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Master Thesis

The effect of brand personality on brand-influencer congruence

An evaluation of brand personality as a driver of brand fit in alliances with social media influencers

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A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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ABSTRACT

Social media influencers have recently been studied from numerous angles. However, scientific literature still appears only to have scratched the surface when looking at influencers from the perspective of brand alliance and endorsement theory. Considering the growing importance of influencers in native advertisement, endorsement campaigns, and brand alliances in the form of co-developed and co-branded products, the relevance in further scientific insights regarding social media influencers becomes evident. Assessing collaborations with personal brands on social media, such as influencers, is still quite enigmatic for managers and marketers. Several studies have pointed out the impact of the perceived fit for traditional brand alliance attitude formation. However, there is still considerable uncertainty whether the overall congruence between brand and influencer is of very high or very low importance for influencer collaborations. This study addresses this ambiguity and examines whether brand personality fit (as a driver of brand congruence) is an essential factor to consider in endorsements alliances with social media influencers. The study tests, validates, and applies a holistic measurement scale by Geuens et al. (2009) to fictitious human brands (influencers) and a set of well-known sports apparel brands. The study then assesses the degree of dissimilarity in perceived brand personality. Finally, the study analyzes the effect of these dissimilarities on consumer attitudes toward brand alliances between them. The study reveals that the concept of brand personality fit is not always an adequate instrument to assess the potential of human brands for collaborations with a company.

INTRODUCTION

Does brand personality fit matter when a brand collaborates with a person, especially with the nowadays omnipresent social media influencers (SMI)? This question still has not been thoroughly answered by academic research. It has long been no secret that social networks are not only a helpful tool to connect people and to help them share or consume content and share their beliefs, ideas, and emotions (Bolton et al., 2013; Felix et al., 2017). Furthermore, from a marketing perspective, social networks have become a gigantic advertisement space with unique opportunities in terms of targeting, conversion rates, attractive ROI, and creative ways to engage with consumers (Alavi et al., 2019; Kakitek, 2018; Silva et al., 2020; Stubb et al., 2019; Woods, 2016). While the audience is constantly growing, the time spent on social media is also increasing year over year (Woods, 2016). There is not only a large audience on social media, but there is also the power of influence, with 74% of consumers relying on social media to influence their purchasing decisions (Bennet, 2014). In 2021, global social media advertising spending by companies worldwide is forecast to reach $153.7 billion (Statista, 2021). A report by Influencer Marketing Hub (2021) predicted the global influencer marketing industry to grow to approximately $13.8 billion in 2021. Companies have turned more and more to influencer marketing which allows them to reach audiences with attractive native advertisements that blend in with the SMI's native content. In a survey among over 5000 professionals, around 44% of respondents stated that they now dedicate a standalone budget exclusively to influencer marketing in 2021, and 90% of all respondents considered influencer marketing an effective marketing tool (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). However, one of the most critical questions regarding influencer marketing remains: how does one select the right influencer for a campaign? So far, academic literature has only loosely addressed this question. This thesis aims to determine whether the concept of brand-personality can serve as a guideline for marketers when selecting an influencer for a marketing campaign or a long-term collaboration. More specifically, the research question of this thesis is to determine if the managerial question whether the personality fit between one's brand and the SMI has an impact on consumers' evaluation of an influencer marketing campaign is relevant when a brand is considering collaborating with an SMI.

To provide a foundation for this thesis, the author had to gain an overview of some of the key findings in various research areas: endorsement theory, brand alliance theory, brand personality, and studies on influencer marketing.

Taylor & Carlson (2021) claim that the internet and social media have fundamentally changed how advertising is defined. These changes led Kerr & Richards (2021) to update the very definition of advertising to "paid, owned, and earned mediated communication activated by an identifiable brand and intent on persuading the consumer to make some cognitive, affective, or behavior change, now or in the future" (p. 177). Their updated definition embraces the significance of earned media aside from paid and owned media and thus reflects the importance of eWOM in advertisement nowadays. Chu & Kim (2018) highlight the need for more research on eWOM in the context of native advertising (of which influencer marketing is a part). Likewise, Taylor & Carlson (2021) highlight the topic of SMIs and the measures of influencer marketing effectiveness as one of the subject areas in desperate need of more extensive future research.

Endorsement theory has long established how companies use endorsement campaigns to leverage the power of a prominent personal brand to draw attention to brands, products, and services (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015; Schouten et al., 2020). As Wood & Burkhalter (2014) have shown, celebrities often include brand names or pictures of brands in their social media postings, highlighting the role of social media in current endorsement campaigns. The widely accepted academic definition of the term "celebrity" as "any person who enjoys public recognition" (McCracken, 1989, p. 310) embraces the SMIs, which are nowadays so prevalent in endorsements campaigns. With the advent of social media and small and SMIs, endorsement theory has seen a resurgence in recent decades and has been explored extensively in marketing research (Amos et al., 2008; Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Erdogan, 1999; Erdogan et al., 2001; Schouten et al., 2020). Endorsements have been studied with regard to various dependent variables such as audience attitude towards the ad (Kamins & Gupta, 1994), brand recall (Misra & Beatty, 1990), brand image (Lee & Thorson, 2008), or purchase intention (Ohanian, 1991). Existing studies have generally focused on the effectiveness of endorsers in the endorsement process through two models known as the source attractiveness model and the source credibility model. These models are essential for ruling out the effects of variables other than brand personality fit in this study's experiment. Another concept from endorsement theory is the match-up hypothesis, which can be described as an effort to match the image of the product or service to that of the endorser to create more favorable responses from consumers (Misra & Beatty, 1990). This is precisely the facet of endorsement theory to which this study can be attributed.

Scholars in the research field of brand alliance theory have studied the effects of combining two or more brands and presenting them in a combined form to the consumer (Rao et al., 1999). Several researchers argue that in endorsement campaigns, brands use a personal brand to associate themselves with the qualities of the endorser (Erdogan, 1999; Erdogan et al., 2001). James (2006) accordingly categorizes endorsement campaigns as a form of symbolic brand alliance. He argues that personal brands of celebrities are used by brands to add meaning to the brand alliance by transferring the associations of the partner brand (in this case, the endorser) – a well-accepted effect in brand alliances that was first noted in a study by Simonin & Ruth (1998). As Kupfer et al. (2018) highlighted, one question that is still not fully answered by academic research: "what are valid fit criteria for brand managers to identify good brand–influencer matches?" (p. 41). This study addresses the question by Kupfer et al. (2018) and investigate whether brand personality fit is a valid criterion for determining brand influencer fit. Over the past decade, SMIs have made their mark in the realm of YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and Twitch (MAD//Fest., 2020), and influencer led campaigns have spiked since August 2020 (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). SMIs have recently been studied in their role as endorsers from various perspectives, such as source characteristics, content attributes, and psychological factors (see Vrontis et al., 2021, for a recent literature review). There have been very few academic studies on the brand personality of SMIs. Moreover, as with personal brands in general, existing research seems to focus on other source characteristics (e.g., credibility, attractiveness, expertise, and popularity) rather than brand personality (see Vrontis et al., 2021). Breves et al. (2019) highlighted the academic uncertainty of whether brand fit with SMIs is either of very high or very low importance for influencer collaborations. This study addresses this ambiguity and examines whether brand personality fit (as a driver of brand fit) is an important factor to consider in endorsements alliances with SMIs.

As highlighted above, there is still much ambiguity on whether brand congruence plays a role in endorsement campaigns using SMIs and whether brand personality fit should be considered an effective driver of brand congruence in this context.

Based on the match-up hypothesis, this study uses a within-subjects design and quantitative data to examine three brands with two SMI partners with different degrees of brand personality congruence to address this ambiguity. A paired-samples *t*-test is used to compare the brand alliances for each brand, and a one-way repeated-measures ANOVA is used to compare the brand alliance ratings across the three brands.

Examining whether brand personality fit impacts alliance evaluation has practical implications from the perspective of companies, SMIs, marketers, and influencer agencies. The study investigates whether it is appropriate for brands to evaluate an alliance between brands and SMIs based on brand personality fit. It thus helps brand managers to weigh this criterion against other alliance-related advantages, such as cost reductions or access to the partner brand's social media power. These insights should help brand managers to decide whether such benefits can outweigh the disadvantages of pairing two incongruent brands.

This thesis opens with a literature review of the research areas as mentioned earlier. Then, the conceptual framework and hypotheses of this thesis are outlined. After that, the methodology is described, and the reader is informed about the data collection, sampling method, and phases of the study. Subsequently, the results of the analyses are presented and discussed. Finally, the limitations of the research and future research avenues are pointed out.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is necessary to consider some key findings from four different research areas to provide a solid foundation for this thesis: First, some key results of endorsement theory that are relevant for this study are summarized. A closer look at the research findings provided by academic literature on brand alliance theory is also necessary to understand how host- and partner-brand and the brand-fit between them can influence the consumers' attitudes towards an alliance. Additionally, since brand personality is the focus of this thesis, the essential facets of this research area are considered. To conclude the literature review, some characteristics of social media as an advertising space are highlighted, and extant studies in the field of influencer marketing relevant to this thesis are summarized. In this final section, the concept of SMIs described by other researchers is outlined, and the logical connection to the other three research areas is established.

ENDORSEMENT THEORY

As Erdogan (1999) noted over 20 years ago, celebrity endorsements have long been an established method in marketing. Endorsement campaigns are employed to harvest celebrities' power to direct attention to promote brands, products, and services (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015; Schouten et al., 2020). A study by Elberse & Verleun (2012) shows that endorsement campaigns can boost sales in an absolute sense and relative to the firm's competitors. Celebrity endorsement is therefore frequently used in marketing campaigns to increase market share. McCracken (1989) had initially defined celebrity endorsers as "any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement" (p. 310). Bergkvist & Zhou (2016) criticized that this definition only partially encompasses the extent of celebrity endorsements nowadays because they appear in many other forms than advertisement. It should be noted that this depends on which definition of advertising one uses. Bergkvist & Zhou's criticism does not apply if one uses an updated definition of advertising that includes earned content, such as the one by Kerr & Richards (2021) mentioned above. As Wood & Burkhalter (2014) have shown, celebrities often include brand names or pictures of brands in their own social media postings. Keel & Nataraajan (2012) point to celebrity-branded products as a form of endorsement that goes beyond simple endorsement in advertisement. Bergkvist & Zhou (2016) also note that it seems limiting to include only consumer goods as celebrities also endorse business-to-business products and services. That said, it should be noted that McCracken's description of the term celebrity as any person who enjoys public recognition did already embrace the rise of the nowadays so prevalent

SMIs. Academic studies have established that celebrity endorsements can transfer a positive, but also negative image and characteristics of a celebrity onto the brand that is endorsed and have confirmed that a transfer of positive attributes can significantly increase advertising effectiveness (Amos et al., 2008; Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Erdogan, 1999). Wood & Burkhalter (2014) have shown that celebrities have recently promoted brands to a growing extent on social media. Celebrity endorsements have thus become increasingly important in recent decades and have been discussed extensively in marketing research (Amos et al., 2008; Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Erdogan, 1999; Erdogan et al., 2001; Schouten et al., 2020). An impact of celebrity endorsement has been found on various dependent variables such as audience attitude towards the ad (Kamins & Gupta, 1994), brand recall (Misra & Beatty, 1990), brand image (Lee & Thorson, 2008) or purchase intention (Ohanian, 1991). Previous studies have generally focused on two models to explain endorser effectiveness: the source attractiveness model and the source credibility model (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Erdogan, 1999; Nanda & Khandelwal, 2017). Solomon (2019) underlines that "credibility and attractiveness are two particularly important source characteristics" (p. 296) and argues that both have a fundamental impact on how much we either like or believe the communicator. It is difficult to attribute this present study about brand personality fit between endorser (SMI) and endorsed brand into one of these two streams of research. In contrast, the product adaptation hypothesis, described as an attempt to adapt the image of the product or service to that of the endorser, corresponds precisely to this study about brand personality fit (Misra & Beatty, 1990).

Source credibility

The source credibility model gives us insight into how people's perceptions of an endorser's credibility affect the effectiveness of endorsement messages. According to Solomon (1996), the dimension of source credibility refers to a communicator's expertise and trustworthiness (p. 296). Erdogan (1999) summarizes trustworthiness as honesty, integrity, and credibility of the endorser, while he defines expertise as the degree to which the endorser is considered knowledgeable and experienced enough to evaluate a product or service accurately. Source credibility impacts the consumers' belief that the communicator is competent and that he or she can provide us with the required information when attempting to evaluate competing products. Solomon also points out that the issue of source credibility has recently gained traction with the trend toward native advertising (i.e., content that resembles the original content of a website, blog, or social media feed, see Wojdynski & Golan, 2016). Although source credibility has been analyzed from different angles, there is still no consensus on its main determinants. Some scholars such as Smith (1973) and Friedman et al. (1978) have found that the endorser's

trustworthiness is the most significant determinant of credibility. Ohanian (1991), however, found no correlation between trustworthiness and consumer purchase intention. Deshpandé & Stayman (1994) found that trustworthiness is influenced by the ethnic background of endorsers since people tend to believe endorsers who belong to their own ethnic group. Priester & Petty (2003) have demonstrated that the trustworthiness of an endorser decreases if he or she endorses too many products. Regarding perceived endorser expertise, studies have shown that it positively affects product attitudes and purchase intentions (e.g., Ohanian, 1991; see also Schouten et al., 2020).

Endorser-brand congruence

Several academic researchers have reasoned that celebrity-brand congruence is a critical determinant of endorsement effectiveness (e.g., Till et al., 2008; Till & Busler, 2000). An underlying rationale for this can be found in the theory of social adaptation, which suggests that the efficiency of an endorsement message depends on the extent to which the advertiser's image, personality, or expertise matches the advertised product or brand (e.g., Basil, 1996; Kelman, 1961). In addition, attribution theory suggests that consumers may believe that the advertiser is intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated when promoting a brand congruent with his image (Mishra et al., 2015). Breves et al. (2019) highlight that there is still some disagreement in the scientific community about the extent to which these findings are transferable to SMIs. They summarize two opposed schools of thought that argue for either very high or very low importance of congruence with SMIs relative to other endorsers: On the one hand, the impact of congruence should be higher for SMIs because consumers see them as part of a particular community. They do not necessarily see a persuasive intent behind an SMI's communication as they expect SMIs to provide information about products that are relevant to their community (Evans et al., 2017). However, if consumers perceive a mismatch between the brand and the influencer, they might will suspect a purely financial motivation behind the endorsement and perceive the influencer as less credible (Koernig & Boyd, 2009). On the other hand, Breves et al. (2019) argue that the numerous interactions and personal communication between SMIs and their followers may overshadow congruence issues.

BRAND ALLIANCE THEORY

Brand alliances involve deliberately combining two or more brands and presenting them in a combined form to the consumer (Rao et al., 1999). Newmeyer et al. (2018) note that the modern market is flooded with brand alliances in various forms and with different strategic orientations. They have tried to categorize these multiple forms according to their level of integration into

the following typologies: co-development, ingredient branding, component branding, brand bundling, co-promotion, and co-location. These different categories all have different levels of integration, meaning different degrees to which the partner brands are physically and collectively incorporated into the brand alliance's offerings (Newmeyer et al., 2014). The level of integration ranges from very low, where the brands are almost entirely independent and separated in physical form and function, to very high, where the brands are merged to form one so that it is practically impossible to distinguish them (Newmeyer et al. 2018). Physical integration occurs when both brands provide components for a new product on which both brands are referenced (Rao et al., 1999; Simonin & Ruth, 1998), or when products from two or more brands are bundled and offered together (Simonin & Ruth, 1998). However widespread in brand alliances with traditional brands, physical integration is difficult to apply in the context of alliances with personal brands. On the other hand, "integration in function refers to how dependent the brands are on each other for the offering to work properly and offer the highest level of utility" (Newmeyer et al., 2018, p. 277). Aside from the categorization according to their level of integration, brand alliances can also be categorized by their form into physical and symbolic brand alliances (James, 2006). In symbolic brand alliances, partner brands are used to provide additional meaning to the consumer through associations that are transferred to the alliance. In this framework, James (2006) already considers a simple celebrity endorsement campaign as a form of symbolic brand alliance. To substantiate this, he refers to Erdogan (1999), who argued that in endorsement campaigns, brands use a celebrity to associate themselves with the qualities of the endorser. As James (2006) argues, personal brands of celebrities are used by brands to add meaning to the brand alliance by transferring the associations of the partner brand (in this case, the endorser). The effect of association transfer in brand alliances was first noted in a study by Simonin & Ruth (1998).

Co-development

As was highlighted in the previous chapter, celebrity co-branding of products is prevalent in many endorsement campaigns nowadays. Brand alliances between traditional and personal brands (celebrities and SMIs) often go beyond simple co-branding and frequently occur in the form of co-development. According to Newmeyer et al. (2018), co-development represents the highest level of integration. In this form of alliances, the cooperating brands pool their resources to develop a product jointly and deliberately market it under both brand names. The level of integration and invested resources by the SMI might be disputable in the context of co-development between brands and SMIs. What is clear is that co-development undoubtedly takes place in many brand alliances between traditional brands and celebrities or SMIs. Prominent

examples include the iconic Adidas Yeezy shoes designed by musician Kanye West (Adidas Group, 2016) or the collaboration PUMA x Pamela Reif between Puma and the German fitness influencer Pamela Reif (Puma, 2021). As illustrated in a study by Kupfer et al. (2018), this widespread type of brand alliance between traditional and personal brands can exploit a celebrities' or SMIs' influence and reach on social media to boost sales of their composite product. As Kupfer et al. (2018) highlighted, one question in relation to SMIs that is still is not fully answered is "what are valid fit criteria for brand managers to identify good brand–influencer matches?" (p. 41). This study examines brand alliances in the light of endorsement messages for co-developed products. Alliances between brands and fictitious SMIs with varying degrees of similarities regarding their respective brand personality are used to address the question that Kupfer et al. (2018) and investigate whether brand personality fit is a valid criterion for determining brand influencer fit.

Market Development (Using the Partner Brand's Social Media Power)

In their study, Kupfer et al. (2018) have taken a closer look at the role of a partner brand's social media power potential on product sales. To estimate social media power potential, the authors have used the size of the celebrity's reach on social media (size of his or her follower base) and the level of activity of his or her followers on his or her social media page (engagement rate). Their research provides evidence of a positive link between the partner brand's social media power potential and the economic success of the brand alliance. It is unclear to what extent Kupfer et al.'s (2018) results are caused by the sheer reach of allied personal brands on social media or whether the reach of personal brands also does signal trustworthiness and credibility. De Veirman et al.'s (2017) study suggests that a SMIs' number of followers affects consumers' attitudes towards SMIs and that perceptions of popularity can lead consumers to attribute opinion leadership to the SMIs in question. In particular, the results of De Veirman et al. (2017) should be considered in this study's stimulus material.

Brand fit

As highlighted earlier, the drivers of brand–SMI fit are still not fully understood. A closer look at the drivers of brand fit in the context of traditional brand alliances will help to understand this issue better. Broniarczyk & Alba (1994) indicated that when two or more brands are presented jointly or in the context of one another, both brands' evaluations are likely to be elicited in addition to certain stored brand-specific associations. If the two images are somehow inconsistent, consumers might activate a causal or attributional search (Folkes, 1988; Keller & Aaker, 1992), through which they are likely to question why these two brands are associated.

