

# Index

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Introduction of the research topic	1
1.2. Problematization	1
1.3. Purpose of the study	3
1.3.1. Research questions	3
1.4. Perspective of the study	4
1.5. Structure of the thesis	4
1.6. Contribution of the study	5
1.7. Definitions and abbreviations	6
<b>2. Theoretical Framework</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1. Defining brand personality (BP)	7
2.1.1. The function and role of BP	8
2.1.2. Anthropomorphism	9
2.1.3. “Brands are like friends”	9
2.2. Measuring BP	11
2.2.1. “The Big Five” personality dimensions	11
2.2.2. Projective techniques	13
2.2.3. Collages	14
2.3. Musical-genres as cognitive schemas	15
2.3.1. Extramusical information	15
2.3.2. Music-genres as cognitive schemas	16
2.4. Summary of the literature review	18
<b>3. Methodology</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1. Context of the study: hip-hop and sneakers	20
3.2. Population of study	21
3.3. Research philosophy	22
3.4. Research design	23
3.4.1. Multiple-method research strategy	24
3.5. Structure and plan for data collection	24
3.6. Methodological procedure	26
3.6.1. Phase I: Preliminary study	26
3.6.2. Phase II: Brand image research	27
3.7. Limitations of the empirical study	30
3.7.1. Validity	30
3.7.1. Reliability	31
3.7.2. Ethical concerns	32
<b>4. Preliminary study</b>	<b>33</b>
4.1. Selection of brands	33
4.2. Data from interviews	35
4.2.1. Advertising of sneaker brands	36
4.2.2. On fashion aspects	37
4.3. Additional observations	38
4.4. Chapter summary	39

<b>5. Brand personification through music .....</b>	<b>40</b>
5.1. COLLAGES (session A) .....	41
5.1.1. Interpretation procedure .....	41
5.1.2. Processing of information of music-genres .....	42
5.1.3. LACOSTE'S BRAND COLLAGE .....	43
5.1.4. NIKE'S BRAND COLLAGE .....	46
5.1.5. VANS' BRAND COLLAGE .....	49
5.1.6. OVERALL IMPRESSION .....	52
5.2. ASSOCIATIVE TASK WITH SONGS (session B) .....	54
5.2.1. Introduction .....	54
5.2.2. Results .....	55
5.3. BRAND PERSONALITY SCALE (session B) .....	59
5.3.1. LACOSTE .....	61
5.3.2. NIKE .....	61
5.3.3. VANS .....	62
5.3.4. Conclusion .....	63
<b>6. Analysis .....</b>	<b>65</b>
6.1. Brand knowledge obtained through music .....	65
6.1.1. Who uses the brand? .....	65
6.1.2. Symbolic attributes of the brand. ....	66
6.2. Evaluation of the methodology and triangulation of data .....	68
6.2.1. Differences using BPS by itself or combined with qualitative data .....	70
6.3. What is missing to use music to talk about BP? .....	72
6.4. Conclusion of the analysis .....	73
<b>7. Conclusions.....</b>	<b>74</b>
7.1. Music as a source of brand knowledge .....	74
7.2. Advantages and disadvantages of the methodology.....	75
7.3. Thesis statement .....	76
<b>8. Final discussion.....</b>	<b>77</b>
8.1. Limitations and recommendations .....	77
8.1.1. The perspective of listeners of hip-hop in Sweden .....	77
8.1.2. The "sneaker brand" and the "mother brand" .....	78
8.1.3. Deeper micro-cultural interpretation .....	78
8.2. External implications.....	79
<b>9. References.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>84</b>

## List of tables

TABLE 1 Brand personality scale, dimensions and traits (aaker, J. 1997) .....	12
TABLE 2 Summary and overview of methods and data types .....	24
TABLE 3 Data collected classified by type.....	25
TABLE 4 List of songs used for the associative tasks .....	29
TABLE 5 Characteristics of participants of the preliminary study.....	33
TABLE 6 Categorization of sneaker brands.....	34
TABLE 7 Summary of clippings' content in LACOSTE's collages .....	45
TABLE 8 Summary of clippings' content on NIKE's collages .....	48
TABLE 9 Summary of clippings' content on VANS' collages.....	51
TABLE 10 Sneaker brands scores on the associative task with music.....	55
TABLE 11 Summary of frequencies of traits and dimensions of the BPS.....	60
TABLE 12 Comparison of scores of traits used on collages and the BPS.....	71

## List of figures

FIGURE 1 Participants of projective techniques.....	27
FIGURE 2 Logos of the three sneaker brands studied .....	35
FIGURE 3 Systematic process to identify music schemas on the collages .....	42
FIGURE 4 LACOSTE's brand collage.....	44
FIGURE 5 NIKE's brand collage.....	47
FIGURE 6 VANS' brand collages .....	50
FIGURE 7 Visual construction of music associated for each brand.....	57
FIGURE 8 Network of brand personality dimensions.....	63
FIGURE 9 Triangulation of data for the interpretation of BP .....	69

# 1. Introduction

---

*This chapter presents an overview of the purpose and objectives of this thesis. Firstly, the concept of Brand Personality is introduced and then the academic and practical problematization identified. Following, the purpose, research objectives and structure of the document are presented.*

---

## 1.1. Introduction of the research topic

This thesis is about Brand Personality (BP), which is defined as the set of human characteristic perceived by the consumer in a brand (Aaker, J., 1997). More particularly, this thesis is interested in the investigation of how through the association of specific musical genres, it is possible to determine the personality of a brand.

The literature supporting this study focuses on the measurement, identification and comprehension of BP. On the other hand, literature regarding musical preferences, music-genres as cognitive schemas, stereotypes of artists, musicians and music-fans; is examined for further comprehension of how can music communicate meaning and how can it be useful for branding purposes.

The investigation of how BP operates and how it happens is a relevant aspect of branding that impacts academics' and practitioners' understanding of consumer behavior. BP is a decisive element of branding that contributes to the explanation of why a brand is preferred among others and helps practitioners to differentiate their products (Freiling & Forbes, 2005a).

Knowing how a brand is perceived is essential brand knowledge to compete in the marketplace and to strengthen the consumer-brand relationship.

In addition, the personality of a brand is a powerful source of self-expression for the consumer. It gives consumers reasons for why to keep loyal to a brand and benefits obtained. For some consumers, the benefits of using or wearing a brand is equivalent to the benefits obtained of having influential friends (Hayes, 2006; Wilson & Liu, 2009).

The investigation of the BP phenomenon helps to understand humans' tendencies to attach human characteristics to non-living objects and the way we "interact" with non-tangible and non-mortal partners, for example the quasi-real bond between movie-stars and their fans (Freiling & Forbes, 2005a).

## 1.2. Problematization

Before developing further the presentation of the research goals, some reflections regarding the gaps and opportunities for research on brand personification and brand image research are presented. Firstly, it is important to recognize that this research is one of the few approaches in

the literature on BP that seeks to investigate what and how information about the personality of a brand can be drawn using music as a non-systematic form of language.

The study conducted herein regards BP as an academic and practical problem that needs to be investigated, illustrated and understood further. In particular, what it refers to the investigation of the role that music plays in the image of a brand. Investigating how a brand is perceived is a critical issue. Brand managers and practitioners must know how their brands are perceived in order to design branding strategies and campaigns. Not knowing how stakeholders perceive a brand, it is as flying an airplane and not having information on speed, position and weather (Koll et al., 2010). On this regard, a “brand architect” has no excuse to lack of brand knowledge due to the existence of diverse methodology available to measure BP and brand associations. On the literature, one can find techniques that range from operationalized constructs based on questionnaires (Aaker, J., 1997); to experimental, less rigid, interpretive methods (i.e. projective techniques, qualitative in-depth analyses) (Hofstede et al., 2006, Choi & Rifon, 2007). However, there are still important opportunities to develop creative and insightful ways of gaining brand knowledge. For example, the majority of studies on brand image are quantitative and strictly focused on verbal questioning (Herz, M., 2010). Several methodologies have been developed in order to obtain a clear projection of a perceived personality of a brand, nevertheless yet there is much to learn about *how* BP occurs and *operates* in consumer behavior (Freling & Forbes, 2005a).

A second issue spotted in the literature on BP and brand image research (BIR); is the existence of a gap in the use of music as a source of brand knowledge on how consumers perceive a brand. Moreover, while a great body of previous research made use of animals, celebrities, colors, professional occupations, etc. as metaphoric channels to identify the personality of a brand (Brown, 2010; Hofstede et al. 2006), there are still conceptual blind spots when it comes to understand how music can be used for brand personification purposes.

Musical styles, musicians and music in general; represent a set of rich information that can be used as a medium or language to operate a metaphor on how a brand is perceived. The existence of shared cultural cognitive schemas pertaining to fans of particular musical styles is proved in our society (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007; Shevy, 2008). These shared cognitive schemas can provide useful information on people’s meanings of what is of value.

A third issue spotted is also that current literature on branding, music and marketing; centers much of its attention on music’s role as a stimulus in advertising campaigns and music as a background element used in advertising tactics such as TV ads and radio (Gorn, G. J. 1982, Park, C. W., & Young, S. M., 1986; Zander, M. F., 2006). There are also several studies available that approach music’s impact from a retail perspective (Wilson, S., 2003; North, A. C., Hargreaves, D. J., & McKendrick, J.; 1999). However, little to almost nothing can be found in previous research done to identify how music interacts and operates in the core of the image of a brand: the brand personality.

If current research proved the existence of genre-specific and accurate music stereotypes, which suggests that people develop music-based personality judgments on others (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007); and brands can convey characteristics of human personality (Aaker, J., 1997); then this thesis suggests that consumers can stereotype a brand as if it was a fan or musician of specific music genres. In other words, this research project, suggests that music can help understand how a brand is perceived when information of existent music-genres as cognitive schemas are used by consumers to talk about the personality of a brand.

### 1.3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to use and interpret existent cognitive schemas (CS) of a selected population regarding musical styles, in order to produce the brand personification metaphor.

This study employs methodology to illustrate, measure and identify brand personality (BP), therefore:

*The purpose of this exploratory research is to investigate what type of brand knowledge can be obtained through the personification of a brand using stereotypes of musicians, music-fans and lifestyles in musical-genres.*

The context of the study puts its attention on the investigation of the brand personality of salient brands of sneakers (tennis shoes) available in the market in Sweden. This category of brands was selected because of the popularity and awareness that the international brands of sneakers have. It is expected that consumers have already acquired experiences of usage and exposure to advertising of the brands that will facilitate the use of music as associative theme. Further information on the context of the study is explained in section 1.4 and the chapter number 3.

#### 1.3.1. Research questions

The research questions of this study are split in two groups; the first is factual and the second is interpretive. The factual questions aim to provide concrete information on the consumption of brands of the population studied. While this research is not centered on consumption, it will broadly identify consumption preferences and existent brand-consumer relationships for a better understanding of the personality of the brands.

- What are the preferred brands of sneakers among fans of hip-hop in Sweden? And, what brands do they tend to disdain?
- Is it possible to identify former associations of musical genres and lifestyles to some brands of sneakers?

The second group of research questions aims to address the interpretive nature of the research, which is to determine through the perspective of the population study how to use music genres as brand knowledge, in particular:

- How do consumers' shared CS on music-genres help understand brand personality?
- In which way the combination of projective techniques and the Aaker (1997) scale can use music-genres as CS to draw conclusions on the personality of a brand? What limitations and opportunities can be identified within this methodology?

#### 1.4. Perspective of the study

The theoretical problematization and the purpose of research are addressed through the perspective of the population studied in the empirical research. This study suggests how consumers can identify and use extramusical information to reveal important brand knowledge. Initially, the population studied was classified as “consumers of sneakers in Sweden”. However, through the development of this study, the author noticed that these consumers shared a connection with the consumption of hip-hop music. Moreover, it is acknowledged that the “hip-hop culture” and sneakers share a tight cultural background (Cunningham, C, 2008). Therefore, the population studied was defined as consumers of hip-hop and sneakers in Sweden.

This context of study represents a scenario in which (a) sneakers and music provide self-expression to the consumers, (b) consumers studied have great exposure and knowledge of sneaker brands in the market and (c) consumers have clearly defined musical preferences and hip-hop fans comprehend a segment of consumers with particular cognitive schemas on hip-hop and other musical styles.

Additionally, it is important to remark that this study centers its investigation on the brand personality of three major brands only on their sneaker product line. For instance, two of these firms have wide scope of brand extensions. These range from branded products for golf to perfumes and clothing.

#### 1.5. Structure of the thesis

In the “Theoretical Framework” chapter it is presented first, existent knowledge on what BP means and how and why it happens in the consumer and marketplace. Secondly, this chapter also presents the knowledge on the literature that suggests how BP should be measured, illustrated and identified. The third section of the literature review is related to the existent knowledge on how stereotypes exist in the society when it comes to talk about the personality of fans of specific music-genres. This topic is connected also with the understanding of what function has music as an element of self-expression. Lastly, a revision of music-genres as cognitive schemas and the role it has played in advertising and marketing is presented in order to construct a guideline to interpret the projective techniques employed in the empirical study.

After this chapter follows a brief presentation of the “context of study” in order to give the reader a clear idea of the reasons and limitations in which the empirical study was developed.

The operationalization of the empirical study is developed in two phases. Firstly, on Phase I, a preliminary study consisting of face-to-face interviews will help gain enough background information to determine *what brands to study* and the consumption issues on the adoption of fashion goods. Phase II, helps to obtain through the use of *brand image projective techniques*, musical associations and the personification of each brand.

The research project combines qualitative and quantitative methods in order to produce the personification of the three brands of sneakers, using music genres as the cognitive schemas that provide the input to interpret how a brand's personality is perceived by consumers (Hofstede et al., 2007; Aaker, J., 1997). Visual collages containing clippings of musicians representing musical styles (i.e. hip-hop, reggae, rock, pop, etc.) are used as stimuli to generate the personification metaphor in the projective techniques. Information regarding the research design, paradigm and operationalization of the study, is presented in the same chapter, named "Methodology".

The next chapters present the findings and results obtained. Chapter number four gives detail of the information obtained in the Preliminary study. In this chapter it is possible to understand how and why the brands chosen for the projective techniques resulted

The last section of this dissertation paper closes with two chapters: Analysis and Conclusions. On the Analysis chapter, a review of the findings is discussed in the light of existent theory on brand personification and cultural cognitive schemas in musical styles. The Conclusions chapter summarizes the research project and presents opportunities for further research.

## 1.6. Contribution of the study

The objective of the study was to use musical genres as a medium/language to interpret BP. In addition, knowledge on musical styles is used to broaden the interpretation of BP.

This research can be seen as introductory step of using music to investigate BP on brand image research. It aimed to open the possibilities of thinking in creative and insightful ways to investigate brand personality (BP) and its interaction with consumers' acquired shared cognitive schemas of music and culture. It is in addition, an example of how existent methodology can be used and complemented, either with qualitative or quantitative approaches, to measure and illustrate BP.

In addition, this study represents an invitation for further research on brand personification that attempt to use diverse themes and methodology for brand personification.



## 1.7. Definitions and abbreviations

**Abbreviations.** Throughout the whole document, one can note the use of abbreviations that aim to simplify and unify the terminology used. For that purpose, in this chapter the most important of these abbreviations are:

- “BP” means “brand personality” or “brand personification” and also a short version for “personality of a brand”
- “BIR” means “brand image research”
- “CS” means “cognitive schemas”

**Hip-Hop.** When used in capital letters “Hip-Hop” refers to the aggregated life-style and concept as a cultural unit. When referred as “hip-hop”, it is merely by the purpose of mentioning the musical style. Further explanation on the context of the study, which is the personification of brands through the perspective of hip-hop fans in Sweden, one can be found in the “Methodology” chapter of this document.

**Personification metaphor/anthropomorphization of the brand:** These terms refer to the brand image construct of brand personality.

**Musical associations/associations of music:** In this paper, those concepts will refer to any cognitive schema connected to a brand in terms of musicians, artists, musical genres, stereotypes of music fans, musical instruments, etc.; these associations consider anything musical and “extramusical” connected to the brand in consumers’ mind.

**Musical genres/music-genre/musical style/music style:** All these terms refer to the classification of music according to rhythmic and melodic styles.

**User imagery/User of the brand/User profile:** The set of human characteristics related to the user/consumer of the brand (Aaker et al. 2001).

**Brand knowledge.** In this research Brand Knowledge is the one that the firm, brand managers and practitioner have over the brand image, associations or brand personality; it can also refer to the information on consumer. Important: In this paper, Brand Knowledge should not be considered at any time as knowledge that the consumer has.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

---

*This chapter is composed of three major sections: First, the theory behind Brand Personality (BP); second, the theory behind the existent measurement of BP and the third corresponds to the theory that supports the operationalization of music as a language to interpret BP.*

---

### 2.1. Defining brand personality (BP)

Brand Personality (BP) conveys the accumulation of human descriptors associated to the brand. BP can be seen as a non-physical piece of product knowledge that shapes and influences consumers' perceptions (Freiling & Forbes, 2005b).

BP can also be constructed out of the characteristics of the "type" of person who uses the products or services of the brand. That for instance, could be *demographic* characteristics that refer to age, race, occupation, etc.; or *psychographic* characteristics which refer to lifestyles and habits; that are intentionally or accidentally associated with a brand (Keller, K. L., 2001).

The personality of a brand is compound by brand associations. The difference is that the brand associations that BP contains are those that communicate personality with human characteristics. BP is a specific type of brand associations (BA). We can refer, BA as considered anything linked to the brand in mind's consumer (Aaker, D., 1991; Low, G. S., & Lamb Jr., C. W.; 2000).

Anything related to "a human's life" can be used as an association to the personality of a brand. For instance, consumers associate brands with experiences they have had of people wearing a brand. This can be product usage, product spokesperson, price, quality, product performance, etc. (John et al., 2006). Caprara et al. (2001) suggests that the image of a brand is composed of (a) the image of the provider (i.e. manufacturers: NIKE, Inc.), (b) the user (i.e. fans of Hip-Hop, athletes) and (c) the product itself (i.e. NIKE® Air Force 1). All of these cognitive links in branding are known as "brand associations". The measurement of associations is a prominent activity for brand managers, academics and researchers. Research in this regard is known as "brand image research" (BIR). It primarily aims to measure brand perceptions through the development of scales with enough validity and reliability (Aaker, J., 1997).

A wide range of literature has studied how brand associations are formed in consumers' memory, often represented as a mapping of concepts or network of associations (John et al., 2006).

According to the *associative network theory*, we know that the consumers' mind is composed of a network of concepts, ideas and cognitive schemas (nodes) that through the experience and exposition to products get to develop linkages or associations (Martínez, E., Montaner, T., Pina, J.M., 2009).

### 2.1.1. The function and role of BP

The attributes of personality in a brand help differentiate the brand from competitors and help branded products establish a price premium (Low, G. S., & Lamb Jr., C. W. 2000). On the other hand, Aaker, J. (1997) suggests that practitioners consider BP an effective way to distinguish a branded product from others in a product category.

Wilson & Liu (2009) suggest that a brand is similar to the *Pinocchio* story. Pinocchio is a fictional character. He was created as a wooden puppet, by Geppetto, a skilled woodcarver; where both wished the puppet became a real boy. Using this analogy, the brand as the puppet relies on the support and guidance of others to become more human. Like Geppetto did, *brand architects* should focus their strategies helping the brand to become more human. This in turn, will make consumers more open to interact and perceive the attributes in the brand that makes them feel identified, as if it was “human”.

A favorable BP impacts positively on the equity of a brand and produces an affective consumer-brand relationship. The product of this relationship is often the development of higher levels of preference that can generate loyalty towards the brand.

The efforts of the firm and practitioners to differentiate their brands from others in market or competing product categories are the main reasons why brand personification results fundamental on the marketplace. Nevertheless, definitions of BP are still on the way. The literature demonstrates that a unique and universal definition of BP has not been agreed. There is still confusion on branding terms that yet share the meaning of existing associations and cognitive links towards brands. A clear delineation from other constructs such as “Brand Image” has not been done (Caprara, G. V. et al. 2001).

For a consumer, a brand with a strong, defined and charismatic personality represents value and benefits. Freiling & Forbes (2005a) distinguish four important benefits for the consumer:

- (1) superior experiences and feelings evoked,
- (2) aid for self-expression,
- (3) facilitation of choice and
- (4) alleviating social interaction

Leading brands often are impeccable in projecting these four benefits to its consumers. If we think of Apple® for instance, its personality communicates it is a brand that provides entertainment and superb experiences to its users, that helps consumers express themselves as creative people. It makes it easy for the consumer to be chosen among other brands as its quality, performance and design attributes attached to the brand facilitate heuristic processes; and of course social benefits are obtained by displaying an Apple laptop at the café downtown.

### 2.1.2. Anthropomorphism

Existent literature can provide answers to the *how* and *why* Brand Personality occurs on consumer behavior. Broadly, it can be explained first, from the operation of cognitive processes on consumers' memory and secondly, due to the anthropomorphic tendency of people to humanize non-human objects (Freiling & Forbes, 2005a).

All of these observed behaviors have turned the thinking on brand management towards social sciences and humanities to obtain methodological support (Wilson & Liu, 2009).

On the Social Sciences anthropologists have long studied the phenomenon of humans adding meaning to objects; in particular when objects are attached with attributes of human personality, this is referred as: anthropomorphism (Freiling, T. H., & Forbes, L. P., 2005).

Moreover, considering Freiling, T. H., & Forbes, L. P., (2005) standpoint, the anthropomorphic tendency results provocative to understand, because if we uncover underlining reasons, one can realize that behind this:

- Consumers seek familiarity by trying to make more human what is not human
- Consumers pursue comfort justifying the use of a brand, and
- Consumers aim to reduce risk by decreasing uncertainty in a complex and ambiguous world.

Regardless of being just a mere perception of how a brand could be in terms of human personality; BP it is a source of knowledge for the consumer. It is fundamental in the purchase process as it will reduce and facilitate the need to think and investigate what brand is the best option. The nature of the human beings often reflects our need to reduce ambiguity. Decision-making is also a daunting task when it comes to choose a branded product and even more if we talk about luxury items or moments in which the consumer presents a high purchase involvement.

The phenomenon of anthropomorphism can be identified in contemporary and ancient cultures. On the world of the artistic literature, it is plagued of fictional characters that are described using human characteristic. Mythological characters of ancient cultures were animals and meteorological phenomena that were conceived as gods, this fact represent other examples of how the anthropomorphization tendency has been part of our history. With regards to branding, many examples of brand anthropomorphism can be spotted for instance using animals. The mascots used in Olympic Games or international competitions such as the FIFA World Cup, present extraordinary examples of how bears, chilies, dogs, etc.; had been used to commercialize and communicate the spirit by which the spectacle is produced (Brown, S., 2010).

### 2.1.3. "Brands are like friends"

For the consumer, a brand represents intangible benefits such as the ones that humans obtain by having popular friends or those who occupy privileged positions; thus from a consumer

behavior perspective, those attractive brands bring “relationship advantages” than those with a less attractive personality (Hayes et al., 2006).

For the consumer, Brand Personality (BP) conveys a bundle of associations that are sources of meaning and information retrieval. Researchers of consumption theory have focused on the understanding of how BP allows them to express her or his own *self*, an *ideal self* or some *dimensions* of the self (Aaker, J. 1997).

Consumers hardly make decisions thinking purely on economic and practical issues (Levy, S. J., 1959; Batra & Ahtola 1990). The selection of a brand is attributed to symbolic rather than utilitarian benefits. Part of those symbolic benefits, is the aid to the consumers to express themselves, when for instance they would like to look like their favorite celebrities. The personality that brands possess can be attributed most of the time to the known profile of the user or celebrities that have endorsed the brand. For this matter, the consumers’ preference of a brand can be attributed to the charisma and personality it projects.

Some literature approaches the BP phenomenon from the line of understanding that “Brands are like friends” (Hayes et al., 2006). Consumers choose brands as we choose friends: by our affinity on their skills, physical characteristics, taste, etc. (Schlesinger & Cervera, 2008). Then a logic question to ask is “What is the most appealing personality of a brand for a consumer?” In sociology, it is noted the existence of charismatic leaders which are people who provide high levels of motivation to the masses. Therefore, like people, products and brands have the attribute of *charisma* (Smothers, N., 1993).

