AUDIO BRANDING

An exploratory study of audio branding as a strategic means to strengthen brand identity

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Abstract

This thesis is an exploratory contribution to the field of audio branding. The study reflects upon the phenomenon, audio branding, and how organisations can work strategically with the discipline to strengthen brand identity and does so by discussing a variety of theoretical perspectives, including branding, cognition and audio branding, as well as qualitative empirical data. The thesis is based on a qualitative research method, where in depth semi structured interviews were conducted, and the study thus draws on a theoretical/empirical research design to contribute to answering the research question.

The theory implies that audio branding is strongly related to general branding practices and that auditive brand assets can contribute to strengthening consumer's emotional responses in different advertising situations, such as increased awareness, brand recognition and brand identity through cognitive processes. The empirical findings emphasise that audio branding and visual branding strategies are similar in terms of how to approach it, and underlines the importance of conducting analysis regarding internal and external brand elements, such as the market situation, market position, consumer perception and target audience and build the auditive element on that. Additionally, it is highlighted that auditive assets should always be made in order to fit the overall image and identity of the brand, and ultimately be used consistently to create a congruent identity. Moreover, a number of challenges associated with audio branding are identified and discussed, laying the foundation for the recommendations aimed at organisations.

Keywords: *Audio branding, branding, cognition, brand identity, brand image, sonic branding, brand equity.*

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1. Introduction

Today's crowded media advertising landscape is full of persuasive brand messages, creatively trying to convince the consumers to buy into the idea that this particular product or service is better than the next one. Consequently, the modern consumer is exposed to a large amount of adverts every day across all platforms. Every brand wants to get its message out, hoping to express its values, identity and meaning in order to stand out from the crowd with creative brand cues, aiming to create recognition and increasing its equity.

For years, strategies for music and corporate auditive cues have been long utilised for organisations attempting to sharpen their brand identity and image, as well as enrich customer experience and the key message in advertising. Hence, audio branding has been used in different variations, and it is hard to imagine anyone not nodding in recognition to Intel's famous *Intel Inside* sound or McDonald's *I'm loving it* playing. Recent studies suggest that music and audio may be the single most stimulating component in advertising, increasing brand recall, recognition and emotional responses (NeuroLab, 2019; Sheridan, 2020). Evolving from mainly being used in television and radio adverts, audio branding has become a growing marketing discipline to build brand equity, brand identity and increase positive brand perception through elaborate corporate audio strategies (Minsky & Fahey, 2014). Initially being used as an effect in commercials, music and auditive cues have become important branding elements, in line with other visual and creative brand cues, to strenghten brand equity and maintain strong memorial associations in the consumers' minds, through consistent and coherent use across all touch points (Jackson & Fulberg, 2003; Treasure, 2007). Leveragin on consumers' immediate and subconsious reactions, as well as cognitive proessing of music in advertising settings, audio branding has gained increased attention. With years of primarily emphasising visual elements in brand communication, the media landscape has become progressively more cluttered, bombarding consumers with constant visual stimuli, creating a strong need for more efficient and distingushiable communication by brands attempting to communicate to them. Hence, the marketing focus has seen a shift towards a more experience- and sensory oriented focus, where neuro marketing and sensory branding, fuelled amongst others by Levitin (2007) and Lindstrøm (2008; 2010), has gained interest as branding disciplines. Herein, audio has become one of the main players, offering considerable means for brands to enhance brand image and consumer awareness. As such, the potential of audio branding has gained increased attention from both professionals and

academia, however, the execution of how to best establish, create and utilise sound remains a somewhat untouched aspect. The field thus lacks managerial perspectives on how to implement audio elements as a prolongation of the visual communication, in terms of theoretical, termonological and methodolocical contributions considering how companies can utilise audio in the development of brand identity.

1.1.   Research Question

Current research on audio branding has contributed to the understanding of how sound logos and music effect human processing of information in different brand settings (MacInnis & Park, 1991), how music in advertising can increase willingness to pay (Krishnan, Kellaris, & Aurand, 2012), and how background music and musical fit influence consumers' responses in advertising (North, Mackenzie, Law, & Hargraves, 2006; Kellaris, Cox, & Cox, 1993), just to name a few. The research has helped underline the positive effect of audio branding in regard to brand awareness, image, perception and preference, however, very little information on how to best apply sound in advertising and branding has been provided. Additionally, recent empirical studies and marketing articles have been published, underlining the positive effect of adding auditive cues in advertising to contribute to strenghtening brand identities and brand recall (MarketingWeek, 2018; NeuroLab, 2019; Rode, 2020; Sheridan, 2020). As with the theoretical literature, a variety of benefits of sonic branding is highlighted, but very little information is shared on the process of establishing audio brand guidelines, consequently creating a gab in the conversation about the discipline.

The object of this study is based on abovementioned research gab, aiming at contributing to the conversation on how organisations can work strategically with audio branding to increase awareness, recognition, and ultimately strenghten brand identity. Hence, the research is based on a theoretical and empirical wondering, aiming to outline how both theoretical literature and emipircal data can contribute to the overall understanding of audio branding, and how to strategically create and utilise sound in advertising efforts to strenghten brand identity. The thesis will thus outline literal and empircal understandings and processes to establish audio branding guidelines and recommendations for organisations and brands. Thus, the overall research question is:

How can organisations work strategically with audio branding to strengthen its brand identity?

To answer the overall research question, the following sub-questions have been formulated to help guide and structure the study:

1. How can audio branding be defined?
2. How can companies create and utilise an audio brand identity?
3. What are the challenges associated with audio branding?

1.2. Delimitations

In order to investigate the overall research question of this thesis, it has been necessary to formulate a number of delimitations to fully study the topic of this research adequately. Therefore, the following two delimitations are presented to outline the deselections of the study.

First, the study does not take into account the technical elements of music related to establishing an audio brand identity. As such, it does not investigate how the technical aspects of music, in terms of pitch, melody and tones influence the choice of music and how brand attributes are represented in music, as well as how these aspects may resonate differently with consumers. Consequently, the thesis does not include theory and in-depth empirical data on how music technically functions in advertising situations.