Several studies have analyzed the impact of brand fit on brand alliance evaluation. The most important being the studies by Simonin & Ruth (1998), Arnett et al. (2010), Lanseng & Olsen (2012) and van der Lans et al. (2014). Arnett et al. (2010) have examined the role of perceived fit between the partnering brands on purchase intention. They show that brand equity of both alliance partners influences the attitude towards the brand alliance and that if the perceived brand fit is high, the alliance offers both participants a method to improve their brand equity. They also found perceived fit to be a moderator of the relationship between attitude towards alliance and purchase intentions. Their results suggest that brand managers should concentrate on finding partners that consumers perceive as fitting well with their brands to ensure a positive outcome. As extant research has shown, brand fit in brand alliances can be based on various dimensions such as "category fit, brand associations, consumer goals, culture, product user, product usage [or] self-representation" (Loken et al., 2008; Martin et al., 2005; Martin & Stewart, 2001). Other researchers have identified country of origin as a driver of brand fit (Bluemelhuber et al., 2007). These findings on possible bases of brand fit will be considered in this study's stimulus material. Simonin & Ruth (1998) determined in their study of spillover effects that "both product fit and brand fit significantly affect attitudes toward the alliance" (p. 40). Additionally, the two authors show that, in addition to brand fit and product fit, the pre-alliance evaluations of both brands are significantly and positively related to brand alliance evaluations. Lanseng & Olsen (2012) examined how both product category fit and brand concept consistency (concept fit) affect brand alliance evaluations. Their study provides additional empirical support for the hypothesis that perceptions of product category fit have important implications for evaluations of brand alliances, further underlining the importance of keeping this aspect constant in this study. Lanseng & Olsen's investigation of the effects of brand concept consistency (i.e., fitting brand concepts) considered whether the two allied brands had either functional or expressive brand concepts. They found that brand concept consistency had an impact on alliance evaluations for all concept combinations except for the expressive-expressive combinations. Van der Lans et al. (2014) have studied the impact of brand personality on brand fit in brand alliances. More specifically, they have examined the effects of overall dissimilarity in brand personality scores between two partner brands. Van der Lans et al. (2014) have used Aaker's (1997) dimensions of brand personality to measure the brand personality scores of 100 selected brands. They have then used these brands to study more than 1000 brand alliance combinations amongst them. To compute the overall dissimilarities in brand personality of each alliance, the researchers used the Euclidean distance between the latent brand personality scores of the respective two partner brands. Their study

has found "a strong negative effect […] of overall dissimilarity between brand personality dimensions on the evaluation of brand alliances" (p. 560). Von Mettenheim & Wiedmann (2021) state that since "brand personality is regularly used as a vehicle to assess how similar (or dissimilar) a brand is to another entity […] it also appears to be well suited for a comparison between a brand and an influencer" (p. 2). To the best of the author's knowledge, no other studies aside from the one by von Mettenheim & Wiedmann (2021) (who have used another brand personality scale) have so far tried to verify the results by Van der Lans et al. (2014) in this context. Van der Lans et al. (2014) have tested the robustness of their results by including attitude towards the brand and brand value in dollars reported in industry reports. They have concluded that neither brand value nor attitude toward the brand affected the explanatory power of overall brand personality dissimilarity on brand alliance evaluations.

BRAND PERSONALITY

According to Avis & Aitken (2015), the term brand personality was coined as early as 1955 by Gardner & Levy. It has since then been mentioned in several scientific publications, long before a recognized scale for its measure had been developed (D. A. Aaker, 1991, 1992; J. L. Aaker, 1995; Blackston, 1993; Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). Aaker (1992, 1992) conceptualized brand personality as a distinct type of brand association and a component of brand equity. Keller (2013) also describes brand personality as an essential dimension of consumer-based brand equity. He explains that "the power of a brand lies in what customers have learned, heard, seen and felt about the brand as a result of their direct or indirect experience with it" (pp. 68-69). Therefore, it appears that according to Keller, brand personality is generally best understood from the recipient's (i.e., consumer's) perspective rather than from the sender's (i.e., brand's) side. It is interesting to point out that this view is not entirely uncontended in scientific literature. Kapferer (2008) argues that brand personality characterizes the sender, while identity dimensions of reflection (i.e., the way in which the consumer wishes to be seen as a result of using a brand) represent the receiver (pp. 182-187). According to Kapferer (2008), brand personality would be best understood from the sender's side (i.e., how is the brand representing itself, as opposed to what associations the brand triggers in consumers). According to Geuens et al. (2009), Kapferer's (2008) view seems to be the most prevalent in the scientific literature. Brand personality can be defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (J. L. Aaker, 1997, p. 347). As such, brand personality tends to serve a symbolic or self-expressive function beyond the utilitarian function of product-related attributes (K. L. Keller, 1993). Brand personality might be crucial to understanding brand choice (Plummer, 2000).

Possession of a particular brand's products allows consumers to express their personality (Belk, 1988) and serves as a reference for consumers when they search for products that match the concept of their ideal self (Malhotra, 1988). Accordingly, extant research has repeatedly empirically proven that brand personality attributes significantly impact purchase intentions (Bouhlel et al., 2011; de la Paz Toldos-Romero & Orozco-Gómez, 2015; Rup et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2009).

Aaker's brand personality scale

J. L Aaker (1997) was the first to construct a set of dimensions for brand personality; her scale was fundamentally inspired by the "Big Five" structure of human personality. According to her brand personality scale, brand personality is a multidimensional and multifaceted construct where some dimensions and facets are more relevant and descriptive of certain brands than others (Bearden & Netemeyer, 2011, p. 341). J. L. Aaker used several procedures to develop her brand personality dimensions. Starting with a vast collection of 309 personality traits drawn primarily from human personality literature, she used an association elicitation procedure among 25 subjects to reduce the initial set to 114 items. This intermediate set of items was then applied to 131 brands and examined with a larger sample of 631 subjects. Using exploratory factor analysis and reliability analyses, J. L. Aaker's study has led to a final brand personality scale including five dimensions and 15 facets, consisting of 42 items in total (J. L. Aaker, 1997). Her scale is very exhaustive, multifaceted and is grouped into five dimensions: (1) sincerity, (2) excitement, (3) competence, (4) sophistication and (5) ruggedness. The satisfactory results of the reliability and validity tests, as well as the extensiveness of the scale, have led to its widespread interest and application by researchers for almost two decades (Bruner, 2009; see also Kumar, 2018). This led to J. L. Aaker's study becoming the most cited work in brand personality research (Kumar, 2018).

Limitations and criticism of Aaker's brand personality scale

Although J. L. Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale is still widely used today, it is not exempt from criticism. Kumar (2018) insinuates that the popularity of J. L. Aaker's scale "has resulted in blind faith of some scholars to adopt [it] in their studies without modification" (p. 204) and suggests that the scale "requires relook before it matures itself to culmination" (p. 205). Sharing this opinion, several researchers have avoided Aaker's scale. The first point of criticism is related to her vague definition of brand personality, which embraces the inclusion of several other attributes (e.g., age, gender, etc.) in addition to personality (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003; Bosnjak et al., 2007). As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this creates a construct

validity problem and uncertainty about what should actually be measured: perceived brand personality (a sender aspect) or perceived user characteristics (receiver aspects). Additionally, based on indications that J. L. Aaker's scale is not always applicable to niche contexts (e.g., because of missing or inadequate personality dimensions) (d'Astous & Levesque, 2003), that it lacks generalizability and robustness (i.e., that it is not transferrable to all cultural contexts) (Geuens et al., 2009; Hieronimus, 2018, p. 32), or that it is simply not practical because of its length (Geuens et al., 2009; Kakitek, 2018), researchers have established alternative models to measure brand personality. Valette-Florence & De Barnier (2013) divided the different measures of brand personality into macro approaches (i.e., global or holistic approaches) and micro approaches (i.e., for the study of a specific sector or cultural environment) and highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of both types. They emphasize that there is reason to question the universal nature of brand personality because research has shown that particular dimensions of brand personality are country-specific. Studies that have adapted Aaker's scale for country-specific applications have failed to replicate the original structure found in the United States (e.g., Hieronimus, 2018; Koebel & Ladwein, 1999). The findings by Valette-Florence & De Barnier (2013) suggest that "measurement of brand personality depends on the area of application" (p. 899) and that more fine-tuned micro approaches are generally better suited for studying particular cultural environments or industries. They further elaborate that a macro approach to measure brand personality is not without its drawbacks. To quote Valette-Florence & De Barnier:

> The recent attempt by Geuens et al. (2009) to develop a personality scale that is applicable to a wide range of product classes and different cultural environments results in a scale with a very limited number of items (only 12) and therefore suffers from relatively weak predictive and nomological validity. (Valette-Florence & De Barnier, 2013, p. 899)

On the positive side, a macro form of brand personality measurement has the advantage of being able to group together different brand areas (e.g., possibly also traditional brands and SMIs, as required in this study), and is suitable for data collection in different cultural settings (Geuens et al., 2009; see also Valette-Florence & De Barnier, 2013). Geuens et al.'s (2009) much shorter scale also has the advantage of being more practical in its application and reducing the risk of causing subject fatigue thanks to its reduced length.

Geuens et al.'s (2009) «new measure of brand personality»

Similar to J. L Aaker (1997), Geuens et al. (2009) constructed their brand personality scale based on the "Big Five" dimensions used in human personality research. However, because the

object of evaluation changes from human to brand, they likewise had to adjust the measures and items for the context of brands. Aaker (1997) reduced a set of 108 items from personality scales believed to reflect human personality to a short measurement instrument containing only the 12 most stable items grouped into five dimensions: *responsibility* (3 items: (1) down to earth, (2) stable, (3) responsible), *activity* (3 items: (4) active, (5) dynamic, (6) innovative), *aggressiveness* (2 items: (7) aggressive, (8) bold), *simplicity* (2 items: (9) ordinary, (10) simple), *emotionality* (2 items: (11) romantic, (12) sentimental). As reported by Geuens et al. (2009), the reliability and validity of the scale meet all the requirements. Their scale seems to show in some regards (i.e., test-retest reliability and coefficient alpha values) even better reliability results than J.L. Aaker's (1997) widely used brand personality scale. Geuens et al.'s objective was to develop a scale that "excludes all non-personality items" (p. 97), and thus "excludes functional attributes, demographic characteristics, user imagery, user appearance, and brand attitudes" (p. 99). Eliminating items that reflect functional characteristics and user imagery appears to make sense in the context of SMIs. Since personal brands (such as SMIs) do not often individually produce or sell any products, functional and economic factors are less pertinent when assessing their brand equity. Instead, personal brands often trigger strong symbolic or expressive associations in the mind of consumers (Keller, 1993, pp. 283-285). The limited number of items in Geuens et al. (2009) scale might oversimplify the concept of brand personality. The authors themselves also contemplate this fact as they confirm that "it is possible that we have deleted useful and meaningful items" (Geuens et al., 2009, p. 106).

Defining and measuring brand personality of personal brands

Although both Aaker's (1997) and Geuens et al.'s (2009) scales are fundamentally inspired by human personality traits, both scales were initially developed, tested, and used to measure the brand personality of traditional brands. The applicability of brand personality scales to personal brands (i.e., human brands) needs to be grounded in findings from extant academic research. Studies of human personality have primarily focused on the "Big Five" human traits: (1) extraversion, (2) agreeability, (3) openness, (4) conscientiousness, and (5) emotional stability (Barrick & Mount, 1991). It is important to emphasize that while human personality and brand personality may overlap in certain areas, they are fundamentally different. Firstly, the personality dimensions of brand personality are different from those we have seen in brand personality (i.e., brand personality dimensions by Aaker's, 1997 ; also Geuens et al.'s, 2009). Secondly, it is considered that human personality is something inherent to every human being, determined by his or her upbringing, something that is permanent and not subject to change (Chaplin et al., 1988). J. L. Aaker's (1997) definition of brand personality as "the set of human

characteristics associated with a brand" (p. 347), on the other hand, describes brand personality as something attributed externally through a recipient's perception, not something which is inherent to the brand. Brand personality of personal (i.e., human) brands does not refer to the human personality traits of the brand's protagonist. Kakitek (2018) makes an important observation here: personal brands of athletes and other celebrities "have both human and brand personality facets" (p. 13) and points out that a celebrity's human personality traits may be completely unknown to the public. On the other hand, the athlete's brand personality may change in the public's eye due to certain circumstances. For example, the impeccable public image of former golf poster child Tiger Wood was tarnished after details about his extramarital affairs were made public. After the scandal, his brand personality changed dramatically, prompting companies such as Accenture, AT&T, and Gatorade to distance themselves from him and abruptly cancel their sponsorship deals with him (Steel, 2010). The example illustrates how a personal brand's brand personality does not necessarily reflect its human protagonist's actual human personality traits. Brand personality only reflects those aspects which the protagonist consciously constructs, manages, and showcases to the public. For this reason, a protagonists' brand personality can change over time because it only represents the consumer's perception of the human brand (Kakitek, 2018). With SMI, these blurred boundaries between human personality and brand personality crystallize and become more apparent, at least from an academic standpoint. As Chen (2013) put it, "each monetized social media channel is a brand." Therefore, the object of brand personality in the context of SMIs is on the channel, on the influencer's monetized social media profile, rather than on the person behind it (Y.-Y. Chen et al., 2020). It has to be noted that some scholars who examine brand personalities on social media do not make this distinction and focus more on the person behind the social media profile (C.-P. Chen, 2013).

Applying general brand personality scales, which were initially constructed for traditional brands to personal brands, can become problematic, as was highlighted in the study by Kakitek (2018) that applied J. L. Aaker's scale to human brands in surf sports. In her study, a confirmatory factor analysis failed to produce the same structure as hypothesized by Aaker, with multiple items showing significant cross-loadings or not loading to the hypothesized dimensions at all. She suggests that further research could also incorporate other general scales such as Geuens et al.'s (2009) to investigate if other scales are more appropriate when dealing with human brands.

BRAND FAMILIARITY

Several studies on brand alliances have found that brand familiarity serves as a moderating variable in the relationship between brand fit and attitude toward the brand alliance. (Bluemelhuber et al., 2007; Dickinson & Barker, 2007; Lafferty et al., 2004; Simonin & Ruth, 1998). However, others have found no significant impact of brand familiarity on this relationship (Baumgarth, 2004).

BRAND PERSONALITY CLARITY

In addition to brand familiarity, the concept of brand personality clarity can provide insight into whether or not consumers perceive a brand's brand personality to be well defined. A study by Freling et al. (2011) conceptualized, developed, and validated measures (i.e., three dimensions, brand personality clarity being one of them) for assessing consumer perceptions of brand personality appeal. The authors state that their brand personality appeal scales are well suited to be used complementarily in academic research about brand personality. The results of their study show that consumer purchase intention increases when brand personality popularity, brand personality originality, and brand personality clarity are each sufficiently high.

INFLUENCER MARKETING

In 2020, the penetration rate of social media among the global population reached 49 percent, with East Asia and North America having the highest social media penetration rate (i.e., 71 and 69% of their population respectively), followed by Northern Europe (i.e., 67%) (Tankovska, 2021b). The global social media penetration rate is expected to increase further as mobile device usage and mobile social networks continue to gain traction (Woods, 2016). Due to their large audiences and unique marketing opportunities, it is not surprising that marketing has become one of the main research fields related to social media (Alavi et al., 2019). Studies have shown that social media can be an effective channel for advertisers to stimulating sales, increasing brand awareness, improving brand image, generating traffic to online platforms, reducing marketing costs, and creating user interactivity on platforms by encouraging users to post or share content (Felix et al., 2017).

With the advent of social media and global digital connectedness, a whole new type of career has emerged: becoming a social media influencer (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015). Over the past decade, SMIs have made their mark across many social media platforms (MAD//Fest., 2020), and influencer led campaigns have spiked since August 2020 (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). Brands leverage the potential of SMI to promote and review products (D. Brown &

Hayes, 2008; Evans et al., 2017). Paid collaborations between brands and SMIs are usually realized in the form of sponsored content (De Veirman et al., 2017); this means that the influencer creates and publishes a post with a product recommendation on social media and in return receives compensation from the sponsoring brand. Sponsored content published by SMI endorsers typically resembles the original, authentic content (i.e., organic content) on his platform (Boerman et al., 2012; Tutaj & Van Reijmersdal, 2012). This places it under the overarching concept of native advertising (Faber et al., 2004; Wojdynski, 2016). The advantage of native advertising is that consumers may not always recognize it as sponsored content (Wojdynski & Evans, 2016). The presence of a sponsorship disclosure (mandatory on most platforms today due to stricter government regulations) may be the only aspect distinguishing the communication as advertising (Evans et al., 2017).

The success of influencer marketing could be explained by its comparatively high return on investment (ROI). A joint research study found that influencer marketing can yield up to 11 times more ROI than other forms of traditional advertising (Kirkpatrick, 2016, as cited in Woods, 2016). It is, therefore, not surprising that many marketers point out that SMIs have penetrated effectively into the realm of professional marketing and that they have become a central part of many companies' marketing campaigns (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021; Jahnke, 2018, p. 6–11). As a result, influencer marketing has also sparked the interest of the scientific community, and influencer marketing has been the subject of numerous recent studies (Y.-Y. Chen et al., 2020; De Veirman et al., 2017; Garland, 2018; Mathews, 2018; Vrontis et al., 2021; Woods, 2016). To make a logical connection between SMIs and the theories and findings presented in the previous chapters, it is necessary to both define the concept of SMIs and see how extant studies have linked influencer marketing to the concepts of celebrity endorsement, brand alliance, and brand personality.

Characteristics of SMIs and related terms

While many celebrities have used their popularity to promote products and services before (Gräve, 2017; McCracken, 1989; Schouten et al., 2020), SMIs appear to be the first to offer their entire life as a platform for marketers (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015). SMIs exploit the fact that everything they do can be seen by their followers – and that they have recognized that there is value behind their audience. As the previous chapters about celebrity endorsement and brand alliances have highlighted, alliances with personal brands such as influencers are nothing new. Therefore, it is helpful to provide some practical and academic definitions of SMI to understand what distinguishes them from other personal brands (i.e., human brands). Academics such as de Veirman et al. (2017) define SMIs as follows: "Social media influencers can be referred to

as individuals that have built a sizeable social network of people following them." Brown & Hayes (2008) add that SMIs are social media users who have earned credibility in a particular industry through their activity in that media. Source credibility and trustworthiness, aspects often emphasized in endorsement theory, are also highlighted by E. Keller & Berry (2003). They point out that SMIs are generally perceived as trustworthy by other users. Practitioners such as Mathews (2018) further elaborate that influencers often operate in niche market segments within different business categories such as travel, food, beauty, and fashion. An important common feature is that they enjoy the trust of a loyal follower base and possess knowledge or personal experience on the topics and products they present on their social media channels. Bolstad & Høili (2019) note three main characteristics that define SMIs and that help to differentiate them from other related terms: (1) the ability to influence, (2) content creation, and (3) community engagement.