On the literature is widely recognized the effective power of celebrities to enhance the image of a brand, this phenomenon is explained by the credibility that the unique characteristics and personality of the celebrity provide to the branded product and in turn, to the consumer (Choi, & Rifon, 2007). This in consumer behavior is known as *the credibility of the source* (Solomon, 2007); and reflects how successful artists can be thought of effective brand managers or also known as “brand ambassadors” (Schroeder, 2005).

Brands possess the ability to communicate cultural meanings - some authors even call them “cultural icons” (Aaker, Benet-Martínez, & Garolera, 2001; Phau & Lau, 2000). The culture-specific meaning of commercial brands goes beyond utilitarian attributes and physical characteristic: which indeed the BP can represent.

Wilson & Liu (2009) say that culture has a significant effect on consumers’ decisions, and further research should focus on the impact and potential that consumers’ cultural framework has on branding. A brand itself is nothing. It is just a symbol. The social sciences can explain the phenomenon of the meaning that symbols have for people throughout: Semiotics. With a perspective from the marketplace, all the objects, brands and commodities exchanged within it, are treated as signs that have a meaning for consumer; which this meaning is the “brand image” (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990).

## 2.2. Measuring BP

The Personification of a Brand is a technique that can help gain understanding of what “commercial symbols” represent for the consumer. Studies and experiments to describe a brand are not new. Back in 1988, it can already be accounted the intention of identifying in a brand of cold and flu medicine called NyQuil®, the desire of research to identify what in the opinion of the consumers, was that represented and distinguished more the product: the triangular-shaped bottle, the color of the label (red), etc.; surprisingly the “essence” of the product was represented by the heavy and dark liquid content (Durgee, J. F., 1988).

The development of constructs to measure Brand Personality has proliferated during the last couple of decades as an attempt by researchers to reduce ambiguity while interpreting the identity and image of a brand. However, these constructs face the problem of not using a common theory and consensual taxonomy (Caprara et al., 2001). This situation often develops in the lack of credibility and validity of the construct itself.

Some authors argue that findings on existent methodology used to identify BP will often be inconclusive in nature and subjective to different interpretations (Freiling & Forbes, 2005a). Depending on the context of study, making the analogy of a brand having human characteristics might sound a bit strange. Some product categories fit better than others for this purpose. It is less ambiguous to produce this metaphor with well-known consumer branded products that fill symbolic purposes; than with services, events or industrial products. The analogy becomes even more abstract if these brands lack of awareness and a clear position in consumers’ mind. For instance, it sounds more logical to say “*Coca-Cola is charming and joyful*” than saying “*Svenska Handelsbanken is exciting and smooth*”. However, if the intention is to connect two concepts of completely different domains, metaphors are excellent methods to do it (Hofstede et al., 2007).

### 2.2.1. “The Big Five” personality dimensions

Many of the brand personality constructs existent nowadays in the literature (Aaker, J., 1997; Caprara et al., 2001; Opoku et al., 2007) are originated after the development of the “Big Five” human personality structure developed originally for psychological applications by Norman (1963).

One of the most remarkable attempts to define an applicable dimension scale of personalities perceived by consumers is the work of Jennifer Aaker (1997). She used the “Big Five” human personality structure to develop a scale using adjectives that could describe with reliability and validity the perceived personality of a brand. Thus, its relevance relies precisely on the fact that no previous research had systematically developed a reliable, valid and generalizable scale to measure brand personality.

On her study, 37 salient and well-known brands were selected. This set of brands covered a balanced mix of symbolic functions (i.e. clothing, cosmetics), utilitarian functions (i.e. electronics,

toothpaste) and those which serve both symbolic and utilitarian functions (i.e. computers, tennis shoes). The aim of her study was to filter out of 309 adjectives, those who can be used to describe the personality of a brand. The result of several filtering stages was 42 personality traits that were grouped in 5 dimensions within 15 facets.

The instrument can be used by simply asking consumers to rate how much they consider that a brand can be described with those personality traits. This Brand Personality Scale (BPS) has been used and adapted by dozens of studies on BP (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2004; Caprara et al., 2001; Choi & Rifon, 2007; Mathiesen K., 2007; Opoku et al., 2007). Many of them aimed to validate the BPS within several product categories, or how the scale develops in the context of goods that serve utilitarian, symbolic or mixed purposes. For instance, Davies et al. (2001) suggest that there is not theoretical reason why BP should be limited to five dimensions. On their study, they found out that the applicability of the Ruggedness dimension is weak in both reliability and number of items. Some other studies have used the BPS in a manner that can support other methods for the measurement of BP (Hofstede et al., 2007)

Aaker, J. (1997) acknowledges that although research has shown that characteristics of human personality are considered almost the same in any culture, this might not be applicable for BP.

Schlesinger, M. W., and Cervera, A. (2008) expose that Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimension scale has been subject to adaptation according to more relevant and adjusted cultural properties. For instance, studies have been done applying these (five) dimensions, but they have inevitably changed to represent accurately the cultural ideas of the country of research.

DIMENSION (x5)	FACET (x15)	PERSONALITY TRAIT (x42)
Sincerity	(4) Down-to-earth, Honest, Wholesome and Cheerful	down-to-earth, family-oriented, small-town, honest, real, sincere, original, wholesome, cheerful, friendly, sentimental
Excitement	(4) Daring, Spirited, Imaginative and Up-to-date	daring, exciting, trendy, cool, spirited, young, imaginative, unique, contemporary, independent, up-to-date
Competence	(3) Reliable, Intelligent and Successful	hard working, reliable, secure, corporate, intelligent, technical, confident, leader, successful
Sophistication	(2) Upper-class, and Charming	glamorous, good looking, upper-class, charming, feminine, smooth
Ruggedness	(2) Outdoorsy and Tough	masculine, outdoorsy, Western, rugged, tough

**TABLE 1 BRAND PERSONALITY SCALE, DIMENSIONS AND TRAITS (AAKER, J. 1997)**

For example in countries with a Latin background, such as France, Spain, Mexico; the consideration of gender traits (e.g. feminine or masculine) contribute to better description of brand personality. Thus, results fundamental to use exclusively those human characteristics that are applicable to brands (Azoulay, A., & Kapferer, J.-N., 2004).

On a similar fashion to Aaker, J. (1997), the work by Choi & Rifon (2007) suggests a set of dimensions to measure the personality of celebrities that can be used to describe brands. The scale developed resulted in 4 dimensions: Genuineness, Competence, Excitement and Sociability. Aaker's (1997) BPS has also used within specific business contexts. For instance, some studies use the scale to measure the perceived BP of corporation among employees and consumers; or resulting perceptions of brand extensions (Opoku et al. 2007; Davies et al. 2001, Mathiesen, K. 2007).

### 2.2.2. Projective techniques.

The literature on projective techniques enumerates more benefits for BIR and consumer psychology than quantitative, straightforward methods (Donoghue, 2000; Hofstede et al., 2007). For instance, the data and information that projective techniques provide are rich and accurate if a research is attempting to understand beliefs, values, motivation, personality and behavior.

Projective techniques allow participants express themselves with more freedom than a structured questionnaire, and helps individuals to project their opinions even without the use of a vocabulary. The Brand Image Research (BIR) technique used in this project is built upon Hofstede et al. (2007) study on the personification that they developed based on four brands of beers in the Netherlands using two projective methods to identify celebrities and prototypical job occupations that participants thought matched the beers' BP.

People often find difficulties writing or expressing what they think of things. Therefore, the use of unstructured task gives the consumer the opportunity to externalize whatever they feel it is appropriate to describe the object. Even if the consumer feels that "there is no sense" in the connection with a brand and an animal for example, deeply rooted cognitive information is used to express what they think. Often, if the person is asked to explain why they associated "A" with "3", they encounter difficulties on giving a sounded reason (Herz, 2010).

On BIR it is also known the existence of other methodology to measure and identify brand associations. For example, brand concept maps (BCM). This is a useful tool that visually represents the links of associations to a brand, and it is possible to distinguish which ones are more relevant or strongly present in consumers' mind. Mapping brand association networks it's a useful technique to visualize relevant associations (John et al. 2006).

Hofstede et al. (2007) mention the existence of 5 different types of methods of projective techniques, which are: associations, completion tasks, construction, choice ordering and expressive.

The projective methods using *associations*, makes participants connect the object of research with words, images and thoughts. It can be whether a specific theme or a completely open topic.

*Completion tasks* often involve finishing sentences, stories and arguments. Projective techniques using *construction* obtain information out of the input of information that the person uses to



describe feelings or situations, an example of this is writing the dialogues of speech bubbles in a cartoon. *Choice ordering* it is helpful to understand the ranking of product benefits. Lastly, *expressive* tasks provide situational information on role-playing, story-telling, drawing and other creative activities (Hofstede et al., 2007).

### 2.2.3. Collages

The use of visual collages on BIR is appropriate for the development of associative tasks where consumers project their perceptions of the brand through activities that connect the brand with themes of diverse domains.

Collages are projective methods that help to obtain brand knowledge on the perception that the consumer has over the price and perceptions of the brand's products and services. They are helpful to know what perception of quality the consumer has over the brand. In addition, one can obtain information on what perceptions the consumer has towards the image of the brand, the personality and for instance, the type of person who they think wears or buys that brand (Koll et al., 2010).

The "collage method" on brand image research (BIR) offers benefits that other methods don't. The collage is of qualitative nature and it helps to obtain implicit and unconscious perceptions in consumer's mind (Herz 2010; Hofstede et al., 2007). The collage technique is essentially a projective technique that results extremely useful to bypass the conscious defenses of respondents. Marc Herz (2010) suggests that the implications of data collection through the collage technique can be evaluated by:

1. Study topic (Open V.S. Focused)
2. Specifications on collage (Open V.S. Pre-specified)
3. Study setting (Field situation V.S. Laboratory situation)
4. Collage creation task (Actively created V.S. Passively used)
5. Input material (Random, external V.S. Pre-selected, Self-created)

As seen, collages used for BIR can range from completely unstructured studies where the aim is to spot "whatever" associated to the brand, or they can be instrument to obtain information on a specific topic. On this regard, the empirical study conducted for this study, uses collages to personify brands of sneakers on a focused topic: music-genres as cognitive schemas. However, this will be explained further. The following section of the "Theoretical Framework" chapter, presents literature on cognitive schemas related to music, and then the "Methodology" chapter explains how the collage technique employed was designed.

## 2.3. Musical-genres as cognitive schemas

As mentioned early in this chapter, existent methodology makes use of animals and fictional characters as metaphors to express how a brand is perceived by consumers (Brown, S., 2010). However, music represents a communication tool that has been ignored and not used for brand personification.

Even though, there is a line of research that has already investigated the interaction of music and the formation of attitudes towards a brand, a product or the advertising itself. For example, adding music of a particular musical genre to a TV-Ad may prime schemas (i.e. pre-conceived beliefs and attitudes), which in turn will influence audience's perception and interpretation of the material (Shevy, M., 2008). It is recognized in the literature how relevant is to carefully choose the music, that will be used within an advertising campaign. According to Zander (2006), music conveys information of the brand that words can't tell. Music is the language that has the strongest power of communication and force of persuasion to consumers, while its main purpose is to evoke emotions.

Fulberg, P. (2003) claims that the potential for music to become a trigger for emotion-based consumer's reaction has never been investigated properly. For instance, Wagner, M. (2008) doctoral work aimed to test brand/music congruency, firstly developing a scale to know how people describe music (i.e. sophisticated, dark, calm, etc.) and then comparing how participants matched the description of a brand's personality with that of the music used. Dann, & Jensen (2007) developed a qualitative analyze of a construct of brand personality dimensions derived from Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale, and determined the applicability of each dimensions for personalities of musicians in different musical genres.

### 2.3.1. Extramusical information

Research done attempting to use music as the language to explore and interpret brand associations and BP is scarce, thus it represents a field in a development phase where no established guidelines can be identified. Other research has projected BP through occupations. Among popular occupations such as secretaries, managers, politicians, lawyers, doctors, etc.; it has been used the personalities of artists, musicians or celebrities. However, the generalization over the personality of an artist or musician is too broad.

Music itself is a very broad concept. The concern of music in this research is the cognitive information that is communicated through specific musical styles in a particular cultural context. However, let's first start to define what "music" is. Music according to the Oxford English Dictionary is:

*"that of the fine arts which is concerned with the combination of sounds with a view to beauty of form and the expression of emotion; also the science of the laws or principles of melody, harmony, rhythm, etc., by which this art is regulated".*

Therefore, music is not only about a piece of music or a melody. Music is also an “expression of emotion. Unarguable music in its acoustic form can communicate technicalities such as tempo, rhythm, melody and tone. But, on the other side, music also communicates intangible aspects, such as emotions, attitudes, values, etc.

As stated by Rentfrow & Gosling (2007): *Music preferences can say much about a man*. Judgment of appearance and stereotypes exist within the musicians and performers of the music. Music somehow has to be performed and at some point “consumed” by someone; thus the performers of particular musical styles have become emblems of “how you should look like” or “how your lifestyle should be” if you perform within specific musical genres; on our society, the personality of a musician of Classical music differs from that of Heavy Metal, the same can be seen on the stereotype of Reggae musicians and Country. (Griffiths, N. K., 2010).

Musical genres can be considered a form of non-verbal communication when it is considered the inherent “extramusical information” and its psychological impact. Music is a carrier of meaning and particularly what Mark Shevy (2008) calls: cognitive schemas.

The concept of “cognitive schema” (CS) it is not new, however, philosophers have varied in their definition. For instance, the German philosopher Immanuel Kant already talked about CS by referring that every person’s experiences get stored in brain’s memory, forming thus a highly structured order of concepts. A definition that helps to understand the concept of CS is the one that Garro (2000) suggests:

*“Schemas are generalized collections of knowledge of past experiences that are organized into related knowledge groups; they guide our behaviors in familiar situations. Cultural schemas do not differ from other schemas, except that they are shared by certain cultural groups rather than individual. Schemas unique to individuals are created from personal experiences, whereas those shared by individuals are created from various types of common experiences”.*

Examples of studies that aim to understand the CS that are communicated through music, are those studies that have identified stereotypes that people has towards listeners of particular musical styles. Shevy, M., (2008) developed an interesting study on the cognitive schemas elicited in the personality of someone who listens Hip-Hop or Country styles of music. His experiment confirmed that a generalized stereotype of people who listen Hip-Hop music is perceived to wear tennis shoes (sneakers) and belong to a youth age group. In stark contrast to the association stimuli scores of people related to Country music, those on Hip-Hop were associated significantly more with minority ethnicity, urban locations and liberal political ideologies

### 2.3.2. Music-genres as cognitive schemas

Music genres as CS further can communicate where a person comes from, for instance if it is an urban neighborhood or if it comes from a small rural-village. On the other hand, music-genres can also help us know what the political positions of a musician or listener of a music-genre are.

Let's say for example a musician of Punk-Rock, one might imply that the musician has some anarchistic tendencies towards political institutions, rejects racism and definitely radical political postures (Hebdige, D., 1979).

Recently, research on music psychology has been interested in the understanding of how music and particularly musical preferences, is used to get an idea of how a person is. The result is the identification of stereotypes of people who listen to specific musical genres. On their research Rentfrow and Gosling (2007) examined the validity of 14 music genres stereotypes (e.g. rap, rock, jazz) and dug on how this music fans were perceived in terms of their personality "Big Five" dimension (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness), personal qualities (i.e. political beliefs), attitude toward social values (i.e. peace, wisdom) and alcohol and drug preferences (i.e. beer, marijuana); this in the United Kingdom and United States. For instance, Rap (which is a musical style of hip-hop) was considered energetic and rich in rhythm. In addition, Rap fans were described as high in extraversion, moderate in agreeableness, politically liberal, athletic in appearance and low in conscientiousness. Moreover, the stereotype perceived in them is that they value self-respect and social recognition (Rentfrow, P. J., & Gosling, S. D., 2007).

People choose music and particular genres for their external meaning and the social symbolism they provide. On the other hand, musical preferences can help understand values, attitudes and feelings (North, A. C., 2007; Schwartz, K., & Fouts, G. 2003). These choices can be understood as taste. Taste begins with the notion of the role music should play in life (Jourdain, R., 1997). Taste and the expression of life-styles (for example musical preferences), from a sociological perspective represent an instrument of differentiation to distinguish our preferences from what they are not (Bourdieu, P, 1979).

On their study, Rentfrow & Gosling (2003) defined four dimensions to measure music preferences; which in addition, also reflected the association of political beliefs, demographics, attitudes and cognitive abilities.

1. Reflective & Complex (comprised of classical, jazz, folk, and blues music) tends to emphasize positive and negative emotions and the compositions are often perceived as complex.
2. Intense & Rebellious (rock, alternative, and heavy metal music), emphasizes negative emotions, with themes of disobedience.
3. Upbeat & Conventional (pop, country, soundtracks, and religious music), emphasizes positive emotions and contains music that is less complex than other genres.
4. Energetic & Rhythmic (hip-hop, rap, soul, and electronic music), emphasizes energy and often involves themes of self-gratification. These factors are reliable and generalize across independent samples and methods of assessment.

View reviewing the literature on what is communicated through musical styles and musical preferences (Shevy, 2008; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007); one can summarize that the cognitive

schemas in musical-styles tell valuable *extramusical information* that either help us for self-expression, or can help us know to get to know something about the personality of a person.

In general, the extramusical information provided by music-genres as cognitive schemas can be:

- Stereotypes of fans of specific musical genres
- Stereotypes of musicians of specific musical genres
- Styles of life endowed to musicians on particular musical genres
- The affiliation to cultural groups
- Political positions (i.e. anarchist, conservative, left-wing)
- Social-class (i.e. High-class, middle-class, working class)
- Consumption profile (i.e. Beverages, food, media)
- Ethnic profile of the listener or musician (i.e. White, African-American, Latin)
- Demographic characteristics (i.e. geographic location, occupation, education, age)

This list represents what in this study will be used to understand and interpret the information obtained in the projective techniques. The review of the knowledge on musical preferences and music-genres as cognitive schemas; opens the possibility of using music as a language to conduct brand personification.

## 2.4. Summary of the literature review

The review of literature followed a sequential discussion that starts on the theory that has already been developed on BP by firstly introducing the existing knowledge on why BP is an important concept in current brand image research. Following, some theoretical perspectives on how BP operates and originates in consumer behavior was discussed.

The second section of the literature review correspond to existent methods used to identify and measure BP. Lastly, a discussion of what is communicated through musical styles was presented as the closing section of the theoretical framework.

The research proposal of this study is to understand “how music genres as consumers’ cognitive schemas can help understand BP?” Even though it was not possible to spot studies done considering both, music genres as cognitive schemas and the measurement of brand personality, this thesis aims to explore what possibilities there are to let consumers use music *to tell us* what is the personality of a brand?

After analyzing all the literature contained herein, it is possible to identify a connection in between the measurement of brand personality using music-genres with their extramusical information. Brands possess charisma and brands are associated with artists and celebrities (Hayes et al., 2006; Smothers, N., 1993). Those artists or fans depending on the musical style they belong to; communicate clearly aspects of who they are and what they like (Shevy, M., 2008; North, A. C., 2007; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007). Therefore, this thesis suggests that if it is

possible to map what type of music-styles or musicians are associated to the brand, then it will be possible to obtain brand knowledge on BP.

The conduction of the empirical study will help additionally to verify if the extramusical information can be used to talk about BP. In particular, from the list above mentioned, what types of extramusical information derived from cognitive schemas is useful to describe BP and what is not? Also, the empirical study aims to explore what information can be drawn out of combining projective techniques with the brand personality scale.

Therefore, the “Analysis” chapter (number 6) will continue from the perspective of the results obtained; what useful brand knowledge can be drawn from music-genres as cognitive schemas. Although this proposition could be seen as adventurous when no particular research can confirm the validity and reliability of music styles as cognitive schemas to draw BP; this project would like to open the discussion and possibilities for future research on music and the construction of BP.

## 3. Methodology

---

*This chapter presents the methodology used for the empirical study. It introduces the context of research and following the research paradigm and design are explained.*

---

### 3.1. Context of the study: hip-hop and sneakers

This study centers its empirical study on the perceptions of the brand personality (BP) that consumers and listeners of hip-hop music have over brands of sneakers. The aim of studying fans of hip-hop responds to the need of investigating a population that could allow us to speak of BP in terms of music.

The interpretive character of this research requires the perspective of the population studied to develop the personification metaphor. Moreover, for the hip-hop culture, sneakers represent a fashion good or symbolic item that fills symbolic purposes.

It can't be ignored the utilitarian benefits obtained of a tennis shoe. They satisfy our needs of protecting the skin of our feet when we walk. However, rarely someone will think of that way when buying a pair of sneakers. Nowadays a consumer buys products not for what they do, but for what they mean (Levy, S. 1959).

Sneakers represent a product category that endows cultural meaning, *speaks* about the personality of who wears it and communicates aspects of social-class. Sneakers give consumers a sense of value; for the youth sneaker brands represent a way of self-expression that often goes beyond reasonable parameters; where in some places people is assaulted for wearing new or exclusive sneaker models (Smothers, N; 1993).

During the last 3 decades, sneakers gained a dramatically different place in post-modern culture. They surpassed purely functional purposes and have earned a cult-like attitude in many consumers (Cunningham, C., 2008). Sneakers and the Hip-Hop culture share somehow the urban-spatial and chronological dimensions in which they appeared on our modern society.

Hip-Hop culture is since its origins plagued by the characteristics of a urban cultural movement, that saw the light for the first time in the blocks of New York, and particularly in the United States, it evolved from a "youth culture" to a proper dominant cultural fact (Dimitriadis, G., 2009, New York). Hip-Hop originates in the United States in the 1970's as a cultural scene that then in turn developed in a musical style which broadly integrates DJing/scratching, sampling, rapping and beat boxing as stylistic elements (Randel, D., M., 2003). However, Hip-Hop artistic culture takes Graffiti writing, MCing, DJing and brake-dance as the key artistic elements that forged a face-to-face social contact and interaction. Literature on the Hip-Hop culture in Sweden is scarce and due to language-barrier could not be examined further. However, it can be accounted that the overall elements of the Hip-Hop culture from the United States have permeated young local demographic groups (Sernhede, O. 2002).

For the context of this study, hip-hop fans in Sweden will provide their impressions on how sneaker brands have interacted with music. The choice of sneaker brands is also beneficial for the conduction of brand image research. Most popular sneaker brands are marketed worldwide, thus the consumers' studied will not find difficulties identifying them and sharing the associations that they already know of the brands.

The empirical aim is to use the knowledge that hip-hop fans in Sweden have over how sneaker brands have been marketed and how they have interacted in their social and personal life. In addition, the extramusical information that music-genres communicate to hip-hop fans will be used as the channel of expression to talk about their perceptions over the brands studied.

### 3.2. Population of study

The participants of this study were fans of Hip-Hop music that live in Sweden. In particular, most of participants were located in the city of Jönköping. The total population of study resulted difficult to determinate do to the inexistent measure on the total number of individuals who are fans of Hip-Hop in Sweden. However, small organizations gave account of the possibility to determinate a sampling method. Some of them are:

**The Dirty Rap Scholars:** This organization is integrated by a group of students from Jönköping University, whose main activity is the host of a radio program broadcasted on the local frequency 98.5FM and at the same time is streamed online and on-demand. This community is known to be active promoters of Hip-Hop on the local scene. Their database accounts up to 180 registered members, which many of them are followers of their Facebook® fan page.

**Bunkern!.** This local organization is also a commercial recording studio that operates in Jönköping, Sweden. Their Facebook group page accounts for 225 members. The individuals who follow this organization comprehend musicians, fans, music producers and regular followers of the hip-hop local scene.

These two organizations present common members in their online communities; therefore it can't be summed up. Leading members of the organizations mentioned above were contacted and informed about the intentions of the research; their response and support was positive towards the facilitation and participation of respondents to the studies.

**Diverse online communities of hip-hop fans in Sweden.** A third sub-group of the population is any person who doesn't belong to any of the two organizations mentioned previously, but in some way manifests that is a fan of Hip-Hop. A way to deduct this, for instance, was doing a filtered-search on Facebook through its paid targeted advertising, where the social network accounted 285 users who manifested that lived in Jönköping and having Hip-Hop as their main interest.