Secondly, financial consideration related to audio branding is not included in the research. Therefore, economic calculations regarding brand cost have not been conducted. As the aim of this thesis is to outline how brands can work strategically with audio branding to strengthen their brand identity, the focus has been on investigating how the process of creating brand sounds can be done, as well as the benefits and challenges related to this process. Including economic calculations thus goes beyond the aim of this thesis, as it would be difficult to measure the economic output versus the input within the timeframe of this thesis.

1.3. Structure of Paper

Chapter 1 of the thesis will start of by outlining research philosophical considerations, establishing how these influence the approach of the research. This is followed by chapter 2, where a thorough discussion on the methodological choices of the study, including the purpose of the study and research design, as well as the sampling strategy and an introduction to the interviewees is outlined. In chapter 3, the theoretical framework is presented, analysed and discussed, laying the foundation for the

literary analysis of the research question. The chapter will thus, outline a variety of theoretical approaches appropriate to define audio branding, as well as establishing the theoretical contribution to establish how audio branding is best utilised and approached. Likewise, challenges related to the establishment of audio branding strategies are analysed. In chapter 4, the empirical findings are presented and analysed, laying the foundation for the following recommendations to organisations in chapter 5. Lastly, the overall findings of the theoretical and empirical analysis are concluded.

2. Research Philosophy

In the following section, the research philosophy and the underlying considerations behind these choices are covered. Additionally, the research approach will be introduced to clarify the considerations behind the methodological choices. This section will therefore deal with the way in which data is collected in order to answer the aforementioned research question. Saunders' Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016), helps illustrate the stages involved in the development of this research project, and the following is therefore structured based on this. Initially, the chapter will focus on the first two outer layers of the onion, thus uncovering the philosophy and approach chosen, which affects the following methodological layers.
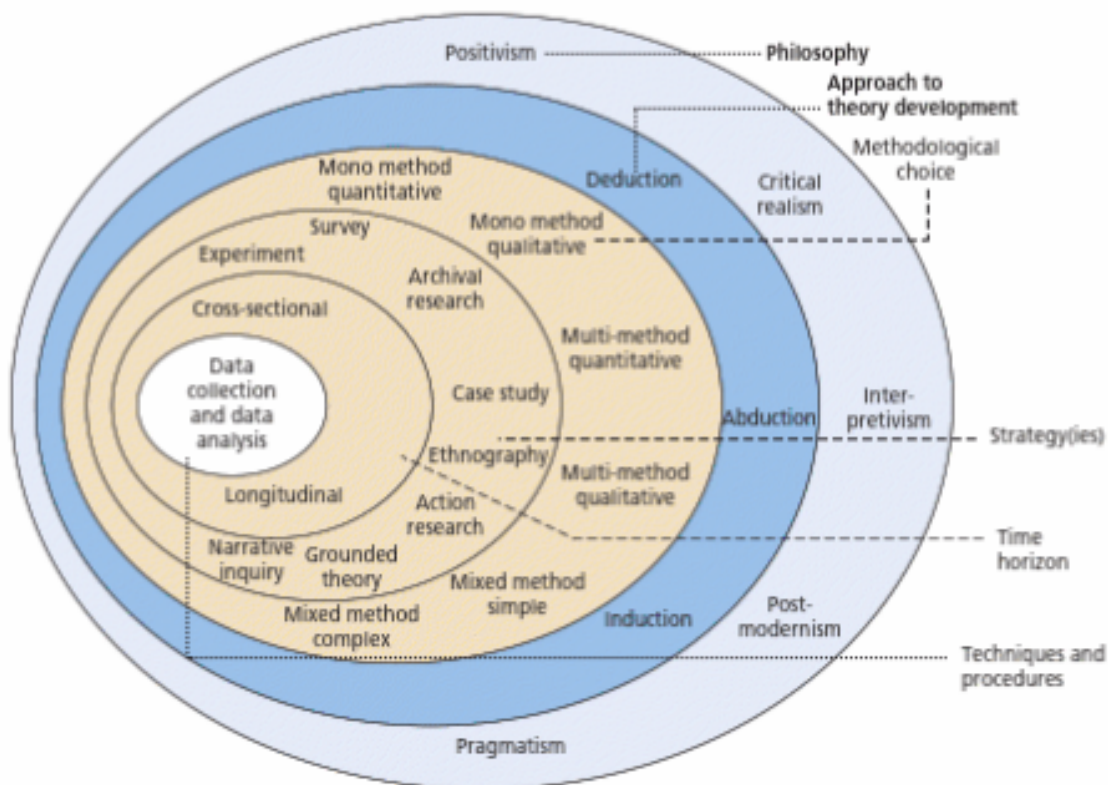

Figure 4.1 The research 'onion'
Source: © 2015 Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill

Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016

Determining a stand on the philosophy of research is an important part of conducting academic research as it gives an indication of the beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge, and thus, how the philosophical underpinnings influence the methodological choices (Trutan, 2013). The philosophical underpinnings influence how researchers understand the world and the phenomenon which is being investigated. Therefore, it is important to outline these beliefs and assumptions, in order to underline the philosophical commitments associated with choosing a specific research philosophy (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The assumptions and beliefs associated with specific research philosophies underpin how the method and research design are chosen to conduct research, and ultimately play a role in how the research question is answered.

For this specific study, the objective is not to generate a new theory on audio branding, but to develop a richer theoretical perspective, on the phenomenon of audio branding building on pre-existing literature. Therefore, interpretivism has been chosen as the philosophical research method, with which to conduct the investigation.

Interpretivism emphasises meaning, and can be seen as a critique of the positivistic goal of achieving law-like generalisations in research. Interpretive researchers emphasise the meaning of phenomena created by the humans involved in the development of this research (Bryman, 2012). Hence, interpretivism understands phenomena based on people's experiences of said phenomena, and as such, sees reality as socially constructed. The aim of this study is to understand the phenomenon, audio branding, by conducting in-depth interviews, which enables respondents' subjective interpretations and experiences of audio branding, resulting in a unique insight into the meaning they assign the phenomenon.