SMIs as endorsers

As Hearn & Schoenhoff (2015) pointed out, the concepts of celebrity endorsers and SMIs are very closely related. They argue that brands are using SMIs in a similar way they have been using traditional celebrity endorsers in the past. That is to draw their audience's attention to products and services which brands want to promote. Gräve (2017) however, emphasizes that marketing practitioners should consider the critical differences between influencers and traditional celebrities when they consider spending money on endorsements. He highlights that celebrities are generally found to be much more effective endorsers. Consumer evaluations for endorsers regarding familiarity, attractivity, trustworthiness, likeability, similarity as well as expertise are generally more favorable for celebrities than for SMIs. In contrast, when consumers have a high level of familiarity with an SMI, SMIs are perceived to be significantly more trustworthy and similar to oneself than celebrities. The choice of an endorser should therefore depend on the advertising channel. As Gräve (2017) put it: celebrities can be more effective for a broad, heterogeneous audience with varying levels of familiarity with the celebrity. This is the case in TV advertising or out-of-home advertising (e.g., billboards). Although these advertisements are generally also meant to reach a specific target group, they are diffused through mass media channels with a heterogeneous audience. Gräve (2017) notes that influencers, on the other hand, are very likely to be more effective when the targeted audience knows them well. This applies especially to social media platforms, where people voluntarily choose to watch the content published by SMIs and where SMIs are seen as part of the community. Schouten et al. (2020) found that consumers perceive influencers as more trustworthy than celebrities, but their study did find no differences between the two endorser

types regarding perceived expertise. Another aspect that was already highlighted by Bielby & Gamson (1995) is that there are two distinct types of personal celebrity brands: the celebrity as performer and the celebrity as image and promotional object. Hearn & Schoenhoff (2015) suggest that the lines between these two types of personal brands seem to become blurry when one looks at SMIs. Interestingly, the perspective of other researchers (in particular those who studied SMIs brand personalities) suggests the opposite, making a clearer distinction between the social media profile and the person behind it. Despite their relative novelty, there have been numerous academic studies of SMIs. However, there is still only limited empirical knowledge about influencers in their role as endorsers. Early academic studies of SMIs focused primarily on the related phenomenon of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) in the context of blogs and social networks (King et al., 2014). Uzunoğlu & Misci Kip (2014), who studied SMI through the lens of the source credibility model, found that trustworthiness and credibility are two of the most significant characteristics of influencers, as they are seen as regular users of the Internet. Kapitan & Silvera (2016) found that if consumers were given the impression that an SMI endorser was extrinsically motivated (i.e., financial incentive) to recommend a product rather than intrinsically motivated (i.e., authentic preference for a product), the effectiveness of the advertising message would be negatively affected. More recently, SMIs have been studied in their role as endorsers from various perspectives, such as other source characteristics, content attributes, as well as psychological factors (see Vrontis et al., 2021, for a recent literature review). Of particular interest are the findings by Breves et al. (2019), who demonstrated that SMIs' source credibility (i.e., perceived trustworthiness and expertise) is affected positively by a high influencer–brand fit. Followers often have one-way interactions with SMIs (i.e., parasocial interaction), which over time can lead to a non-reciprocal, but affectual relationship between followers and the SMI (i.e., parasocial relationship) (Schramm & Hartmann, 2008). Breves et al. (2019) have found parasocial relationship with SMI to act as a moderator between influencer–brand fit and source credibility (i.e., participants with low levels of parasocial relationship reported the highest influence of perceived fit on source credibility). Stubb et al. (2019) have shown that providing sponsorship compensation justification disclosure positively affects consumer attitudes towards sponsored content posted by influencers. Their findings further developed empirical results by Kozinets et al. (2010) which had demonstrated that a transparency strategy (disclosure of underlying marketing campaigns) leads to more favorable reactions from consumers.

Brand alliances with SMI

As shown in the previous section on brand alliances, co-development alliances between brands and SMI are undeniably a common practice. They occur typically in the form of co-development. Prominent recent examples include the alliance between the "Official Energy Drink of Esports" (as stated on their website) *Gfuel* and the most subscribed personal brand on YouTube *Pewdiepie* (G Fuel, n.d.), the co-developed fashion collection by online fashion retailer AboutYou and Instagram-superstar Kendall Jenner (Braun, 2021), as well as the co-developed fashion collection by online fast-fashion brand NA-KD and social media it-girl Taylor Lashae (NA-KD, 2021). In all three of these examples, the social media power of the SMI taking part in the alliance was leveraged to promote and endorse the products. As widespread as this marketing practice is today, academic research on brand alliances seems, surprisingly, to have only scratched the surface regarding the drivers of brand fit in endorsement campaigns by SMIs. Existing research investigating SMIs from a brand alliance perspective is extremely scarce in general. Only one paper on brand alliances among SMI has been identified in the literature review (i.e., Y.-Y. Chen et al., 2020). However, since endorsements are considered a form of symbolic brand alliance, then many of the insights from endorsement theory mentioned above are worth considering when examining brand alliances with SMIs in the form of endorsements.

SMI brand personality

There have been very few academic studies on the brand personality of SMIs. Moreover, as with personal brands in general, existing research seems to focus on other source characteristics (e.g., credibility, attractiveness, expertise, or popularity) rather than brand personality (see Vrontis et al., 2021). As for the effects of brand personality in brand alliances, Breves et al. (2019) highlighted that overall congruence between brand and influencer might be either of very high or very low importance for influencer collaborations, depending on the presence of a parasocial relationship. As proponents of the high importance hypothesis, Evans et al. (2017) stated that a mismatch between influencer and brand would negatively affect audience trust, because they would assume that the endorsement was solely commercially motivated. The findings of von Mettenheim & Wiedmann (2021) are in line with this hypothesis. They found brand personality fit to have a significant positive effect on post attitude and belief. Their study design and results, published while this work was in progress, are of particular interest because it will be interesting to find out if this thesis will reach similar conclusions.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To guide the choice of variables, this study draws on research about partner selection in brand alliances by van der Lans et al. (2014) and research about congruence issues in influencer marketing by von Mettenheim & Wiedmann (2021). The purpose of this thesis is to investigate whether dissimilarities of brand personality between a host brand and a personal brand partner (i.e., brand personality fit) have an effect on brand alliance evaluations. Co-developed alliances between brands and SMIs that leverage the endorsement by the SMI have become a common practice in marketing (Adidas Group, 2016; Braun, 2021; G Fuel, 2021; NA-KD, 2021; Puma, 2021). Therefore, this study uses fictitious posts by SMIs that endorse a co-developed product as primary stimulus material.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Theory suggests that in the context of endorsements, brand congruence positively impacts consumer evaluations of the endorsement message and consumer attitude (Kamins & Gupta, 1994). The literature review identified only one study that examined to what extent these extant findings about the effects of brand congruence are transferrable to influencers. Schouten et al. (2019) hypothesized that brand congruence is stronger among influencers than celebrities because consumers see them as part of a particular community and expect them to endorse brands that match the image of that community. However, they were unable to confirm their hypothesis empirically. Von Mettenheim & Wiedmann (2021) were able to demonstrate empirically that brand personality fit has a positive effect on post attitude and post belief. Likewise, in the context of brand alliances, the theory also suggests that brand fit impacts consumer evaluations of brand alliances (Folkes, 1988; Keller & Aaker, 1992). Extant findings supported both a significant and positive effect of brand congruence on endorsement message effectiveness (Breves et al., 2019) and a substantial and positive effect of brand fit on consumer evaluations of brand alliances (van der Lans et al., 2014).

Based on the studies mentioned earlier (Breves et al., 2019; van der Lans et al., 2014; von Mettenheim & Wiedmann, 2021), as well as brand alliance theory and endorsement theory, consumer evaluations of brand alliances between brands and SMI should be negatively affected by brand personality dissimilarities between the two allied brands. The above-stated arguments serve as a foundation for the following hypothesis:

H1: Brand personality dissimilarity has a negative effect on brand alliance evaluations between brands and SMIs.

This central hypothesis can be broken down into two aspects:

$H1_a$: If a brand alliance with a lower dissimilarity score (i.e., better fit) is compared to a brand alliance with a higher dissimilarity score (i.e., more unfit), then the brand alliance evaluation scores of the alliance with the lower dissimilarity score will be higher than the brand alliance evaluation scores of the alliance with the higher dissimilarity scores.

$H1_b$: Brand alliances with similar dissimilarity scores (i.e., similarly good or bad fit) will have similar brand alliance evaluation scores.

Additionally, Simonin & Ruth (1998) had determined that in addition to brand fit (i.e., in the case of the present study brand personality fit) and product fit, the pre-alliance evaluations of both brands had significantly and positively related to brand alliance evaluations have to be kept in mind when comparing alliance evaluations between different brands. Since according to their findings, it is to be expected that brand alliance variations vary significantly across the brands, this assumption leads to a second hypothesis:

H2: If brand alliance evaluation scores for alliances with similar degrees of dissimilarity are compared across brands, there will be differences between their evaluation scores.

Figure 2 summarizes the framework of brand personality dissimilarities as the drivers of brand fit in a brand alliance between a SMI partner brand A and a host brand B. The dependent variable, being brand alliance evaluation, is based on previous research on brand alliances by Simonin and Ruth (1998). In this framework, brand images of both allied brands A and B are based on latent factor scores (i.e., averaged item scores of the respective factor items) of each of the five brand personality dimensions. Brand personality fit (i.e., dissimilarity) is defined as the Euclidean distance between all five brand personality dimensions of personal brand A and host brand B. The smaller the distance between the two brands, the greater their similarity and the better their brand personality fit. On the other hand, a larger distance represents dissimilar brand personality profiles and a lower brand personality fit.

METHODOLOGY

Investigating the brand personality fit as driver of brand fit is challenging for several reasons. First, measuring brand personality for two brands that are fundamentally different in their nature (i.e., traditional brands and personal brands) is complex. It requires a measurement instrument that is able to assess brand personality for both types simultaneously (Valette-Florence & De Barnier, 2013). Second, based on existing studies on endorsement theory and brand alliance theory, one must consider a multitude of possible inferences from other factors aside from brand personality fit, which could also impact brand alliance evaluations. To isolate brand personality congruence as the sole base of fit in this study, all other potential bases of brand fit and consumer attitude drivers must be constant. Both challenges are addressed in the subsequent sections before the various stages of this thesis, and their respective measurement instruments are described in detail.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT BRAND PERSONALITY SCALE

Brand personality in this study is measured by assessing the characteristics of the sender, i.e., consumers' perception of how the sender (i.e., the brands) portrays himself. This is consistent with Kapferer's (2008) viewpoint on measuring brand personality (pp. 182-187) and is in line with the purpose of most brand personality scales (Geuens et al., 2009). As was mentioned above, Valette-Florence & De Barnier (2013) suggest that "measurement of brand personality depends on the area of application" (p. 899) and that more fine-tuned micro approaches are more suitable for studying specific industries. Therefore, the advantages of using two separate scales specifically tailored to sportswear manufacturers and SMEs, respectively, would seem self-evident. However, this would also lead to a dilemma as the main objective of this thesis is to investigate the impact of the overall similarity of brand personality between sportswear manufacturers and SMIs. Comparing two brands whose brand personality is measured by two different scales would be impossible, as the overall similarity scores could not be computed since the scales would probably not use the same items. Therefore, using a micro approach as described by Valette-Florence & De Barnier is not an appropriate option to answer the research question of this thesis. Another reason for choosing a more general and holistic approach to measure brand personality in this study is that the data collection is conducted in several European countries (including Switzerland). The challenge to find a reliable and validated brand personality scale that applies to both personal as well as traditional brands therefore remails. Reliability tests of J. L. Aaker's macro-approach scale were thoroughly satisfactory, with test-retest reliability correlations ranging from 0.74 to 0.77, coefficient alphas between 0.9

and 0.95, and item-to-total correlations averaging around 0.85 across the five dimensions. Validity of the scale was also demonstrated by evidence of a stable five-factor model (i.e., strong factor loadings and no significant cross-loadings) corresponding to the five hypothesized dimensions, as confirmed by confirmatory factor and principal component analyses (J. L. Aaker, 1997). Although J. L. Aaker's holistic scale meets all requirements regarding validity and reliability, the recent criticism states that her scale lacks generalizability and robustness (Geuens et al., 2009; see also Kumar, 2018). Furthermore, it is also criticized that the scale is not practical because of its length (Geuens et al., 2009; see also Kakitek, 2018). These critiques were considered a valid reason to find a better alternative. A suitable candidate was found in Geuens et al.'s (2009) "*new measure of brand personality*" scale. Multiple estimates of reliability and validity were reported by Geuens et al. (2009). The five brand personality dimensions showed test-retest reliability correlations ranging from 0.84 to 0.93. Coefficient alphas estimates of internal consistency ranged from 0.90 to 0.95, and item-to-total correlations averaged 0.85 across the five dimensions. The new measure of brand personality scale showed internal consistency estimates across the five factors of 0.95, 0.95, 0.95, 0.93, and 0.79. The average variance extracted estimates (AVE) in their study ranged from 0.67 to 0.90, and all factors showed discriminant validity from one another. As for the cross-cultural validation of their model, their 12-item 5-factor solution showed a satisfactory fit ($\chi^2 = 482.878$, df = 44, TLI = .903, CFI = .935, RMSEA = .091). Since their scale has also been validated cross-culturally and data collection in this study will encompass several countries (Switzerland, Germany, France, and Italy), their scale can be considered well suited for the present study. Additionally, Kakitek (2018) suggested that future research should incorporate Geuens et al.'s (2009) scale into studies about brand personality of human brands to test its applicability in this context. To the best of the author's knowledge, Kakitek's study was the only one to apply a holistic brand personality scale to personal brands so far. Von Mettenheim & Wiedmann (2021) have used a specifically designed micro-approach scale, and no other study has examined the application of Geuens et al.'s scale in that context.

ISOLATING BRAND PERSONALITY FIT AS SOLE INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Several findings from the scientific literature must be considered to rule out undesirable effects of variables other than brand personality fit on brand alliance evaluations. They are listed below according to their research area.

Variables that affect consumer evaluations according to endorsement theory

The findings of extant research on the drivers of source credibility (i.e., Smith, 1973, and Friedman et al., 1978) must be taken into account for the experimental design of this master's thesis. Since unwanted effects of source credibility must be excluded to examine the effects of brand personality fit, the SMIs used in the stimulus material should not vary in terms of credibility. For this reason, several characteristics must be held constant. First, expertise about the endorsed products must be held constant. This is achieved by selecting SMIs that all have the same background and profession. Since the brands supported are sportswear manufacturers, all SMI personas are all athletes. Therefore, they all have a high level of expertise about the endorsed product, and their credibility in this regard should therefore be equally high. Unwanted effects of endorsers' ethnical background on source credibility will be avoided by using only blurred pictures in the stimulus material in which neither ethnical background nor gender can be recognized. The SMIs will only be referred to as "athlete 1", "athlete 2", and so forth, so that no conclusions about their ethnical origin can be drawn from their names.

Variables that affect consumer evaluations according to brand alliance theory

De Veirman et al. (2017) found that a SMIs' number of followers affects consumers' attribution of opinion leadership to the SMIs in question. Their findings represent a valid argument for using fictional SMIs, rather than real ones since it allows to hold their number of followers constant. Extant research on brand alliances identified multiple drivers of brand fit (i.e., category fit as identified by Lanseng & Olsen, 2012; country of origin as identified by Bluemelhuber et al., 2007; product-fit as identified by Simonin & Ruth, 1998). These undesirable potential bases of brand fit can also be held constant by using fictitious SMIs for the stimulus material. Country of origin and culture will be held constant by choosing only athletes from one location: Switzerland. Category fit and product fit will be held constant by using only one type of SMIs: professional athletes.

Variables that affect consumer evaluations according to influencer marketing theory

Extant studies have highlighted two variables that affect consumer evaluations. Breves et al. (2019) demonstrated that participants with low levels of parasocial relationship with an SMI reported the highest influence of perceived fit on source credibility. Their findings are another strong argument for using fictional SMIs because it allows to factor out parasocial interaction and to maximize the impact of perceived fit. Kozinets et al. (2010) and Stubb et al. (2019) have shown how disclosure of underlying marketing campaigns leads to more favorable reactions from consumers. Since the final experiment of this thesis includes fictional endorsement posts

from SMIs on Instagram, all posts are clearly labeled as sponsored, as is customary on this platform.

ADDITIONAL MEASURE: BRAND PERSONALITY CLARITY

One of the three brand personality appeal scales by Freling et al. (2011) which the authors believe is well suited for complementary use in scientific research on brand personality, will be used to check for data quality. Respondents who indicated that a brand's brand personality was not at all clear to them might affect the results, as it can be assumed that they rated the brand personality randomly. The brand personality clarity scale was developed and tested in several studies by Freling et al. (2011). Their scale uses five, seven-point bipolar adjectives: (1st Item): 1 = this brand's personality is unapparent, 7 = this brand's personality is apparent, (2nd Item): 1 = this brand's personality is distinct, 7 = this brand's personality is indistinct, (3rd Item): 1 = this brand's personality is obvious, 7 = this brand's personality is not obvious (reverse coded), (4th item): 1 = this brand's personality is vague, 7 = this brand's personality is well-defined, (5th item): 1 = this brand's personality is unclear, 7 = this brand's personality is clear. Its reported alpha values were between .866 and .925. Its temporal stability (seven-week test-retest) was found to be .740. Considerable evidence of the scale's validity was provided by Freling et al. Their studies supported claims of the scale's convergent, discriminant, known group, and predictive validities. The scale's reported AVE was .582 (Freling et al., 2011, as cited in Bruner, 2013). Their scale is introduced solely to check for data quality, and it will not be factored into the analysis.

DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLING METHOD

Data collection for all stages (Pretests, Brand Personality Study, and final Brand Personality Fit Study) was done entirely through online surveys. The surveys were distributed among fellow students, friends, and family, on the one hand, and posted on the crowd-sourcing platforms SurveyCircle, SurveySwap, and Amazon MechanicalTurk, on the other, to reach sufficiently high numbers of respondents in each stage. The sampling method was, therefore, a convenience sample in all phases.

PROCEDURE OF THE TESTS AND THE EXPERIMENT

This chapter outlines the sequence of the various phases of this study that were necessary to answer the research question. Please refer to Figure 1: Process description for a visual representation of the whole study and its phases. It includes the objectives of the required pretests, the design of the surveys and questionnaires, and the measurements and stimuli used.

The research design in the form of an experiment, which represents how the research questions of this master thesis will be answered, is presented in the last section of this chapter. Since it was impossible to perform the data collection for the final experiment in one go without performing some pretests first, the study was divided into several phases. In the first stage, a set of popular brands in the sports apparel industry was put together. This first phase is hereafter referred to as *initial brand set*. This initial set of brands was then narrowed down using a widely accepted scale for measuring brand familiarity. This second phase is referred to below as the *brand familiarity test*. The narrowed-down set of the remaining 12 brands was then used in a first study, in which respondents' perceptions of each brand's personality with regard to Geuens et al.'s (2009) new brand personality scale were evaluated. This third phase is subsequently referred to as *brand personality study.* After the personality profiles of the remaining 12 brands were established, four brands with distinct personality profiles were selected for further steps. Subsequently, a set of four proto-personas (i.e, fictional personas with distinct characteristics that are thought to represent a user-group or target audience, see Tomlin, 2018, pp. 32–33) was created so that each brand had varying degrees of personality fit with the different proto personas. The goal of the *proto-persona test* was to compare their brand personality scores with the 12 brands' personality scores and form combinations between brands and personal brands with varying degrees of personality fit. These combinations were then used to test this thesis' hypotheses in the final *brand personality fit study.*

Initial brand-set

The initial set of brands in the sports apparel industry was put together according to lists of the most popular, most appreciated, and most valuable brands by Forbes, Brandingmag, and NetBase (Tomic, 2013; Ozanian, 2019; NetBase, 2017). The list was completed with additional brands through a list of sportswear manufacturers from Wikipedia (Wikipedia, 2021). Ultimately, the initial set included 33 internationally active brands of different sizes and varying degrees of consumer brand familiarity. Please refer to Table 1 for the full list.