In addition, the musical social network Last.fm contains the existence of 3 users groups devoted to Hip-Hop: *Swedish hiphop* with 64 members, *Svenske hip hop* with 160 members and *Swedish Hip Hop* with 96 members; however the members of these groups in some cases belong to all or more than one group, also, they seem to come from any country in the world, but the vast majority resides in Sweden.

All the member numbers were accounted until December 1st, 2010. In addition, screening filters to avoid repetition of participants were also employed.

Respondents were coordinated to participate either on the in-depth interviews or the two group sessions using projective techniques. Further explanation on the characteristics of participants used for each method is presented in the next sections.

### 3.3. Research philosophy

#### **Interpretive research paradigm**

The Interpretive paradigm was selected, as it is appropriate when a study is conducted within small samples or a specific population of study. In this regard, the research project is using as a population of study, hip-hop fans that live in Sweden. The intention of studying this population is to gain knowledge on how salient brands of sneakers are perceived on their BP. This study on BP differ with others studies on brand image research in that lifestyles attached to musical-genres are used as the theme to talk about the personality of a brand.

The Interpretive research paradigm on the business and organizational research is acknowledged to be of great use as it provides the researcher with information and knowledge to understand phenomena happening in unique situations (Saunders et al., 2009). Unfortunately, studies of this nature can't be used as a reference to infer on the same phenomena happening in other context. However, with this perspective it will be possible to contribute with new insights on how to use diverse themes for the investigation of BP.

Williams (1998) suggests that Interpretive research is useful to learn about a social phenomenon yet unexplored or without clear theoretical boundaries, in particular:

*“Interpretivist research is primarily exploratory and descriptive in purpose designed to discover what can be learned about the area of interest... In contrast to the causal mode of functionalist analysis, interpretive analysis is associative, for the interpretivist what is meaningful emerges from the data”*

The data obtained out of an Interpretive research will contribute better to understand and learn how music as cognitive schemas (CS) can be used to talk about BP; rather than quantitative approaches such as experiments or mathematical treatment of data (Cryer, P., 2006). This doesn't mean that quantitative data can't be used in a research with an Interpretive paradigm. The Interpretive research is flexible addressing research questions such as “What”, “Why” and “How” things happen. Some might argue that Interpretivism and Positivism are research

philosophies impossible to combine, but others consider they are possible to conceal (Kirkwood, J., & Campbell-Hunt, C., 2007).

It can be argued, that the methodology used for this research doesn't follow traditional research paradigms, in particular the popular positivistic research philosophy which dominates the academic world of business and management (Kirkwood, J., & Campbell-Hunt, C. 2007). However, this study shares the vision of embracing and reducing ambiguity through the use of the necessary methods to provide convergent and complementary results in order to comprehend and explain the phenomena behind the consumer's preferences for a brand (Stewart, D., W., 2009).

Out of the three most popular research purposes, which are "explorative", "descriptive" and "casual/predictive"; this research is conducted with "explorative" purpose. Research is a systematic and methodological process of inquiry and investigation that increases knowledge and provides solutions to problems (Williams, 1998). On one side, the shortage of research done on BP that measures musical associations makes it difficult to refer to other methodology. However, an exploratory research allows choosing the most appropriate research, data collection procedure and selection of subjects. Following below, it is presented the design adopted to conduct the empirical study; where in this research a triangulation of methods was adopted taking the brand image research (BIR) work done by Hofstede et al. (2007).

### 3.4. Research design

The objective of the study was to illustrate and identify the BP of three brands of sneakers using music-genres as CS. For that matter, the research design was developed considering the triangulation of methods to gather data and to complement each other.

The methodology used was inspired on the work done by Hofstede et al. (2007). In their study, Hofstede et al. (2007) triangulate projective techniques with quantitative data obtained from a brand personality scale (BPS) derived from the work of Aaker, J. (1997). Their aim was to compare the congruency between projective techniques within 2 sessions of projective techniques. On the first session, they instructed participants to illustrate through collages, what celebrities fit the personality of the brands. On the second session, the theme was changed to prototypical occupations.

However, important differences exist between the method used in this project and that of Hofstede et al. (2007). The analysis is done on a similar fashion to Hofstede et al. (2006); where the results of the brand collages are visualized and interpreted in combination with the results on the BPS. Distinctly to Hofstede et al. (2007), this study adds the projection of the personality of the brand using songs of diverse musical styles. The conclusive analysis of this study, will take all the information collected from the musical styles as cognitive schemas and will be evaluated in the way they contributed to learn how consumers perceive BP and the types of brand knowledge that can be obtained.

### 3.4.1. Multiple-method research strategy

The literature shows that the methodology used for BP often relies on creative approaches, such as casual explorations and holistic interpretations (Mathiesen, K., 2007; Hofstede et al., 2007). This research favors the posture of the triangulation of methods in brand image research with the aim of obtaining insightful brand knowledge (Hofstede et al., 2007; Freiling & Forbes, 2005a; Davis et al., 2010).

A Multiple-Method research strategy according to Davis et al. (2010), gives the opportunity to draw conclusions on data obtained from more than one source and to employ more than one type of analyze. Therefore, a mixed-method approach conveys the utilization of quantitative and qualitative data for the purpose of research.

Furthermore, Davis et al. (2010) work discusses the use of multiple-methods in marketing research; where the authors argue that research in marketing is characterized for the lack of diversity and inventiveness, traditionally relying on a single-method quantitative approach.

The use of method triangulation helps to provide more precision and validation to the data obtained (Jick, T. D., 1979). Therefore this empirical study was designed as a mix of qualitative and quantitative data gathering methods. The character of the research design is defined as a “Multiple Methods” research strategy focused in the use of the “Mixed-Model-Research” where qualitative data obtained will be quantified and quantitative data will also be interpreted from a qualitative perspective (Saunders et al. 2009). In addition, the triangulation of methods aims to increase the validity and reliability of the explorative study conducted.

### 3.5. Structure and plan for data collection

The research design was developed in a two-phase study. Phase I is considered the preliminary study that provided the information on the brands to be used in Phase II, but at the same time, it had the purpose of obtaining an overview of what the dynamics of fashion, clothing and culture for fans of hip-hop music in Sweden are. Phase I and Phase II followed a sequential process.

PHASE	STUDY	METHOD
Phase I	(a) Preliminary study (N=6)	(i) In-depth semi-structured interviews
Phase II	(b) Brand image research	Session A (N=11)
		Session B (N=12)
		(ii) Brand collages
		(iii) Association with songs
		(iv) Aaker (1997) brand personality scale

TABLE 2 SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW OF METHODS AND DATA TYPES

The information obtained on Phase I was required to develop the Phase II, which is considered the main study. Phase I consisted of a study using (a) in-depth semi-structured interviews to a sample of local leaders of opinion within hip-hop in Jönköping, Sweden. This phase is considered the main study.

On Phase II a “Complementarity” Multiple-Method research strategy (Davis, D. F., Golicic, S. L., & Boerstler, C. N., 2010) was adopted in order to triangulate the data obtained on the projective technique sessions. The Phase II executed two group sessions of projective techniques.

The session “A” consisted of the execution of collages to identify visual associations of music with the brands, and the session “B” consisted of the execution of a projective task using music and the Aaker’s (1997) BPS.

Summing up, the empirical study can be described to have:

- Phase I and Phase II that ran in sequential order, and
- Two studies conducted for data gathering (a) face-to-face interviews and the (b) brand image research group study

Regarding the methods used for data gathering, this research project presents:

- The face-to-face interviews made use of (i) in-depth semi-structured interviews
- The projective technique for the brand image research used (ii) personification of brands through image collages, (iii) association tasks using musical songs and (iv) Aaker, J., (2007) brand personification scale

QUANTITATIVE DATA	QUALITATIVE DATA
The data of the musical projection. The data of Aaker, J. (1997) test. Frequencies of brands mentioned during in-depth interviews.	Clippings of artists and people on the brand collages Information obtained on the in-depth interviews.

**TABLE 3 DATA COLLECTED CLASSIFIED BY TYPE**

Additionally, it is important to make a distinction of the type of information obtained along the different methods employed. This study makes use of a “Multiple-Method” research design that aims to combine qualitative and quantitative data in order to understand and obtain information on how music genres as cognitive schemas can help to provide brand knowledge on BP. Even though, not all the information obtained is used for that purpose.

For instance, during the semi-structured interviews, interviewees were asked about advertising that they could identify of sneaker brands using or endorsing particular musical styles. Although this information was not used to produce the brand personification, it gave an idea of which brands to study, or which brands currently have strong associations with music.

## 3.6. Methodological procedure

### 3.6.1. Phase I: Preliminary study

The preliminary study aimed to obtain information of the most popular brands of sneakers available in the market in Sweden. In order to obtain that information, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the population of study.

Previous literature on brand image research, acknowledges that it is extremely important to start with brands that participants will recognize in further stages of the research (Buil, I., Martínez, E., & Pina, J. M., 2008), therefore obtaining the name of the brands with the highest awareness for consumers in Sweden was the primary objective of Phase I of this study.

The sampling method used was a *non-probabilistic snowball sampling* approach. This methodology was selected due to the difficulties related to the identification of individuals who are engaged in hip-hop music and activities. Thus, it was required to ask participants to recommend a person that could be of value for the research. However, to avoid homogenization and bias, participants were instructed to keep “low-profile” sharing information when talking among friends and potential participants.

A sample of 6 participants provided information on:

- Names of popular brands of sneakers, and
- Insights on the Hip-Hop culture and scene in Sweden

This information was required as a previous step to conduct the empirical study on Phase II.

This because the Brand Image Research required the names of the most popular brands of sneakers, those preferred by hip-hop listeners and those which they consider are not preferable.

In addition, this preliminary study served to test pilot and obtains references on terminology and question-phrasing for the following methods.

Saunders et al. (2009) advice that semi-structured group interviews are insightful data collection methods that can help triangulate and complement quantitative data collected through other methods.

The interview was developed in two steps. Firstly, the interviewee was asked to respond to a self-administered questionnaire. Secondly, after the interviewee mentioned to have completed the questionnaire, a face-to-face discussion and motivation of the answers was developed. The interviews were designed to last 1 hour approximately.

Interviewees were asked broadly to develop a conversation on:

- The brands of sneakers that fans of Hip-Hop in Sweden consider relevant?
- The brands of sneakers that they don't like or consider irrelevant, if any?
- What are the trends, points of purchase and general social-dynamics when it comes to look for sneaker brands?

- What are their own experiences regarding the use of these brands among peers?
- Awareness of advertising campaigns made by these brands; for example: musical styles used, celebrities and artists endorsing them, etc.

In addition, this preliminary study served to test pilot and to obtain references on terminology and question-phrasing for the following methods.

### 3.6.2. Phase II: Brand image research

This study was completed by 11 participants on the session A, and 12 participants in the session B. For this study the *non-probabilistic snowball sampling* method was used again, participants that were interviewed on the preliminary study suggested and invited people to participate in the brand image research (BIR). They were also asked to keep discretion and confidentiality about the purposes of the research to avoid biased results.

Each session lasted approximately 1 hour. When the first session ended, 15 minutes were taken to clean up the residuals of material and then proceed with the reception of the participants of the session B.

The sessions were conducted in a classroom of the Jönköping International Business School. Participants gathered on time and were instructed to take seat and their respective materials. Also, for the compensation of their participation, snacks and beverages were offered during the study.

This stage aimed to accomplish three goals, (1) represent through images the perceived personality of each brand as if it was an artist or musician, (2) identify the musical genres that better describe the personality of each brand, and (3) apply Aaker, J. (1997) brand personification methodology. The study was conducted using three salient brands of sneakers that were selected after conducting the preliminary study. These brands were: NIKE, LACOSTE and VANS. More on the criteria to choose the brands is presented in the next chapter.



**FIGURE 1** PARTICIPANTS OF PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES

## Session A

The “Personification Metaphor” was the projective technique used. The material needed for the development of this study considered the use of magazines which contained photos of artists. For this purpose, each participant received three magazines that could contain a wide variety of artist imagery. Many of the magazines were specialized on a specific music style or theme, such as: hip-hop, rock, popular music, singing, catalogs of instruments and so. In addition, scissors, glue, pencils were provided along with the forms and paper to complete the study.

Each participant received 3 blank sheets, each one with the print of the logo and the name of the brands. The assignment each participant had was to paste any clipping of musicians and artists found in the magazines provided. They were told:

*“Imagine the hypothetical situation that each of the brands became a musician, music band, or a stereotypical fan of a musical genre; then how will he/she/they will look like?”*

The aim was to use of projective techniques with emphasis on personification (Hofstede et al., 2007). The assignment was developed individually, avoiding interaction among participants. Focus on the artists and musicians appearing in the magazines was emphasized. The session took around 40 minutes until all participants manifested that their collages were sufficiently filled. After all participants have filled the brand-sheets collages, they were asked to assign to each clipping one personality trait of the 42 traits developed by Aaker, J. (1997). The 42 traits were given in alphabetical order and projected on the whiteboard of the classroom. Participants were allowed to repeat any trait. Therefore, they were instructed:

*“You have 1 minute to carefully read-through the following list of adjectives, concentrate on each of them and understand them...”*

*(After 1 minute) Please assign ONLY 1 adjective to each clipping that you pasted on the sheets to describe in your opinion the personality of the person (or group of persons) appearing there.*

*Adjectives can be repeated, even though you are encouraged to vary the use of the adjectives. Lastly, you can use the adjective also to express what that character is not, by adding the word “NOT” (i.e. NOT friendly)”*

When the method was completed, the data gathered provided 11 collages for each of the three brands studied, giving a total of 33 collages.

## Session B

This projective method aimed to obtain what type of music was associated to each brand. This activity is an associative projective method where the object of study (the brands) are connected with topics of different domains, in other words the aim was to connect the brand with something different than words and images (Hofstede et al., 2007). For this purpose, participants were told:

*“Imagine that each of the brands were artists, what do you think it will be the type of music you will listen if they released an album this week?”*

Each participants indicated on the forms “how likely they thought” that the music style of the songs played will sound in that brand’s CD. For this purpose, 12 music tracks were played with a length of 60 seconds. In between tracks, participants had time to answer and fill in a questionnaire how much they agreed that the music played was representative of each of the three brands.

	ARTIST	TRACK NAME	YEAR	SUB-GENRE	MUSICAL GENRE
Track 1	Atomic Cat	A Dream In Jail	2008	Techno	Electronic
Track 2	Ensono	Alien Groove	2008	House	Electronic
Track 3	ArtOfficial	Big City, Bright Lights	2009	Hip-Hop	Rap
Track 4	Slikk Tim	Blues For Slick	2009	Blues	Sophisticated
Track 5	Thornwill	Civilized Ways	2010	Heavy Rock	Rock
Track 6	Rod Trotter	Drinking and Thinking	2009	Country	Folk & Country
Track 7	Oferta Especial	Hasta Los Huevos	2010	Punk	Rock
Track 8	Knatilo	IFL	2010	R&B	Pop
Track 9	Celestial Aeon Project	Rainy Day	2006	Classic	Sophisticated
Track 10	Robert James-Kennedy	Reflections	2010	Pop Ballad	Pop
Track 11	Kavel 57	Step It Out Mary	2009	Folk	Folk & Country
Track 12	Mr. Tac a.k.a. ”Chocolate”	Where I Come From	2008	Rap	Rap

**TABLE 4 LIST OF SONGS USED FOR THE ASSOCIATIVE TASKS**

The songs played were obtained at [www.jamando.com](http://www.jamando.com) which considers a database of music works that can be freely used under the CreativeCommons License. The selection of 12 tracks was based upon Schäfer, T., & Sedlmeier, P. (2009) classification of musical preferences in six dimensions. Out of these six dimensions, two music styles for each dimension were selected, obtaining the total of 12 tracks.

The music used was selected in a way that could be compared and analyzed afterwards with the results obtained through the Aaker (1997) brand personality scale (BPS). In some aspects, the six music dimensions coincided with the BPS, but in some others not. While the existence of a scale that could represent BP through characteristics of music doesn’t exist (Wagner, 2008), the interpretation of how the characteristics of musical styles and possible similarities and incidences with the Aaker (1997) scale will be developed as a suggested holistic interpretation that could function as an invitation for future research interested in the development of a reliable and validate scale using dimensions of music to talk about BP.

Lastly, participants received three sheets of paper containing the list of 42 adjectives/personality traits (Aaker, J., 1997) and were indicated to mark the ones that better described the brand. To provide an easy comprehension of the goals, participants were given a hypothetical example to induce the thinking of brands as persons:

*Just tick any adjective that you think describes “LACOSTE, NIKE and VANS” as if they were persons.*



*For example, if “LACOSTE” was a person sitting next to you: “how will she/he will look like?”*

*Imagine that “VANS” is talking to you right now: “how will she or he will sound, what will she or he say, what topics she or he would be interested in?”*

Three paper sheets containing each one the logo and the 42 personality traits of the brand personality scale (BPS) were given to each participant.

After concluding this method (iv), it was obtained 12 forms containing the list of the adjectives that better represented the personality of each brand. The results were computed to generate frequencies of each of the 42-adjectives. The following chapters will present the set of adjectives and dimensions that integrates the personality of each brand.

### **3.7. Limitations of the empirical study**

Scientific research is usually evaluated on its quality due to their characteristics of reliability and validity in which the data is collected and interpreted. These two qualifying aspects are rooted in quantitative and positivistic research philosophies. The Interpretive and Exploratory character of this study situates the evaluation of qualifying properties with distinct “metrics” as it combines qualitative and quantitative information. It is suggested that interpretive and research oriented with a more qualitative approach should be evaluated with the scientific rigor applicable (Golafshani, N. 2003).

#### **3.7.1. Validity**

##### **Data triangulation**

Triangulation of methods is typically a good strategy to increase the trustworthiness of qualitative studies, in order to seek convergence of information (Golafshani, N, 2003)

This study considered the combination of 4 methods in order to reduce ambiguity and abstractionism in the results obtained for the personification of brands using musicians, artists or music fans (see section 3.6). Therefore, it can be considered that the qualitative and quantitative data obtained from the methodology was discriminated as it helped to increase the convergence of information.

Some of the benefits of data triangulation are that possible weakness of each single method will be diminished by the use of triangulation of data (Jick, T., 1979).

##### **Systematic data collection**

On qualitative research of brand image it is important that the evaluation of findings is conducted in a systematic and structured process (Herz, M. 2010). In each method it was established a process to identify, categorize and quantify the information. More on this information can be found on this chapter where it is described the research design and

procedure (sections 3.4 and 3.5) or the chapters 4 and 5 which present the way in which the different methods were interpreted and analyzed.

Regarding subjects bias, it can be accounted that the population of study are Hip-Hop fans, therefore it exists the probability that anything that in their opinion was related to the musical genre they prefer, was treated or answered in a more positive way.

### **Author's role on the research**

The role of the research is fundamental in interpretive studies. In qualitative research “the researcher is the instrument”, and therefore the role of the researcher has to be clearly delimited (Golafshani, N. 2003). The author of this research functioned as the main interpreter of the findings. However the interpretation and analyze of findings was done by supportive theoretical framework and the interpretations of the author and guest interpreters (see sections 3.7.1 and 5.2).

The author and researcher adopted an “outsider role”. During the interviews the author avoided suggesting, commenting or discussing on any of participants responses; the position taken was neutral.

#### **3.7.1. Reliability**

A research has to be judge according to the qualifying criteria of its research paradigm (Golafshani, N., 2003); therefore, this exploratory research is more on insight and exploration than on statistical proof (Cryer, P. 2006). In order to achieve this criteria, the purpose of research was narrowed to the population studied. The listeners and consumers of hip-hop music in Sweden represented a consumer group that was selected for its reachability and knowledge on the context of sneaker brands. Although the sample studied is considerably small (see section 3.6), it complied with the requirement of using the perspective and vision of a consumer group in order to produce the brand personification.

From a qualitative perspective, the aspect of reliability refers to the quality of the research done and how good it was to generate understanding (Golafshani, N., 2003). Therefore, analysis of results was done taken in consideration the external judgment of four guest interpreters that provided their impressions on the findings. Although the interpreters are not specialist on projective techniques or brand image research, they compose valuable opinions for their academic and professional background as:

- Interpreter A, graphic designer and owner of branding agency
- Interpreter B, professional academician with experience as docent
- Interpreter C, linguistic professional with experience in sales and marketing
- Interpreter D, master level student of the Jönköping International Business School

With the perspective, observations and critics of the guest interpreters it was possible to reduce the bias of the author functioning as sole interpreter. In addition, Herz (2010) suggests that projective techniques should be evaluated by different interpreters to increase their value and quality.

In terms of generalizability the philosophy of research adopted herein is Interpretive, therefore, it is widely acknowledge that even when this research philosophy is useful to interpret the brand personification from the perspective of the population studied, it lacks on external validity if the interpretations obtained are used to provide answers in other contexts (Saunders et al. 2009; Williams, 1998).

### **3.7.2. Ethical concerns**

With regards to ethical concerns of this thesis, it could only be accounted two relevant aspects. One is the anonymity and privacy protection of interviewees, projective techniques participants and guest interpreters. In all situations, it was granted and offered that if they desire so, their identity or personal information would not be mentioned in the documentation.

The same conditions were offered to the guest interpreters. Although always it was required to take their names and personal details for further contact, this information was not revealed in this paper. It was also necessary that they acknowledge that the information they provided regarding the purpose of the research was going to be revealed and documented in this paper for academic analysis and further reference.

The second aspect to consider ethical limitations is the respect to the trademarks of the brands used or mentioned in this study. Although most of the brand names mentioned in this study are internationally known, the purpose of their usage was to exemplify and broaden the scope of the knowledge obtained to an international audience.

It is also stated that no brand or corporation has any sort of relation, interest or connection with the purpose of this research.

## 4. Preliminary study

---

*This chapter presents the findings of the face-to-face interviews, which helped to define the brands of sneakers to be used for the personification-based projective techniques.*

---

### 4.1. Selection of brands

For a time lapse of two weeks (the 44th and 45th of the year 2010), 6 semi-structured interviews were conducted to leading members of the “*Dirty Rap Scholars*” association, members of “*Bunkern!*” music studio and researcher’s colleagues that previously manifested their deep interest in sneakers and hip-hop. The interviews were conducted in the location that better fit the respondent situation; however, a location with reduce amount of distraction was preferred, (i.e. University’s Library Study Rooms).

The self-administered questionnaire plus the face-to-face discussion provided the name of the brands of sneakers that could be catalogued by:

- the whole list of well-known brand of sneakers
- brands preferred by hip-hop listeners
- and, less preferred brands that have been marketed with other musical styles

In order to have a measurable perspective to choose the brands, a table of frequencies was made considering the mentions that each brand had (see table 6).

Out of the 6 interviews, a total of 39 brand mentions were accounted and 18 different brand names, including models or sub-brands. NIKE, ADIDAS, REEBOK and VANS were the most popular brand names.

	COUNTRY OF BIRTH	OCCUPATION	GENRE	YEAR OF BIRTH
Interviewee A	Sweden	Student	Male	1986
Interviewee B	Mozambique	Student	Male	1988
Interviewee C	Sweden	Student	Female	1987
Interviewee D	Russia	Student	Male	1988
Interviewee E	Sweden	Student	Male	1988
Interviewee F	Sweden	Rapper	Male	1986

**TABLE 5** CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE PRELIMINARY STUDY

To know if these brands were related or not to Hip-Hop, participants were asked to note and to comment which of these brands were used by their friends who like hip-hop or their favorite artists. With regards to the most preferred brands by hip-hop fans: NIKE and ADIDAS share most of the impressions.

On the other hand, it is possible to identify which of the whole set of brands represent also the less preferred. Out of these accumulated mentions, the results indicate that VANS, DIESEL and CONVERSE are the less preferred brands of sneakers.

In order to quantify the information and help decide what brands to study, verbal and written opinions regarding the brands were categorized.

The first category of information was about the brands of sneakers that were preferred or not by hip-hop listeners. The second was a classification of existing associations, whether musical styles used in advertising, artists endorsing, user-lifestyle or culture.