The philosophy deals with the assumption that there is no single correct route or method to conduct and create knowledge, and that there is no such thing as correct or incorrect theories when conducting research (Willis, 2007). Instead, interpretivist researchers should choose theories based on what contributes to the research based on the people involved. Therefore, this project has included literature ranging from classic branding theory, cognition and audio branding, as it supports the area of expertise of the selected respondents. Interpretivism is based on the assumption that knowledge and meaning, are all constructed through interpretation, and knowledge is thus always based on subjective understandings of the given phenomenon (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The aim is to understand the meanings that people assign the phenomenon being investigated.

When conducting interpretive research, it is, therefore, crucial to have access to reality though language and consciousness in order to fully understand the meaning. Only then, is the interpretive researcher able to analyse the phenomenon in the context in which is it understood by the participants and the subjective experiences of these individuals (Willis, 2007).

Interpretive research is based on methodologies which focus on meaning, such as qualitative interviews. Thus it is crucial for the researcher to adopt empathy in order to gain trust and insight into the participant's mind and the meanings they assign the given phenomenon (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

Interpretivism is not a single paradigm, but rather a strand of philosophies (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Hermeneutics and phenomenology are both considered to make up the philosophical base for interpretive research. Hermeneutics provides a base for the analytical work, as it deals with the fundamental principle that human understanding is created through cultural artefacts. Therefore, this constraint helps to shape and understand both societal and cultural importance to meaning. Therefore, establishing trust and empathy enables an interpretive researcher to develop a holistic and accurate understanding of the mind frame of a study based on these human understandings within the context in which they are being explored (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

Just as hermeneutics contribute to the basic understanding of interpretive research, phenomenology also plays a role. The philosophy deals with the study of phenomena and how these appear to people. Therefore, it seeks to discover and explain the characteristics of a phenomenon based on the experiences and interpretations of the participants (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

The basic assumptions of interpretivism deal with human meaning-making. Most commonly, methodological choices are based on participation and engagement, and the premise is to make the researcher a participant observer within the specific context. As the aim of interpretive research is to uncover individuals' understandings and meaning-making of a specific phenomenon based on cultural and societal artefacts, this research has applied qualitative interviews to get an insight into each of the interviewees' social and cultural context as well as their professional situation to uncover the different experiences, which may have influenced their interpretation.

When conducting research, every stage of the process will be influenced by ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Ontological

assumptions refer to the nature of reality, shaping the way in which a researcher interprets, and studies the research phenomenon. The epistemological assumptions refer to how one understands knowledge and what constitutes valid knowledge within the field of study. Lastly, the axiological assumptions refer to the values and ethics related to conducting research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

Developed as a critique of the positivist approach to research, the interpretivist paradigm relies on subjectivist epistemologies. Epistemologically, this study, therefore, regards knowledge through an interpretive philosophy, which argues that "researchers need to make sense of subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed about the phenomenon being studied" (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016, p. 168). Interpretivism thus emphasises the importance of exploring this significance within a natural setting, relying on the development of trust and participation in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the meaning associated with the phenomenon. Within the context of this particular study, the investigation of audio branding as a tool used to create a strong brand identity is then only epistemologically acceptable, if the meaning of the phenomenon can be uncovered within the natural research context, thus helping "create new, richer understandings and interpretations of social worlds and contexts." (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016, p. 140).

Ontology refers to the nature of reality, and hence the assumptions related to this. Ontologically, this study regards knowledge from a perspective of relativism. Social phenomena are created from the perceptions and realities of complex social actors, and thus something which is socially constructed through culture and language (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Therefore, in contrast to the philosophical stance of natural science, such as positivism, which emphasises the importance of objectively observable law-like generalisations, interpretivism, acknowledges the human interpretations and consequently their effects upon the outcome of studying complex phenomena. Interpretive research should therefore be understood through a relativist ontology, as it relies on human beings' interpretations based on experiences as well as social and cultural contexts. This in turn relates to the axiological implication when working within this philosophical paradigm.

Axiologically, interpretivism acknowledges that the researcher's interpretation of the study is the key contributor to the field. Therefore, it is inevitable to incorporate personal values during the research process. However, it is important to reflect on what this means, and, as such, underline the importance of reflecting on one's values and how this in turn impacts the research.

Working within the philosophical field of interpretivism allows the researcher to explore a phenomenon within its natural setting, and, as such, the researcher will, in some ways, be part of what is researched. The paradigm relies predominantly on naturalistic methods such as interviews, which aims to collaboratively construct a meaningful and emergent reality (Willis, 2007). Even though this makes it difficult to draw conclusions that are observable and measurable, such as the goal of positivism, it is argued that this is the strength of interpretivism, as it acknowledges that subjective assumptions and cultural heritage help shape the understanding of complex phenomena (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Therefore, this study also acknowledges that the interpretation can be influenced by the researchers' own values and beliefs of audio branding. Thus, it is essential for the researcher to adopt an empathetic stance, and for the interpretivist "to enter the social world of the research participants and understand the world from that point of view." (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016, p. 141). Interpretivism is highly subjectivist, and it is therefore important for the researcher to aim to be open-minded and emphatic when investigating the phenomenon. It can however be argued, that since interpretation is subjective, the outcome will be relativistic, thus, all interpretations will be acknowledged as equally contributing to the field of research. Additionally, it is argued that branding is a complex phenomenon, which corresponds differently to different individuals, and will inevitably always be subjective to some extent.

This study does, however, acknowledge that there are biological and cognitive factors that are embedded in the human body that can help shape behaviour. It is therefore important to underline that this study recognises these cognitive factors play a role in branding and our understanding of branding activities, and that it would be impossible to undermine these biological factors. However, the premise of this research is to explain the phenomenon of audio branding from the perspective of participants involved within this field. Consequently, the research shaped by the biases of them as well as the ones of the researchers.