Brand familiarity test (narrowing down the brand set)

The initial set of brands was narrowed down according to consumer familiarity with the brands. In order to measure the degree to which a respondent is aware and knowledgeable of a brand, the brand familiarity pretest used a reliable and widely used scale developed by Zhou et al. (2010).The scale uses three seven-point semantic differentials to measure brand familiarity: (1st Item): 1 = This brand is very unfamiliar to me, 7 = This brand is very familiar to me, (2nd Item): 1 = I am not at all knowledgeable about this brand, 7 = I am very knowledgeable about his

brand, (3rd Item): 1 = I have never seen advertisements about this brand in the mass media, 7 = I have seen many advertisements about this brand in the mass media. The scale's Cronbach's alpha reported by Zhou et al. was .91. The authors also provided various support for the scale's convergent and discriminant validities Zhou et al. (2010). Due to its' high reliability and accepted validity, as pointed out by Bruner (2013), the scale was used in its initial form without any modifications. Respondents were split up into six different groups with five to six brands respectively to avoid fatigue effects caused by the large number of brands. Please refer to Table 1 to see how the brands were split up. All items in the survey were mandatory, and forced scales were used (no "no opinion" option was provided). The order of brands was randomized in each group to avoid order effects. An attention check with a completely fictional brand was employed to filter out respondents that provided meaningless data. The attention check was placed randomly in the questionnaire. Please refer to Figure 3 for the detailed survey layout. The stimulus material was presented in the form of the name and logo of the brand being evaluated. The logo was added because one of the items in the brand awareness scale asked whether respondents had seen advertising for a brand. It was deemed possible that respondents might not remember the name of a brand, but the logo could serve as a visual reference to stimulate their recollection of advertising for the brand they might have seen. The online survey was programmed in such a way that the attention check served as an ad-hoc filter. Participants who indicated familiarity with the non-existing brand on the brand awareness scale were blocked from answering further questions, and their data were instantly deleted. In addition, the completion time score criterion, which Leiner (2019) suggests is one of the best post-hoc methods for identifying meaningless data in Internet surveys, was used to filter out additional cases that provided meaningless data.

Brand personality study

It was then necessary to create personality profiles for each of the remaining 12 brands. The brand personality study discussed hereafter was used to identify brands with distinct personality profiles according to their latent brand personality factor scores. The survey measured three variables: brand familiarity, brand personality clarity, and brand personality. The stimulus material included both brand names and brand logos, allowing respondents to base their ratings on visual features of the brand as well. To assure that respondents provided only valuable ratings on brand personality, the brand familiarity scale, which was tested in the previous stage, was used as an ad-hoc filter to exclude the submission of meaningless data. Respondents were only allowed to rate a brand's personality if they rated each of the three items in the brand familiarity scale with values above 4. In other words, if respondents indicated that they were

either relatively unfamiliar with the brand, not knowledgeable about it or that they have not seen many advertisements about it, then they were immediately directed to the section about the next brand (again, the order of brands was randomized). See Figure 5 for a detailed survey layout. In addition to the brand familiarity ad-hoc filter, the brand personality clarity scale by Freling et al. (2011) was used as a second post-hoc filter to verify data quality (i.e., to verify whether respondents considered the brand personality to be obvious and clear in cases that showed atypical response patterns as indicated by their respective z-scores). To measure brand personality, the scale developed by Geuens et al. (2009) was applied. The scale is composed of five factors and 12 items (Responsibility): 3 items, (Activity): 3 items, (Aggressiveness): 2 items, (Simplicity): 2 items, and (Emotionality): 2 items. All items are measured on 7-point Likert scales ranging from not characteristic of the brand to very characteristic of the brand. Coarse latent factor scores were extracted by calculating unweighted composites of the raw indicator scores (i.e., averaging of the corresponding item ratings). Fabrigar & Wegener (2012, p. 29) note that in cases where theory and/or previous data are not sufficiently developed to make predictions about how the factors influence each measured variable in a scale, exploratory factor analysis is advisable to provide further support for the appropriateness of a scale, with the provision that a confirmatory approach is adopted later in the research program. Therefore, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to confirm the dimensionality of the measured 12 items as developed by Geuens et al. (2009) with the collected data.

Proto-persona test

Four fictional SMI personas were constructed to rule out inferences from additional variables (i.e., variables identified in the literature review as interfering with the measurement of the impact of brand personality fit on consumer evaluations). The stimulus material consisted of an Instagram post by each SMI that contained a short “about me” text which provided clues about each SMIs personality. See

Figure 8 for a depiction of the stimulus material and Figure 9 for the detailed questionnaire layout. To avoid legal issues as well as interfering attributions, heavily blurred pictures of athletes from image databases were used as profile pictures. The fictional athletes-SMIs were referred to as “athlete 1”, “athlete 2”, etc. The proto-persona test included only one variable (i.e., brand personality). Each respondent rated all four SMIs on the brand personality scale developed by Geuens et al. (2009). The proto-persona test was conducted to see whether the stimulus material would produce the hypothesized brand personality profiles once latent factor scores were extracted.

Brand personality fit study

This final phase served to answer the research question and investigate whether brand personality fit should be considered an important driver of brand fit in collaborations between brands and influencers. The questionnaire uses a within-subjects design to measure the same three variables as in the previous brand personality study: brand familiarity, brand personality clarity and brand personality, as well as a fourth variable: attitude towards the alliance. A scale also used by Simonin & Ruth (1998) was applied to measure attitude towards the alliance. Their scale uses three 7-point semantic differentials: (1st Item – potitive / negative): 1 = very negative, 7 = very positive, (2nd Item – like / dislike): 1 = dislike very much, 7 = like very much, (3rd Item – favorable / unfavorable): 1 = very unfavorable, 7 = very favorable. The stimulus material in the SMI section consisted of an Instagram post from each SMI that included a short “about me” text that provided information about each SMI’s personality (see

Figure 8). Respondents were then asked to spontaneously and honestly rate each SMI personality according to their perceptions. SMIs were shown in random order to avoid order effects. The SMI section of the questionnaire was followed by a section on host brands, in which the three sportswear manufacturers were also shown in a random order to avoid order effects. Respondents were again shown the logo and name of a brand and were then asked to imagine that brand as a person and rate their brand personality accordingly. This was followed by a section on each brands brand alliances with the previously rated SMIs. Respondents were asked to read a short text that informed them that the brand had entered a co-development alliance to develop a new product line called "Second Skin" with one of the SMIs. They were again shown the respective SMIs "about me" stimulus as a reminder before proceeding to the next page. On the next page, another stimulus post was presented in which the SMI advertised the co-developed product, and the respondents were asked to evaluate the brand alliance between the SMI and the sportswear manufacturer. See Figure 11 for a detailed survey layout. The previous brand personality study found that only four brands had personality profiles unique enough to form alliance combinations with varying degrees of brand personality dissimilarity compared to the four proto-personas. However, two of the four brands (Converse and Ralph Lauren) were found to have very similar levels of dissimilarity to all four proto-personas in the proto-persona pretest. Converse did not exhibit the dissimilarities and similarities to those personas that it was expected to. As a precaution, Converse was therefore excluded from the final study. Six combinations with three brands and two allied personal brands for each brand were consequently evaluated. The combinations were selected based on brand personality fit scores (dissimilarities) as indicated by the results of the proto-persona test. See Table 10 for the dissimilarity scores of all combinations. For each brand, there were two combinations: There was one combination with low dissimilarity that was expected to score high in consumer evaluations. Additionally, a second combination with high dissimilarity was expected to score low on consumer evaluations. Nike was paired with "athlete 1" and "athlete 2". Ralph Lauren was paired with "athlete 2" and "athlete 4". Kappa was paired with "athlete 2" and "athlete 4". Neither van der Lans et al. (2014) (i.e., they used Aaker's scale in its original form) nor von Mettenheim & Wiedmann (2021) (i.e., they used a scale by Mäder that was not accessible) have used Geuens et al.'s (2009) brand personality scale. Therefore, the final study includes an additional confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm that Geuens et al.'s scale is an adequate tool to measure the personality of traditional brands and personal brands simultaneously. Finally, a paired samples t-test and a repeated-measures ANOVA were conducted to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS

SAMPLE DESCRIPTIONS

Subjects were only allowed to complete the online surveys if they resided in either Switzerland, Germany, France, or Italy. Overall, 646 people participated in the study (all phases). 59.7% of them were male, and 40.28% were female. The age of the participants ranged from 17 to 67 years, with a median of 30 years and an average age of 32.6 years. 68% of respondents had a high school diploma or higher. More detailed sample descriptions for the brand personality study, the final brand personality fit study, and the pretests can be found in the relative section to each phase below.

BRAND FAMILIARITY TEST

89 respondents filled out the online survey. Participants were between 19 and 57 years old ($\bar{x} = 33\ years, \sigma = 9.89\ years$), 66% were male, and 34% were female. In total, 15 cases were filtered out ad-hoc based on the failed attention check, and six cases were filtered out post-hoc based on unreasonably fast completion time scores (more than 2.5 times faster than the average). Testing the familiarity scale was especially important because it was going to be used as an ad-hoc filter in the subsequent stage. The reliability test of the test scale across all 33 brands was satisfactory with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.921, and Cronbach's Alpha values did not improve if any of the items was dropped. Please refer to

Brand Familiarity Study

1	Adidas	Group 1
2	Air Jordan	
3	ASICS	
4	Billabong	
5	Champion	
6	Columbia	
7	Converse	Group 2
8	Diadora	
9	Ellesse	
10	Everlast	
11	Fila	
12	Head	
13	Hummel	Group 3
14	Kappa	
15	Lacoste	
16	Le Coq Sportif	
17	Lonsdale	
18	Mammut	
19	Mizuno	Group 4
20	Moncler	
21	New Balance	
22	New Era	

Brand Personality Study

1	Adidas	Group 1
2	ASICS	
3	Champion	
4	Converse	
5	Fila	
6	Kappa	
7	Lacoste	Group 2
8	Nike	
9	Puma	
10	Ralph Lauren	
11	Reebok	
12	The North Face	

23	Nike	
24	Puma	
25	Quiksilver	
26	Ralph Lauren	Group 5
27	Reebok	
28	Rip Curl	
29	Rossignol	
30	Salomon	
31	The North Face	Group 6
32	Umbro	
33	Under Armour	

Table 2 for the full reliability test results. The collected data were normally distributed (skewness values between –0.19 and 0.5 and kurtosis values between –1.53 and –1.21). Please refer to Table 3 for descriptive statistics. The brand familiarity test supported the assumption that the brand familiarity scale by Zhou et al. (2010) could serve as a reliable filter to avoid meaningless data in the subsequent brand personality survey. The test also helped to narrow down the initial brand set to those brands respondents were most familiar with. Application of a brand familiarity score of at least 4.5 (scale from 1 to 7, 7 meaning most familiar) as a selection criterion resulted in 12 brands with reasonable degrees of consumer familiarity, which could be used in further steps. Please refer to Figure 4 for brand familiarity scores of all 33 initial brands. The remaining 12 brands were Adidas, Asics, Champion, Converse, Fila, Kappa, Lacoste, Nike, Puma, Ralph Lauren, Reebok, and The North Face.

BRAND PERSONALITY STUDY

268 subjects participated in the brand personality study. Participants were between 19 and 64 years old ($\bar{x} = 32\ years, \sigma = 9.78\ years$), 68% were male, and 32% were female. 15 of them failed the attention check (indicating high degrees of familiarity with a non-existing brand) and were excluded. Another five respondents were filtered out due to unreasonably fast completion times (more than 2.5 times faster than the average). The overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin MSA for

the collected data was 0.761, with a variable MSA range from 0.631 to 0.889. Since all values are larger than 0.50, the entire dataset and all variables are sufficiently intercorrelated for an EFA to be appropriate (see Table 4). Therefore, an exploratory factor analysis with oblique rotation was conducted to investigate how the items were factorized. The construct structure (number of factors) was defined based on theory (i.e., model by Geuens et al., 2009), and 5 factors were pre-specified. Results of the EFA were satisfactory. All 12 items loaded on the correct factors, as hypothesized by Geuens et al., (2009) and except for one item, none showed significant cross-loadings on other factors.

Results of the exploratory factor analysis

One item (i.e., Item 5: Activity – dynamic) showed extremely low factor loadings (0.322) on its construct Activity and had a considerable cross-loading (0.277) on the construct Aggressiveness. Item 5 also negatively affected the models' overall fit to the data: With Item 5 Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.048, and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was 0.974, compared to RMSEA 0.026 and TLI of 0.993 without item 5. Therefore, a fit index above the accepted threshold of 0.95 (Brown, 2015, p.140) was achieved only in the version with 11 items. Please refer to Table 5 for the factor loadings and fit indices with Item 5. The cross-loadings of Item 5 demand further investigation into the discriminant validity of the two factors, Activity and Aggressiveness. Since, Item 5 had a negative effect on the overall fit on Geuens et al.'s brand personality factor model to the data, Item 5 was considered problematic and treated with caution until a second confirmatory factor analysis would confirm its suitability for the scale. It should be noted that although Item 5 had a very low factor loading for its respective construct, its factor loading was still above the acceptable threshold of 0.3 (T. A. Brown, 2015, p. 27). Therefore Item 5 can still be considered a salient indicator for its respective construct. Latent brand personality scores for the construct Activity were thus computed twice, once with and once without the Item Dynamism. Note that only the scores with Item 5 are shown in this study. Another important point to emphasize is that the high correlations between the factors Activity and Aggressiveness (0.678) and between Responsibility and Simplicity (0.503) has led to a careful assessment of Geuens et al.'s scale in the confirmatory factor analysis conducted in the final brand personality study. The lower brand familiarity scores for most brands compared to the previously conducted familiarity test were another concern. However, since the brand personality clarity scores of the selected brands were considered acceptable and the selected brands had previously shown higher familiarity scores, the final study continued with some brands that had familiarity scores below the initially established threshold of 4.5. Additional confirmatory factor analysis in the final study will be

conducted to re-evaluate the problematic item and the scale as a whole in the final study. For the full report of the exploratory factor analysis without Item 5, please refer to

Table . See Figure 6 to see the factor model (including the problematic Item 5 highlighted in red.)

Brand familiarity and brand personality scores

Analysis of the latent brand familiarity scores of the remaining 12 brands showed that consumer familiarity with all brands except Nike was lower than indicated in the pretest. Surprisingly, The North Face and ASICS, which had some of the highest familiarity scores in the pretest (4.72 and 4.56, respectively), had latent scores of only 3.51 and 3.59, respectively. shows a comparison of the familiarity values of the pretest and the values of this study. Brand personality clarity values were above 5.0 for all brands. ASICS showed the lowest score with a latent score of 5.05; Nike achieved the highest score with 5.96. See Table 8 for the full list of brand personality clarity scores for all brands. The latent brand personality factor scores were analyzed to create personality profiles for all of the remaining 12 brands, illustrated as spider diagrams in Figure 7. Based on the 12 brand personality profiles, four brands were selected whose profiles differed from each other to such an extent that, when combined with the SMIs, they would each yield different levels of brand personality dissimilarity. Two factors were

considered: the brand's latent scores and the respective *z*-scores, as well as the distinctiveness of their brand personality profile from other brands. Please refer to Table 9 for an overview of the latent factor scores of all brands. The four selected brands are Converse, Kappa, Nike, and Ralph Lauren. Converse had the highest latent factor score for Responsibility among all the brands and also had relatively low scores for Simplicity, Emotionality, and Aggressiveness. Converse's brand personality profile, according to the brand personality study, is Factor 1 (Responsibility): 5.42, Factor 2 (Activity): 5.54, Factor 3 (Aggressiveness): 4.52, Factor 4 (Simplicity): 4.58, Factor 5 (Emotionality): 4.29. Kappa had the highest latent factor score for Simplicity among all brands. Besides, the brand had very low scores for Emotionality and Aggressiveness. Kappa's latent brand personality factor scores are Factor 1 (Responsibility): 5.24, Factor 2 (Activity): 5.12, Factor 3 (Aggressiveness): 4.10, Factor 4 (Simplicity): 4.81, Factor 5 (Emotionality): 3.82. The third brand that stood out in terms of its brand personality profile was Nike, which had the highest score on the Activity factor, the lowest on the Simplicity factor, and the second-lowest on the Emotionality factor among all brands. Nike's factor scores are Factor 1 (Responsibility): 5.19, Factor 2 (Activity): 6.04, Factor 3 (Aggressiveness): 4.96, Factor 4 (Simplicity): 3.82, Factor 5 (Emotionality): 3.33. Finally, Ralph Lauren stood out because it had the lowest latent score for Responsibility and low to average latent scores for all other factors. Ralph Lauren's brand personality profile is Factor 1 (Responsibility): 5.00, Factor 2 (Activity): 5.03, Factor 3 (Aggressiveness): 4.16, Factor 4 (Simplicity): 4.08, Factor 5 (Emotionality): 4.46 (See Figure 7 for all 12 brand personality profiles).

PROTO-PERSONA (AND DISSIMILARITY) TEST

51 people rated the four proto-personas according to the brand personality scale. Participants were between 19 and 58 years old ($\bar{x} = 33\ years, \sigma = 11.04\ years$), 62% were male, and 38% were female. Four respondents were filtered out due to unreasonably fast completion times (more than 2.5 times faster than the average). Overall dissimilarity was then computed by calculating the square root of all squared factor-distances between the brand and SMI (i.e., Euclidean distance). The pretest revealed the following results: As expected, Nike's well-fitting SMI alliance partner was "athlete 1" with an overall dissimilarity of 1.2. Nike's bad fit was "athlete 2", with an overall dissimilarity of 3.1. The well-fitting SMI to Kappa was "athlete 4", with an overall dissimilarity of 0.41. Kappa showed the worst fit with "athlete 2" with an overall dissimilarity of 1.88. The well-fitting SMI to Ralph Lauren was "athlete 4" with an overall dissimilarity of 1.05. For Ralph Lauren, the worst fit was "athlete 2" with an overall

dissimilarity of 1.8, a score very similar to the brands' best fitting SMI. Surprisingly, Converse was the only brand that did not fit the SMIs it was expected to and also showed similar degrees of dissimilarities for all four with values of 1.02, 1.58, 1.64, and 1.92. In fact, Converse showed the highest dissimilarity score to the SMI it was expected to be closest to. Since it was considered difficult to predict which stimulus the brand would match in the final experiment, it was excluded from the subsequent phase. Please refer to Table 10 for a table showing all the dissimilarity scores and to Figure 10 for spider diagrams illustrating the various personality profile comparisons between brands and SMIs.

BRAND PERSONALITY FIT STUDY

238 subjects completed the online brand personality questionnaire, of which 17 cases were excluded because either the attention test was failed or the completion time was unreasonably short. 64% of all respondents were male, and 36% were females. The age of participants ranged from 17 to 67 years ($\bar{x} = 29\ years, \sigma = 11.05\ years$), while 84% had a high school diploma or an even higher level of education. 97 participants were from Switzerland, 59 from Germany, 36 from France, and 46 from Italy.

Confirmatory factor analysis

The confirmatory factor analysis on Geuen et al.'s (2009) full scale (all 12 items) revealed satisfactory results in terms of measures of fit: an RMSEA of 0.079, TLI 0.906, and a Comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.938. All three indices showed an acceptably good fit of the model to the data (see

Table 11 for the model fit indices). In terms of parameter estimates, the analysis revealed factor loadings above 0.867 across all factors, indicating that all factors had convergent validity on their relative constructs (see Table 12).

Brand familiarity

The brand familiarity scores for all brands were even lower than in the brand personality study. Nike again achieved the highest score with 5.93, followed by Kappa with 4.41 and Ralph Lauren with 3.88.