For instance, the brands that presented a negative score show either that they already have a defined impression on a user of the brand not related to Hip-Hop (i.e. VANS®, preferred by people who listens to Punk-Rock or used by skaters). Some with negative scores (i.e. NEW BALANCE with “-1”) represent brands that have no particular association with a musical style or artist endorsing it, neither participants manifested they preferred or not; it can only be considered that some of the participants are aware of its brand name.

In order to conduct the personification-based projective technique on Phase II, three brand names were selected out of the information obtained during the interviews. For these purpose, the brands selected were: NIKE®, LACOSTE® and VANS®.

ACCUMULATED SCORE	SNEAKERS BRANDS	PREFERRED BY HH?	ASSOCIATIONS	MENTIONS
6 (+6)	NIKE	Yes	Hip-Hop	6
4 (+4, -2)	ADIDAS	Yes	Hip-Hop	6
2 (+2)	AIR JORDAN (NIKE)	Yes	Hip-Hop	2
2 (+2, -1)	REEBOK	Yes	Hip-Hop	3
1 (+1)	A-LIFE	Yes	Hip-Hop	1
1 (+1)	G-UNIT (REEBOK)	Yes	Hip-Hop	1
-1	ASSICS	Probably Not	Unknown	1
-1	K-SWISS	Maybe	Unknown	1
-1	LACOSTE	Probably Not	Unknown	1
-1	LOUIS VUITTON	Maybe	Unknown	1
-1	NEW BALANCE	Probably Not	Unknown	1
-1	SUPRA	Yes	Hip-Hop	1
-1 (+1, -2)	DC	Maybe	Punk-Rock / Skate	3
-1 (-1)	ETNIES	Probably Not	Punk-Rock / Skate	1
-1 (-1)	PUMA	Probably Not	Unknown	1
-2 (-2)	CONVERSE	Maybe	Uncertain	2
-2 (-2)	DIESEL	Probably Not	Unknown	2
-3 (+1, -4)	VANS	Maybe	Punk-Rock / Skate	5

**TABLE 6** CATEGORIZATION OF SNEAKER BRANDS

The decision behind NIKE is supported by being among all interviewees, the prime and leader brand of sneakers that Hip-Hop fans prefer in Sweden. In addition, NIKE® is a brand that requires no effort to recognize, has a high level awareness due to the international scope of its marketization. One can expect that the results of the projective techniques on NIKE, to project a person with a lifestyle associated to Hip-Hop. Somehow, the projective techniques will demonstrate how congruent is this preference is with the BP they perceive.

The second brand chosen was LACOSTE. This decision responds to the necessity of having a brand of sneakers that the consumers studied could not have a well-defined brand image. Neither this brand represents the preference from fans of other styles of music. This is the “outsider” brand that isn’t considered a relevant brand by hip-hop fans and doesn’t have a clear positioning with music.

Lastly, the third brand chosen was VANS. This brand was chosen due to a unified and strong positioning with a musical genre different to hip-hop, which is Punk Rock. It is also a brand that according to their opinions is not so often used by them or their friends.

As the aim of this research is to comprehend what types of brand knowledge can be obtained using music-genres as cognitive schemas for brand personification it is expected that the results of the projective techniques reflect what participants have manifested in this preliminary study. In addition, with the personification-based metaphor using personalities related to musical styles, it is expected to comprehend and gain more brand knowledge on the symbolic functions that these brands satisfy.

## 4.2. Data from interviews

Although the aim of the preliminary study was to help decide what brand names to choose for the personification-based projective techniques on Phase II, interesting and relevant insights were obtained in the interviews.

As stated earlier, this study is focused on the measurement of BP using music-genres as cognitive schemas to produce the personification metaphor of the three brands selected. However, the following quotations provide a better understanding of how some brands have been marketed.



**FIGURE 2** LOGOS OF THE  
THREE SNEAKER BRANDS  
STUDIED

### 4.2.1. Advertising of sneaker brands

Opinions on the identified advertising and campaigns done by sneaker brands, confirm that the most popular brands actively market their products using media that conveys the use of images and sound. Some of the participants can't confirm that their favorite brands, even if many of their friends and favorite hip-hop artists wear them, have not seen the brand being marketed exclusively using a musical-genre on their TV-ads or endorsers

*E: "I have never seen TV ads of hip-hop for sneakers, but I have seen many ADIDAS® and NIKE® commercials"*

*A: "Since NIKE is such a big brand, they are into different sports, I have seen many ads for soccer..."*

On the other hand, other participants can clearly spot the interaction of the brands and hip-hop. Some of them consider that hip-hop artists clearly engage in endorsing activities for some brand names.

*B: "ADIDAS® and Run-DMC is a clear example of branding, they had the whole track suit by ADIDAS® and the "Shell Top" sneaker models, which eventually became part of the hip-hop identity... in Hip-Hop magazines one can observe famous and not famous people wearing sneakers"*

*A: "I don't remember a particular AD of NIKE using hip-hop music, but a lot of rappers mention NIKE on their songs... NIKE does a lot of marketing with basketball players that are connected to hip-hop... another example is (the brand) A-LIFE which recently did a show in their NYC store with rapper Drake that was huge on the Internet"*

*D: "G-UNIT sneakers are themed with the hip-hop group [of the same name]. They are advertised mostly in the United States. I have not seen them advertised here in Sweden"*

With regards to brands of sneakers explicitly doing campaigns interacting with music, interviewee "F" acknowledges that musical videos are alternative forms of advertising to the traditional TV Ad of 30 seconds. With his opinion, it seems as if musical videos are other channels that the brands use to connect with the targeted consumer populations that follow a particular music-genre:

*F: "The NIKE sneaker model 'Air Force 1' celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a song called 'Classic'. In the musical video appeared KAYNE WEST and DJ PREMIER. Another good example is REEBOK; they had a huge campaign with JAY-Z and 50CENT for the launch of the 'S. CARTER' model, the signature model of SHAWN CARTER (JAY-Z's real name)"*

Another set of opinions, can give us a hint of the influence that celebrities and artists have to embed associations of their personality in the brands. This is an interesting issue, as it may seem that regardless of official campaigning efforts made by a firm, if a celebrity wears a product, associations are immediately generated.

*D: "NIKE is usually worn by famous DJ's and artists"*



*C: "The Swedish dance group 'Bounce' used NIKE and the brand appeared clearly in the posters for a dance performance... Swedish rappers such Petter, Pato Pooh; always have NIKE or ADIDAS in their music videos"*

The advertising on specialized magazines is also important for the construction of associations to particular musical genres. For instance, interviewees "B" and "E" recognize that brands such as ADIDAS or NIKE, appear often doing advertising of their products and sneakers. Two printed magazines devoted to hip-hop in Sweden have an important penetration in the Swedish market: "Kingsize" and "The Source". There are also several online portals focused on Swedish hip-hop, one of them is "www.whoa.nu" where participants mentioned that it is also a good way to get informed on what brands Swedish rappers use.

Participants are also aware of brands of sneakers that have been associated to different musical genres:

*A: "I have seen A-LIFE videos using dub-step and house music"*

*B: "Rock usually relates to skating which is usually connected to sneakers (brands) like DC SHOES®, VAN®, ETNIES® [...] I've seen some in Rock music videos and campaigns"*

*C: "(The Swedish singer) Robyn has worn ADIDAS in her music videos; there are also reggaeton music videos of artists such as Don Omar or Daddy Yankee, that also use NIKE and ADIDAS"*

#### 4.2.2. On fashion aspects

It is important to mention that several participants (B, E, F) agreed that besides the existing stereotypes on the dress-code of a Hip-Hop fan, in Sweden one can consider that the selection of clothing elements will respond more to a need of "wearing sneakers or clothes that looks good".

*B: "...here [in Sweden] you can see that people, fans of hip-hop, will use whatever they think is good and trendy, besides the brands, colors or even the design or type of shoe... NIKE and ADIDAS are brands that in Sweden are seen more casual and not necessarily related to hip-hop... REEBOK is not so popular, there are problems with their availability"*

*E: "NIKE is a brand known worldwide, and you can find it everywhere, here in Sweden will always be in Stadium [sports store]... VANS can be found in more 'hip' stores... REEBOK in Sweden is not so well known, it is hard to find in stores"*

Some participants manifested that designers-luxury (i.e. LACOSTE, LOUIS VUITTON) brands might not be preferred because they were not *born* as brands producing models for Hip-Hop, however they recognize that in fashion is all about taste and displaying properly the clothes.

*E: "Swedish hip-hop style varies a lot, they can wear leather shoes and a suit, or Timberland® shoes and baggy clothes, nothing is out of the hip-hop style... however, feminine colors are not so used, pink for instance"*



On the other hand, participants “B” and “E” exposed that the Hip-Hop culture and the Skate culture, sometimes share borderlines in what fashion respects:

*B: “When it comes to wear sneakers, or even clothes in general; you can see that ‘skaters and ‘hip-hopers’ sometimes adopt and copy trends from each other... VANS sneakers are comfortable, they are used more by guys who likes skating”*

*E: “DC® and VANS® are associated more with the skating culture, they are marketed heavily there... but some skate culture can border on hip-hop”*

Participants were also asked to provide information, if any, about brands or products that in their position as hip-hop fans, they would not wear. For instance, they were asked to imagine a hypothetical situation in which they had won a prize of 10 pair of sneakers/shoes, but even if they have not paid anything, they would not wear it but would have give them away or throw them to the garbage.

In general, there were not specific brands or products that would produce such situation. But they mention that some colors or brands would be very hard to use by them. “Pink” or feminine colors were some of them. Dr. Martins, which is a brand that manufactures boots is now considered a brand (or shoe design) that identifies people involved in Punk music, thus one participant commented that this is an object that probably will not be worn by hip-hop fans. Some participants commented that it will also depend of cultural contexts. For instance, participant “A” expressed that in the USA exist more radical position with respect to cultural fashion:

*A: “Converse® might be preferred in Sweden, but I can say that a hardcore hip-hop fan in the USA won’t wear it”*

With relation to the rejection of “feminine colors”, participant “E” opinion can help comprehend better when hip-hop is considered a “male thing”:

*B: “...Sorry to say it, but Hip-Hop culture is homophobic; I can’t name a single rapper who is homosexual... the lyrics of hip-hop music actually laugh and mock on homosexuality...”*

### 4.3. Additional observations

The researcher got to participate in “Hip-Hop nights” organized by the Dirty Rap Scholars members. These events took place once a month in September and October. Respondents made clear that there was the “shortage of fans of Hip-Hop in Sweden”. However, emphasis on the existence of a solid but small-sized musical and cultural movement was done.

It is important to describe the setting as it might contribute as observation for further discussion:

- Even when the core theme of the night was Hip-Hop and hip-hop music, related arts where showcased as part of this “open-mic” philosophy, thus one could observe that

participants enjoyed the sharing of performances such as: poetry, acoustic guitar and singing, break-dance, spoken comedy and even the projection of a whole film as part of the Jönköping Film Festival

- One can identify a dressing code casual, relaxed and a mix in between sports and casual denim. Shared style of clothing, such as caps, sneakers, loose jeans; the expression “Yo!” is also a constant among conversations.
- However, one can visualize the presence of “prototypical” hip-hop clothing elements, such as: American baseball caps, “baggy” (loose) jeans, sneakers, sport jackets and “hoodies”, vibrant colors, diverse accessories
- Female and male audience was present, however on the female audience, just a couple of them shared the same dress-code mentioned above

#### 4.4. Chapter summary

After the findings of the preliminary study were condensed, it was possible to obtain useful information regarding the constellation of sneaker brands available and known in Sweden. Well-known and salient brands were required to develop the projective technique research on Phase II.

The results of this phase also contribute to have a good overview of existing consumer-brand links and how they develop into usage, associations and perceptions. This information also suggests that there are explicit and implicit interactions of the brands with particular musical-styles.

Lastly, it was also possible to get to know existent associations of music to some of the sneaker brands. This information is used in the next Phase, as a way to corroborate and develop the discussion of findings in the projective techniques where music will be used to develop the personification of the brands.

## 5. Brand personification through music

---

*This chapter presents the findings of the personification-based projective technique methods.*

---

As suggested by Hayes et al. (2006) “a brand is like a friend”. Brands have personality and it can be communicated through human characteristics (Aaker, J., 1997). The examination of findings of this research follows the same interest that previous studies have had on representing the *brand as a person*. Furthermore, the relevant question to answer is “what type of person a brand evokes?”

When we want to get to know persons a good way to do it is to know their musical preferences. We use music to achieve goals and needs (Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2009). Through music we express who we are, what we believe and what we stand for. It is not a secret that when music is used for self-expression purposes, it can clearly reveal how a person is (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007).

This thesis suggests that if a brand can be “stereotyped” or perceived with human characteristics (Aaker, J., 1997) and if brand-consumer relationship can reach levels of empathy and affection compared to those we have with friends or non-tangible/mortal partners such as movie-stars (Hayes et al., 2006), then why don’t we use music to get to know the personality of a brand?

The rationale behind is that music can tell us as much about the personality of a brand as it does about a person. The concrete idea was to ask consumers of sneaker brands “what are the musical preferences of NIKE, LACOSTE and VANS?” Moreover, what are those musical preferences telling about their (brand) personality? And if possible, what type of artists or musician reflected each brand?

The answer to these questions is the product of the interpretation of music-genres as cognitive schemas. Music-genres, regardless of not being as precise as a system of formal language, can be a useful form of non-verbal communication through the extramusical information they convey (i.e. political beliefs, values, demographic characteristics, lifestyles, etc.) (Shevy, M., 2008).

In order to accomplish that goal, this study is motivated by the research procedure suggested by Hofstede et al. (2007) using personification-based projective techniques in combination with brand personality scales. In specific, this study uses two projective techniques employing associative tasks. The first associative method is done through visual collages and the second is the connection of music and brands. Put in other words, the way in which consumers informed us about “the musical style and personality of the brands” was through the use of collages and songs as projective techniques.

Separately, the Aaker (1997) brand personality scale served in two ways. Firstly, to get to know the personality characteristics connected to the musicians and artists in the collage clippings, and secondly, to obtain the values for the five brands personalities dimensions, in order to triangulate

it with the impression of the collage. This can be considered the only quantitative method used for the personification of the brands.

To comprehend further, it is suggested that the reader considers the discourse of “brands as persons”, for example: “LACOSTE has a seductive appearance and she likes to sing Pop music”. This chapter will often refer to brands as persons as the aim was to produce a personification-metaphor. Finally, this chapter presents the findings of the projective techniques, but in addition, throughout the following section, the analysis of findings will be also included in this chapter. At the end, a cross-reviewed analysis of findings is discussed.

## 5.1. COLLAGES (session A)

---

Following in this section, the brand collages will be presented and analyzed. As suggested by Hofstede et al. (2007), the way of analyzing the results of the projective techniques is looking at the overall impression the participants have done for each brand, in specific “a scan of types and numbers of celebrities”. However, the scan of information will be focused on the musical style that the person, musician or artist projected in the clippings. In addition, the interpretation of the artists’ personalities will be done by using the literature on stereotypes and cognitive schemas associated to musical genres (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007, Schwarz & Fouts, 2003; Shevy, M., 2008, North, A. C., 2007).

### 5.1.1. Interpretation procedure

The author of this thesis, figures as the instrument of interpretation of the meanings deposited in the images. Herz (2010) suggests that the interpretation of projective techniques should consider the participation of external observers in order to reduce bias. Thus, the interpretation of collages and the connection with the associative task with music and the BPS was verified and complemented with the observations of 3 colleagues of the author. One of them is a former professional of an advertising agency. The other two guest interpreters are professional colleagues that have several years of experience in marketing and sales.

Unfortunately it was not possible to integrate interpreters with knowledge on the field of brand image research (BIR) and music-genres as cognitive schemas. Neither it was possible due to the methodology followed, to ask participants afterwards regarding the reasons and explanation of why they placed each image; however, participants provided at the end of the session the name of the musicians and celebrities appearing on their collages.

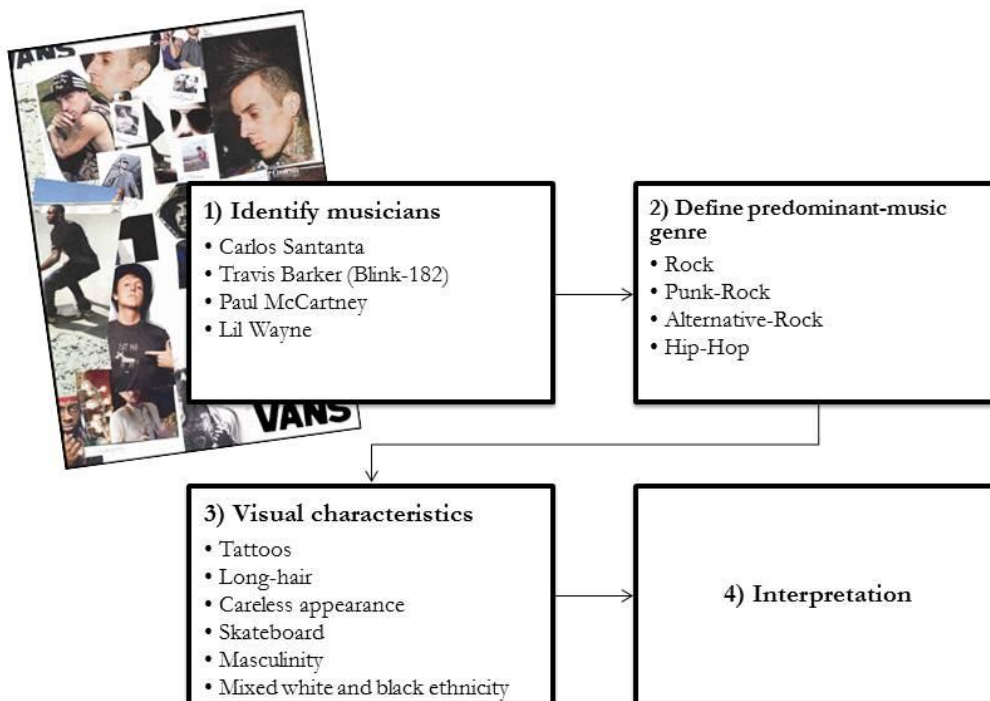
Herz (2010) suggests that the analysis of visual data on collages should follow a documented and structured procedure. Therefore, the artist imagery scan was done taking each “brand-sheet collage” and numbering the clippings taking a clockwise direction.

### 5.1.2. Processing of information of music-genres

To accomplish this, the visual information on the collages was categorized according to the type of information that musical genres could provide. For instance, musical instruments, clothing, ethnicity; artists and the musical-genre by which they are known. The accounting of the characteristics of the personality of the people in the clippings was done on a spreadsheet considering as well the traits used to describe them.

The procedure to interpret the information was developed through a focused analysis process spotting the relevant information on musical genres. First, an observation from a holistic perspective of the whole was done to interpret in general terms what is communicated by all images and what possible connotations of musical genres are perceived in the whole. Secondly, a list of recognizable artists was done and the musical-genre by which they are known was verified. Once that the predominant musical genres were identified then a scan of individual elements on each clipping allowed us to connect accessories, dress-codes, musical instruments, etc., with the musical styles.

In addition, information on demographic aspects was also considered, for example: age group, ethnicity, geographic upbringing and so. In addition, activities and the settings also were taken in account in order to talk about a possible lifestyle; some clippings reflect sporting activities or scenarios that talk about lifestyle and cultural aspects. To do this, Goin (2001) suggests that the



**FIGURE 3** SYSTEMATIC PROCESS TO IDENTIFY MUSIC SCHEMAS ON THE COLLAGES

relevant skill to interpret photographs is to be able to talk about the “story” behind the picture. In particular the idea was to “connect back” all these individual fragments of the characteristics of the personalities of each person in the clippings with the musical genre that predominantly was associated with the brand. The literature on stereotypes and cognitive schemas attached to musical genres, served to give sustain to this interpretation (Dann & Jensen, 2007; North, A. C., 2007; Shevy, M., 2008; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007; Schwarz & Fouts, 2003).

The clippings of artists showcase accessories, objects and secondary-items; that provide hints and ideas of the lifestyles of these artists. Another element considered was the “facial and corporal” expression displayed in the clippings.

Following, a visual summary of the clippings encountered in the collages will be presented. The images with bigger proportion are those who appeared with more frequency. The collages of each brand were combined using graphic design software to obtain a composed collage of all those obtained.

The decision of not including page by page of each collage responds to the issue that there is a lot of blank space in it, and thus the insertion in the document will turn in a material difficult to visualize.

### **5.1.3. LACOSTE’S BRAND COLLAGE**

---

The first brand to be analyzed is LACOSTE. The first information that can be interpreted if we try to identify a musical genre that could give us information on the personality of this brand is that its personality is not defined by a specific music-genre. Contrarily, it seems that LACOSTE’s musical taste is varied or “multi-genre”.

Schwarz and Fouts (2003) comment that there are persons who doesn’t have a particular preference for a musical style, this is called “eclectic musical preference”. If we take this in account, we can spot some congruent characteristics between an “eclectic listener” and the personality of LACOSTE. For example, we can say that LACOSTE is not “married” to a specific musical genre; it is possible that consumers can’t clearly distinguish which type of music-genre fan or artist is associated with the brand.

LACOSTE having an “eclectic taste” tells us that “his or her” use of music is flexible and is a medium to reflect or validate moods. LACOSTE uses music according to the context, “listening particular kinds of music with peers, but other type when is alone” (Schwarz & Fouts, 2003).

Particularly, two important associations can be identified: (1) its personality resembles more a celebrity than a musician/music-fan and (2) the strong connection with the “upper-class, sophisticated, trendy and glamorous” personality characteristics of the artists in the clippings.

For instance, Madonna, Sean Combs (Puff Daddy) and Prince; are musicians that somehow have crossed to the “celebrity zone”. That LACOSTE is projected more as a celebrity, than as a musician or music-fan, is an interesting characteristic that can tell us something about its BP. Celebrities are known to have achieved recognition, their popularity makes them attractive to consumers and regardless of their physical appearance, their fame translates into credibility and power in the eye of the public (Choi & Rifon, 2007). The personality of LACOSTE as a celebrity can also be confirmed with the appearance of the actor George Clooney and the model Tristan Wild.

Visual evidence of psychographic characteristics can also be identified. For example, the corporal language of the artists presents LACOSTE as seductive, self-assured and independent. The facial expressions reflect joy and confidence; which in turn is reflected in the adjectives used to describe those persons. A visual example is Sean Combs (also known as Puff Daddy), clipped in 4 of 11 collages, was described using traits such as “upper-class”, “intelligent”, “trendy” and



FIGURE 4 LACOSTE'S BRAND COLLAGE

“confident”. Sean Combs is known to be an extravagant artist and also a successful businessman as CEO and entrepreneur of his multiple apparel and entertainment labels. He represents the characteristics of the sophisticated celebrity that LACOSTE is communicating on the collages.

LACOSTE’s style can also be said to be seductive and sophisticated. The “woman” could be a semiotic symbol to represent this aspect. If we observe Madonna’s incidence, she communicates seduction and femininity. She is a well-known celebrity remarkable for promoting promiscuity and cult for sexual personality like no other female entertainer has done (Scaruffi, 2003). In the collages, Madonna was described with the “feminine” trait. Although, she was not the only woman who appeared on the collages, there were two occasions in which a blonde woman described as “glamorous” and “independent” appeared in the collages.

TRAITS	TRAIT FREQUENCY	ARTIST	MUSIC-GENRE
original	1	Prince	Rock
technical	1	George Clooney	N/A
glamorous	1	FM-A	N/A
good looking	1	BEP	Pop, Funk
feminine	1	Madonna	Pop
masculine	1	MM-C	N/A
Western	1	The Amplifetes	Rock
intelligent	1	Sean Combs	Hip-Hop
outdoorsy	1	Immolate	Rock
spirited	1	Mark Ronson	Electronica
independent	1	FM-A	N/A
smooth	3	Jay Kay, Norah Jones, Scott Weiland	Electronica, Pop, Rock
trendy	3	Tristan Wild; Kings of Leon, Sean Combs	Rock, Hip-Hop
upper-class	4	Sean Combs, MM-A, Paul Tutmarc, MM-B	Hip-Hop, N/A , Blues, N/A

\*FM= Female Model, MM= Male Model

**TABLE 7 SUMMARY OF CLIPPINGS' CONTENT IN LACOSTE'S COLLAGES**

LACOSTE’s sophisticated personality is also communicated by artists such as Jay Kay (singer of Jamiroquai), Scott Weiland and Norah Jones, described as “smooth”. This talk rather more about a style of life than the connection to the music they do, or the Electronica, Rock and Pop music-genres in which they respectively perform. LACOSTE’s sophistication is also represented regardless of connections to music-genres through several clippings showcasing male persons with suits and elegant clothing.