The research approach applied to answer the research question is the abductive approach to theory development, where "instead of moving from theory to data (as in deduction) or data to theory (as in induction), an abductive approach moves back and forth, in effect combining deduction and induction." (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016, p. 155). By obtaining data that is rich and detailed, it is possible to explore the audio branding phenomenon further through theory, which is then tested using existing data and theory in order to establish if more data is needed. As such, abduction has

been argued to offer "great promise as a potential primary mode of reasoning for qualitative research" (Given, 2008, s. 1). Based on this, it is suggested that abductive inferences are valid in different ways that the modes of reasoning that deduction and induction propose. Where deduction relies on inferences that are certain and the premise of truth; and induction relies on probably inferences, abductive inferences are based on plausibility. As such, abductive inferences can be argued to be weaker by nature compared to deductive and inductive inferences (Given, 2008). Even though abductive is suggested to be weaker by nature, it is argued to be useful. As is seeks to reason to meaning, it contributes to expanding the realm of plausible explanation, and can thus contribute with reasonings to explanations (Given, 2008). By using the abductive approach, it becomes possible to look for meaning in both literature and empirical findings in order to iteratively seek explanations. Utilising both interpretive and abductive approaches will provide an in-depth insight and understanding to the phenomenon of audio branding within a specific context, and thus help offer a richer understanding of the theory of audio branding. Specifically, the approach is to collect in-depth, qualitative data on branding and audio branding and combine it with, and test it iteratively, through existing academic theory, as well as newer studies on the concept of audio branding, in order to obtain a richer and more insightful interpretation of audio branding.

3. Methodology

The following section will uncover considerations on the remaining three layers of Saunders' research onion. The research's methodological choices, research strategy and time horizon will be introduced as well as a discussion on validity and reliability. These layers concentrate on the research design's process, in terms of how the research question is turned into a research project via achieving coherence for the research design (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

The research design should clearly show the researchers' overall plan for how to answer the research problem and undoubtedly state the sources from where the data has been collected, while presenting how the data were collected. Also, ethical issues and constraints this research expects to face at different stages, will be presented, as well as offering possible solutions to overcome them (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

The methodological choice for this research has been on whether to apply a quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods research design as each of them are accounting for different elements in order for the researchers to achieve coherence (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). This research will be based on the qualitative research design where the researchers will attempt to make sense of the respondents' subjective and socially constructed expressions about a certain phenomenon which in this case is audio branding (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). This research design, therefore, requires the researchers to operate within a natural setting and thereby being able to establish trust, in-depth understandings and meanings (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

The qualitative research design provides the opportunity to study a variety of meanings and the relationship between them (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). The process of data collection is characterised as being non-standardised, meaning that the researchers are able to put forward questions and procedures that emerge while the research process is ongoing. (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, this research is based on a mono method qualitative study because it has applied a single data collection technique, as the data collected only has been through conducting several semi-structured interviews (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016; Bryman, 2012).

3.1. Purpose of Research

A research can fulfil a wide spectrum of purposes, namely being, exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, evaluative or a combination of them.

The exploratory study can be applied to gain insights about a topic of interest by asking open questions to discover what is happening. Typically, exploratory questions begin with 'What' or 'How'. There are multiple ways to conduct exploratory research for instance by conducting interviews that can be both individual in-depth interviews with 'experts' on the field, or focus group interviews with a number of people participating at the same time. Based on the exploratory nature, these interviews are likely to be relatively unstructured. When applying the exploratory study, one must be willing to change direction as a result of the collected data, which, in turn, can provide the researchers with new insights on the chosen research topic. The exploratory study has the advantage that it is flexible and easily adaptable to change (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

The descriptive study is a valuable method to gain an accurate profile on situations, events or persons. Questions that are descriptive are likely to begin with 'What', 'Where', 'Who', 'How' or 'When'. It is essential to have a clear picture of the phenomenon prior to collecting data. It has been argued that the descriptive study is an extension of a piece of the exploratory study as well as a forerunner to a piece of an explanatory study (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

The explanatory study often seeks to establish causal relationships between variables. Characteristically, explanatory questions begin with 'How' or 'Why' in order to get an explanatory response. The purpose of the explanatory study is to study a phenomenon or situation and thereby be able to explain the causal relationship between variables. Thus, quantitative data are relevant to include for statistical tests in order to get a deeper understand of the causality. Alternatively, qualitative data can be collected to explain a phenomenon or situation (Bryman, 2012).

The purpose of the evaluative study is to find out how well something works. Evaluative research questions tend to start with 'How' or include 'What 'in the form of 'To what extent'. The evaluative study is likely to be concerned with assessing the effectiveness of subjects like organisational strategy, policy, initiatives or processes. Thus, the subject can relate to any of an organisation's elements, such as costing strategy, personnel policy and the delivery of a support service. During the data collecting process, questions the researcher ask are likely to begin with or include, 'What', 'Why' or 'How'. Moreover, the evaluative study may also be interested in making comparisons and therefore ask questions that comprise 'Where', 'Which', 'Who' or 'When'. In this way, evaluative studies allow the researcher to assess performance and to compare this (Bryman, 2012).

Additionally, it is worth to mention that a research study may have more than one purpose. Thus, a combination of the above-mentioned purposes, can occur.

This research has an exploratory purpose, as the objective is to gain insights and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon audio branding by conducting individual semi structured in-depth interviews with 'experts' by asking open questions. This is useful, as it allows the interviews to progress naturally, and are thus useful when investigating phenomena from individuals' point of view. The conducted interviews will be relatively unstructured, so the researchers are able to change direction by being flexible and adaptable to change, allowing the interviewer to dig deeper into the interviewee's experiences regarding audio branding.

3.2.   Choosing a Research Strategy

A research strategy is a plan of action to accomplish a specific goal, therefore it is an aspect for any researcher to choose an appropriate research strategy (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). This research's purpose is to explore audio branding by having an in-depth inquiry into the phenomenon. This will be done by completing a theoretical/empirical research design, which seeks to explore the phenomenon of audio branding in order to contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon. The research initially started as an inductive process, with the goal of collecting a large amount of empirical data, thus aiming to be an empirically heavy study. However, due to unforeseen challenges, creating difficulties gathering sufficient data, the study was redesigned, relying instead on more research literature and less on primary empirical findings (Ankersborg, 2020). Thus, the research problem is based equally on both a theoretical- and empirical wondering (Ankersborg, 2020). Likewise, this thesis' work will rely on both theoretical literature and on primary empirical findings, meaning that the thesis is designed into a two-legged investigation; a theoretical part and an empirical part (Ankersborg, 2020). The theoretical/empirical master's thesis theoretical part contains an independent contribution to the answering of the problem statement, instead of solely functioning as the frame for the empirical part of the research (Ankersborg, 2020).