Brand personality clarity

Participants indicated that Nike's brand personality was the clearest to them, with an average latent brand personality clarity score of 5.49. Ralph Lauren's average latent brand personality clarity score was 5.22, and Kappa's brand personality was the least clear, with an average latent brand personality score of 4.64. The SMI persona stimuli produced acceptably distinct brand personalities. Participants reported an average brand personality clarity of 5.10, 4.84, and 4.75 for "Athlete 1," "Athlete 2," and "Athlete 4," respectively.

The study returned the following results regarding personality fit between brands and SMIs: As predicted by the pretest, all brands matched and mismatched the SMIs as hypothesized. As expected, Nike's well-fitting SMI alliance partner was "athlete 1" with an overall dissimilarity of 2.9. Nike's bad fit was "athlete 2" with an overall dissimilarity of 4.2. The well-fitting SMI to Kappa was "athlete 4" with an overall dissimilarity of 2.98. Both brands showed notable differences between their low and high dissimilarity partners in terms of overall dissimilarity. This allowed hypothesis H1 to be tested. It should be noted that while matches and mismatches were obtained, the level of separation between low and high dissimilarity partners was less pronounced than expected based on the pretest results.

The well-fitting SMI to Ralph Lauren was "athlete 4" with an overall dissimilarity of 3.18. The more unfitting SMI for Ralph Lauren was "athlete 2" with an overall dissimilarity of 3.27. Again, the two values were very close to each other, so that the hypothesis $H1_b$ could be tested Kappa showed a bad fit with "athlete 2" with an overall dissimilarity of 3.38.

BRAND PERSONALITY FIT AND ALLIANCE EVALUATIONS (HYPOTHESES TEST)

Paired t-test

The results of the t-test which investigated the evaluation of the alliance in terms of brand personality dissimilarity (dissimilarity: low, high) across all three brands indicate that for Nike, the evaluation of the alliance with low dissimilarity $\bar{x} = 5.607, \sigma = 1.169$ was significantly higher $t(193) = 7.048$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.50$ than the evaluation of the alliance with high dissimilarity $\bar{x} = 4.656, \sigma = 1.293$ with a high effect size.

Moreover, brand alliance evaluation scores for Ralph Lauren did not significantly differ in terms of brand personality dissimilarity ($p = 0.958$).

Kappa's brand alliance evaluation scores did not differ significantly in terms of brand personality dissimilarity either (p = 0.759) (see Table 13).

One-way repeated measures ANOVA

A first one-way repeated measure ANOVA was conducted to investigate the evaluation of the brand alliance in terms of the different brands (brands: Kappa, Nike, Ralph Lauren) in alliances with low brand personality dissimilarity. Results of Mauchly's test indicated that the distributions satisfy ($\chi^2_{(2)}$ = 4.02, p = 0.13) the assumption of homogeneity-of-variance-of-differences (i.e., sphericity). Since the requirements of Mauchly's test were met, the analysis proceeded without any adjustments. The results of the analysis indicate that the main effect of the brand is significant and has a high effect size ($F_{(2, 186)}$ = 17.70, p < 0.001, η^2 = 0.16). Please refer to Table 14 for within-subject effects, pairwise comparison with Holm correction, as well as descriptive statistics of the analysis.

A second, similar test was conducted to investigate the evaluation of the brand alliance in terms of the different brands in alliances with high brand personality dissimilarity. The results of Mauchly's test again indicated that the distributions satisfy the assumption of sphericity ($\chi^2_{(2)}$ = 2.697, p = 0.26). Thus, the second analysis also proceeded without any corrections.

The second repeated-measures ANOVA determined that mean brand alliance scores also differed significantly across the three brands in the high brand personality dissimilarity setting with a medium effect size ($F_{(2, 186)}$ = 7.384, p < 0.001, η^2 = 0.074). For within-subject effects, pairwise comparison with Holm correction, as well as descriptive statistics of the analysis, please refer to Table 15. The results of both one-way repeated measure ANOVAs indicate a significant effect of the brand for brand alliance evaluations as measured on the scale by Simonin & Ruth (1998).

DISCUSSION

SUMMARY

Brand Personality Fit Study

The confirmatory factor analysis of Geuens et al.'s scale was satisfactory, and all three interpreted fit indices showed that the scale fit the collected data acceptably well. The CFA addressed two crucial issues that were critical for further analysis of the data. First, the CFA results indicated that the holistic scale by Geuens et al. was indeed suitable for measuring brand personality of brands and personal brands simultaneously. Second, it was found that item 5 (Activity - dynamic) did not need to be excluded for the calculation of the latent activity factor scores. The study, therefore, proceeded with the extraction of latent factor scores, considering all 12 items. The resulting brand personality dissimilarities between the three brands and the SMIs they were paired and produced the expected good-fit and bad-fit combinations for Nike and Kappa, as well as combinations with similar degrees of fit for Ralph Lauren. This was an indication that the stimulus material in the form of "about me" Instagram posts produced the desired brand personalities in the respondents' view. The paired t-test was conducted to test H_{1a} and confirm a significant difference in brand alliance evaluations between high-dissimilarity and low-dissimilarity alliances. The t-test revealed that only one brand (Nike) showed significantly higher brand alliance evaluations in low-dissimilarity alliances. The brand alliance evaluations of Kappa, on the other hand, showed no significant differences between the alliances with their good-fit partners and poor-fit partners. The t-test results demonstrated that if a brand alliance with a lower dissimilarity score (i.e., better fit) is compared to a brand alliance with a higher dissimilarity score (i.e., more unfit), then the brand alliance evaluation scores of the alliance with the lower dissimilarity are not always higher than the those of the alliance with the higher dissimilarity scores. Therefore, H_{1a} is rejected.

Interestingly, only Nike, being the brand with both the highest brand familiarity score and the highest brand personality clarity score, displayed an effect of brand personality dissimilarity on alliance evaluations. It seems not unintuitive that consumer evaluations of brand alliances are only affected by brand personality fit if the consumers know the brand well. Consumers can only judge a fit or misfit in brand personality between a brand and an SMI if they have seen enough advertisements of the brand to know how the brand presents itself and if the brand personality is clear to them. About 78% of all respondents said they were less familiar with Kappa, and about 60% said they did not recognize Kappa's brand personality as clearly as Nike's. It can be speculated that many did not consider the brand personality of Kappa to be

clear enough to consider brand personality fit when evaluating the alliances. This is consistent with verbal feedback collected during the final study. Multiple respondents indicated that the brand personality of Kappa was not well known or clear enough to them to assess whether the SMIs in the alliances were a good or bad fit. These indications point to an assumption that the effect of brand personality fit on brand alliance evaluations might be mediated by brand personality clarity. Although not empirically proven, the conclusion would be that brand personality congruence only plays a role for brands with very distinct perceived brand personalities.

As expected, the brand alliance evaluations for Ralph Lauren did not differ significantly in terms of brand personality dissimilarity, supporting H_2.

Both repeated measures ANOVA indicated a high effect of brands on brand alliance evaluation, supporting the assumptions of H_2. As was expected, one can thus conclude that other factors related to the brands (e.g., pre-alliance evaluations) also impacted the alliance evaluations.

LINK TO EXISTING LITERATURE

Von Mettenheim & Wiedmann (2021) had previously demonstrated that congruence between a brand has a significant positive effect on the effectiveness of SMI endorsement messages., Having used brand personality as the sole driver of brand congruence in their study, their results suggest that brand personality similarity generally positively affects the effectiveness of SMI endorsement messages. However, the present study results indicate that brand personality similarity influences brand alliance evaluation only for certain brands, but not for all. Consequently, the generally positive effect of brand congruence on endorsement effectiveness demonstrated by Mettenheim & Wiedmann cannot be transferred to evaluations of the alliance. The data collected on brand familiarity and brand personality clarity, as well as verbal feedback during the data collection phase, suggest that the effects of brand personality fit on consumer ratings of the alliance between brands and SMI may be mediated by other variables (e.g., brand personality clarity). It should be noted that the brands examined in Mettenheim & Wiedmann's study were Nike and Mercedes, both of which are very well known and have a very well-defined brand image. Varying degrees of familiarity and clarity of brand personality between brands were therefore not considered in their study. In addition, it should be noted that their stimulus material for the SMI personas included descriptions such as "Hi, my name is Angelina […] I am a girl who hates high heels and loves sneakers." (i.e., this being the appropriate endorser for Nike) and "Hi, my name is David […] On my channel I am delighted to introduce you to the finest quality products […] whether it's a car, suit or piece of luggage." Although the concept

of brand congruence was measured and calculated in their study using only a brand personality scale, their stimulus material might have mixed different drivers of brand-fit. Thus, it is difficult to assess the extent to which their measured post-purchase attitude and belief scores were driven by brand personality fit or whether subjects were also influenced by perceptions of other factors for fit, particularly product fit.

The effects of brand personality, as well as brand personality fit in brand alliances, was investigated in particular by a study by van der Lans et al. (2014). Their study analyzed a much larger sample of brands (100 brands), making it very likely that their analysis covered brands with a wide range of different degrees of brand familiarity. Van der Lans et al. have used a Bayesian nonlinear structural equation model (SEM) to analyze their data on 1206 brand alliance combinations and found a strong negative effect (β = –0.32) of overall brand personality dissimilarity on the evaluation of brand alliances. A significant negative effect of brand personality dissimilarity was confirmed for one of the brands (Nike). However, the other brand with varying degrees of brand personality fit in its alliances (Kappa) showed no significant effect. Unfortunately, since van der Lans et al. have not studied brands individually, their results do not give us much insight about which brands showed what effect. Out of curiosity, a (linear) SEM was conducted, but exclusively with the data on Nike (i.e., the only brand that showed a significant effect). The SEM yielded a very similar estimate for the effect of brand personality dissimilarity on alliance ratings (β = -0.312). Effect of brand personality clarity (β = 0.271). Please refer to Table 16 for results of the SEM on Nike.

Regarding the observed effect of brands, the results of this study support what has already been revealed by Simonin & Ruth (1998), that pre-alliance attitudes towards brands play a crucial role in the evaluation of brand alliances. Although pre-alliance attitude was not measured in this study, it is very likely that the significant effect of the brand variable on alliance ratings is related to the effects of pre-alliance attitude. Though not tested in this study, the results suggest that Simonin & Ruth's findings may also apply in the context of alliances between brands and SMIs.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The study further elaborates on the hypotheses and findings of the role of brand personality congruence as a driver of brand fit in brand alliances. It compares the results with extant literature in that field. Extant studies that have looked at brand personality fit have mainly either focused on very well-known brands (van der Lans et al., 2014) or have not looked at brands individually (von Mettenheim & Wiedmann, 2021). Since brand personality is defined by what

consumers have learned and seen about a brand, it is not surprising that brand personality did not play a role in the alliance's evaluation of one brand. Respondents indicated a lower level of familiarity. Thus, the fact that H1 was rejected does not contradict the existing theory but rather deepens it by pointing out that the effect of brand personality similarity is still not fully understood. Although the underlying hypothesis of this thesis had to be rejected, the analysis did reveal that brand personality fit between brands and SMIs plays an important role for certain brands. Therefore, the results of the analyses are not inconsistent with the theory that, in addition to the expertise, credibility, and attractiveness of SMIs, their congruence in terms

MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The finding that brand personality fit does not always impact alliance evaluation has practical implications from the perspective of companies, SMIs, marketers, and influencer agencies. The study showed that in some cases, it might be inappropriate for brands to evaluate an alliance with an SMI based on brand personality fit if fear of the negative impact on brand alliance evaluation is the reason for whether or not to ally. Brand personality alignment should be most important for brands that already have a distinct and clear brand personality. For them, it is indeed very likely that poorly fitting SMI alliance partners will negatively influence consumers' evaluation of the alliances. Marketers of brands that have not yet strengthened their brand's image may neglect their fear of the negative impact on brand alliance evaluation due to a lack of personality fit. However, fit can still play a role from a managerial perspective for other reasons. Selecting an SMI that fits the company's envisioned image can still be beneficial, as one of SMIs' main characteristics is content creation. SMIs may not want to hand over too much control over the content they publish to brands it works with for fear of losing its authenticity. Even if a brand's brand personality is not yet clear in the eyes of consumers, it is still beneficial for companies to find an SMI that fits the envisioned brand personality because it can prevent disagreements about what content should be published. In conclusion, the findings of this study enable marketers to recognize the possible absence of effects of brand personality fit on alliance evaluations when entering into alliances with SMIs. Considering the high prices for endorsement campaigns with established SMIs, choosing a well-known influencer whose brand personality is known to be a good fit for the brand can sometimes be a misguided decision. Forming alliances with several smaller influencers without factoring in their personality fit can, in some cases, be an appropriate alternative. Moreover, it should be noted that the conclusions in this study are limited to impacts of brand personality fit. As was already observed in van der Lans et al.'s (2014) study, other alliance-related advantages, such

as cost reductions or access to the partner brand's social media power, may potentially outweigh the disadvantages of pairing two incongruent brands. Additionally, it should also be noted that the brand personality of an SMI can always be an important factor to consider for other reasons than congruence with the brand, especially for smaller, less well-known brands. As Simonin & Ruth (1998) have shown, brand associations are more easily transferred to the alliance partner with lower brand familiarity. This means that the brand personality of a well-known SMI alliance partner can help to steer the brand personality of a lesser-known brand in the desired direction.

As a side note, this study also validated Geuen et al.'s scale as a holistic measurement tool that can simultaneously assess the brand personality of both personal brands. While this is undoubtedly a valuable insight, this may also have managerial significance beyond the field of marketing. Recently, academic research has increasingly been driven by the assumption that managing one's brand, and the associated brand personality is of importance not only to celebrities but can play a role for literally anyone, for example, in the job market (Arruda & Dixson, 2007; McNally, 2014; Merdin Uygur, 2011; Shafiee et al., 2020; Shepherd, 2005). People as brands can be found among pop stars, in the movies, in sports, art and political industries, social media, as well as in educational institutions (Merdin 2011; Schwabel 2009; Shepherd 2005). A more holistic measurement tool that can assess the brand personality of personal brands and that of traditional brands could be of interest not only in the context of brand alliances and endorsement strategies but also in the context of human resource management in general.

CONCLUSION

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Sampling Procedures

Because convenience sampling was used in all phases of the study, it is generally uncertain to what extent the sample represents the population. This uncertainty is further amplified because the additional respondents needed to achieve acceptably high case numbers in the various phases were recruited via the crowdsourcing platforms SurveyCircle, SurveySwap, and MechanicalTurk. It must be assumed that the participants on these platforms represent a rather specific user group and are not necessarily representative of the entire population. Therefore, one should be cautious when using results from this study to draw conclusions about consumers (Swiss, German, French and Italian) in general.

Sample Size

Choosing the right sample size for factor analyses is a relatively complex task, and various rules of thumb can be found in the academic literature. These are, however, not always consistent. Some research indicates that the sample size should be quite large (e.g., 400 or greater) (Conway and Huffcutt, 2003, p. 154, as cited in Kakitek, 2018) in order to produce accurate results. Kline (2015) addresses the issue of few indicators per factor, which is the case with Geuens et al.'s scale and indicates that "in factor analysis […] larger samples may be needed if there are relatively few indicators per factor" (p. 15). Other sources indicate a smaller minimum sample size (e.g., $N \geq 100–200$) (Brown, 2015, p. 380). Brown also offered other guidelines, such as a minimum number of cases per freed parameter (e.g., minimum 5–10 cases per parameter). Depending on which rule is referred to, the sample size in this study may be criticized as too small.

Sequence effects

The within-subject design might have been problematic because the collected data might have been affected by the sequence of questions. Participants might have consciously or unconsciously rated the alliances based on previously answered questions about the brands. Asking respondents to rate the alliances first and ask them questions about the brands later on, might have been a better approach.

Selection bias

A possible selection bias in this study (i.e., differences among brands prior to the experiment that affect the experimental results) must be acknowledged. Since only a limited number of brands were considered based on familiarity, as opposed to random selection, a potential selection bias cannot be completely ruled out. Choosing a more significant number of brands and more SMIs would have had the advantage of increasing the generalizability and robustness of the results. However, the disadvantage would have been possible subject fatigue and boredom. In the test phase of the final questionnaire, an average completion time of about 20 minutes was reported. In this case, however, a "between subject" design would also have helped rule out subject fatigue.

Brand personality scale

Van der Lans et al. critically noted that the limited number of dimensions in their study might be problematic and that "future research may incorporate additional dimensions and further explore how the conceptual coherence between these or other dimensions contribute to brand fit" (2014, p. 564). Since Geuens et al's (2009) short scale was used without additions for this study, the same criticism applies here. From a purely statistical perspective, it can be criticized that all five factors (dimensions) in their model may be significantly underdetermined due to their limited number of indicators (items). As it is noted in the much-cited reference work by Brown (2015), "factors that are represented by two or three indicators may be underdetermined […] and highly unstable across replications" (p.21) and that "methodologists recommend that latent variables be defined by a minimum of three indicators to avoid […] underidentification" (p. 61).

Other drivers of brand fit

As in the study by van der Lans et al. (2014), this thesis also focused exclusively on brand personality fit as the sole driver of brand fit. Obviously, brand fit in an endorsement cannot be reduced to the five dimensions measured by Geuens et al.'s scale. While brand personality coherence across brands has been established as a driver of brand fit, other variables may also contribute to perceived brand fit.

Method

Merely demonstrating differences across brands with respect to the impact of brand personality fit on brand alliance evaluations might have created more ambiguity in this area than it resolved. Another non-negligible limitation of this study is that brand familiarity, and brand personality clarity were not considered in any of the analyses. While the results certainly indicated that

existing findings on the topic studied should be viewed with caution, the study may have raised more new questions than it resolved. Conducting an additional SEM on top of the analyses undertaken and considering brand personality clarity would have helped answer these emerging questions.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of this thesis led to the assumption that the effect of brand personality fit on brand alliance evaluations is likely to be mediated by brand personality clarity. Investigating a possible relation in future studies would help to shed light on newly arisen questions. Additionally, it would be interesting to look at each brand personality dimension of SMIs individually and see how each of them affects consumer evaluations of an alliance. Van der Lans et al. (2014) have shown in their study on brand alliances between traditional brands that "whether similarity or dissimilarity drives brand fit should be answered separately for each dimension" (p. 563), since their study showed varying impacts of dissimilarity in terms of the different dimensions. For example, their separate analysis of dissimilarity for Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions of sincerity and competence suggests that brand alliance members do not need to be similar on these dimensions. Their results even indicate that moderate dissimilarity in these dimensions may be beneficial for consumers' evaluation of the alliance. However, their analysis of the excitement and robustness dimensions suggests that consumers evaluate an alliance more positively when alliance partners are similar on these dimensions.
Their findings suggest that using aggregated brand personality dimensions to reach a general conclusion about the effects of brand personality dissimilarity on alliance evaluations may oversimplify the issue and overlook the multidimensional nature of brand personality constructs. Future studies should investigate whether the differences in individual brand personality dimensions in alliances between brands and SMI also show different effects depending on the analyzed dimension.