As a summary of observations, it can be said that:

- Firstly, it was not possible to identify a specific music-genre associated to the brand, which in turn variety of music-genres was found with no apparent connection.



- Secondly, although the connection to a music-genre is diffuse, yet the projective task using images of musicians and artists, provided brand knowledge. Individual characteristics of the personality of these artists, revealed important perceptions of LACOSTE's BP. Sort to say it, participants found the way to express how they perceive the brand even though the personification metaphor as musical-genre did not appear solid.
- Thirdly, LACOSTE could not be represented as the stereotype of a musician or music-fan; contrarily, it was represented on the "celebrity" zone. In connection to the first implication, what brand knowledge can be gained if a brand can't be personified as a musician/music-fan or connected to a music-genre? Is it simply just a brand that has had not developed an active campaigning strategy towards musically-oriented consumption groups?
- And fourth, the relevant characteristic of LACOSTE's personality is the upper-class and sophisticated lifestyle that "he or she" projects.

Further discussion on the theoretical and practical implications of these questions will be addressed in the following chapters of this thesis. Although, it is not possible to analyze the collages with a holistic perspective on a music-genre stereotype; yet it is possible to obtain interesting interpretations through individual elements of the whole.

#### 5.1.4. NIKE'S BRAND COLLAGE

---

The images presented in NIKE's collage clearly define the connection of its personality with the hip-hop music-genre. Well known musicians (or rappers/MC's in hip-hop context) such as Lil Wayne, Eminem, Snoop Dogg, Jay-Z, Nick Cannon (rapper/actor), Fat Joe, Redman; appearing in the collages connect NIKE with their personalities.

This connection to hip-hop allows us to identify demographic and psychographic characteristics of musician and listeners of this genre. For example, hip-hop is a music genre which people associate to youth inhabitants of urban areas mostly represented by Black-African ethnicity (Shevy, 2008).

It can be said that NIKE's personality is demographically speaking urban. The incidental connection comes after the association with the Black-African ethnicity, in particular the African-American Hip-Hop community. Hip-hop is a musical style developed by Black-African population in urban locations of the USA such as New York; mainly by the influence of Jamaican cultural imports and immigration, Rap music was indeed an evolution of Jamaica's dub music (Scarrufi, P., 2003). The urban aspect can also be interpreted as an identity that belongs to *where* cultural and fashion trends originate. Casually, Hip-Hop and sneakers historically share this

bond; both were born and popularized in the streets of New York almost in contemporary similitude in the late 70's (Cunningham, C., 2008).

Another aspect identified in the collages is the “masculinity” of the brand. Out of the 10 collages, four clippings have female figures, but contrarily to LACOSTE the female image has a different meaning. In one clipping, it is shown only the gluteus of a female body and in another two women appear at the sides of the rapper “Jay-Z” with a small amount of clothes resembling a sort of “female army backing-up him”. Although it is a risky assumption, it can be said that the figure of the woman for a hip-hop artist occupies a place of satisfaction provision and should support “the man” when he needs her. Interpretation on this regard shall be made carefully. Dyson (2007) exposes that hip-hop is unfortunately a music-genre that promotes the macho culture and the praise for power as a symbol of masculinity. Taking also the references of the in-depth interviews conducted in the preliminary study, one participant commented that hip-hop songs’ themes are homophobic.

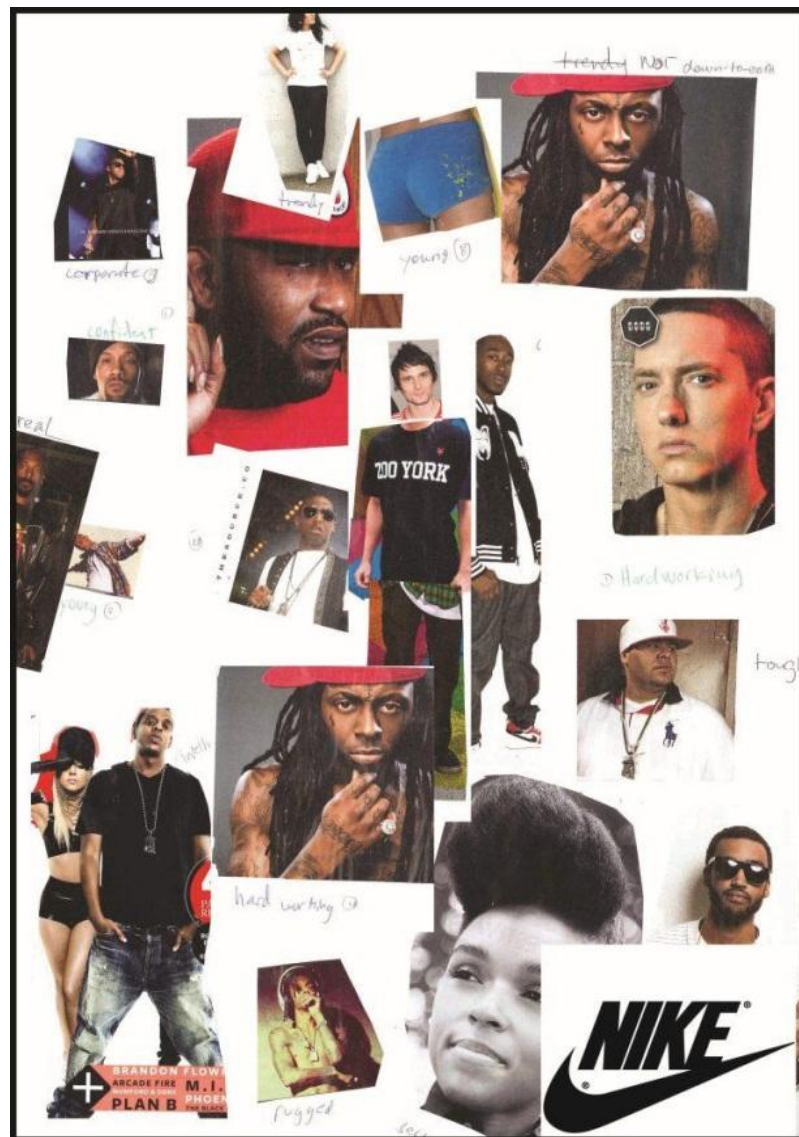


FIGURE 5 NIKE'S BRAND COLLAGE

TRAIT	TRAIT FREQUENCY	ARTIST	MUSIC-GENRE
down-to-earth	-1	Lil Wayne	Hip-Hop
corporate	1	Jay-Z	Hip-Hop
honest	1	Kardinal Offishall	Hip-Hop
friendly	1	T.I.	Hip-Hop
secure	1	Janelle Monáe	R&B
leader	1	Jay-Z	Hip-Hop
tough	1	Fat Joe	Hip-Hop
cool	1	Redman	Hip-Hop
masculine	1	Lil Wayne	Hip-Hop
smooth	1	Drake	Hip-Hop
young	2	T.I., FM-A	Hip-Hop, N/A
hard working	2	EMINEM, Lil Wayne	Hip-Hop
rugged	2	MM-A, Lil Wayne	N/A, Hip-Hop
confident	2	Lil Wayne, Redman	Hip-Hop
intelligent	2	Jay-Z, Damien Marley	Hip-Hop, Reggae
trendy	2	MM-B, FM-B	N/A
charming	3	"Miami Heat basketball players", Fabolous, Nick Cannon	N/A, Hip-Hop
real	3	Snoop Dogg, Redman	Hip-Hop

\*FM= Female Model, MM= Male Model

**TABLE 8 SUMMARY OF CLIPPINGS' CONTENT ON NIKE'S COLLAGES**

The personality of the rappers connected to the brand provides fundamental characteristics of NIKE's BP. They create the psychographic profile that the brand has as the source of identity is driven to a large extent by individual and highly psychologized icons (Dimitriadis, G., 2009). He, NIKE, absorbs aspects of the personality of Lil Wayne and Jay-Z as charismatic, successful and cultural leaders. They also communicated attitude and values. Hip-hop is about attitude indeed. It is rooted as a cultural movement against the establishment, oppression and freedom of expression (Dimitriadis, G., 2009).

Artists such as Lil Wayne and Eminem, described as "hard-working", also can reveal aspects of social class if we trace the background in which the artists have grown up and thrived for life. Both artists for instance came from working-class families and succeeded through their talent and efforts.

Some facial expressions of the artists in the collages project defiant, serious and intimidating facial and corporal language. The gestures of hands often appear greeting, other clippings display hands on a thinking moment. The outfit and clothing is also clearly connected to hip-hop. The use of caps, loose jeans and clothes is a clear example of the hip-hop fashion.

NIKE presented an ideal scenario in which relevant brand knowledge can be gained through extramusical information communicated by music-genres. The collages reflect a demographic and psychographic profile connected to the cultural cognitive schemas associated to Hip-Hop

(Shevy, 2008). NIKE's personality can be summarized by "his" connection to (a) the African-American urban youth, (b) the cultural hyper masculinity of Hip-Hop, (c) the fit to the hip-hop dress style and (d) the iconic attitude of a rapper.

### 5.1.5. VANS' BRAND COLLAGE

---

The personification-based projective technique developed by participants, on the personality of VANS, resulted in a set of images that combined artists and people of diverse ethnicity, age group and musical areas. Nevertheless, the presence of well-known artists such as Carlos Santana, Travis Barker (drummer of Blink-182), Brandon Flowers (singer of The Killers), Paul McCartney and Steve Ray Vaughan; which are representative of rock-music is predominant (Scaruffi, P., 2003).

Other visual elements of the lifestyle of Rock that connect to the personality of VANS are (1) the significant amount of tattoos in the body of the persons and (2) the hair style, which in many of them is long and some of them have the "Mohawk" popularized by Punks in the 70's.

It is hard to differentiate in which degree VANS is more connected to the Rockers or to the Punks. Both cultural groups have clearly defined symbols of identification (Stahl, 1999); however punk-rock is a sub-style or sub-genre of rock music. In general followers of rock music are known to have liberal political ideologies and low involvement with religion (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003).

Schwarz & Fouts (2003) consider that people's preferences for Rock, Rap, Heavy- Metal and Punk music can be classified as "heavy music". Frequent themes of this type of music are often driven by sociopolitical, moral relativity, antiestablishment and hypermasculinity.

The association of rock music with VANS can tell us also something about "his" social class. Contrarily to an upper-class position, a person who listens to rock music is perceived to have more conventional consumption tastes. For instance, if we take the example of alcoholic beverages, fans of rock music are considered to prefer beer, instead of wine or cocktails (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). Beer is conventionally a drink for the masses, in comparison to wine or fancy cocktails. This information can tell us about the personality of the brand and thus about the type of consumer that wears VANS. On the collages, what seems to be a rock band of 5 young men was described as "Not Upper Class". They are dressed with simple t-shirts and jeans, many parts of their bodies are covered with tattoos.

A musical-genre can also talk about drug preferences of its followers. For instance, listeners of rock music are perceived to abuse and consume most type of illegal drugs (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). This somehow provides the connotation that the personality of someone in rock is “lived in the edge” and seeking highly sensorial experiences. This connection on the personality of VANS could be reflected by the use of traits such as “rugged”, “exciting” and “independent”. VANS somehow reflect the personality of a common person, not pretentious or people that not necessarily are considered musicians. One can observe simple skaters and young boys with regular clothing such as jeans and t-shirts. Some traits used, gives us a hint about it. For instance, “down-to-earth”, “sincere”, “spirited”, “not upper-class; talks about VANS personality as an honest, casual and truthful brand. This could be also interpreted as if this brand is perceived with less attachment to the "artistic" sphere, and as if it belongs more to a typical stereotype of a person who listens Rock and Punk-Rock music and likes to practice skateboarding.

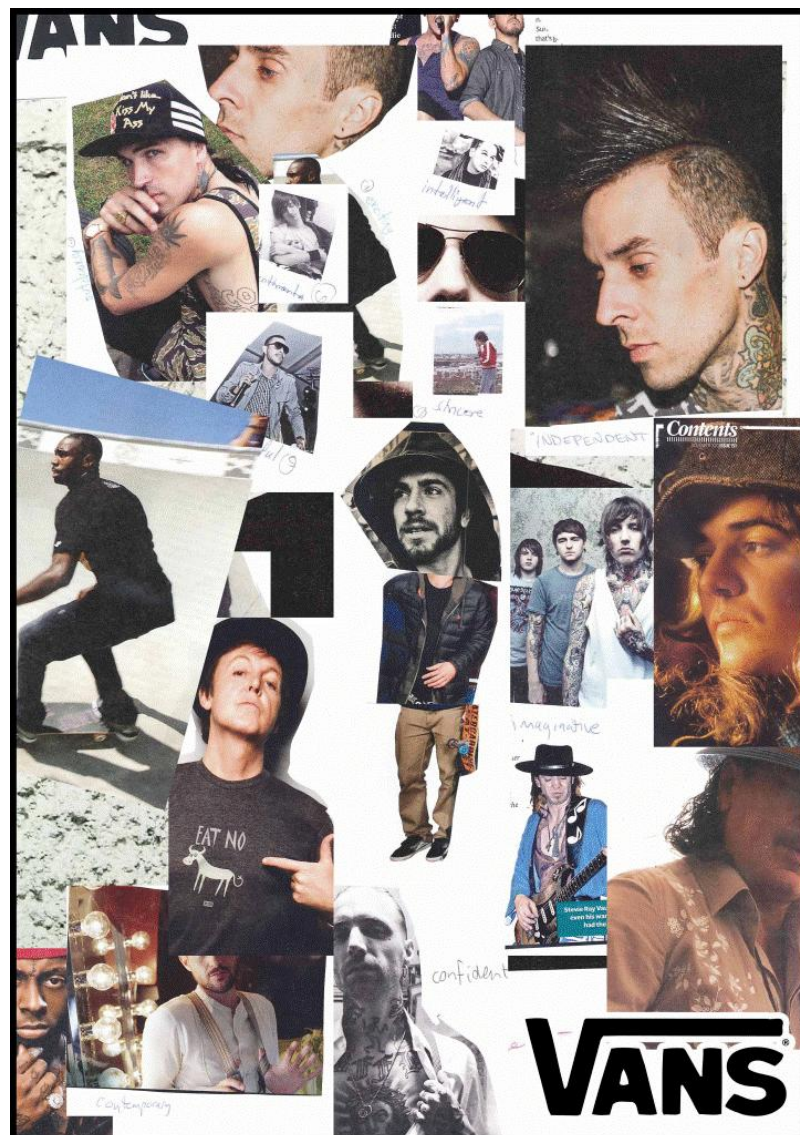


FIGURE 6 VANS' BRAND COLLAGES

Lastly, on the corporal language of VANS, in a similar fashion to NIKE, projects a musical performance oriented pose-composition among clippings.

Visually, it can also be said that VANS is a brand predominantly masculine, as with exception of only one clipping of a female person, all images reflect male individuals and artists. Another demographic aspect identified is the predominant appearance of people of White ethnicity, and in less degree, Black and other ethnicity.

Even though a set of artists and persons of mixed ethnicity and different musical-styles can be identified, there is still a visual connection that takes VANS personality towards Rock, particularly sub-styles such as Punk or Punk-Rock. This symbol is the “skateboard”, where in practice, is a recreational or sportive activity popular among youth in urban areas. The skate culture is connected to Punk-Rock music since its origins, and goes beyond simple sport, connecting with other cultural groups such as Hip-Hop followers through its values.

The presence of a couple of famous Black rappers, such as Lil Wayne and Kid Cudi, could for instance signify a sort of musical and cultural bond with the “rocker” or “punk” culture. The bond of punk-rock culture and hip-hop can be exemplified for instance through “skateboarding”. The skate culture conveys a shared value of self-expression and freedom from rules (Arthur, D. M., 2009). As a summary, we can say that VANS is masculine, likes skateboarding and enjoys an exciting life in the streets. His style of life belongs to urban locations. He dresses casual and not pretentious.

TRAIT	TRAIT FREQUENCY	ARTIST	MUSIC-GENRE
upper-class	-1	N/A	N/A
corporate	-1	N/A	N/A
small-town	1	N/A	N/A
sincere	1	N/A	N/A
sentimental	1	N/A	N/A
outdoorsy	1	N/A	N/A
rugged	1	Travis Barker	Punk-Rock
intelligent	1	N/A	N/A
trendy	1	Brandon Flowers, Kid Cudi	Rock, Hip-Hop
down-to-earth	2	N/A	N/A
exciting	2	Dave Gahan	Rock
spirited	2	Linkin Park, FM-A	Rock
independent	2	Travis Barker	Punk-Rock
cool	2	MM-A, Lil Wayne	Hip-Hop
confident	2	Tommy Bolin	Rock
successful	3	Paul McCartney, Snoop Dogg, Drake	Rock, Hip-Hop, Hip-Hop

\*FM= Female Model, MM= Male Model

**TABLE 9** SUMMARY OF CLIPPINGS' CONTENT ON VANS' COLLAGES

### 5.1.6. OVERALL IMPRESSION

---

The first impression obtained on the brand knowledge provided by the brand collages is that one can have a glimpse of demographic and psychographic characteristics attached to the brand. This could mean that the characteristics of the personality of the artists, musicians and persons clipped in the collages; can also speak about the type of user of the brand.

Consumers seek for congruency in the products and brands they acquire (Phau & Lau, 2000). BP has the power to ease the look for congruency, when demographic or psychographic characteristics complement or reaffirm those that the consumer has. The results of the collage technique can be used to extract information on the demographic and psychographic profiles of the artists, fans and celebrities that appear in there; according to the music-genre they are associated. The following lines present some of the incidents spotted regarding demographic or psychographic aspects elicited by music-genres.

#### **Demographics**

For example, demographic characteristics that can be perceived and confirmed with the information on music-genres are age groups, genre, social class, ethnicity and geographic ubiquity. An example of this is the congruence of the personality of NIKE connected to the urban youth of Black-African ethnicity that represents the stereotype of a listener of hip-hop (Shevy, 2008). VANS in a similar way to NIKE, was visualized as a young and urban person, however with a more predominant Caucasian/White ethnicity, this connection could possibly be explained by the association found with musicians of punk-rock music, which is predominantly a musical style that has its origins in White ethnicity cultural groups of the United Kingdom (Hebdige, D., 1979; Arthur, D. M., 2009).

With relation to LACOSTE's demographic aspects, although it is not possible to identify a homogenized ethnicity or age group, it can also be said that this brand presents has a personality characterized for heterogeneous racial and sexual characteristics.

Other demographic characteristics that can be spotted are that of the occupation, income and socio-economical class that reflects the type of musician, music fan or person in the collages. For example, LACOSTE is associated with entrepreneurial and successful musicians such as Madonna and Puff Daddy; even though "musicians and/or artists" were the category of professions predetermined for the study, the collages reveal additional information that can be interpreted outside the artistic world. A similar example can be deduced from the images on VANS collages, where this brand was projected in contrast to the business and entrepreneurial class of LACOSTE, as a regular person, probably the lifestyle of a student or independent workers.

## **Psychographics**

Psychographic aspects of the personalities of the individuals in the clippings can provide information on the values, attitudes, interests and lifestyles; that are connected to the musical style in which they perform as musician or those that they project as fans of particular musical styles.

This information is of great importance because it reveals the culture behind the personality of the brand. NIKE and VANS have an explicit cultural relation with music, hip-hop and punk-rock respectively; and it is possible to at least visually confirm the connection with artists that have previously sponsored the brands. In the particular case of VANS, its imagery reflects the connection to the rock and in specific punk-rock musicians, which is the musical style that supports the skateboarding culture. NIKE on the other side, is a brand that has been directly or indirectly connected with hip-hop music through the involuntary adoption of consumers as their symbol of expression (Cunningham, C. 2008), or when the firm has actively sponsored artists and rappers within hip-hop. These antecedents evidence that these two brands project well-defined psychographic characteristics of their users. Through the visual collages it is possible to unveil psychographic attributes of their brand personalities that give us an idea that these brand are also cultural brands and symbols.

## **Additional associations**

The collage technique resulted in a brand knowledge tool revealing associations that are not necessarily related to music but could complement the findings.

On the collages of NIKE one can find not only rappers or musicians. For instance, professional basketball players appear on the collages. It seems that throughout projective techniques, even when the intention was to develop a focused–topic with a preselected theme as input for knowledge (Herz, 2010); are instruments that allow to obtain brand knowledge regarding associations that are invariantly strongly attached to the brand. LACOSTE presented a similar scenario where this brand projected several persons who fall in a celebrity category. Models, actors and entrepreneurial artists compose some of those personalities associated that were not set to obtain.

Therefore, the idea of obtaining only artists was not achieved as the clippings on brand collages showcase celebrities and artists that have no relation to the music industry. While some of the clippings contain captions on the names of the musicians or bands, and some of them are widely popular figures on the media; some others remain as unidentified persons. However, these individuals who are not possible to identify by artistic name, profession, background; showcase dress-code and clothing elements that can be interpreted either as a “prototypical fan” of a music style, an artist, a celebrity or a model. Thus, these characteristics could be transferable to the whole evaluation of BP.



## Personality traits

The use of the 42 adjectives of the brand personality scale (BPS) eased the interpretation of images in the collages. It would have resulted considerably abstract to deduct by own means how an artist can be described. Even though the methodology followed from Hofstede et al. (2007) already reveals that using these adjectives is important to interpret the characteristics of the personality in the clippings, this empirical research put in practice how could they work within a particular theme for personification. As mentioned before, this study made use of music-genres and their cognitive schemas as the language that participants had to use to “talk about” the personality of the brands, where no study before has used this association stimuli to interpret BP and thus the combination of Aaker’s (1997) personality traits and images resulted in an effective complement.

## 5.2. ASSOCIATIVE TASK WITH SONGS (session B)

---

### 5.2.1. Introduction

The second session of the projective techniques consisted of an associative task using musical songs. Participants were presented with 12 music tracks with length of 60 seconds. Their task was to evaluate how much the musical style of the song that they were listening to represented the personality of the brand. In particular, participants were asked to imagine that the three brands were musicians and their album was about to be released. The music tracks were played in random order by using the shuffle-play function on the media player. 12 persons participated in this method however 1 participant’s response had to be ignored as he filled in incorrectly the sheet form given. Thus, 11 musical evaluations were obtained for each of the three brands.

The aim of this session was to confirm the congruence between the visual information obtained in the collage session and the music associated in this task. It is expected that if participants are aware of how a person who likes or performs particular musical-styles “looks like”, then they will be able to connect acoustically the personality of the brands with the songs.

Music in its acoustic form also communicates “extramusical information”. Music is often supported with lyrical themes that touch upon topics that often connected with a particular music-genre, for example is perceived that artists of rock or rap music often talk about rebellion, freedom and self-expression (Schwarz & Fouts, 2003). Therefore, the acoustic connection of the personality of the brands, with songs of particular musical-genres, can provide brand knowledge on psychographic aspects such as values and emotions.

On the other hand, it is expected that through the association to music on an acoustic form, it can also be provide a support to the knowledge gathered on music as visual stereotypes on the brand collages.

### 5.2.2. Results

Participants were asked to indicate with a scale from “Very probably not”, “Probably not”, “Possibly”, “Very probably” to “Definitely”, how likely was that the type of music played matched with the personality of each brand. The 12 tracks were evaluated for each of the three brands.

	BEAT, FOLK & COUNTRY	SOPHISTICATED	POP	ELECTRONICA	RAP	ROCK
LACOSTE	54	77	69	58	37	43
NIKE	39	38	40	59	92	51
VANS	48	39	43	55	75	98
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>192</b>

N=11, The possible total score per dimension is 110 (5 points x 11 participants x 2 music-styles).

**TABLE 10 SNEAKER BRANDS SCORES ON THE ASSOCIATIVE TASK WITH MUSIC**

All the answers were computed and frequencies for each item were summed. Although the data obtained is for ranking purposes (ordinal data), some researchers suggests that it can also be quantified as numerical data (Saunders et al., 2009). Therefore, each item of the scale was assigned a value; being “Very probably not” equal to “1” and “Definitely” equal to “5”. As a result, each brand got a score based on the sum of frequencies.