The theoretical part will, therefore, be investigated and structured through theory and literature regarding branding, cognition, and audio branding, which is still considered valid, as all three areas contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon investigated. However, the theory does not consider temporary changes in the empirical field. Hence, the collected empirical data will be used to supplement the existing theory (Ankersborg, 2020). Moreover, the empirical analysis will look at audio branding from a current perspective by investigating how experts within the field of branding and audio branding understand, define and interpret the phenomenon, providing additional insights

into the field. As such, the empirical data will rely heavily on personal experiences and interpretations to provide a qualitative look into the field of study.

This research has an abductive approach and seeks to explore the phenomenon of audio branding in order to contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon. Thus, this research will gather detailed data on audio branding, to explore the phenomenon further, as well as drawing on theories and secondary data in order to provide an adequate answer to the research question. The approach is therefore useful, as it allows the researcher to move back and forth between theory and data in order to establish, whether more data or more theory is needed (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016; Bryman, 2012). The theoretical analysis will be investigated and structured, by applying theory relevant for audio branding and including supplementing theory regarding branding and audio. This will provide a deeper understanding of the complexity of audio branding, which will supplement the empirical findings. The empirical findings will provide an in-depth analysis and discussion, based on the conducted semi-structured interviews. The theoretical and empirical analysis will work as the basis for the recommendations offered. Finally, the conclusion section will outline the main findings in order to answer the research question.

3.3. Choosing a Time Horizon

Before the design of the research can begin, a time horizon must be created. The time horizon for a research study can either be 'cross-sectional', where the research is aiming to be a snapshot taken at a certain time or 'longitudinal' where the researchers have a more 'diary'-oriented perspective (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Cross-sectional studies involve studying a specific phenomenon within a particular timeframe. This kind of study frequently employ the survey strategy, because it often seeks to describe the incidence of a phenomenon, or to explain how factors are related in different organisations. Conversely, they may also apply qualitative or mixed methods research strategies, i.e. case studies, which often rely on interviews conducted over a short period of time. On the other hand, longitudinal studies main strength is its ability to study change and development over time. Even for a research with time constraints it is possible to apply longitudinal elements. This can be done by reanalysing already published data (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). This master thesis has a cross-sectional time horizon, as its objective is to study the phenomenon, audio branding, within a particular timeframe. Likewise, the utilisation of the cross-sectional time horizon appears as the collected interviews have been conducted within a short period of time.

3.4.   Establishing Ethics

Before conducting any research, it is important to highlight the research ethics because there is a number of ethical principles researchers need to adhere e.g. the research should not subject those that are being investigated to the risk of pain, harm or the risk of embarrassment (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Ethics refers to the standards of behaviour that guide the conducts in relation to the rights of those, who become the subject of the study (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). There are a range of ethical issues associated to the process of collecting data. Once individuals have consented to participate in a research, they still maintain the right to withdraw or decline to take part in particular aspects of the research. This research has sought to maintain the participants rights prior to the interviews, by stating that they at any given time could refuse to answer questions if they felt it may cause harm or intrusion of their privacy. Another ethical issue is the importance to keep focusing on the aims of the research paper that the participants agreed on. To do otherwise without renegotiating it with the participants is considered as deceit. Moreover, the individuals who participated in this research have all been offered that their interview could be done confidentially, as well as given access to all quotes used and information shared, in order to ensure the information are accurate.

3.4.1.   Establishing the Quality of the Research Design

When conducting research, it is important to consider issues of the research quality, reducing the possibility of generating incorrect results, gaining acceptance and achieving credibility (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016; Bryman, 2012). As interpretivists, the criteria for establishing the quality of the research design differs compared to other scientific approaches' (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The qualitative research is not necessarily intended to be replicated. Instead, the research tends to be a reflection of the participants' interpretations of social constructions within a particular setting, during the time within which the research occurred. As such, the findings will be highly influenced on this. It is important to acknowledge that even though rigid descriptions of the research design, its context and applied methods can be helpful for other researchers when reproducing similar studies (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). To increase the internal reliability of the research study, researchers can use more than one interviewer where it is possible in order to provide different perspectives on the matter. Within the context of this research, interviews with multiple respondents have been conducted when possible to account for the reliability of the responses, and has thus aimed at finding suitable interviewees where it was possible (Bryman, 2012).

3.5. The Role of the Researcher

The writers should also take into accounts their role as researchers when formulating the research design. Researchers can either adopt an internal or external researcher role (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The internal researcher role is categorised when the researcher is currently working within the organisation being investigated or being professionally involved with the people being investigated. This provides the researcher an advantage, because the obstacle of negotiating is removed. Likewise, the researchers' existing knowledge of the organisation and its complexity is yet another advantage, because the researcher does not need to spend a huge amount of time in understanding the context. Conversely, a distinct disadvantage can be that the researcher can find it inappropriate to ask basic questions because the researcher and the respondents would feel that the researcher should already have knowledge about the issue (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Additionally, possible hierarchical differences between the interviewer and the respondent may cause an unproductive conversation, as the power balance between the two may be influenced by employment rank. This may cause the researcher to strategically consider questions in order to benefit personally or professionally from it. In contrast, the external researchers need to identify an organisation or experts and negotiate access to them, as well as those from whom they desire to collect data from within the organisation (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). For this research, both approaches have been applied. One of the researchers work in an organisation that is dealing with branding, and it has therefore been possible to utilise the role of an internal researcher to conduct interviews with colleagues from the workplace and industry partners. On other occasions, the researchers occupied the external researcher role, where it was necessary to negotiate access to respondents that were not a part of the researchers' network, as it was the case when getting in contact with Bjørn Vidø, who is a film composer and sound designer at CPHSound. Hence, the researchers had to negotiate the access to the respondent by contacting him and introduce him to the project.