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APPENDIX

TABLES

Table 1: List of brands and attributed groups

	Brand Familiarity Study			Brand Personality Study	
1	Adidas	Group 1	1	Adidas	Group 1
2	Air Jordan		2	ASICS	
3	ASICS		3	Champion	
4	Billabong		4	Converse	
5	Champion		5	Fila	
6	Columbia		6	Kappa	
7	Converse	Group 2	7	Lacoste	Group 2
8	Diadora		8	Nike	
9	Ellesse		9	Puma	
10	Everlast		10	Ralph Lauren	
11	Fila		11	Reebok	
12	Head		12	The North Face	
13	Hummel	Group 3			
14	Kappa				
15	Lacoste				
16	Le Coq Sportif				
17	Lonsdale				
18	Mammut				
19	Mizuno	Group 4			
20	Moncler				
21	New Balance				
22	New Era				
23	Nike				
24	Puma	Group 5			
25	Quiksilver				
26	Ralph Lauren				
27	Reebok				
28	Rip Curl				
29	Rossignol	Group 6			
30	Salomon				
31	The North Face				
32	Umbro				
33	Under Armour				

Table 2: Single-Test Reliability Analysis for the Brand Familiarity Scale

Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics

Estimate	Cronbach's α	sd
Point estimate	0.921	0.488
95% CI lower bound	0.919	
95% CI upper bound	0.923	

Note: Of the observations, pairwise complete cases were used.

Frequentist Individual Item Reliability Statistics

Item	If item dropped Cronbach's α	Item-rest correlation	mean	sd
Item 1: Familiar	0.882	0.846	4.148	2.339
Item 2: Knowledgeable	0.859	0.872	3.583	2.174
Item 3: Seen Advertisement	0.914	0.803	3.176	2.168

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the Brand Familiarity Test

	Item 1: Familiar	Item 2: Knowledgeable	Item 3: Seen Advertisement
Valid	1598	1598	1598
Mean	4.148	3.583	3.176
Std. Error of Mean	0.059	0.054	0.054
Median	5	4	3
Std. Deviation	2.339	2.174	2.168
Skewness	-0.194	0.174	0.5
Std. Error of Skewness	0.061	0.061	0.061
Kurtosis	-1.528	-1.4	-1.211
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.122	0.122	0.122
Minimum	1	1	1
Maximum	7	7	7

Table 4: Exploratory Factor Analysis (12 items) Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test

	MSA
Overall MSA	0.761
Item 1: Responsibility (down-to-earth)	0.856
Item 2: Responsibility (stable)	0.851
Item 3: Responsibility (responsible)	0.870
Item 4: Activity (active)	0.789
Item 5: Activity (dynamic)	0.778
Item 6: Activity (innovative)	0.714
Item 7: Aggressiveness (aggressive)	0.816
Item 8: Aggressiveness (bold)	0.631
Item 9: Simplicity (ordinary)	0.653
Item 10: Simplicity (ordinary)	0.646
Item 11: Emotionality (romantic)	0.661
Item 12: Emotionality (sentimental)	0.889

Table 5: Exploratory Factor Analysis (12 items) Factor Loadings and Fit Indices

Factor Loadings (with item 5)

	Resp.	Act.	Aggr.	Simpl.	Emo.	Uniqueness
Item 1: Responsibility (down-to-earth)	0.692					0.525
Item 2: Responsibility (stable)	0.781					0.415
Item 3: Responsibility (responsible)	0.763					0.421
Item 4: Activity (active)		0.723				0.303
Item 5: Activity (dynamic)		0.322	0.277			0.068
Item 6: Activity (innovative)		1.127				0.461
Item 7: Aggressiveness (aggressive)			0.807			0.511
Item 8: Aggressiveness (bold)			0.688			0.379
Item 9: Simplicity (ordinary)				0.93		0.178
Item 10: Simplicity (ordinary)				0.704		0.43
Item 11: Emotionality (romantic)					1.026	0.005
Item 12: Emotionality (sentimental)					0.861	0.217

Note. Applied rotation method is promax. Estimation method is Maximum Likelihood

Additional fit indices (with item 5)

RMSEA	RMSEA 90% confidence	TLI	BIC
0.048	0.034 - 0.063	0.974	-58.509

Table 6: Exploratory Factor Analysis Results (Scale with 11 items)

Chi-squared Test

	Value	df	p
Model	16.577	10	0.084

Factor Loadings

	Resp.	Act.	Aggr.	Simp.	Emo.	Uniqueness
Item 1: Responsibility (down-to-earth)	0.691					0.517
Item 2: Responsibility (stable)	0.737					0.420
Item 3: Responsibility (responsible)	0.749					0.415
Item 4: Activity (active)		0.905				0.167
Item 6: Activity (innovative)		0.882				0.271
Item 7: Aggressiveness (aggressive)			1.096			0.225
Item 8: Aggressiveness (bold)			0.399			0.557
Item 9: Simplicity (ordinary)				0.754		0.315
Item 10: Simplicity (ordinary)				0.887		0.320
Item 11: Emotionality (romantic)					0.865	0.169
Item 12: Emotionality (sentimental)					1.061	0.061

Note. Applied rotation method is promax. Estimation method is Maximum Likelihood

Factor Correlations

	Responsibility	Activity	Aggressiveness	Simplicity	Emotionality
Responsibility	1	0.268	0.344	0.503	0.381
Activity	0.268	1	0.678	0.423	-0.082
Aggressiveness	0.344	0.678	1	0.199	0.292
Simplicity	0.503	0.423	0.199	1	0.114
Emotionality	0.381	-0.082	0.292	0.114	1

Additional fit indices

RMSEA	RMSEA 90% confidence	TLI	BIC
0.026	0 - 0.048	0.993	-52.124

Table 7: Brand Familiarity Score Comparison

Brand	Familiartiy Score in Familiarity Test	Familiartiy Score in Brand Personality Study	Familiartiy Score in Brand Personality Fit Study
Adidas	6.09454	5.803225052	
Nike	6.04631	6.169907395	5.930334457
Reebok	5.19426	4.329658114	
Lacoste	5.13206	4.699213527	
Converse	5.12411	4.400965655	
Puma	5.07284	4.987937719	
Fila	5.04234	4.551078896	
The North Face	4.71652	3.55548835	
Kappa	4.65865	4.246696994	4.406426651
ASICS	4.56716	3.593704911	
Champion	4.55922	4.063879422	
Ralph Lauren	4.54887	3.948193564	3.884010614
New Balance	4.39525		
Diadora	4.08149		
Air Jordan	3.89546		
Quiksilver	3.76326		
Under Armour	3.73858		
Lonsdale	3.60858		
Umbro	3.60574		
Everlast	3.56865		
Le Coq Sportif	3.50057		
Moncler	3.40007		
Ellesse	3.17589		
Columbia	3.06823		
Salomon	3.06348		
Billabong	2.96262		
Mizuno	2.95149		
Head	2.88043		
Rossignol	2.81723		
New Era	2.55333		
Mammut	2.51213		
Rip Curl	2.49418		
Hummel	2.42482		
Attention Check	1.87794	1.79201102	1.314072225

Note: Brands with critically low values (below the initial selection criterion of 4.5) are highlighted in red.

Table 8: Brand Personality Clarity Score Comparison

Brand	Brand Personality Clarity in Brand Personality Study	Brand Personality Clarity in Brand Personality Fit Study
ASICS	5.05091	
Fila	5.12222	
Champion	5.13243	
Kappa	5.24634	4.89550
Reebok	5.32593	
Puma	5.44091	
The North Face	5.55068	
Lacoste	5.56957	
Ralph Lauren	5.62778	5.41185
Adidas	5.70316	
Converse	5.82899	
Nike	5.96106	5.69223

Table 9: Brand personality factor scores for all 12 brands

Brand	Resp.	z-score	Act.	z-score	Aggr.	z-score	Simpl.	z-score	Emo.	z-score	∑ z-scores
Adidas	5.305	0.588	5.878	1.392	4.575	0.822	4.108	-0.730	3.731	-0.054	3.496
Asics	5.267	0.217	5.061	-0.790	4.100	-0.901	4.673	0.993	3.482	-0.690	2.947
Champion	5.192	-0.516	4.904	-1.208	4.199	-0.543	4.630	0.864	3.808	0.142	2.787
Converse	5.417	1.684	5.544	0.500	4.522	0.629	4.588	0.736	4.294	1.381	5.932
Fila	5.187	-0.560	5.112	-0.652	4.056	-1.060	4.753	1.238	3.899	0.373	3.534
Kappa	5.245	0.002	5.122	-0.625	4.108	-0.874	4.810	1.412	3.823	0.179	3.182
Lacoste	5.244	-0.001	4.978	-1.011	4.117	-0.841	4.189	-0.482	4.022	0.688	2.435
Nike	5.196	-0.477	6.040	1.823	4.963	2.230	3.826	-1.590	3.335	-1.065	12.185
Puma	5.310	0.639	5.549	0.513	4.524	0.635	4.218	-0.394	3.182	-1.454	3.343
Ralph Lauren	4.995	-2.438	5.033	-0.864	4.162	-0.676	4.077	-0.822	4.465	1.816	11.123
Reebok	5.253	0.085	5.435	0.208	4.335	-0.047	4.278	-0.209	3.291	-1.176	1.480
The North Face	5.324	0.777	5.624	0.715	4.521	0.626	4.014	-1.015	3.697	-0.141	2.557

Note: High z-scores are highlighted in green and red. Selected brands fort the brand personality fit study are highlighted in grey.

Table 10: Dissimilarity Scores in the Proto-Persona Test

Personality Dissimilarities (Euclidian Distances)

Brand	Responsibility	Activity	Agressiveness	Simplicity	Emotionality	∑Δ
Nike	5.196	6.040	4.963	3.826	3.335	
Athlete 1	0.427	0.287	0.038	0.312	0.383	1.203
Athlete 2	0.473	0.867	4.086	0.909	3.299	3.104
Athlete 3	0.314	0.415	0.174	0.338	0.506	1.322
Athlete 4	0.055	1.081	0.517	0.760	0.086	1.581

Brand	Responsibility	Activity	Agressiveness	Simplicity	Emotionality	∑Δ
Converse	5.417	5.544	4.522	4.588	4.294	
Athlete 1	0.764	0.002	0.060	1.744	0.116	1.639
Athlete 2	0.218	0.190	2.497	0.036	0.735	1.917
Athlete 3	0.610	0.022	0.001	1.806	0.061	1.581
Athlete 4	0.207	0.296	0.077	0.012	0.444	1.018

Brand	Responsibility	Activity	Agressiveness	Simplicity	Emotionality	∑Δ
Ralph Lauren	4.995	5.033	4.162	4.077	4.465	
Athlete 1	0.205	0.222	0.367	0.656	0.261	1.308
Athlete 2	0.789	0.006	1.489	0.492	0.471	1.802
Athlete 3	0.129	0.131	0.148	0.694	0.175	1.130
Athlete 4	0.001	0.001	0.007	0.385	0.700	1.046

Brand	Responsibility	Activity	Agressiveness	Simplicity	Emotionality	∑Δ
Kappa	5.245	5.122	4.108	4.810	3.823	
Athlete 1	0.493	0.146	0.435	2.380	0.017	1.863
Athlete 2	0.408	0.000	1.359	0.001	1.765	1.880
Athlete 3	0.371	0.075	0.193	2.452	0.050	1.772
Athlete 4	0.080	0.015	0.019	0.013	0.038	0.406

Table 11: Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Model Fit

Chi-square test

Model	X^2	df	p
Baseline model	3255.445	66	
Factor model	243.163	44	< .001

Additional fit measures

Fit indices

Index	Value
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.938
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.906
Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.906
Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.925
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.617
Bollen's Relative Fit Index (RFI)	0.888
Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.938
Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI)	0.938

Other fit measures

Metric	Value
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.079
RMSEA 90% CI lower bound	0.069
RMSEA 90% CI upper bound	0.089
RMSEA p-value	5.882e -7
Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)	0.058
Hoelter's critical N (α = .05)	181.824
Hoelter's critical N (α = .01)	206.425
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.947
McDonald fit index (MFI)	0.872
Expected cross validation index (ECVI)	0.428

R-Squared

	R^2
Item 1: Responsibility (down-to-earth)	0.447
Item 2: Responsibility (stable)	0.598
Item 3: Responsibility (responsible)	0.607
Item 4: Activity (active)	0.561
Item 5: Activity (dynamic)	0.576
Item 6: Activity (innovative)	0.365
Item 7: Aggressiveness (aggressive)	0.592
Item 8: Aggressiveness (bold)	0.43
Item 9: Simplicity (ordinary)	0.524
Item 10: Simplicity (ordinary)	0.764
Item 11: Emotionality (romantic)	0.789
Item 12: Emotionality (sentimental)	0.751

Table 12: Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Parameter estimates

Factor loadings

Factor	Indicator	Symbol	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval Lower	95% Confidence Interval Upper
Responsibility	Item 1: Responsibility (down-to-earth)	λ11	0.994	0.054	18.542	< .001	0.889	1.099
	Item 2: Responsibility (stable)	λ21	1.09	0.049	22.22	< .001	0.994	1.186
	Item 3: Responsibility (responsible)	λ31	1.025	0.046	22.425	< .001	0.935	1.114
Activity	Item 4: Activity (active)	λ42	0.867	0.043	20.261	< .001	0.783	0.951
	Item 5: Activity (dynamic)	λ52	0.958	0.047	20.548	< .001	0.867	1.049
	Item 6: Activity (innovative)	λ62	0.883	0.056	15.885	< .001	0.774	0.992
Aggressiveness	Item 7: Aggressiveness (aggressive)	λ73	1.358	0.076	17.796	< .001	1.209	1.508
	Item 8: Aggressiveness (bold)	λ83	0.947	0.06	15.748	< .001	0.83	1.065
Simplicity	Item 9: Simplicity (ordinary)	λ94	1.054	0.055	19.203	< .001	0.947	1.162
	Item 10: Simplicity (ordinary)	λ104	1.396	0.061	23.012	< .001	1.277	1.515
Emotionality	Item 11: Emotionality (romantic)	λ115	1.39	0.055	25.252	< .001	1.282	1.498
	Item 12: Emotionality (sentimental)	λ125	1.337	0.054	24.57	< .001	1.23	1.443

Factor variances

Factor	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval Lower	95% Confidence Interval Upper
Responsibility	1.000	0.000			1.000	1.000
Activity	1.000	0.000			1.000	1.000
Aggressiveness	1.000	0.000			1.000	1.000
Simplicity	1.000	0.000			1.000	1.000
Emotionality	1.000	0.000			1.000	1.000

Factor Covariances

			Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval Lower	95% Confidence Interval Upper
Responsibility	↔	Activity	0.102	0.047	2.154	0.031	0.009	0.195
Responsibility	↔	Aggressiveness	-0.383	0.046	-8.402	< .001	-0.472	-0.294
Responsibility	↔	Simplicity	0.51	0.038	13.52	< .001	0.436	0.584
Responsibility	↔	Emotionality	0.526	0.035	15.106	< .001	0.457	0.594
Activity	↔	Aggressiveness	0.53	0.043	12.434	< .001	0.446	0.613
Activity	↔	Simplicity	-0.324	0.044	-7.433	< .001	-0.41	-0.239
Activity	↔	Emotionality	-0.048	0.045	-1.066	0.287	-0.137	0.041
Aggressiveness	↔	Simplicity	-0.342	0.046	-7.41	< .001	-0.432	-0.251
Aggressiveness	↔	Emotionality	-0.137	0.047	-2.896	0.004	-0.23	-0.044
Simplicity	↔	Emotionality	0.492	0.036	13.612	< .001	0.421	0.562

Residual variances

					95% Confidence Interval	
Indicator	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**z-value**	**p**	**Lower**	**Upper**
Item 1: Responsibility (down-to-earth)	1.22	0.078	15.587	< .001	1.067	1.374
Item 2: Responsibility (stable)	0.798	0.064	12.49	< .001	0.673	0.923
Item 3: Responsibility (responsible)	0.68	0.055	12.253	< .001	0.571	0.789
Item 4: Activity (active)	0.588	0.05	11.82	< .001	0.49	0.685
Item 5: Activity (dynamic)	0.676	0.059	11.422	< .001	0.56	0.792
Item 6: Activity (innovative)	1.356	0.085	15.966	< .001	1.189	1.522
Item 7: Aggressiveness (aggressive)	1.271	0.159	8.011	< .001	0.96	1.582
Item 8: Aggressiveness (bold)	1.189	0.094	12.679	< .001	1.005	1.373
Item 9: Simplicity (ordinary)	1.008	0.081	12.377	< .001	0.848	1.168
Item 10: Simplicity (ordinary)	0.601	0.113	5.312	< .001	0.379	0.822
Item 11: Emotionality (romantic)	0.517	0.092	5.649	< .001	0.338	0.696
Item 12: Emotionality (sentimental)	0.593	0.087	6.843	< .001	0.423	0.763

Table 13: Results of the paired samples t-test

Paired Samples T-Test

						95% CI for Cohen's d	
Measure 1	**Measure 2**	**t**	**df**	**p**	**Cohen's d**	**Lower**	**Upper**
meanNEVAP	- meanNEVAN	7.048	193	< .001	0.506	0.356	0.655
meanREVAP	- meanREVAN	0.053	136	0.958	0.004	-0.163	0.172
meanKEVAP	- meanKEVAN	0.308	152	0.759	0.025	-0.134	0.183

Descriptives

	N	**Mean**	**SD**	**SE**
meanNEVAP	194	5.607	1.169	0.084
meanNEVAN	194	4.656	1.293	0.093
meanREVAP	137	5.049	1.193	0.102
meanREVAN	137	5.041	1.190	0.102
meanKEVAP	153	5.139	1.150	0.093
meanKEVAN	153	5.100	1.206	0.097

Table 14: Results of the one-way repeated measures ANOVA in low dissimilarity alliances

Within-Subject Effects for brand alliance evaluation

Cases	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**p**	**η^2**
Brand	34.39	2	17.20	17.70	< .001	0.16
Residuals	180.72	186	0.97			

Pairwise Comparisons for the Brands in High Fit Condition

		Mean Difference	SE	t	p holm
Nike	Ralph	0.82	0.14	5.67	< .001
	Kappa	0.63	0.14	4.39	< .001
Ralph	Kappa	-0.18	0.14	-1.28	0.20

Descriptive Statistics for the Brands in High Fit Condition

Brands	Mean	SD	N
Kappa	5.22	1.21	94
Nike	5.85	1.04	94
Ralph	5.04	1.16	94

Table 15: Results of the one-way repeated measures ANOVA in high dissimilarity alliances

Within-Subject Effects for brand alliance evaluation

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Brand	15.518	2	7.759	7.384	< .001	0.074
Residuals	195.445	186	1.051			

Post Hoc Comparisons for the Brands in High Fit Condition

		Mean Difference	SE	t	p holm
Nike	Ralph	-0.298	0.150	-1.992	0.096
	Kappa	-0.574	0.150	-3.842	< .001
Ralph	Kappa	-0.277	0.150	-1.850	0.096

Descriptive Statistics for the Brands in High Fit Condition

Brands	Mean	SD	N
Kappa	5.110	1.177	94
Nike	4.535	1.425	94
Ralph	4.833	1.188	94

Table 16: SEM Results (Data on Nike only)