The 12-tracks were reduced to the 6 dimensions used out of the musical genre classification developed by Schäfer and Sedlmeier (2009). The characteristics of dimension of musical-style will also be used to talk about the associations that the brand can obtain when it is associated with a particular music-style.

The results obtained present with a numerical perspective how LACOSTE, NIKE and VANS are associated to the six dimensions of musical-styles. This association reflects how in the opinion of the participants what type of music *the brands will make or play if they were musicians*. An overview of the scores obtained, tells us the following about each brand:

- The numerical evidence tells us that LACOSTE has a strong association with the “Sophisticated” dimension, which corresponds to music-styles such as jazz, blues, swing and classical. Nevertheless, LACOSTE obtained considerably high scores for the “Pop”, “Electronica” and “Beat, Folk & Country” (BFC) dimensions. Surprisingly, the “Rap” dimension was notably low on this brand.
- With regards to NIKE, the “Rap” dimension, which considers musical styles such as hip-hop, rap and reggae obtained the highest score with 92 out 110 possible points per dimension. The “Rock” and “Electronic” music dimensions followed in importance.

And thirdly, the “Pop”, “Sophisticated” and “BFC” dimensions were scored but with apparent no relevant connection to the personality of NIKE.

- VANS, on a similar situation to NIKE, but with the “Rock” dimension as the highest, it obtained 98 points out of 110 on this dimension. Surprisingly, the following dimension rated higher was “Rap”; and in a very similar way to NIKE, the “Electronica” dimension followed in importance. Lastly, the “Pop”, “Sophisticated” and “BFC” musical dimensions appeared but with lower scores. VANS evaluation was almost similar to the one did for NIKE, but with the difference on the inverted relevance of the “Rap” dimension, leaving “Rock” as the most possible type of music that VANS could present or perform if “he/they” were (a) musician

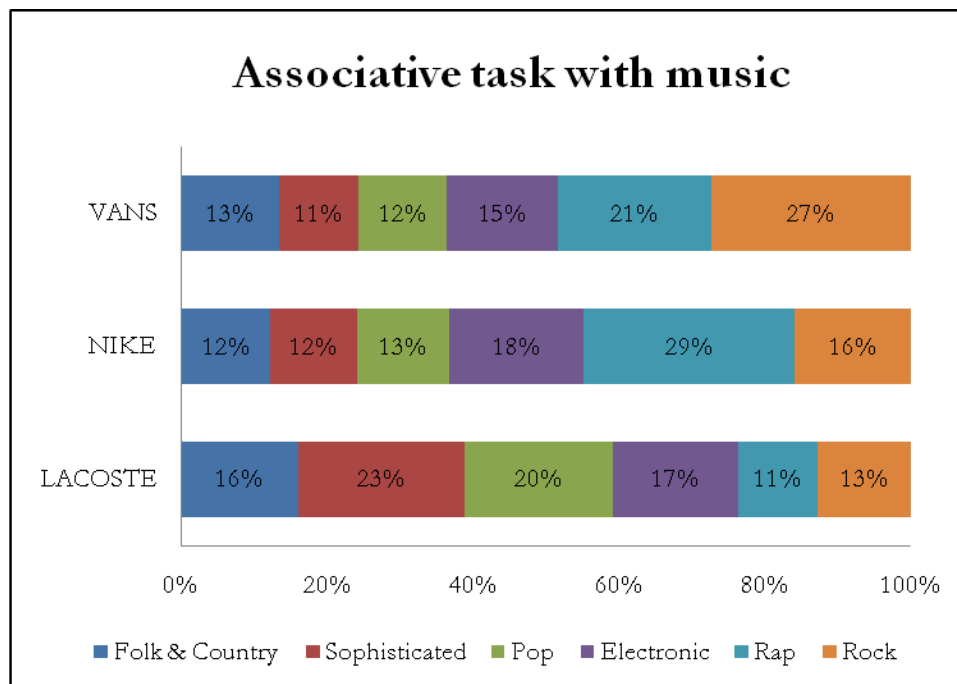
The list of dimension were ordered from left to right by the intensity of the music, in this way it is easier to make comparison starting with a less intense and rebellious music type such as “Country” and having in the other extreme “Rock”.

It is important to clarify what it means rebellious or intense in this context. It doesn’t mean that blues, folk or classical music can’t be intense; blues music was one of the first forms of expression against slavery or repressed feelings that the African-American population in the south of the United States experience in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Scaruffi, P., 2003); neither it is possible to say that a fascinating and persuasive piece of classical music such as Tchaikovsky’s 1812 Overture lacks of intensity. The appreciation of “intensity” is done taking in account the stereotypes that people has regarding fans or musicians of particular musical-styles, where heavy-metal or rap music fans are perceived as threats for the society, self-destructive and rebellious (Fried, C. B., 2003; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007).

### **Evaluation of findings on the association of music.**

In the figure number 7, we can observe how VANS and NIKE present a very similar composition of their personalities expressed through music. NIKE and VANS obtained high scores, both in the “Rock” and “Rap” dimensions. Both styles reflect urban tendencies and the messages of youth self-expression, freedom and anti-establishment. Contrarily, LACOSTE obtained most of its scores distributed towards the left of the graph, where the stereotypes of pop, classical, blues, country music differ greatly with rock and pop.

Interesting is the fact that the three brands in a more or less degree presented the ability to communicate a musical association in all musical styles. A possible explanation of this clear classification of the brands through musical-styles can be explained by the music used by the brands in advertising. The association of music is generated after the consumer is exposed to TV advertising (Zander, 2006; Park & Young, 1986).



**FIGURE 7** VISUAL CONSTRUCTION OF MUSIC ASSOCIATED FOR EACH BRAND

On the preliminary study, the persons interviewed, commented on the connection of NIKE with hip-hop artists on advertising and also as adopters of the brand:

*“The NIKE sneaker model ‘Air Force 1’ celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a song called ‘Classic’. In the musical video appeared KAYNE WEST and DJ PREMIER*

On the other hand, VANS was also mentioned to be connected with the “Skate culture”:

*“Rock usually relates to skating which is usually connected to sneakers (brands) like DC SHOES®, VAN®, ETNIES® [...] I’ve seen some in Rock music videos and campaigns”*

These opinions are in line with the musical association obtained in this method for NIKE and VANS. Even though, on LACOSTE it is not possible to identify a clear association to a musical genre, it rated high on the “Sophisticated” and “Pop” musical dimensions, which in turn connect clearly to the visual information obtained in the previous session. Further discussion of the cross-reviewed evaluation of findings on the projective techniques is developed at the end of this chapter.

### **Demographic and psychographic aspects communicated by music.**

The associative task using musical songs to project the personality of a brand could provide a hint of how some characteristics that are communicated through musical styles, such as emotions, lyrical themes, rhythm, etc., can talk about the personality of each brand.

If we examine LACOSTE, this brand was associated with musical styles such as pop, R&B, classical music and jazz. Existing literature mentions for instance, that pop music often touches

upon sentimental themes and smooth rhythms; in a social setting LACOSTE as a listener of this type of music can be seen as cooperative, sociable and not-impulsive (Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2009). With this type of music we can also talk about how people perceive the dress-code associated to performers of “posh” music. People are aware of how artists dress when they perform music, where popular music talks about lower technical skills and classical is associated with skilled performers (Griffiths, N. K. 2010). This association can tell us that LACOSTE, as a “posh” brand, shall dress as a performer with elegant clothing that somehow makes emphasis on the attractiveness of the body, but not reaching vulgarity. Also, this association of music in LACOSTE tells that as musician is not a truly technically skilled musician, but is a good performer and entertainer.

What can be extracted from the music associated with NIKE? The results of this projective technique associated this brand as a musician of hip-hop music. To start, hip-hop music is a style that almost anyone can differentiate from other music-styles (Wagner, M. S. 2008), on one hand this means that having 29% of perceived association as a brand that will produce hip-hop music represents the strong relation of the brand to this musical genre. Hip-Hop was originated in the streets of New York as an expression form of the youth when the city passed through hard economic times on the 70's; it was born out of the talent of DJ's while looping a drum break of old records, thus creating a “hot” and new percussive sound (Cunningham, C. 2008). Out of this, it could be said that NIKE projects the “urbanism” in which this genre was born and also tell us that NIKE is a brand with “groove” or properly a “groovy” brand. But, what is a “groovy” brand or brand with “groove”? To date, it is not possible to find a definition with that purposes on branding, however the intention is to obtain aspects of the personality of a brand through the characteristics that the music associated has. Nevertheless, without getting into much technical aspects of music, “groove” refers to the rhythmic aspects of a melody (Levitin, D. 2006). The beat of a song is somehow what makes us dance or makes us feel the joy to move our bodies following the rhythm (Zentner et al., 2008), and the connection of NIKE to a musical genre that has its foundations on the “groove”, can characterize this brand through its bonds and affinity with the expression of ideas and feelings through the body.

Another example of demographic and psychographic aspects projected through the association of music, is the case of VANS, where the brand was associated with music produced by rock musicians. Rock music is associated with the ideals of protest. Listeners of this type of music are perceived to dig information of media with low-cultural and intellectual content however rock symbolizes the power of the expression of the crowds gathered in concerts and festivals (North & Hargreaves, 2007). When VANS is connected to rock music, it could signify that the brand has a personality that projects the spirit of expression. In a similar way to NIKE, VANS was associated to the rap dimension of music; the possible connection of the personality of VANS with both rock and rap dimension, can be the urban and street origin that both musical genres have (Sköld & Rehn, 2007). VANS thus can be perceived as a brand inherent to urban social groups and trends.

Another example of demographic aspects communicated by the music-genre can be the social-class and ethnicity of the persons that perform or listen to that music. For instance, punk-rock is a musical style that was developed by creative working-class youth predominantly of white ethnicity in the United Kingdom (Laing, D. 1978); this can talk about the demographic profile and consumption preferences of VANS and thus the user of the brand.

### **Conclusion of the results on the associative task using music**

The associative task using musical songs gave the opportunity to explore possible associations connected to brand personality (BP). Musical genres on an acoustic form communicate more than just pitch and tone. The study produced interesting combinations of music associated to each brand and thus using extramusical information to talk about their personality.

As exemplified before, the literature on the emotions, lifestyles and characteristics of people who are involved within particular music-genres offer extensive possibilities to identify individual and cultural characteristics that allows us to interpret BP, however, a gap still remains on defining which of all the set of cognitive schemas elicited by a music-genre is the one connected to the BP?

With a holistic view, it is easy to determine what music genre represent the personality of each brand, but it could not be defined what individual aspect of the micro-level of the culture, lifestyle, psychographic or demographic aspects related to a music-genre are the ones associated to the BP of the three brands.

## **5.3. BRAND PERSONALITY SCALE (session B)**

---

The results obtained through this method are based upon Aaker, J. (1997) work on the development of a reliable, valid and generalizable brand personality scale (BPS). This consists of 42 personality traits that belong to one particular dimension (Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness).

Eleven participants were asked to mark all of the adjectives (traits) that they thought better described the brand as if it was a person. Emphasize on the personification metaphor was done by suggesting them *to visualize each brand as if it was a person sitting next to them*, or for instance describing *how that person will look like or the way she or he speaks*. As a result, 11 sheets containing the 42 personality traits were obtained for each of the 3 brands.

Although the BPS is a quantitative instrument, it is not an instrument that can be interpreted without statistical tests in part due to the Interpretive approach by which this study is conducted (Mathiesen, K. 2007). In addition, the work of Aaker (1997) already confirms that the statistical validity, reliability and generalizability of the scale. The BPS is taken just as a reference and complement to interpret and compare the findings of the two previous projective techniques.

FACTOR NAME (DIMENSION)	FACET NAME	FACET	TRAITS	LACOSTE	NIKE	VANS	
Sincerity	Down-to-Earth	1A	down-to-earth	0	5	4	
		1A	family-oriented	2	0	1	
		1A	small-town	0	0	2	
	Honest	1B	honest	0	1	1	
		1B	real	1	6	3	
		1B	sincere	2	1	0	
	Wholesome	1C	original	2	5	3	
		1C	wholesome	1	0	1	
	Cheerful	1D	cheerful	2	4	3	
		1D	friendly	2	2	5	
1D		sentimental	4	2	0		
				FREQ.	16	26	23
Excitement	Daring	2A	daring	0	2	3	
		2A	exciting	0	3	6	
		2A	trendy	7	3	4	
	Spirited	2B	cool	2	8	6	
		2B	spirited	2	2	3	
		2B	young	3	5	7	
	imaginative	2C	imaginative	0	4	2	
		2C	unique	1	2	3	
	Up-to-date	2D	contemporary	3	3	4	
		2D	independent	0	4	7	
2D		up-to-date	2	4	1		
				FREQ.	20	40	46
Competence	Reliable	3A	hard working	1	4	3	
		3A	reliable	2	5	2	
		3A	secure	2	3	1	
	Intelligent	3B	corporate	5	1	0	
		3B	intelligent	5	2	0	
		3B	technical	0	3	1	
	Successful	3C	confident	5	6	4	
		3C	leader	1	4	0	
		3C	successful	8	6	1	
				FREQ.	29	34	12
Sophistication	Upper class	4A	glamorous	7	1	0	
		4A	good looking	7	2	0	
		4A	upper-class	9	1	0	
	Charming	4B	charming	6	2	1	
		4B	feminine	3	1	0	
		4B	smooth	6	5	1	
				FREQ.	38	12	2
Ruggedness	Outdoorsy	5A	masculine	3	1	3	
		5A	outdoorsy	2	2	5	
		5A	Western	4	1	2	
	Tough	5B	rugged	0	0	5	
		5B	tough	0	2	3	
				FREQ.	9	6	18

**TABLE 11 SUMMARY OF FREQUENCIES OF TRAITS AND DIMENSIONS OF THE BPS**

This study which has a more qualitative orientation uses the shared vision and experiences of the participants as the source of meaning in the results. In addition, the number of participants (12) represents a small group of study that does not allow to conduct statistical tests.

The procedure followed to interpret the information started with the creation of a frequency matrix of the 5 dimensions and 42 adjectives of the BPS for each brand. Each trait marked in the sheets was computed with a value of “1” and the traits not marked were computed with a value of “0”. The result was the scores for each of the 42 traits and thus summing up their value to the facet name and dimensions respectively.

Above, the table number 11 provides the frequencies that each trait obtained and a total frequency of each brand score on the five dimensions. At a first glance, it is possible to see that

most of the scores were given in the “Excitement” and “Competence” dimension. This could be due to the product category used, where brand of sneakers could be in general preferably described in their personality within these two dimensions.

Besides that, the remaining three dimensions present an interesting result, where at least one brand figures as the dominant on them. For instance, on the “Sincerity” dimension, VANS and NIKE are somehow dominant over “LACOSTE”. A more radical domination is presented in the “Sophistication” dimension, where “LACOSTE” obtained the highest rating. Lastly, the “Ruggedness” personality dimension obtained lower scores for the three brands; however “VANS” is the dominant brand of this personality dimension.

It is important to note that participants had the opportunity to mark all the traits they desired in order to describe the personality of the brand according to the list of 42 traits. Considering this freedom of choice, the results indicate that participants carefully chose and marked only the adjectives that they considered relevant, as it is possible to observe many of them that has “0” scores. On the other hand, this could be interpreted that only some of the adjectives were appropriate to talk about the personality of the sneaker brands.

In general it could be said that participants evaluated the three brands eliciting important differences on their brand personality. The following can be accounted for each of the brands:

### **5.3.1. LACOSTE**

Its personality scores project a strong brand in the “Competence” and “Sophistication” dimensions; representing almost 60% of its accumulated description in these two dimensions. However, “Sophistication” is the dimension of personality that represents its unique strength. The other two brands, scored relatively low in this dimension where one of them almost didn’t get scores. By having a personality in the “Sophisticated” dimension, LACOSTE sneakers as a product that provides utilitarian and hedonic benefits to the consumer, is a brand that helps the consumer with the achievement of goals for the increase of social status. The personality of LACOSTE is characterized as “upper-class”, “glamorous”, “good-looking”, etc., in particular, these adjectives were the ones used with more frequency to describe its personality. The brand personality of “Sophistication” elicits aspirational lifestyles within luxury, glamour and status (Aaker et al., 2001).

### **5.3.2. NIKE**

The results for the brand personification of this brand showcase a balanced personality that falls with high scores on the “Competence” and “Excitement” dimensions. The associative implications of the “Competence” dimension can be produced due to utilitarian and functional attributes of the brand. It is important to take in account that the population studied represents a



segment of consumer with high-involvement in the sneaker product category. It is possible that for the participants, NIKE's personality conveys information of the technical quality of the tangible aspects of the brand, which are the tennis shoes. For instance, comfort, design and innovation; are elements that can be transferred from the products to the overall perception of the brand. NIKE is a brand that can serve functional, prestigious and expressive purposes (Bhat & Reddy, 1998). Therefore, NIKE can be seen as a "well-rounded" brand that projects a personality with both utilitarian and symbolic attributes. Moreover, NIKE's personality has a strong connection with what is real. The Aaker (1997) scale considers that the "Sincerity, Excitement and Competence" dimensions tap innate characteristics of the human personality (Phau & Lau, 2000). Casually, NIKE obtained considerable high scores in these three dimensions.

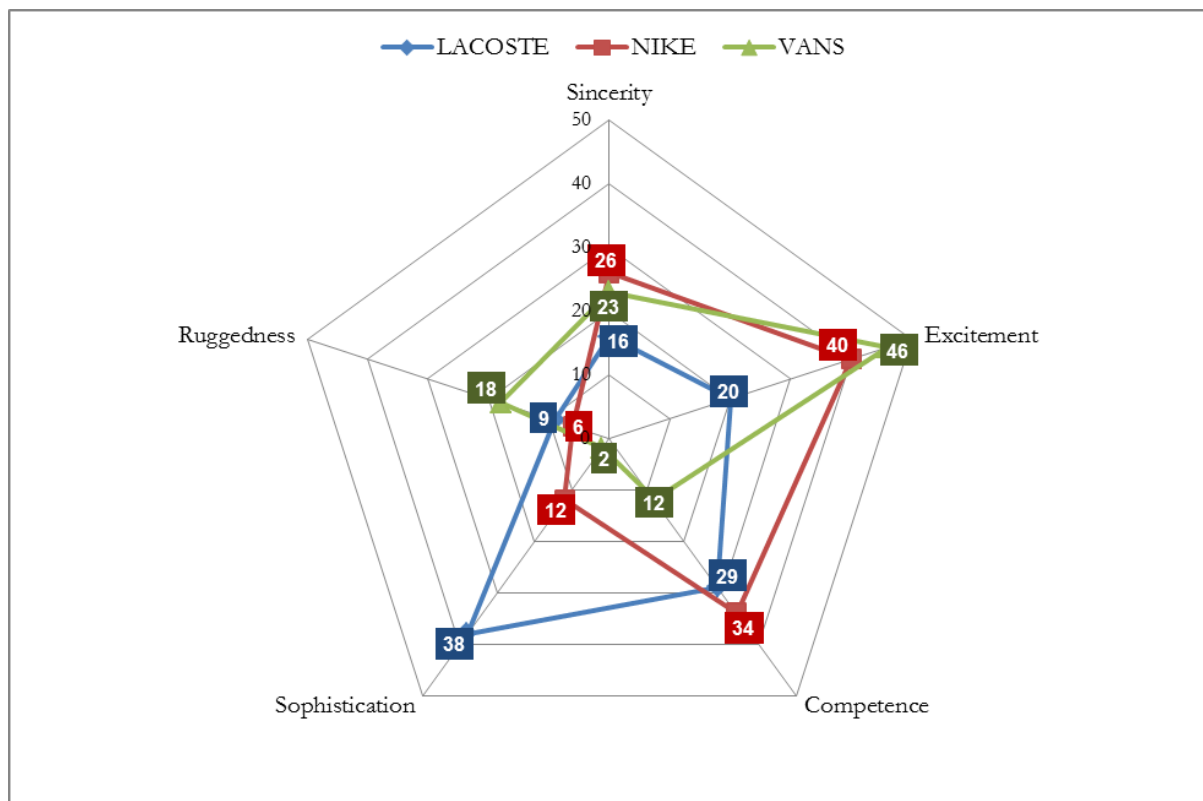
### 5.3.3. VANS

Participants gave most of their evaluations to the "Excitement" dimension. This brand clearly dominates this dimension. This dimension is often connected to brands that offer entertainment. The "Excitement" dimension of brand personality is also connected to the "seek for" Excitement (Aaker, J. 1997). Possible reasons of the strong connection of VANS to this dimension can be explained by its association to street sports, such as skateboarding. Participants interviewed in the preliminary study commented that VANS is a brand of sneakers "often used by those who like skateboarding" (see Chapter 4).

The "Sophistication" dimension has no presence at all in the personality of VANS. Only 2 traits, which are "charming" and "smooth", were selected in this dimension instead of those that represent physical attractiveness or high-social status on this dimension. The absence of scores in this dimension thus tells us an important aspect of VANS personality; participants don't perceive that VANS satisfy symbolic purposes of high social-class interaction or luxury through its BP.

Contrarily, VANS obtained relatively important scores in the "Sincerity" and "Ruggedness" dimensions. The "Ruggedness" dimension on BP is closely related to the communication of aspirational status (Aaker et al., 2001). This dimension helps the consumer reach goals to confirm or try to be an aspired person, often characterized with the interaction of the "wild" side of our world, the outdoors, etc. Thus, this connection of VANS personality with the predominant "Excitement" dimension provides a congruent and constant composition of the personality in turn to the spirit of the adventure.

Nevertheless, the "Sincerity" dimension, which was considerably high scored, results difficult to interpret on what is communicating in the personality of VANS. An alternative to examine this dimension is to observe the individual traits used, which were "friendly", "down-to-earth", "cheerful" or "real"; this traits can talk about a BP that is not pretentious and casual.



**FIGURE 8** NETWORK OF BRAND PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS

### 5.3.4. Conclusion

The Aaker (1997) BPS unveiled symbolic and/or utilitarian characteristics of the brands studied. However, from an Interpretive perspective, the lack of information of the reasons behind participants' choices to classify the brands within those dimensions doesn't allows us to provide a more sustained interpretation.

Nevertheless, the BPS was a useful brand image tool to make comparisons between brands. In that aspect, it was possible to see how three leading brands of the same product category are perceived contrastingly different.

From the perspective of practitioners, the BPS could represent an important reference on how consumers perceive their brands in comparison to others in the market, but the gap of understanding what is behind of a brand belonging to the "Ruggedness" or "Sincerity" dimension, requires that consumer researchers dig deep in the meanings behind these associations.

Until now, the findings of the three personification-based techniques have been presented. Recapping, the two first methods used music as the theme to talk about BP. And now that the findings of the two group sessions were presented, in this chapter a continuation of a cross-evaluation of findings will be presented. Throughout this cross-evaluation, it is intended to

evaluate how the triangulation of methods along with the extramusical information derived from the associations of music for each brand, can provide a better understanding and brand knowledge on BP.

The following chapter presents the discussion of empirical and theoretical incidents on the projective techniques employed to use extramusical information as a medium to investigate brand personality and related associations.

Bestpofe.com

## 6. Analysis

---

*This chapter analyzes the brand knowledge obtained through the triangulation of methods for brand image research. It also discussed the theoretical and practical implications of using music-genres as associative theme for brand personification.*

---

The aim of the empirical research was to find out what type of brand knowledge can be gained through the use of musical-genres as association theme. Musical genres functioned as the “common language” to talk about LACOSTE, NIKE and VANS.

The rationale behind this perspective is originated from the theory that tells us that our musical preferences express our personality (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007; Schwarz & Fouts, 2003). This time, instead of talking about the personality of a human, the investigation was focused on the personality of a brand. But how can we say that a brand has a musical preference or musical taste? Existent theory affirms that brands like people have charisma and personality; understanding brand personality is a viable form to get to know how consumers perceive a brand (Smothers, N. 1993; Caprara et al. 2001).