3.6. Use of Secondary Data

The study will also make use of secondary data in combination with the primary data collected through interviews and the literature chosen. By using secondary data, it is possible to develop a deeper insight into the phenomenon, through studies and analysis that have already been conducted, and which cover nuances that go beyond the capacity of this study. By adding studies, which cover the neurological reactions to audio branding, as well as analysis that show the effect of its ability to

create ad recall, it is possible to show a more insightful picture of the phenomenon. In addition, it can help underline the points and arguments of the study. The secondary data includes a study by Ipsos, written by Adam Sheridan (Sheridan, 2020), which underlines auditive brand assets' strengths in terms of creating brand recall. The study from February 2020 gives an insight into the strengths of audio branding and helps underline the benefits of including auditive assets into a brand's overall branding- and advertising strategy. Additionally, a study from 2019 from NeuroLab is utilised. Launched in the New York office of Mindshare U.S, which is a part of the media agency network WPP, the NeuroLab department proposes neurological responses related to brand stories and media, and has published a study regarding the neurological effects of audio in branding (NeuroLab, 2019). The study concludes that audio branding is a strong tool in terms of stimulating consumers' subconscious feelings, stating that audio ads elicit stronger emotions from consumers, and that consumers are more reception to auditive calls-to-actions (NeuroLab, 2019).The study provides supplementary data to the research, introducing neurological aspects related to audio branding through scientific research, which goes beyond the capacity of this particular thesis.

3.7. Semi-Structured Qualitative Interview

This section will present our reasonings, sampling strategy and thoughts associated with creating an interview guide for the interviews. As this research has applied a single data collection technique through collecting semi-structured qualitative interviews, interview guides were created before each interview. The intention of the semi-structured qualitative interview is to gather new empirical data, and can then be applied to illuminate specific research fields (Kvale 1996; Klemmensen, Andersen, Hansen, & Jensen, 2012).

For the qualitative research method, the importance is not focused on the number of collected interviews, but rather on collecting sufficient amounts of data in relation to the research question. Hence, the number of interviews become irrelevant. Instead, it is critical that the focus is that every interview should contribute with knowledge for the research field (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016).

There are many benefits of conducting qualitative interviews when seeking to investigate a research field. One of the advantages, is that it gives access to personal experiences and knowledge, providing an insight for the researchers to a phenomenon that is to be investigated (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). The informant often has hidden knowledge, which is obtainable through in-depth interviews (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). The qualitative interview is relatively flexible as it provides the

interviewer with the possibility of creating new and relevant questions as the interview progresses further (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). Thus, the respective interviews develop differently due to this interview design, however, it is always possible to return to certain topics of interest by asking any pre-prepared questions from the interview guide.

The purpose of the qualitative interview is not to generate statistics and figures, but rather to attain an in-depth understanding. To ensure the quality of a qualitative interview study, it is imperative to conduct a sufficient and detailed data collection on the themes that highlights the study field (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). It is equally as important to end an interview correctly, ensuring respondents do not feel that the interview ended while they had something to state, also not rushing through interviews, and hence not provide appropriate and sufficient time for the interviewees to consider responses (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). The researchers have attempted to end the dialogue with each respondent in a correct manner, by asking the interviewees if they had something to add to the conversation before it ended, and thereby reducing the risk of the respondents feeling that they had more to say before the conversation ended.

The semi-structured interviews that were conducted for this research were each adapted based on the profession of the interviewees, as well as the theme that was being discussed. The respondents' all work within different fields of branding and audio branding, and are thus chosen in order to get a more holistic and wider understanding of the research area. In order to be prepared for the interviews, general questions were created that reflected themes that could be elaborated on during the interviews. Since this research is an exploratory study, it provided with the opportunity to ask open questions, which allows insights to be gained by the study surrounding the topics of interest (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

3.8. Interview Guide

An interview guide provides the researcher with the opportunity to operationalise the theoretical perspective, because it is essential for the researchers to reflect on how to formulate questions regarding theoretical concepts. Both the research question and the theoretical perspectives should be 'translated' into specific themes and suggestions for questions to be asked (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Moreover, the interview guide can be helpful during interviews, because the interview guide can function as a supportive tool for the interviewer (Kristensen &

Hussain, 2016). However, one of the limitations of applying an interview guide is that it can distract the interviewer from actively listening, as one can tend to focus too much on the guide and the questions prepared. Consequently, this can result in the interviews being too narrow and thus limit the interviewers from being flexible and able to change directions during the dialogue or asked questions which may arise doing the conversation (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016).

When formulating the questions in the preparation for the interviews, the researchers should have the overall research question in mind, since it is the overall research question that function as a guideline in the preparation of the questions (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). The research question states what the researchers want to gain an insight into, thereby dictating, who is of interest to conduct an interview with, and which phenomenon to emphasise. It is accepted for the researcher to formulate any kind of questions for the interview, however, the majority of the intention of the questions formulated should be to conduct descriptive answers from the respondents, allowing the respondents to give detailed answers (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). The interview questions should aim to be short and easily understood by the respondents. As the interviewees all come from different social, cultural and professional background, the interview questions were modified to suit the individual respondent (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Additionally, Kvale (1996), has presented different types of questions that can be asked during qualitative interviews, namely introducing questions, follow-up questions, probing questions, specifying questions, direct questions, indirect questions and structuring questions. Furthermore, it is important to allow silence to appear, as it provides the respondents with the opportunity to reflect and amplify their answers (Bryman, 2012). As this indicates, a crucial part of conducting in-depth interviews, is to listen and avoid being too intrusive, by paying attention to what the respondents are trying to say (Bryman, 2012).

3.9. The Conducted Interviews for This Research

All of the interviews conducted took place digitally through Skype. Hence, there were several aspects to consider. The interviews had some degree of structure as an interview guide had been formulated in advance of the interviews. Moreover, there were clearly defined roles among the researchers when the interviews were going on. One of the researchers, had the responsibility of leading the conversation by asking the prepared questions as well as any follow-up questions that came to mind. The other researcher's focus was on keeping the interview 'on track', asking follow-up question and securing the conversation covered all of the prepared themes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This also

included making sure that correct interview etiquette and ethics were observed, such as ensuring the respondents knew when the tape recorder was being utilised and offering the option for the respondents to receive a copy of the recording afterwards. By having clearly defined roles, the conversations could unproblematically deviate from the interview guide as new interesting topics where introduced in order to maintain a fluent conversation, without losing track of the initial purpose of the interview (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). Additionally, the focus was on starting the interviews by asking for permission to record the conversation and to give a brief introduction to the research, with the aim to make the respondents feel informed and comfortable. Likewise, the respondents were asked lighter questions in the beginning of the interview to create an open and safe environment for the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Moreover, the opening of the interview where planned so the respondents were asked to introduce themselves, which is relevant in order to provide insight needed to utilise the interpretivist scientific philosophy, as it seeks to develop an understanding of a phenomenon through the lens of the respondents' subjective opinions and experiences. Therefore, it became important for this study to direct a lot of focus on the individual respondent's background to establish a deeper understanding on their meanings and interpretations.