Chi Square Test Statistic (unscaled)

	df	AIC	BIC	χ^2	p
Model	534	42206.173	42727.658	1445.698	0.000

Parameter Estimates

			est	se	z	p	CI (lower)	CI (upper)	std (lv)	std (all)
Nike: Responsibility	=~	Nike: Responsibility (down-to-earth)	1	0			1	1	1.157	0.727
Nike: Responsibility	=~	Nike: Responsibility (stable)	0.854	0.069	12.46	< .001	0.719	0.988	0.988	0.717
Nike: Responsibility	=~	Nike: Responsibility (responsible)	1.096	0.082	13.446	< .001	0.936	1.256	1.269	0.839
Nike: Activity	=~	Nike: Activity (active)	1	0			1	1	0.746	0.796
Nike: Activity	=~	Nike: Activity (dynamic)	1.325	0.084	15.684	< .001	1.159	1.49	0.988	0.889
Nike: Activity	=~	Nike: Activity (innovative)	0.914	0.081	11.233	< .001	0.754	1.073	0.681	0.584
Nike: Aggressiveness	=~	Nike: Aggressiveness (aggressive)	1	0			1	1	0.957	0.577
Nike: Aggressiveness	=~	Nike: Aggressiveness (bold)	1.055	0.15	7.015	< .001	0.76	1.349	1.009	0.712
Nike: Simplicity	=~	Nike: Simplicity (ordinary)	1	0			1	1	1.295	0.804
Nike: Simplicity	=~	Nike: Simplicity (ordinary)	1.047	0.101	10.339	< .001	0.849	1.246	1.357	0.837

Nike: Emotionality	=~	Nike: Emotionality (romantic)	1	0			1	1	1.544	0.929
Nike: Emotionality	=~	Nike: Emotionality (sentimental)	0.981	0.06	16.347	< .001	0.863	1.098	1.514	0.874
SMI: Responsibility	=~	SMI: Responsibility (down-to-earth)	1	0			1	1	1.16	0.738
SMI: Responsibility	=~	SMI: Responsibility (stable)	0.972	0.07	13.983	< .001	0.836	1.109	1.128	0.812
SMI: Responsibility	=~	SMI: Responsibility (responsible)	0.87	0.066	13.289	< .001	0.742	0.999	1.01	0.752
SMI: Activity	=~	SMI: Activity (active)	1	0			1	1	0.957	0.852
SMI: Activity	=~	SMI: Activity (dynamic)	1	0.073	13.69	< .001	0.856	1.143	0.957	0.761
SMI: Activity	=~	SMI: Activity (innovative)	0.853	0.081	10.5	< .001	0.693	1.012	0.816	0.567
SMI: Aggressiveness	=~	SMI: Aggressiveness (aggressive)	1	0			1	1	1.554	0.823
SMI: Aggressiveness	=~	SMI: Aggressiveness (bold)	0.574	0.056	10.276	< .001	0.464	0.683	0.892	0.602
SMI: Simplicity	=~	SMI: Simplicity (ordinary)	1	0			1	1	1.025	0.721
SMI: Simplicity	=~	SMI: Simplicity (ordinary)	1.422	0.11	12.875	< .001	1.206	1.639	1.458	0.895
SMI: Emotionality	=~	SMI: Emotionality (romantic)	1	0			1	1	1.496	0.928
SMI: Emotionality	=~	SMI: Emotionality (sentimental)	0.92	0.054	17.073	< .001	0.815	1.026	1.377	0.851
AllianceEvaluation	=~	AllianceEvaluation: Positive	1	0			1	1	1.249	0.926
AllianceEvaluation	=~	AllianceEvaluation: Like	1.022	0.034	30.393	< .001	0.956	1.088	1.277	0.914
AllianceEvaluation	=~	AllianceEvaluation: Favorable	1.039	0.033	31.916	< .001	0.975	1.103	1.298	0.931
BPClarity	=~	BPClarity: Awareness	1	0			1	1	0.64	0.6
BPClarity	=~	BPClarity: Knowledge	1.375	0.127	10.798	< .001	1.126	1.625	0.88	0.691
BPClarity	=~	BPClarity: SeenAdvertisement	0.809	0.14	5.778	< .001	0.534	1.083	0.518	0.326
BPClarity	=~	BPCd	1.524	0.123	12.433	< .001	1.284	1.764	0.975	0.869
BPClarity	=~	BPCe	1.387	0.111	12.466	< .001	1.169	1.605	0.888	0.875
BrandFamiliarity	=~	BrandFamiliarity: Awareness	1	0			1	1	0.714	0.777
BrandFamiliarity	=~	BrandFamiliarity: Knowledge	1.285	0.101	12.707	< .001	1.087	1.483	0.918	0.796
BrandFamiliarity	=~	BrandFamiliarity: SeenAdvertisement	1.026	0.087	11.83	< .001	0.856	1.196	0.733	0.679
BrandPersonalityDissimilarity	**~**	**AllianceEvaluation**	**-0.458**	**0.074**	**-6.224**	**< .001**	**-0.602**	**-0.314**	**-0.572**	**-0.313**
BrandFamiliarity	**~**	**AllianceEvaluation**	**0.088**	**0.033**	**2.628**	**0.009**	**0.022**	**0.153**	**0.153**	**0.153**
BPClarity	**~**	**AllianceEvaluation**	**0.139**	**0.029**	**4.718**	**< .001**	**0.081**	**0.196**	**0.271**	**0.271**
NikeResponsibility	~~	AllianceEvaluation	0.348	0.088	3.969	< .001	0.176	0.52	0.241	0.241
NikeActivity	~~	AllianceEvaluation	0.141	0.054	2.625	0.009	0.036	0.246	0.151	0.151
NikeAggressiveness	~~	AllianceEvaluation	-0.033	0.081	-0.408	0.683	-0.191	0.125	-0.028	-0.028
NikeSimplicity	~~	AllianceEvaluation	0.022	0.095	0.238	0.812	-0.163	0.208	0.014	0.014
NikeEmotionality	~~	AllianceEvaluation	0.208	0.107	1.945	0.052	-0.002	0.418	0.108	0.108
SMIResponsibility	~~	AllianceEvaluation	-0.187	0.085	-2.193	0.028	-0.354	-0.02	-0.129	-0.129
SMIActivity	~~	AllianceEvaluation	0.496	0.076	6.556	< .001	0.347	0.644	0.414	0.414
SMIAggressiveness	~~	AllianceEvaluation	0.762	0.127	5.983	< .001	0.512	1.012	0.392	0.392
SMISimplicity	~~	AllianceEvaluation	-0.304	0.078	-3.922	< .001	-0.456	-0.152	-0.237	-0.237
SMIEmotionality	~~	AllianceEvaluation	-0.357	0.105	-3.383	< .001	-0.563	-0.15	-0.191	-0.191
BPClarity	~~	BrandFamiliarity	0.172	0.031	5.474	< .001	0.11	0.233	0.395	0.395
BPClarity	~~	BrandPersonalityDissimilarity	0.274	0.063	4.35	< .001	0.151	0.398	0.445	0.257
BrandFamiliarity	~~	BrandPersonalityDissimilarity	0.291	0.073	4.007	< .001	0.149	0.434	0.413	0.238

Figure 1: Process description

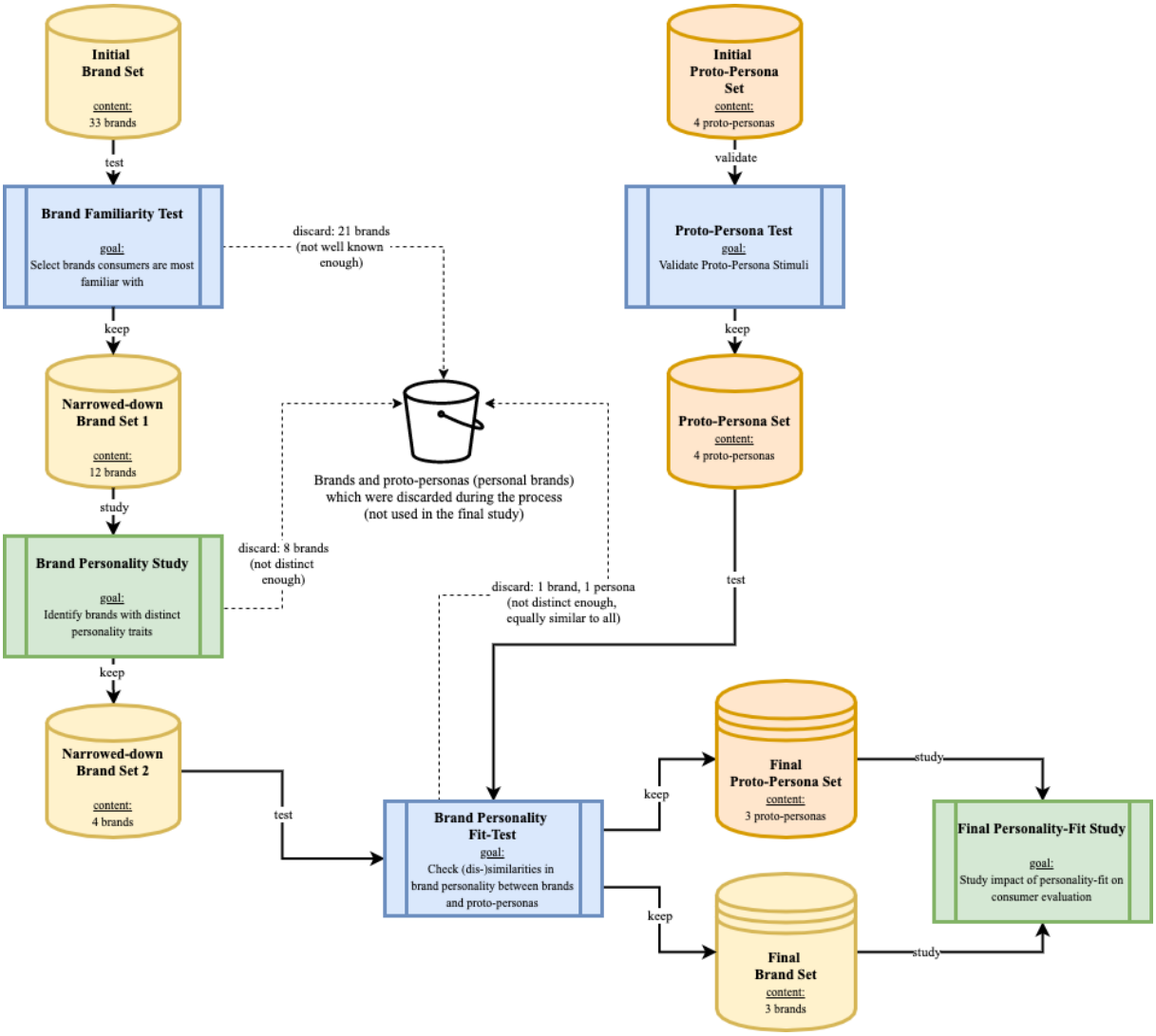
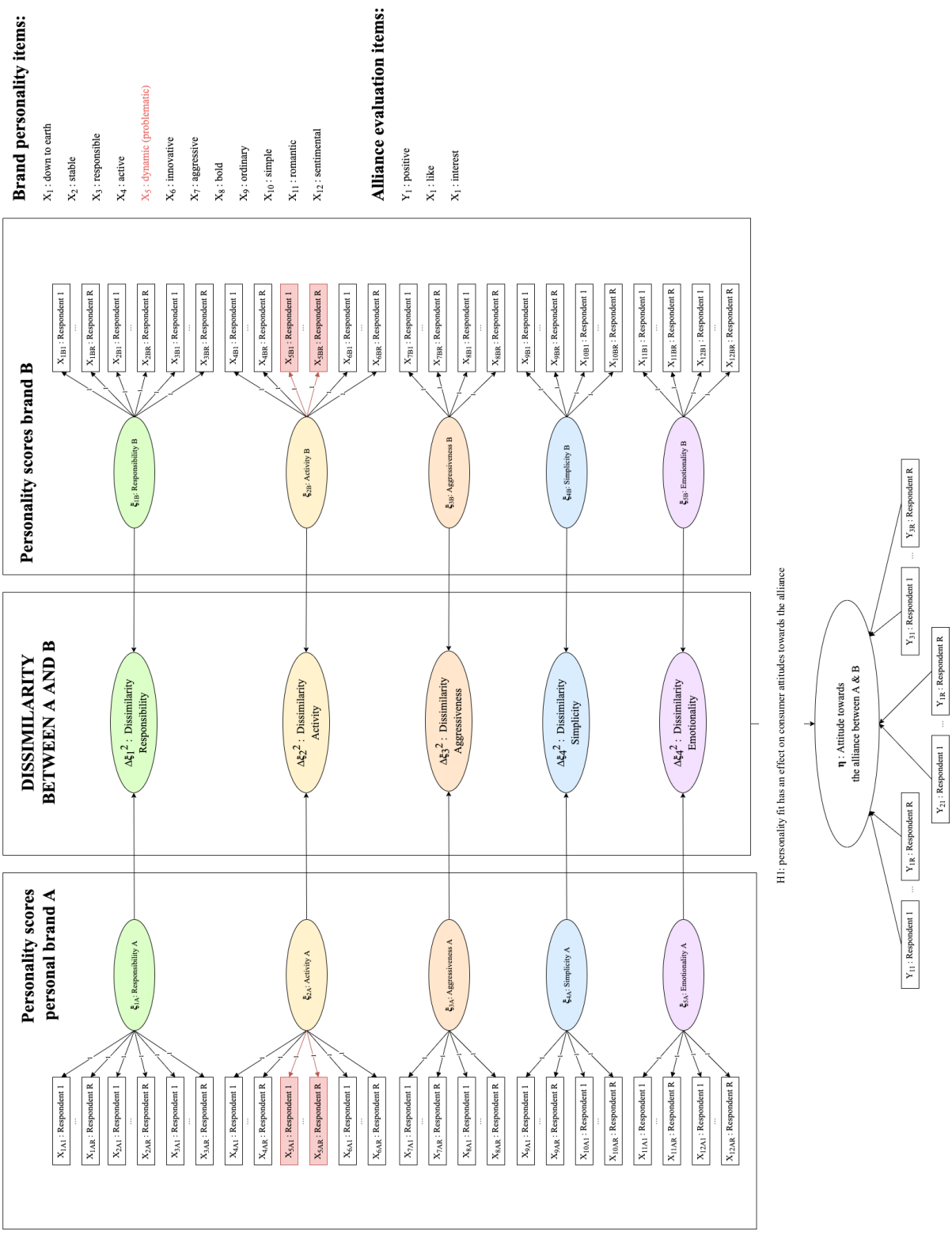


Figure 2: Model Specification



Note: This model specification refers to the brand alliance combination between personal brand A and host brand B. Item 5 which was identified as problematic due to low factor loadings in the exploratory factor analysis in the brand personality study is highlighted in red.

Figure 3: Brand Familiarity Survey Structure

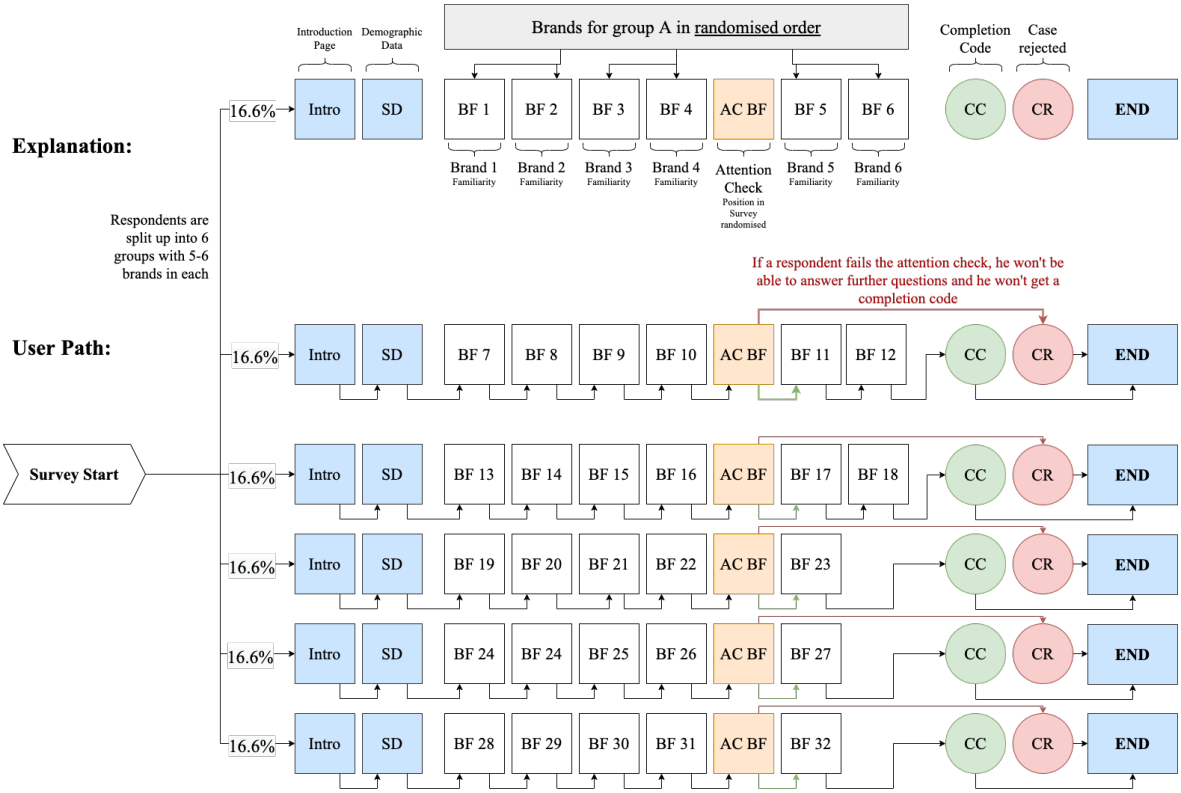
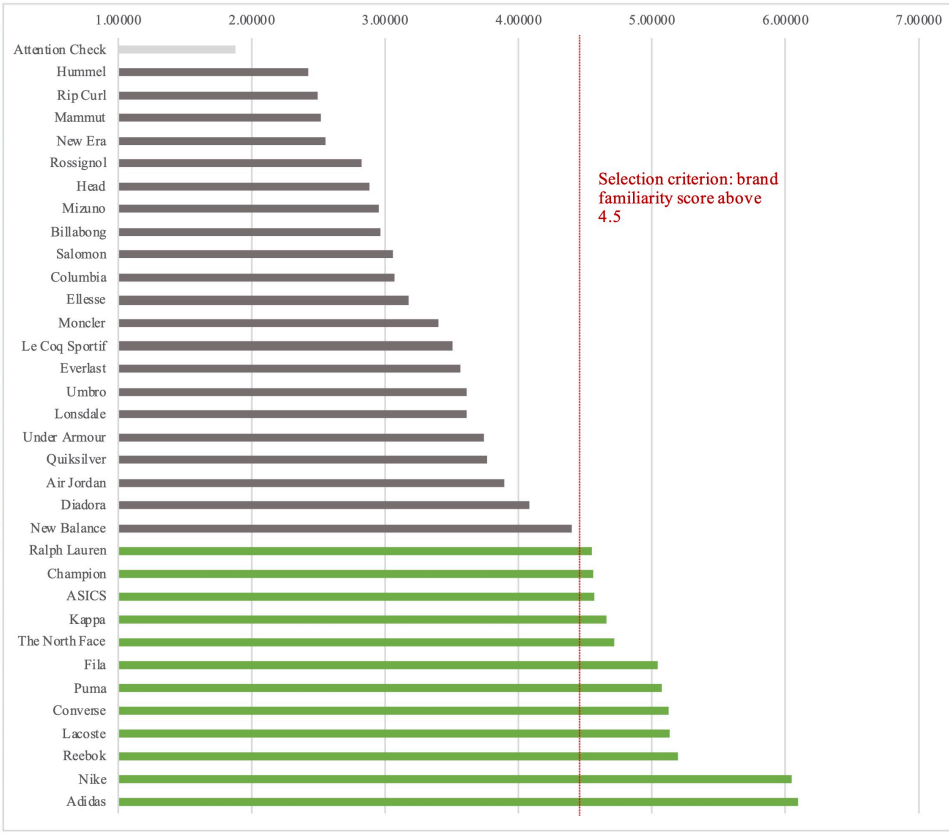


Figure 4: Brand Familiarity Scores

Brand	Familiarity Score
Attention Check	*1.87794*
Hummel	2.42482
Rip Curl	2.49418
Mammut	2.51213
New Era	2.55333
Rossignol	2.81723
Head	2.88043
Mizuno	2.95149
Billabong	2.96262
Salomon	3.06348
Columbia	3.06823
Ellesse	3.17589
Moncler	3.40007
Le Coq Sportif	3.50057
Everlast	3.56865
Umbro	3.60574
Lonsdale	3.60858
Under Armour	3.73858
Quiksilver	3.76326
Air Jordan	3.89546
Diadora	4.08149
New Balance	4.39525
Ralph Lauren	4.54887
Champion	4.55922
ASICS	4.56716
Kappa	4.65865
The North Face	4.71652
Fila	5.04234
Puma	5.07284
Converse	5.12411
Lacoste	5.13206
Reebok	5.19426
Nike	6.04631
Adidas	6.09454



Note: Familiarity sores represent extracted latent factor scores in the brand familiarity scale by Zhou et al. (2010).