The methodology was selected with the aim of using music as the associative theme to investigate the personality of LACOSTE, NIKE and VANS. It was adopted following the research done by Hofstede et al. (2007), where they investigated BP using job occupations and celebrities in combination with Aaker (1997) brand personality scale (BPS).

As a consequence several theoretical and practical implications came to light. Some of them touch upon the contributions and limitations of the methodology used. On the other hand, it is also discussed the challenges and opportunities for further research using music to produce brand knowledge.

### 6.1. Brand knowledge obtained through music

#### 6.1.1. Who uses the brand?

The aim of the research on BP is to identify human characteristics attached to a brand (Aaker, J. 1997; Freiling & Forbes, 2005b). The present study made use of music as the instrument to identify these characteristics. For instance, when NIKE was associated to hip-hop music it was possible to identify demographic characteristics of listeners of this genre. In general, the stereotype of people who produces or listens to hip-hop is of Black-African ethnicity (Shevy, M., 2008). This association was clearly observed in NIKE’s collages (see section 5.2.3).

Another example of the human characteristics identified in brands was getting to know that LACOSTE is projected as a glamorous and seductive person. This was possible, after observing that artists such as Madonna, Prince, Sean Combs (Puff Daddy) or Jay Kay were clipped in the collages. This interpretation wasn’t done just by knowing or observing who they are, it was

necessary to dig a on the background of each musician and also to analyze the adjectives used to describe them. “Feminine”, “trendy”, “upper-class” and “glamorous” for instance were some of the adjectives used to describe the personality of these artists. The types of musicians connected to LACOSTE are well-known artists that reach the “celebrity” category.

What are the benefits of this type of information? Practitioners require information of psychographic and demographic characteristics of the target consumer in order to offer products that fit and satisfy their interests. Also, it is important to know what characteristics are associated and communicated by the brand for the development and enhancement of consumer-brand relationships (Keller, K. L. 2001). The findings obtained suggest that investigating what music is associated to the brand will be possible to understand further how a brand is perceived. The reason for this is that consumers seek for congruence when they choose a brand, they choose brands that can confirm the perception of their actual or ideal self (Azoulay, A., & Kapferer, J.-N. 2004). Thus through music, it was possible to identify associations of ethnicity, age groups, gender, etc. that results valuable construct the demographic profiles of the image of the brand. It was also possible to identify possible psychographic characteristics of the brand users; however this is discussed in the next section as it represents how the brands communicate symbolic purposes for the consumer.

Low & Lamb (2000) suggest that brand personality is a strategic tool to differentiate a brand from its competitors. Throughout the study conducted here, it was possible to understand that the three brands studied have clear and distinct brand personalities. The use of music genres as associative theme allowed identifying relevant differences among the brands. The knowledge obtained says that NIKE is the brand that embodies the persona of hip-hop, VANS is a sneaker brand that through rock is attached to the urban youth in the streets and LACOSTE is seen as a sophisticated artist. Therefore, the investigation of music associated in the image of a brand can give an interesting perspective of how brands in the same product category are positioned in consumers’ mind. Although a limitation of the results is the perception of only the consumer segment studied, the value of the brand knowledge obtained relies on the potential that music-genres as cognitive schemas have to unveil associations in the personality of the brand and its users.

### **6.1.2. Symbolic attributes of the brand.**

After observing the findings, in addition to concrete “visible and evident” demographic characteristics, the theoretical framework acknowledges the existence of lifestyles and shared cultural meanings in a musical-genre (Cunningham, C. 2008; Laing, D, 1978; Hebdige, D. 1979). One can think for instance on the roots of hip-hop and punk-rock as a form of expression of the youth against what they think is wrong or what they don’t like. This opens the possibility to ask ourselves that through musical-genres or music in general, it could be possible to investigate values and the cultural role of the brand in the consumer.

This cultural role is connected to the symbolic aspects that a brand satisfies on the consumer. Consumers evaluate products taking in account utilitarian and symbolic benefits. Through their interaction with products and advertising, consumers come to personify brands as having personalities (Caprara et al. 2001). Symbolic benefits, or also named *hedonic attributes* depending on the author, measure the experiential affect associated with the object for example how pleasant or agreeable are the feelings produced by wearing a brand or branded product (Batra & Ahtola, 1990).

The investigation of the potential and impact of culture in branding represents an area of opportunity (Wilson & Liu, 2009). For our study, the setting of product category and population studied was favorable to obtain information regarding possible symbolic attributes in the brands. For the segment of consumers studied, sneakers are products that go beyond utilitarian considerations; they convey culture and are symbols of identity. The sneaker culture was born almost at the same time and place than hip-hop music for instance (Cunningham, C. 2008).

The use of music-genres to interpret BP resulted particularly valuable in this context. For instance, LACOSTE in the opinion of participants is a brand that communicates the glamorous and sophisticated style of celebrities and artists. In contrast, when VANS was represented predominantly with associations of rock music it could tell us the brand is connected to the values of expression and freedom from rules through the combination of skateboarding and rock and an active urban lifestyle (Arthur, D. M. 2009; Shevy, M., 2008).

NIKE and VANS for instance reflected how the lifestyle of the brand is set-up in the streets and the urban scenario in which hip-hop and punk-rock exist (Arthur, D. M. 2009). These two brands represent an example of brands where music is not only a measure to know demographic characteristics such as age, gender or ethnic group. These two brands also represent brands that share lifestyle and cultural identity for the consumer. This information was first identified in the preliminary study. Some participants mentioned for NIKE that *this brand is often worn by famous DJ's and rappers*. Similarly, for VANS the comments suggested that *it is a brand used by skaters and that skateboarding is connected with rock*.

This interpretation of symbolic functions unfortunately does not apply to all the brands. NIKE and VANS sneakers have inherited a relevant cultural position within the hip-hop and rock culture respectively. But LACOSTE is a brand that apparently has not acquired the role of cultural symbol for listeners of a particular musical-genre.

A possible explanation of this is the positioning that each of these brands has on the sneaker market. Apparently NIKE, through its sneaker sub-brands (i.e. Air Jordans, Air Force 1, etc.), it's a brand that has already acquired a cultural symbolism for consumers of hip-hop.

Bhat and Reddy (1998) suggest that one can't take for granted that NIKE's BP and all the symbolic associations it has will provide benefits to consumers. The BP is also dependable on how the branded products perform in real life:

*“Consumers want both types of benefit (self image improvement and functional) – people buy Nike products because they’re associated with Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods or some other sporting hero. But they also want comfort and performance from the shoe. If a pair fell apart after the first few wearings folk would soon stop believing the aspirational association with sporting celebrities!”*

NIKE’s BP presents a complex network of clear and strong associations that merits deeper comprehension to delimit how symbolic and utilitarian attributes are communicated by the image of the brand. In addition, consumers seem to understand to a great extent what the quality is and value that they obtain from NIKE. The high score on Aaker’s (1997) BPS dimension named “Competence” reflects the “know-how” superiority on what is about “making sneakers”. In a similar way, VANS is a brand that since its origins entered the market as a shoe manufacturer and gained the preference of the skate culture. Contrarily, it is likely that participants see LACOSTE as a new player in the sneaker scenario and the perceived personality that they have corresponds to the acquired cognitive associations with the other product lines or users of the brand.

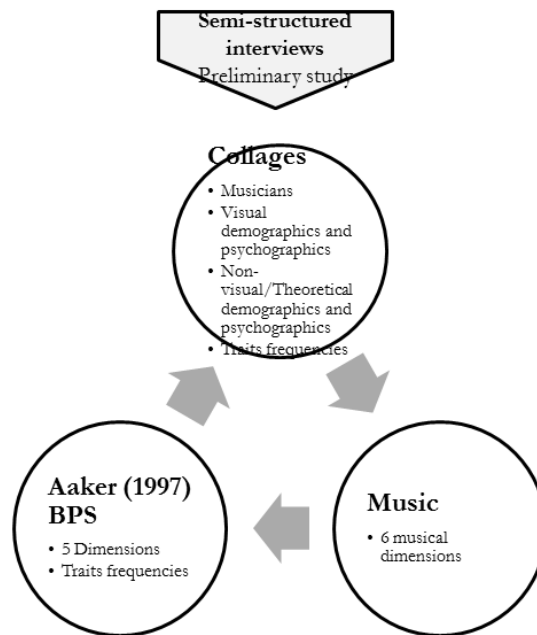
## 6.2. Evaluation of the methodology and triangulation of data

It was necessary to consider a methodology that could allow us to compare and discriminate objectively on the data obtained. An initial implication of the methodology followed and adopted from Hofstede et al. (2007), is that the triangulation of information derived out of the projective techniques and the BPS, is a methodological procedure that results in insightful information on the perceptions of consumers. The triangulation of methods had the purpose of reducing ambiguity and to obtain the most complete and detailed data possible (Freiling & Forbes, 2005b).

Although the methodology followed provided evident brand knowledge on the personality of the brands, it faced certain limitations and offered some advantages. For instance, the visual information on the collages would have been affected by the content of the magazines. The magazine publisher targets the consumers with certain messages that play to their schema about music, fashion, etc. This may not allow your survey subjects to have full creativity or it may have limited the expression of ideas.

In other aspect, the use of the adjectives of the BPS to describe the images of the collages facilitated to a high degree the interpretation of the personality of artists and musicians. However, there are important considerations to make when BP is investigated only through a structured quantification of traits within brand personality scales. These quantitative constructs indeed reveal and group relevant attributes of the personality of a brand, but leave a gap on what else the consumer perceives in a brand.

When the time came to interpret the data of the BPS, it was possible to know “what” dimensions pertained each brand but not “why”. The set of adjectives could only give a hint on



**FIGURE 9** TRIANGULATION OF DATA FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF BP

how the BP is perceived. For instance, if we look at the case of LACOSTE, what do consumers mean when they say that LACOSTE belongs to the “Sophistication” dimension and that it is upper-class, trendy and glamorous?

This information is somehow abstract but communicates the potential of brand knowledge that is there to be discovered. The context of this study allows one to exemplify how insightful brand knowledge can be gained when alternative personification metaphors can be used and combined with the data of the BPS.

For instance, the personality trait “smooth” is hard to objectively interpret, when it is used to describe a brand. It is difficult to interpret exactly what is meant when one is regarded by another with the idea, “Look, that person is smooth.” Perhaps it might refer to a person that is relaxed, at ease, accomplished, sophisticated, or self-confident; quantification of this idea seems problematic.

In the context of brand personification theory it is important to reduce ambiguity. For this purpose, the use of CCS helps reduce this ambiguity. For example, when the projective technique showcases that LACOSTE “looks like” the musician Jay Kay (singer and frontman of Jamiroquai) and is *smooth*, then the information transforms into insightful and clearer brand knowledge that is expressed through musical concepts. If we talk of Jay Kay in terms of musical style, we can say that his musical style is a fusion of funk, pop, electronica, house. Those are musical styles easy to listen to and accessible according to the taste of many people. Surely, there should be something in the personality of Jay Kay that is perceived within LACOSTE. The



personality traits “successful”, “upper-class”, “glamorous” and “trendy” for instance, match with Jay Kay’s success as musician and known by his trendy and innovative works.

The intention is not to know the biography of each artist or musician in the clippings, but to exemplify how the information regarding musical styles, stereotypes and the lifestyle of the musician can provide insightful brand knowledge.

The interpretation of the BPS is particularly favored when music is used to talk about brand personality. The results obtained by LACOSTE make it very clear when this brand was ranked high on the “Sophistication” dimension. It might have nothing to do with music, but the session A of the projective techniques still confirmed this positioning through music when participants attached Puff Daddy, Jay Kay and other artists displaying elegant clothing.

However, the situation of VANS is less clear when we try to understand what does it mean that the brand ranked high on the “Excitement” and “Sincerity” dimensions? Although the “excitement” dimension is naturally a consequence of the advertising and usage that VANS sneakers have by young urban sport people and skateboarders; apparently it is not possible to explain the “Sincerity” dimension. In this context the association to rock artists on the collages, and the rock and rap music in the associative tasks using music can help do an interpretation of this aspect. On one side the “sincerity” could be related an indicator of social-class and on the other hand it can be seen as sincerity as a value or lifestyle. Stereotypes of rock music can tell us that the brand is associated to middle and working class where rock was forged, or a bit on the taste, where rock fans are seen to consumer beer instead of wine or whisky (North, A. C. 2007) or for instance on the rebellious and honest spirit of rock as a cultural force against the establishment (Scaruffi, P. 2003).

### **6.2.1. Differences using BPS by itself or combined with qualitative data**

It was identified an inconsistency between the adjectives used on the collages and the adjectives used on the BPS. Both methods made use of the same 42-adjectives of the Aaker (1997) scale.

This on one side can reflect the reliability of the study where the same adjectives were used in two sessions and somehow differed on each other. But on the other side it can be said that if a researcher uses both methods independently, it is necessary to be aware that distinct information can be provided although the same scale is used.

On one side, the dimensions obtained through the collages give more sense of what the scale means. In particular when an associative theme is used, as we have done with music lifestyles, or Hofstede et al. (2007) did with job occupations and celebrities. For instance, the table 12 shows how LACOSTE on the collages was ranked even more high in the “Sophistication” dimension as a product of the association of glamorous musicians and celebrities. But considerable differences on the “Competence” dimension.

	LACOSTE		NIKE		VANS	
	Adjectives on Collage	Only BPS	Adjectives on Collage	Only BPS	Adjectives on Collage	Only BPS
Sincerity	5%	14%	17%	22%	25%	23%
Excitement	24%	18%	21%	34%	45%	46%
Competence	10%	26%	38%	29%	25%	12%
Sophistication	48%	34%	8%	10%	-5%	2%
Ruggedness	14%	8%	17%	5%	10%	18%

**TABLE 12 COMPARISON OF SCORES OF TRAITS USED ON COLLAGES AND THE BPS**

VANS as LACOSTE differed considerably on the scores of the “Competence” dimension, but in an opposite sense. LACOSTE increased its perception of “Competence” in the BPS, and contrarily VANS was “seen” in the collages more competent than when it was evaluated on the BPS. Azoulay and Kapferer (2004) suggests that the “Competence” dimension is related in the case of brands, to the “know-how” and tangible attributes of quality, and contrarily to the psychological “Competence” dimension it doesn’t refer to cognitive capacities in humans. Thus the perceptions that participants had when they evaluated the brands using only the adjectives of the BPS, they should have taken in account more of the technical and tangible quality of the personality of the sneaker brands. But when they used the traits in connection to images in the collages, their perception of the traits of the “Competence” dimension allowed them to express what they thought it was the non-cognitive capacities or “given-talent” of the musicians in the clippings.

Another drastic difference is the “Ruggedness” dimension on NIKE, where on the collages it was projected with the threatening and defiant corporal language of rappers. But it can be seen that the BPS tells us that this dimension is not relevant for NIKE’s personality. In this context one can evidence how different interpretations of brand knowledge can be derived even though the same scale is used. In this regard, can be noted a benefit of the use of music as associative theme to understand that some aspects of the personality of a brand can be ignored if only one method is used, particularly when only the BPS is applied.

An example of how the application of the BPS differs if it is used with an associative theme (i.e. to describe musicians) can be seen on NIKE’s results. For instance, when personality traits were used to describe almost only hip-hop artists in the collages: “*real, young, hard-working, trendy and intelligent*” were the traits more used. On the other hand “*cool, confident, successful, real and young*” were the ones that obtained more ratings on the Aaker (1997) test situated NIKE in two personality dimensions, “Competence” and “Sincerity”.

With these two different sources of information that come from the same instrument (the BPS); it is hard to delineate a connection. This issue reveals how there is still the need for more investigation on the best way to compile adjectives to measure brand personality or the applicability of the scale across cultures and product categories (Caprara et al. 2001).

### 6.3. What is missing to use music to talk about BP?

The findings obtained in this empirical study offer a preliminary idea of how the semiotic content produced by music-genres can be useful for brand image research. Humans have used music to express emotions for centuries (Brandt, P. A. 2008). For the consumer, music means identity and the sense of belonging to a culture. Brands as music, are symbols of identity and culture and the relationship brand-music deserves a close examination that on first instance will help understand motivations and preferences of consumers. Therefore through this study the author would like to point out the limitations faced to suggest that through music it is possible to understand and investigate aspects of the brand image construct, such as brand personality and associations.

First of all, this study represents the perspective of consumers of sneakers in Sweden that incidentally have hip-hop music as one of their favorite music-genres. This aspect besides being a limitation or pre-established reason for biased perceptions, it represents a valid context of the reality in which consumers interact with branded products. The Interpretive character of this study investigates the reality from a micro-perspective or a specific context in which consumer-brand-music relationships are given in the market.

Therefore, further research should address this interaction delineating for instance the validity and applicability of existent scales and methodology for the measurement of brand personality when the musical associations are investigated. In this aspect, this research joins the interest of previous research aimed to establish a way to measure the impact and use of music for brand image enhancement (Fulberg, 2003; Wagner, 2008).

In particular, the results of this empirical study unintentionally approximated Wagner (2008) proposal of investigating the relationship between the way music and brands are described.

A concrete example of this issue is the results obtained for the brand personification of LACOSTE. This brand obtained high scores on the “Sophisticated” musical dimension used from Schäfer and Sedlmeier (2009) classification of musical styles, and on the other side LACOSTE was ranked with the highest scores on the “Sophistication” dimension of the Aaker (1997) BPS. Besides the coincidence of both dimensions names, participants didn’t know of the name of the dimensions when they provided their answers, they only listened to different musical styles and filled a paper sheet containing the 42-adjectives (see sections 3.52 and 5.3).

The coincidence of both the musical and the BP dimensions opens the questioning on: what is required to develop a BPS using music-styles as dimensions? Wagner (2008) pursued a similar line of research when she on her doctoral research first developed a scale to describe music. With this scale, she found that some dimensions of the scale to describe music matched with the dimensions of Aaker (1997) BPS. For instance, Aaker (1997) suggests that a brand can be perceived as “Exciting” and Wagner (2008) established the “Energizing” dimension. Wagner (2008) pursued further this coincidence by first finding a brand that could be seen as “Exciting”, this was the branded chocolate bar “Kit-Kat”. The researcher examined the relationship between

the description of a brand and the description of music. To develop further the possible relationship of both, she produced experiments in which the “Kit-Kat” brand was presented on a TV-Ad with music with high/moderate/low (in particular: energizing, dark and calm music) congruity to the “Energizing” musical dimensions.

Although this study and Wagner’s (2008) research differ on the final scope, where the latter investigates the effects on consumer’s perceptions due to the congruency of music in advertising and the personality of the brand; both studies sense the possibilities of describing brand personality in terms of music.

## 6.4. Conclusion of the analysis

Although they are beyond the scope of this paper, variables that play an important role in the relationship of the construction of the personality of the sneaker brands through shared cultural experiences open more questions than answers. The current state of research on brand image research makes difficult the possibility to draw definite conclusions on the role that musical associations play in constructing BP. There is still a need to investigate what could be considered or not brand knowledge through the use of the existent brand personality scales and methodology on brand image research (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2004).

It is possible that broadening the results with perspective from other consumer groups, it would have been possible to discriminate which characteristics of BP are subject only to hip-hop fans and what other characteristics are widely agreed characteristics of the brands. The data by which this analysis was done comes from a small sample of mostly university students living in one Swedish city which reflect a homogenized interest for hip-hop and sneakers.

Nevertheless, the comparison of findings on the personality of the three brands of sneakers studied represent an advance in the exploration of alternatives to gain brand knowledge. The associations obtained are a sort of micro-culturally “enriched” demographic and psychographic description of the characteristics of the personality of LACOSTE, NIKE and VANS.

## 7. Conclusions

---

*This chapter summarizes the results produced by personification-based projective techniques, which used music-genres as cognitive schemas to interpret BP.*

---

In this study two projective techniques were employed to perform the personification metaphor of three sneaker brands in combination with the Aaker (1997) brand personality scale (BPS). The perspective of the results was limited to the cognitive schemas that hip-hop listeners had regarding extramusical information of musical genres. This for instance considered stereotypes of people, musicians and lifestyles that they associate to a musical-genre. The empirical study exemplifies how shared cognitive schemas in a consumer group can be used for brand image research. Following, the account of results is presented with regards to the two main interrogations that this research aimed to answer. First it is presented the conclusions regarding the brand knowledge obtained of using music-genres as the theme for investigation of BP, and secondly it is discussed the benefits and disadvantages of methodology followed to represent the brands.

### 7.1. Music as a source of brand knowledge

The use of music as associative theme for the personification of three brands of sneakers revealed demographic and psychographic characteristics associated to the brands. The knowledge obtained could be classified into “evident” and “non-evident” brand knowledge. This means that the “evident” knowledge is for instance those demographic characteristics such as ethnicity, age group or geographical livelihood; that were found in the collages and that coincide with the theoretical framework on popular stereotypes and extramusical information of musical genres.

On the other side, musical genres also convey “non-evident” characteristics that could mean lifestyles, values, beliefs, etc.; however, the interpretation of these aspects is subject to the shared cultural knowledge of participants or the interpretive capacities of the author.

For instance, the collages provided with visual evidence on attributes of ethnicity, age group and geographical livelihood associated to the brand and thus to the user of the brand. LACOSTE was associated with a multi-racial set of artists and celebrities that often are involved in entrepreneurial occupations and high-income. NIKE was visually represented with a strong connection to musicians (particularly hip-hop rappers) of African-American ethnicity pertaining to a young-adult group segment. VANS is represented with multi-racial characteristics, however it is predominant the white ethnic group; it is also seen characteristics of urban livelihood and apparently a middle-class income due to the not pretentious and “careless” appearance.

On the other hand psychographic aspects that talk about symbolic attributes in the brands could also be identified. Regardless of not being a formal system of communication, music has the

potential to communicate extramusical information such as lifestyle associated to musicians, political beliefs, values or consumption preferences of music-fans. Thus through the cognitive schemas of participants it was possible to identify that LACOSTE sneakers convey the glamorous lifestyle of musician-celebrities based upon sophistication and hedonism. NIKE embodies the personality of hip-hop musicians (rappers), characterized for being a “masculine”, competent, tough and talented youth urban person. Lastly, VANS was projected as a working-class rock musician, with a sincere and not pretentious attitude that adopts the values of the skate culture of freedom from rules and independency.

As it is presented for each brand, music worked as a language with categorical information of existent stereotypes and cognitive schemas of lifestyle in musical-genres. The empirical findings give face-validity that brand knowledge on brand personality can be obtained by interpreting the extramusical information on music-genres. However, it is acknowledgeable that yet several theoretical and practical interrogations remain unanswered and deserve attention to gradually increase the applicability of music in brand image research. More on this is discussed in the next chapter.

## 7.2. Advantages and disadvantages of the methodology

Although the main purpose of this research was to investigate the potential to obtain brand knowledge from the perspective of “brands personified as musicians or music-fans”, this study also pays attention to the value and suitability of projective techniques and triangulation of data to uncover brand associations.

Both projective techniques, collages and associative tasks, complemented each other and with a holistic perspective it was possible to identify the convergence of information towards the musical genre to which each brand was associated. On the collages, LACOSTE was associated with artists of several musical genres but mostly top-charts artists, NIKE was clearly associated with “black-styles” such as Reggae and Rap and VANS towards Rock, Alternative-Rock and Rap. On the other side, through the associative tasks, LACOSTE was associated with the “Sophisticated” and “Pop” musical dimensions, NIKE with “Rap” and VANS with “Rock” and “Rap” in less degree. This convergence, besides of not necessarily clarifying the meaning of this associations in brand personality, provided validity and empirical support to the interpretations of the collages.

The triangulation of the methods mentioned above with Aaker (1997) brand personality scale (BPS) reduced ambiguity and incremented the scope of the interpretation of the characteristics of personality of musicians and listeners of the music-genres associated to the brands

The triangulation of data resulted in the benefits of reducing ambiguity, complementarity of data and the increase of credibility to explore the phenomenon of brand personification through music.

### 7.3. Thesis statement

The aim of this research was to explore the possibilities of obtaining brand knowledge when consumers' cognitive schemas regarding stereotypes of musicians or music fans in musical genres are used to illustrate and measure brand personality. Therefore, the use of music genres as CS to produce brand knowledge can provide insightful information on the lifestyle and type of user that buys, consumes or wears the brand. Extramusical information helps understand characteristics of BP through the lifestyle and profile of the musician or music-fan that was associated with the brand.