It is crucial to recognise that there were significant limitations for the interviews, as they took place digitally. One of the limitations, was that the sound quality was lacking compared to physical face-to-face conversations. Especially one of the interviews were challenged by the quality of the sound and image, making it difficult to get a fluent and natural conversation to occur. Additionally, this led to occasions where the researchers interrupted the respondents, which may have led to important knowledge that could have been elaborated on were missed. Moreover, the physical distance and lack of physical presence impacted the possibility to 'read' the respondents body language (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Furthermore, many of the respondents were not alone when the interview took place. For instance, one of the conversations with the respondents were interrupted multiple times, because his family walked into the room, or because his phone started ringing. Likewise, many of the dialogues were interrupted because the respondents would get distracted by noises in their house or because of the quality of the lighting. Consequently, there were a certain level of background noise, scratching sound and the aforementioned interruptions might have harmed the level of concentration, which may have potentially resulting in the omission of relevant knowledge when conducting the interviews. This also, required the interviewers to be patient during the conversation practice,

allowing them to reveal relevant information, as well as attempting to get the respondents back on track after the interruptions.

3.10. Sampling Strategy

Sampling is an important aspect of the qualitative research design. The following paragraphs will touch upon the sampling strategy utilised when conducting interviews. Decisions related to the sampling strategy can start once the research question has been formulated (Bryman, 2012).

The chosen respondents for this paper have been selected based on the purposive sampling strategy and the snowball strategy. The purposive strategy refers to the fact that respondents have been strategically selected based on the research's overall topic and focus (Bryman, 2012). Thus, the respondents have been chosen due to an expectation that they can generate a sufficient amount of information on the central topics that are relevant in order to deliver an adequate answer to the overall research question. The snowball strategy refers to a technique, were the researchers initially samples a small group of participants, and then the participants suggest other participants that may be relevant to the research based on their experiences or characteristics (Bryman, 2012). The snowball strategy was utilised to get in contact with experts on the investigating topics. The researchers asked a selected group of participants for their help to recruit more respondents with the desired characteristics when the snowball strategy was applied (Bryman, 2012). Likewise, this strategy provided the research with the opportunity of conducting interviews with respondents we did not had any relation to prior to the interview, which could have introduced bias into the interview process. For instance, two of the researches happened based on a recommendation from another respondent.

It can be difficult to state whether or not the respondents can be classified as experts (Bryman, 2012). The four respondents were selected based on their competencies and job function instead of their educational background. The reason behind this choice is that many audio specialists do not necessarily have an education related to the topic and are instead self-trained or have attained the required knowledge throughout their professional lives. Neither the purposive- or snowball strategy allow to generalise, because none of the respondents or the applied case were randomly selected (Bryman, 2012). Hence, this research cannot be claimed to be a universal representative overview of all national or international organisations' possibilities to access the phenomenon 'audio branding'.

3.10.1. Sample Universe

In order to define a sample universe, a set of inclusion criteria or exclusion criteria, or a combination of both are necessary to be stated for a study. Inclusion criteria must specify an attribute that cases must possess in order to qualify for the study (Robinson, 2013). Conversely, the exclusion criteria must illustrate attributes that disqualify a case from the study. When the inclusion criteria and the exclusion criteria are combined, they draw a boundary around the sample universe (Robinson, 2013). Inclusion and exclusion criteria can be used to define the sample universe and the more precise the criteria are, the more homogenous the sample universe becomes (Robinson, 2013). The aforementioned homogeneity can be accomplished by multiple parameters, for instance: physical homogeneity, demographic homogeneity, psychological homogeneity, geographical homogeneity, or life history homogeneity. Certain qualitative methods prefer homogenous samples. When regarding researches with an interpretative scientific approach, it is explicit that homogenous samples work best in conjunction with both philosophical foundations and analytical processes (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). By upholding a measure of sample homogeneity, studies remain contextualised inside a defined setting, so that any generalisation from the study is made considering the sample universe (Robinson, 2013).

For this specific research study, the inclusion criteria, when selection the respondents for the conducted interviews, have been based on the sought for life history homogeneity when creating the sampling universe. Therefore, it has been of importance that each of the respondents are actively engaged in the research field's main topics; audio branding, audio and branding. The research study's exclusion criteria have also been founded on the respondent's life history, since the research prior to conducting the interviews wanted to ensure that the respondents had been engaged in work tasks related to the aforementioned topics for the last 5 years prior to conducting an interview. The addition of exclusion or inclusion criteria in these different domains has helped the researches to increase its sample homogeneity (Robinson, 2013).

3.10.2. The Conducted Interviews

This section will present the four respondents with whom the interviews were conducted. Hence, this section will outline a short description of the interview, a brief presentation of the respondents and a description of how each of the respondents have contributed to the research. As this research applies the interpretivism scientific approach it is necessary to have an in-depth understanding of the

respondent's social context. Only by understanding their social context it becomes possible to analyse how they perceive and experience a topic.

Respondent 1: Rune Born Schwartz, Bauer Media

Date: 19th of March 2020

Duration: 75 minutes

Format: Skype with audio and video

Rune Schwartz works at Bauer Media Denmark as an Innovation Manager, where he has worked for seven and a half years. Bauer Media Denmark is part of Bauer Media Group, which is an international media group located in 16 countries on four continents (Bauer Media, n.d.), offering magazines, radio programmes and design of digital formats. The Danish department runs a number of high profile Danish commercial radio stations, offering specialised audio advertising solutions, such as radio advert spots, creative content production for radio and podcasts as well as sound identities (Bauer Media Danmark, n.d.). Schwartz' daily work consists of innovating new creative products and solutions for clients within radio and podcast. Through his education as a journalist, Schwartz has long professional background within the radio industry, and has previously worked for the Danish national public service news, radio and television station, Danmarks Radio for 12 years (Interview 1, 2020). Through his work experience, he has gained a large knowledge on the auditive medium, and based on his current position at Bauer Media, it is argued that he possesses an extensive amount of insight and knowledge on branding, audio and audio branding. The interview, therefore, provides an in-depth understanding of branding in a radio and auditive context.