Figure 5: Brand Personality Survey Structure

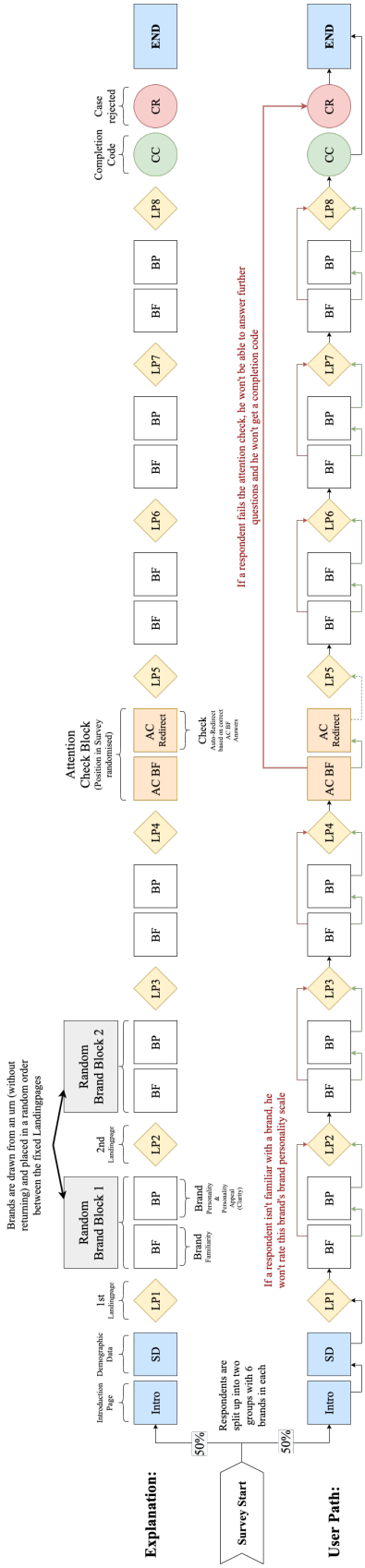
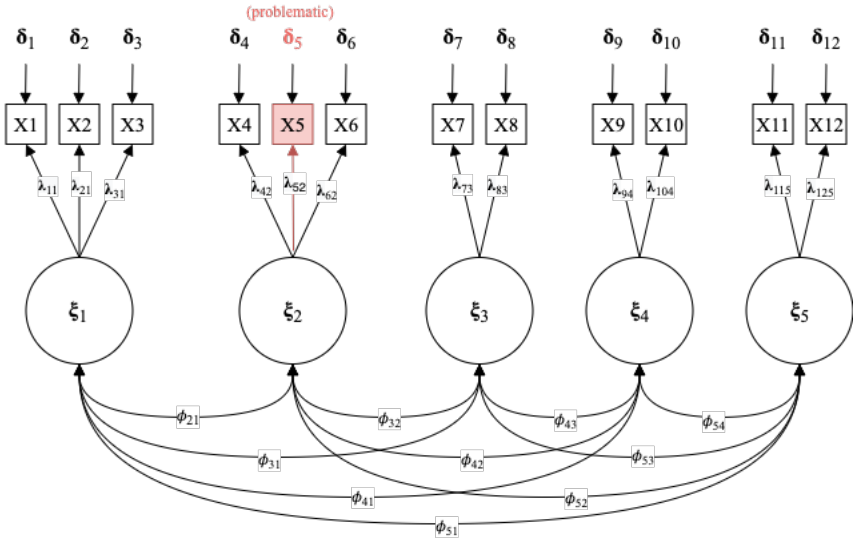


Figure 6: Updated Factor Model



Brand personality factors:

ξ_1 : Responsibility
ξ_2 : Activity
ξ_3 : Aggressiveness
ξ_4 : Simplicity
ξ_5 : Emotionality

Brand personality items:

X_1 : down to earth
X_2 : stable
X_3 : responsible
X_4 : active
X_5 : dynamic (problematic)
X_6 : innovative
X_7 : aggressive
X_8 : bold
X_9 : ordinary
X_{10} : simple
X_{11} : romantic
X_{12} : sentimental

Figure 7: Brand Personality Profiles in the Sports Apparel Industry

	Responsibility	Activity	Aggressiveness	Simplicity	Emotionality
Champion	5.191780822	4.904109589	4.198630137	4.630136986	3.808219178
Asics	5.266666667	5.006606061	4.1	4.672727273	3.481818182
Fila	5.187265918	5.112459551	4.056179775	4.752809889	3.898876404
Nike	5.195718654	6.039755352	4.963302752	3.825688073	3.334862385
Reebok	5.253164557	5.445499156	4.135443038	4.278481013	3.291139241
Kappa	5.244725738	5.122362869	4.107594937	4.810126582	3.82278481
Puma	5.399803922	5.549019608	4.523529412	4.217647059	3.182352941
The North Face	5.323943662	5.624413146	4.521126761	4.014084507	3.697183099
Adidas	5.304659498	5.878136201	4.575268817	4.107526882	3.731182796
Converse	5.416666667	5.544117647	4.522058824	4.588235294	4.294117647
Lacoste	5.244444444	4.977777778	4.116666667	4.188888889	4.022222222
Ralph Lauren	4.995305164	5.02836385	4.161971831	4.077464789	4.464788732

Note: The personality profiles displayed above are based on the latent factor scores (average of item scores for each factor) in the brand personality scale by Geuens et al. (2009) excluding item 5 (dynamic). Brands which were selected for the final brand personality fit study are marked in red.

Figure 8: Stimulus : "About me" Instagram Posts

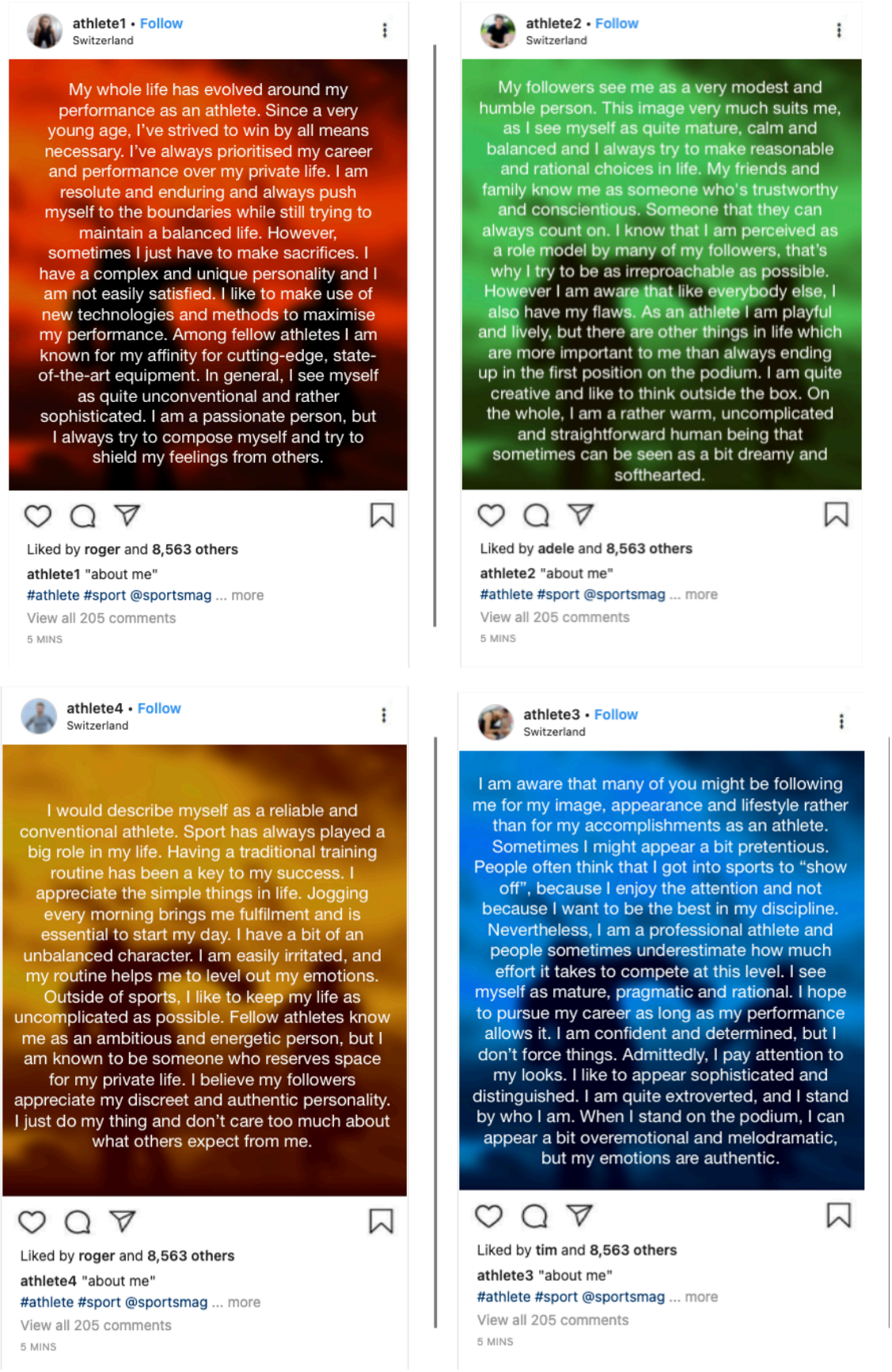


Figure 9: Proto-Persona Questionnaire Structure

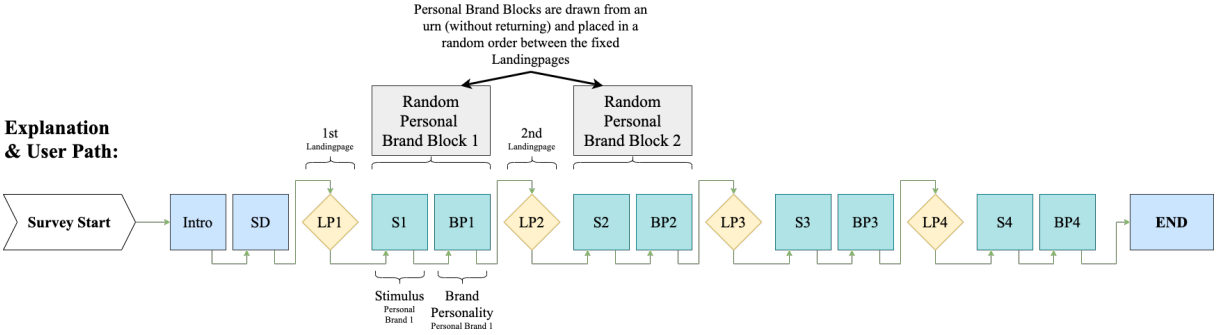


Figure 10: Brand Personality Dissimilarity between Brands and SMIs

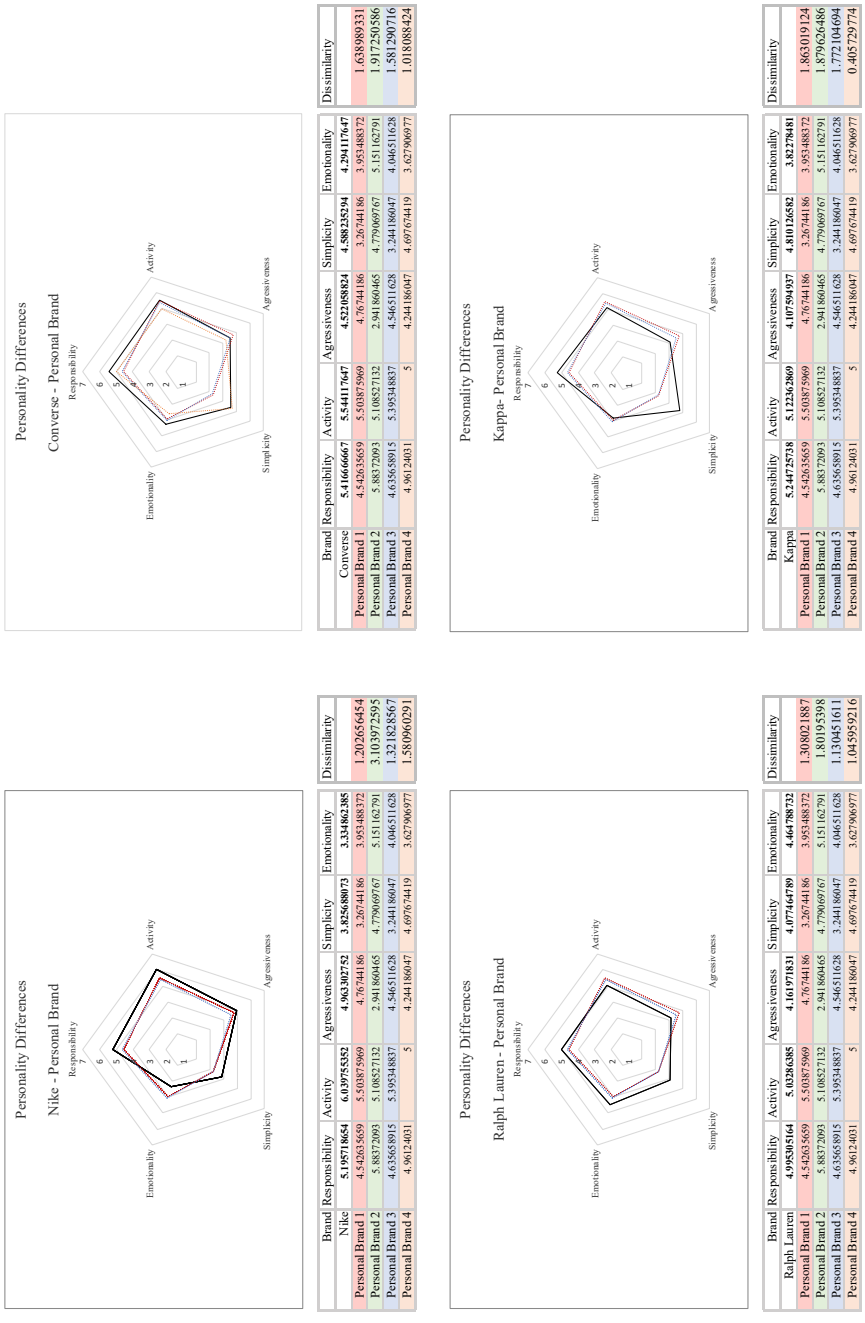


Figure 11: Brand Personality Fit Questionnaire Structure

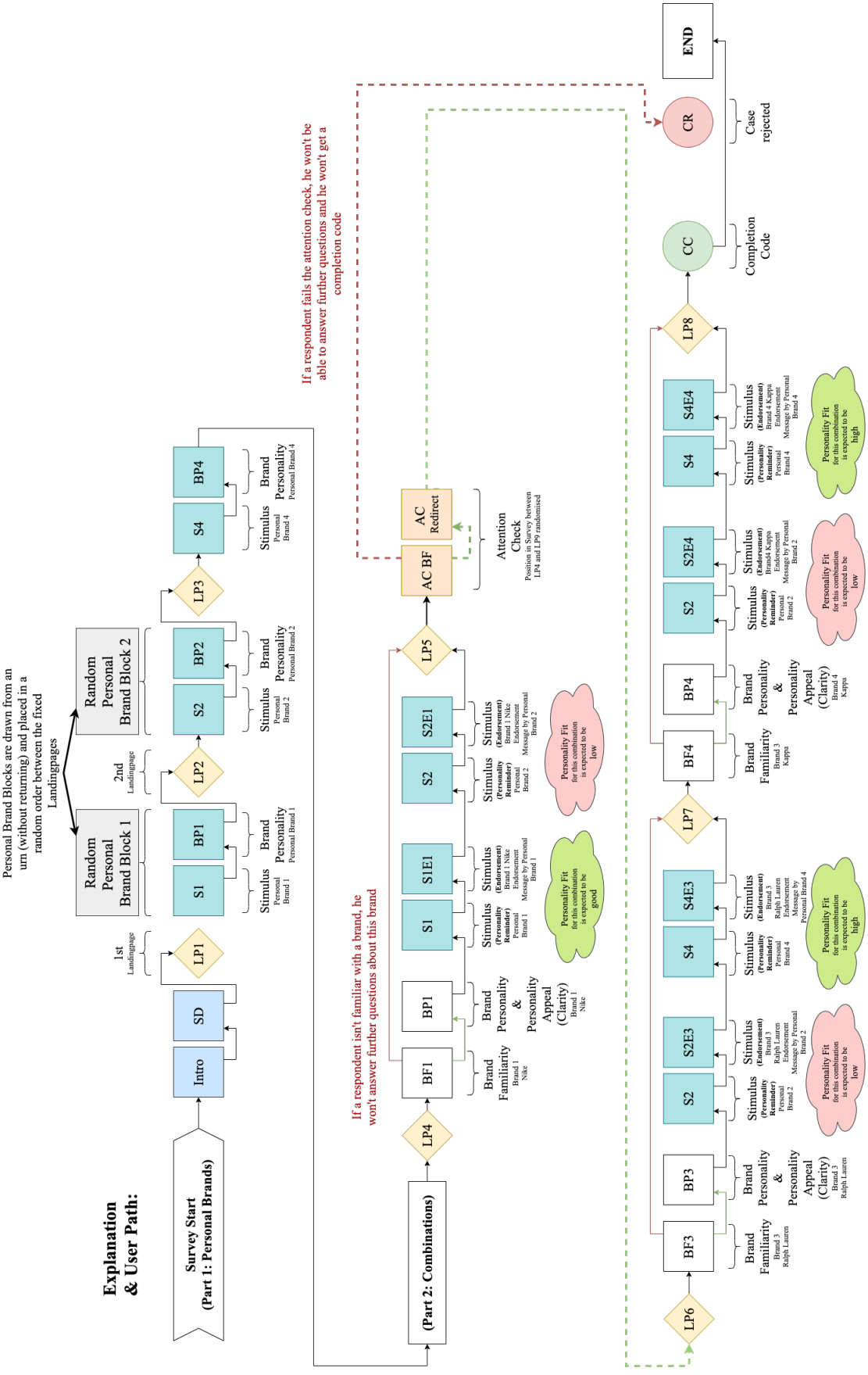


Figure 12: Sponsored Post Stimulus