The main discoveries of this study (1) agree on the current state of the theory on BP which suggests that brands convey characteristics of human personality. (2) Through shared experiences and exposition to the brand and music, consumers form associations that construct the brand personality. (3) The capacity of some brands to project a brand personality within a musical genre could be due to the usage of the brand by a cultural group (i.e. skaters, urban African-Americans) that in addition have a close relation to a music-genre.

Lastly, the approach to the brand personification perspective of "the brand as a musician or music fan" reveals the potential of music to serve as categorized communication system that reveals demographic/evident and psychographic/non-evident associations and properties of BP, however the interconnection of several variables in consumers and the marketplace suggests that yet there is much to learn and understand on the brand-consumer-music relationship.

## 8. Final discussion

---

*This chapter shares the thoughts of what has been theoretically and practically learned in the development of this research project. In addition, suggestions for further research are also presented*

---

This research can be seen as a “Demo song” for an “album” of brand image research. It is a theoretical idea or example that needs to be polished for its “official release”. It aimed to open the possibilities of thinking in creative and insightful ways to investigate brand personality (BP) and its interaction with consumers’ acquired shared cognitive schemas of music and culture. It is in addition, an example of how existent methodology can be used and complemented, either with qualitative or quantitative approaches, to measure and illustrate BP.

This study resulted in the identification of interrogations and opportunities that the scope and narrowness of the thesis couldn’t address. However, it can be pointed out the direction in which researchers and practitioners have to go in order to expand existent knowledge. Therefore, in the next lines the author suggests and reveals “compositional arrangements” needed to polish the “raw version” of the use of music as a non-formal system of communication to talk, investigate and measure brand personality and its impact on consumer behavior.

### 8.1. Limitations and recommendations

#### 8.1.1. The perspective of listeners of hip-hop in Sweden

The personification of brands done in this research was limited to the perceptions of primarily hip-hop music fans. This population was selected on purpose due to (1) the clear profile of their musical preferences, (2) their clear distinction from other type of listener thus marginalizing clearly other styles, (3) the symbolic benefits that sneakers have for them, (4) their knowledge of sneaker brands and advertising done and (5) for local accessibility and delimitation.

Even though they represent an ideal segment to investigate sneaker brands, the results are primed with their cognitive schemas on stereotypes of musicians, music-fans and lifestyles in musical-genres; and thus it is not possible to generalize or apply these results in other consumers or product categories.

The author considered the need of comparing the perceptions of other cultural segments of consumers, however due to time constrain and possible broadening of the research scope, the comparison was not pursued further. The results obtained on one aspect could be considered congruent and homogeneous due to the common characteristics of the population study. Most of them were university students living in one Swedish city with a common interest in hip-hop music and sneakers. They could also convey homogenized cognitive characteristics due to their



socio-economic status. The scope of this research would have resulted different if other consumer segments would have been taken in consideration, for example young urban workers. Nevertheless, further research can enrich this understanding by studying two or more groups of consumers with different musical cognitive schemas. It could contribute to understand why and how for some consumers musical associations are relevant or how they impact on their preferences.

### **8.1.2. The “sneaker brand” and the “mother brand”**

This study was limited on the associations and factors behind the interaction of the associations of the “mother brands” (i.e. LACOSTE) and the brand as a categorical product (i.e. LACOSTE sneaker shoes).

Brand extensions differ on the personality that the mother-brand or other extensions can have, and they impact on consumers’ attitudes (Martinez et al. 2009). For example, NIKE’s Air Jordan® and Air Max® against NIKE Eyewear® or NIKE Golf®. It was not the scope of this research to consider the influence and transfer of associations among brand levels, however this issue points out that further research has to be aware of the influence of this factors in the results of the personification of the brand.

On the other hand, further research should approach the investigation of BP with less known brands. The brands chosen for this study were extremely well-know, although they were chosen purposeful, less-known brands or neutral brands would give interesting results on the implications that musical associations have for new brands in the market.

### **8.1.3. Deeper micro-cultural interpretation**

This study explored and exemplified the possibilities of using music as cultural cognitive schema to construct the personification of a brand using as interpretation tool the information provided in the semi-structured interviews (see chapter 4) and the most relevant theoretical framework on music as stereotype factor, personality classification and cultural cognitive schema (North et al., 1999; Rentfrow & Gosling; 2003; Schwarz & Fouts, 2003; Shevy, M. 2008). However, it was notable a lack on deeper meanings of the consumer studied regarding their cognitive schemas of music. As an example, it would have been valuable to know and confirm for instance why the African-American rapper Sean Combs (Puff Daddy) didn’t appear on NIKE’s collages when he is an emblematic figure of a successful entrepreneurial hip-hop artist. Could it be that Sean Combs is seen as a cultural outsider for “turning rebellion into a profitable commodity” (Brym, R. 2006), and thus more suitable for luxury and sophisticated brands such as LACOSTE? Isn’t his personality compatible with NIKE, a brand that through sneaker models such as Air Jordan® or Air Force 1® represents the core and pioneer of the “basics” of the sneaker fashion? (Cunningham, C., 2008).

Future research aiming to understand the role of music in the interpretation of associations will require that future researchers approach with a “deeper and customized” semiotic interpretation of what extramusical information is evoked by music on the consumer group studied.

Lastly, a potential to comprehend and understand further the “emotional” side of music in BP was left out due to the interplay of several theoretical and practical factors to produce sounded statements. On section 5.3 of this paper is presented the results of the associative task using music where the aim was to find out if characteristics of musical-genres communicated and confirmed other characteristics found on the artists in the collages or the Aaker (1997) BPS. Nevertheless, this research field represents the potential of the investigation of audio-branding, where music in its acoustic form has the potential to evoke emotions and experiences embedded in its personality (Fulberg, 2003; Wilson, 2003).

## 8.2. External implications

The implications and applications of the brand knowledge obtained find a relevant role on the work of brand architects such as brand managers, advertising planners and creative direction. For instance, the visualization of a brand through the Aaker (1997) dimensions in combination with the aspects of musical personality, are a good start for idea and strategy generation on the brand communication.

However, there is much to learn on how music influences consumers’ preferences and decisions when advertising is matched with the proper music style (Zander, 2006). When music takes a prominent role we can picture that this research can provide a valid strategy to decide what song, artist or music-style shall be used in the 30-seconds of the TV or radio Ad This brand knowledge not only gives practitioners a tool for research and decision making. It is also an approach that will go beyond putting “nice music”. This research suggests that investigating the values and emotions that music communicate to consumers, will increase the effectiveness of relational and emotional marketing tactics.

If future research continues investigating the role that music plays on the construction of BP, we could see soon that certainly, it will be possible to ask consumers: “Tell me the music the brand likes, to get to know who the brand is”.

## 9. References

- Aaker, D. (1991). *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the value of a brand name*. New York: The Free Press (Macmillan Inc.).
- Aaker, J. (1997). Dimensions of brand personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. XXXIV (August 1997), 347-356.
- Aaker, J. L., Benet-Martínez, V., & Garolera, J. (2001). Consumption symbols as carriers of culture: a study of Japanese and Spanish brand personality constructs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81(3), 492-508.
- Arthur, D. M. (2009). *The symbolic consumption of subcultures: An ethnographic study of the Australian Hip Hop Culture*. Adelaide: The University of Adelaide Business School.
- Azoulay, A., & Kapferer, J.-N. (2004). *Do brand personality scales really measure brand personality?* Paris: HEC, Graduate School of Business.
- Batra, R. & Ahtola, O. T. (1990). Measuring the Hedonic and Utilitarian Sources of Consumer Attitudes. *Kluwer Academic Publishers, Marketing Letters*, 159-170.
- Bhat, S. & Reddy, S. (1998) "Symbolic and Functional Positioning of Brands," *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 15 (1): 32-44
- Bourdieu, P. (1979). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*. Editions de Minuit , 404-428.
- Brandt, Per Aage (2008). Music and How We Became Human – A view from Cognitive Semiotics. Exploring Imaginative Hypotheses. In (eds.) Colwyn Trevarthen and Stephen Malloch, *Communicative Musicality*, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Brown, S. (2010). Where the wild brands are: some thoughts on anthropomorphic marketing. *The Marketing Review*. Vol. 10 (3), 209-224.
- Robert J. Brym Hip-Hop from Dissent to Commodity - A Note on Consumer Culture. In: Robert Brym et al. (Hrsg): *Sociology: Your Compass for a New World*, Chapter 34.
- Buil, I., Martínez, E., & Pina, J. M. (2008). A Model of Brand Extension Evaluation Applied to Goods and Services. *Revista Europea de Dirección y Economía de la Empresa*, 167-186.
- Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., Guido, G. (2001), "Brand Personality: How to Make the Metaphor Fit?" *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 22, 377-395.
- Choi, S. M., & Rifon, N. J. (2007). Who is the celebrity in advertising? Understanding dimensions of celebrity images. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 40(2), 304-324.
- Cryer, P. (2006). *The research student's guide to success*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Cunningham, C. (2008). You are what is on your feet: Men and the sneaker subculture. *Journal of Culture & Retail Image*, 1-6.
- Dann, S., & Jensen, E.-B. (2007). Brand Personalities with Real Personality: Strategies for Individual Brands and Branded Individuals in the Entertainment Industry. ANZMAC 2007, 10th Anniversary: Reputation, Responsibility & Relevance (ss. 1636-1643). Otago: Australian & New Zealand Marketing Academy.
- Davis, D. F., Golicic, S. L., & Boerstler, C. N. (2010). Benefits and challenges of conducting multiple methods research in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 1-13.
- Davies, G., Chun, R., da Silva, R. V. (2001). The personification metaphor as a measurement approach for corporate reputation. *Corporate Reputation Review*. Vol. 4 (2) 113-127
- Dimitriadis, G. (2009). *Performing identity performing culture. hip hop as text, pedagogy and lived practice*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

- Dobni, D. and G. Zinkhan (1990), "In Search of Brand Image: A Foundation Analysis," In M.E. Goldberg, G. Gorn, and R. Pollay eds., *Advances in Consumer Research*, Association for Consumer Research, Provo, UT, no. 17, 1990, pp. 110 - 119.
- Donoghue, S. (2000). Projective techniques in consumer research. *Journal of family ecology and consumer sciences* , 42-53.
- Durgee, Jeffrey F. (1988), "Understanding Brand Personality," *Journal of ConsumerMarketing*, Vol.5, Été, pp.21-25
- Dyson, M. E. (2007). *Know what I mean?*. New York: Basic Civitas Books.
- Freiling, T. H., & Forbes, L. P. (2005a). An examination of brand personality through methodological triangulation. *Brand Management* , 148-162.
- Freiling, T. H., & Forbes, L. P. (2005b). An empirical analysis of the brand personality effect. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 404-413
- Fried, C. B. (2003) Stereotypes of Music Fans: Are Rap and Heavy Metal Fans a Danger to Themselves or Others? *Journal of Media Psychology*. Vol. 8 (3) 1-27
- Fulberg, P. (2003). Using sonic branding in the retail environment - An easy and effective way to create consumer loyalty while enhancing the in-store experience. *Journal of Consumer Behavior* , 3 (2), 193-198.
- Garro, L.C. (2000). Remembering what one knows and the construction of the past: A comparison of Cultural Consensus Theory and Cultural Schema Theory. *Ethos*, 28.3, 275-319.
- Goin, P. (2001). Visual Literacy. *The Geographical Review*, 363-369.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report: 8 (4)*, 597-607
- Gorn, G. J. (1982). The effects of Music in Advertising on Choice Behavior: A Classical Conditioning Approach. *Journal of Marketing* , 94-101.
- Griffiths, N. K. (2010). Posh music should equal posh dress: an investigation into the concert dress and physical appearance of female soloists. *Psychology of Music*. 159-177
- Hayes, Alford, Silver & York (2006). Looks matter in developing consumer-brand relationships. *Journal of product and brand management*. Vol. 15 (5), 306-315
- Herz, M. (2010). Exploring consumers' brand image perceptions with Collages – Implications on Data Collection, Data Analysis and Mixed Method approaches. In W. Mayerhofer & M. Secka (Eds.), *Aktuelle Beiträge zur Markenforschung: Tagungsband des 3. Internationalen Markentags* (p. 121-143). Heidelberg: Gabler.
- Hebdige, D. (1979). *Subcultures: the meaning of style*. New York: Methuen & Co.
- Hofstede, A., van Hoof, J., Walenberg, N., & de Jong, M. (2007). Projective techniques for brand image research: Two personification-based methods explored. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 300-309.
- Jick, T. D. (1979). Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Triangulation in Action. *Administrative Science Quarterly* , 602-611.
- John, DR, Loken, B., Kim, K., and Monga, AB (2006). "Brand Concept Maps: A Methodology for Identifying Brand Association Networks." *Journal of Marketing Research*, 43: 549–563
- Jourdain, R. (1997). *Music, the brain and ecstasy: how music captures our imagination*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Keller, K. L. (2001). Building customer-based brand equity: A blueprint for creating strong brands. *Marketing Management 10* (July/August) 15–19
- Kirkwood, J., & Campbell-Hunt, C. (2007). Using multiple paradigm methodologies to gain new insights into entrepreneurial motivations. *Journal of Enterprising Culture* , 219-241.

- Koll, O. & Kreuzer M. (2010). Multi-method research on consumer-brand associations: comparing free associations, storytelling and collages. *Psychology & Marketing*, 27(6), 584-602.
- Laing, D. (1978). Interpreting Punk Rock. *Marxism Today*. 123-128
- Levitin, D. (2006). *This is your brain on music*. The science of an obsession. New York: Dutton/Penguin.
- Levy, S. J. (1959). Symbols For Sale. in S. J. Levy, Brands, Consumers, Symbols & Research (ss. 203-212). London: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Low, G. S., & Lamb Jr., C. W. (2000). The measurement and dimensionality of brand associations. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 9 (6), 350-368.
- Martínez, E., Montaner, T., Pina, J.M., 2009. Brand extension feedback: The role of advertising. *Journal of Business Research* 62 (3), 305-313.
- Mathiesen, K. (2007). When brands connect: Feedback effects from the alliance between L'Oréal and Nestlé to create Innéov. Bergen: Norges Handelshoyskole.
- Norman, W.T. (1963), "Toward an adequate taxonomy of personality attributes: replicated factor structure in peer nomination personality ratings", *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 66 No. 6, pp. 574-83.
- North, A. C. (2007). Lifestyles correlates of musical preference: 2. Media, leisure, time and music. *Journal of Psychology of Music*, Vol. 35 (2), 179-200.
- North, A. C., Hargreaves, D. J., & McKendrick, J. (1999). The influence of in-store music on wine selections. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 271-276.
- Opoku, R. A., Abratt, R., Bendixen, M., & Leyland, P. (2007). Communicating brand personality: are the web sites doing the talking for food SMEs? *Qualitative Marketing Research: An International Journal*. Vol. 10 (4) 362-374.
- Park, C. W., & Young, S. M. (1986). Consumer response to television commercials: The impact of involvement and background music on brand attitude formation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, XXIII (February), 11-24.
- Phau, I., & Lau, K., C. (2000). Conceptualizing brand personality: A review and research propositions. *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing*, Vol. 9 (1), 52-69
- Randel, D. M. (2003). *The Harvard dictionary of music*. 4th Edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Rentfrow, P.J. & Gosling, S.D. (2003). The do-re-mi's of everyday life: The structure and personality correlates of music preferences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Vol. 84, 1236-1256.
- Rentfrow, P. J., & Gosling, S. D. (2007). The content and validity of music-genre stereotypes among college students. *Psychology of Music*, 35 (2), 306-326.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research methods for business students* (5th Edition). Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Sernhede, O. (2002). *Alienation is my nation: Hiphop och unga mäns utanförskap i Det-Nya Sverige*. Uddevalla: Ordfront.
- Scaruffi, P. (2003). *A history of rock music 1951-2000*. Lincoln: iUniverse.
- Schäfer, T., & Sedlmeier, P. (2009). From the function of music to music preferences. *Psychology of Music*, 1-22.
- Schlesinger, M. W., & Cervera, A. (2008). A comparative study between ideal and perceived brand personality as applied to airline companies: le cas des compagnies aériennes. *Innovar Journal*, 18 (31), 61-76.

- Schwartz, K., & Fouts, G. (2003). Music Preferences, Personality Style, and Developmental. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 32 (3), 205-213.
- Schroeder, J. E. (2005). The artist and the brand. *European Journal of Marketing*, 39(11/12), 1291-1305.
- Shevy, M. (2008). Music genre as cognitive schema: extramusical associations with country and hip-hop music. *Psychology of music*, 477-498.
- Sköld, D., & Rehn, A. (2007). Makin' it, by keeping it real: street talk, rap music, and the forgotten entrepreneurship from "the hood". *Group & Organization Management*, 32(1), 50-78.
- Smothers, N. (1993), "Can products and brands have charisma?". In D. Aaker and A. Biel (ed) Brand equity and advertising. Hillsdale, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Solomon, M. R. (2007). *Consumer behavior. Buying, having and being* (7th Edition). New Jersey: Pearson Education Limited.
- Stahl, G. (1999) Still 'winning space?': Updating subcultural theory. In *visible culture: An electronic journal for visual studies*, 2, Article 3. Retrieved December, 1, 2010, from [http://www.rochester.edu/in\\_visible\\_culture/issue2/stahl.htm](http://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/issue2/stahl.htm)
- Stewart, D. W. (2009). The role of method: some parting thoughts from a departing editor. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 381-383.
- Wagner, M. S. (2008). Dimensions of music: The effect of music/brand congruity on advertising and brand evaluations. The University of Michigan.
- Williams, E. (1998, March 26). Research and paradigms. Retrieved from [http://www.umdj.edu/idsweb/idst6000/williams\\_research+paradigms.htm](http://www.umdj.edu/idsweb/idst6000/williams_research+paradigms.htm)
- Wilson, S. (2003). The effect of music on perceived atmosphere and purchase intentions in a restaurant. *Psychology of music*, 93-112.
- Wilson, J. & Liu, J. (2009). 'The Pinocchio Effect', When Managing The Brand Creation Process, Across Cultures. *TMC Academic Journal. Vol. 4 (1)*, 45-58
- Zander, M. F. (2006). Musical influences in advertising: how music modifies first impressions of product endorsers and brands. *Psychology of Music*, 465-480.
- Zentner M., Grandjean D. & Scherer K. (2008). Emotions evoked by the sound of music: Characterization, classification and measurement. *American Psychological Association. Vol. 8 (4)*, 494-521

# APPENDIX

The following pages present the content of the appendix, which aims to provide material of reference related to the empirical study.

# A. Questionnaire for associative task with music

## "THE MUSIC ALBUM" sheet

Participant's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate "how probable" is that you will find the music style of the tracks played in the "music album released by each brand"  
 (mark only 1 option for each brand):

### Evaluation of Track #1

	Very Probably Not	Probably Not	Possibly	Very Probably	Definitely
NIKE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LACOSTE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VANS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Evaluation of Track #2

	Very Probably Not	Probably Not	Possibly	Very Probably	Definitely
NIKE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LACOSTE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VANS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Evaluation of Track #3

	Very Probably Not	Probably Not	Possibly	Very Probably	Definitely
NIKE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LACOSTE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VANS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Evaluation of Track #4

	Very Probably Not	Probably Not	Possibly	Very Probably	Definitely
NIKE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LACOSTE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VANS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Evaluation of Track #5

	Very Probably Not	Probably Not	Possibly	Very Probably	Definitely
NIKE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LACOSTE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VANS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Evaluation of Track #6

	Very Probably Not	Probably Not	Possibly	Very Probably	Definitely
NIKE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LACOSTE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VANS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



### Evaluation of Track #7

	Very Probably Not	Probably Not	Possibly	Very Probably	Definitely
NIKE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LACOSTE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VANS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Evaluation of Track #8

	Very Probably Not	Probably Not	Possibly	Very Probably	Definitely
NIKE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LACOSTE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VANS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Evaluation of Track #9

	Very Probably Not	Probably Not	Possibly	Very Probably	Definitely
NIKE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LACOSTE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VANS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Evaluation of Track #10

	Very Probably Not	Probably Not	Possibly	Very Probably	Definitely
NIKE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LACOSTE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VANS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Evaluation of Track #11

	Very Probably Not	Probably Not	Possibly	Very Probably	Definitely
NIKE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LACOSTE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VANS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Evaluation of Track #12

	Very Probably Not	Probably Not	Possibly	Very Probably	Definitely
NIKE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LACOSTE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VANS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please complete the following information about yourself:

1. What is your genre?  
Male   
Female
2. What is your year of birth? (Indicate the 4 digits, i.e. 1956)  
1986

## B. Semi-structured questionnaire used for the in-depth interviews

Participant's name: [REDACTED] B  
Date: 04/11/2015

PRELIMINARY STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE  
Master thesis research project conducted by José Enrique Leyva

**SECTION A** → Air Force design

A.1 Write the name of the first 6 brands of sneakers that comes to your mind?

- 1 Nike
- 2 Adidas
- 3 Reebok
- 4 Vans
- 5 DC Shoes
- 6 Etnies

**SECTION B**

B.1 Which brand(s) mentioned on A.1, do you think is/are the ones preferred and used among fans of hip-hop music or your group of friends who like to listen hip-hop? (just mention the relevant cases, if any)

- 1 Nike
- 2 Adidas
- 3 Reebok
- 4
- 5
- 6

Or:  None of them  All of them

B.2 List which brand(s) on A.1 have you personally wear during the last 2 years:

- 1 Nike
- 2 Reebok
- 3 Vans
- 4 Etnies
- 5
- 6

Or:  None of them  All of them

B.3 Which of the brand(s) you mentioned in A.1, do you think is/are NOT preferred or less preferred by hip-hop fans or your group of friends/colleagues who like to listen to hip-hop?

- 1 Vans
- 2 DC Shoes
- 3 Etnies
- 4
- 5
- 6

Or:  None of them  All of them

B.4 Imagine the hypothetical situation that a hip-hop fan was given 10 pair of sneakers for free; but she/he will reject or will throw to the garbage because of the brand? What this brand(s) will be?

Possibly, among others, DC Shoes, Etnies, Vans; nowadays however, depending on a number of factors, e.g.: location, (upbringing), neighbourhood, friends, etc

→ where you live / where u brought-up  
→ rock music association, advertising related

**SECTION C**

*casual, non-hip-hop, in Sweden*

C.1 Besides the fact that some of these brands are known worldwide; which of those brands do you think are WELL-KNOWN locally or with regional proximity to Sweden, and briefly explain why?

- |   |          |          |   |
|---|----------|----------|---|
| 1 | Nike     | because: | style, prestige, lifestyle, hip hop, availability |
| 2 | Adidas   | because: | simplistic, worn by many                          |
| 3 | Vans     | because: | comfort, skate                                    |
| 4 | DC shoes | because: | availability, skaters, comfort                    |
| 5 | Etnies   | because: |   |
| 6 |          | because: |   |

*skating in Sweden*

*leebok less recognized*

OR

- All of them, because: *available everywhere / continuous exposure to them by friends, TV, etc*
- None of them.

C.2 Can you cite advertising campaigns (i.e. print, TV...) of the brands mentioned on A.1, which was themed with hip-hop music or artists?

(Please explain in the following box)

*Adidas and Run DMC → Run DMC had the whole track suit by Adidas and the "shell top" sneakers which eventually became part of their identity*

*He He Magazines of famous people wearing them*

*→ type of adidas*

*← Nike especially*

- I can't identify any advertising campaign

*(i.e. mag) XXL, Source, Vibe*

C.3 Can you cite advertising campaigns (i.e. print, TV...) of other brands, which were themed with music CONTRASTINGLY DIFFERENT TO hip-hop music/artists?

(Please explain in the following box)

*Rock usually relates to skating which is usually connected to sneakers like DC Shoes, Vans, Etnies*

*I've seen some in Rock music videos & campaigns*

- I can't identify any advertising campaign

**SECTION D**

D.1 How much do you agree that: "sneakers are a fundamental product to express yourself and your musical taste"? (being 1= "I disagree completely" and 7= "I completely agree", mark one box)

- 1  2  3  4  5  6  7

*Just wearing good products.*

Thanks for participating! Please return the form to the interviewer.

Observations:

*- clarify Brand as personality!*