As the interview with Schwartz was the first of this study, it was less structured compared to the other three interviews. As the study was in its initial phase, all decisions regarding scope and inclusion criteria had not been fully decided. Consequently, the nature of the interview was flexible, allowing both Schwartz and the researchers to engage in fluent conversation about a variety of themes related to audio branding and radio in general. Thus, the interview provided a deeper understanding of what topics to explore further, and as such, helped guide the following interviews and the selection of new respondents. Lastly, Schwartz facilitated the contact with respondent 4, Lauri Domnick, who he believed would be able to provide us with additional information and knowledge on audio branding.

Respondent 2: Jacob Mouritzen, Holst Moutritzen

Date: 20th of March 2020

Duration: 36 minutes

Format: Skype with audio and video

Jacob Moutritzen, who is educated in Business studies and global studies at Roskilde University is co-founder of Holst Mouritzen. Holst Mouritzen offers companies consultancy to determine the potential of a given market, and regarding identifying what areas of action and initiatives are needed to create sustainable growth.

Prior to founding Holst Mouritzen, he worked for Danish marketing agencies, most recently Mindshare Denmark. He has, thereby, been involved in work tasks within the areas of communication, social media and branding, and he has consequently obtained skills and knowledge regarding branding and creating brand strategies (Interview 2, 2020).

Mouritzen complies, thus, with the inclusion criteria as his main areas of expertise are within the topics of strategy, launch strategy and branding. The interview with Mouritzen was of relevance, because it touched upon multiple elements that any businesses must consider prior to establishing a brand strategy, whether it is a visual, or an audio branding strategy (Interview 2, 2020). Likewise, Mouritzen contributed to the research by sharing his experiences of the advantages that are linked to working strategically with branding.

Respondent 3: Bjørn Vidø, CPHsound Design

Date: 24th of March 2020

Duration: 42 minutes

Format: Skype with audio and video

Bjørn Vidø works as a Sound Designer at CPHsound Design. CPHsound Design's main work task consists of designing sound for advertising and cinematic purposes. The company handles multiple kinds of projects, such as designing commercials and implementing voice overs (CBHsound Design, n.d.). The company has more than 20 years of experience in listening to what the producer and the director's actual message is in the project and get it translated into concrete sounds. CPHsound Design's employees are trained in creating creative audio design (CBHsound Design, n.d.)

Vidø is educated from the The National Film School of Denmark as a Sound Designer in 1997, whilst he has been working with audio in a variety of different contexts since he left high school, and he thus possesses more than 20 years of experience on the field of music and audio production (Interview 3, 2020). His main work tasks at CPHsound Design are within the areas of creating audio identities for a business. Moreover, he has previously been involved in creating auditive elements for a number of large Danish corporations (Interview 3, 2020).

The reasonings behind conducting an interview with Vidø, are based on the inclusion criteria. Vidø matches the inclusion criteria of being actively engaged in audio, which is one of the research's main topic. Additionally, he has achieved a mini MBA, providing him with an academic understanding of business and marketing (Interview 3, 2020). The interview with Vidø was valuable for the study, because it provided the researchers with insights regarding the auditive elements that companies should consider when establishing an audio branding identity. Likewise, Vidø explained comprehensively how a business' audio identities can be produced through collaborating with a business that wants to establish an audio identity (Interview 3, 2020). Vidø contributed to the study with an understanding of audio by carefully explaining the features a business should consider in order to be able to express its core values through sound.

Respondent 4: Lauri Domnick, Bauer Media Finland
Date: 2nd of April 2020
Duration: 47 minutes
Format: Skype with audio and video

Lauri Domnick is Head of Audio Branding Oy at Bauer Media Finland, and is thus a part of the same media group as Rune Schwartz. The Finnish department specialises in creating audio branding identities and solutions, and is one of the market leaders within audio branding production in Finland (Bauer Media Oy, n.d.). Domnick has positioned his current role for two years and 10 months, and his main work tasks consist of providing consultancy for B2C organisations. Typical projects include establishing strategies for audio branding guidelines, design of sonic logos and other corporate auditive identity elements.

Prior to Bauer Media, Domnick had his own business for four years, which offered audio branding strategies, sound identity development and audio consultancy. Moreover, he has more than 20 years of experience working within sound, music and customer experience, and he is thus argued to possess extensive insight and knowledge on all inclusion criteria, audio, branding and audio branding. Through his work, Domnick has gained a large understanding of customer relationships, and he is, therefore, experienced with working with a variety of clients, including bigger international clients as well as local Finnish organisations, providing him a unique insight into different industries and corporate challenges.

The interview was based on the interview guide, and allowed the conversation to stay on track in terms of what needed to be covered, while still staying flexible enough for the conversation to flow naturally, allowing Domnick to elaborate on his points by including concrete examples. Additionally, it allowed the researchers to ask additional question based on this, providing information and insight on topics that went beyond the prepared questions.

In figure 1 below, an overview over the four respondents that have contributed to this research is visualised. The figure provides basic information on the respondents and their occupation.

Name	Company	Topic of Focus	Job Experience (in years)
Rune Born Schwartz	Bauer Media, Denmark	Audio branding, audio and branding.	+20 years
Jacob Mouritzen	Denmark	Branding, marketing & communication	12 years
Bjørn Vidø	CPHsound Design, Denmark	Audio	+20 years
Lauri Domnick	Bauer Media, Finland	Audio branding	+20 years

Figure 1: Respondents

3.11. Data Quality Issues

Before moving on to the chapter concerning theory, an outline of this studies considerations regarding data quality issues from the conducted data through semi-structured interviews will take place. Hence this section will uncover the considerations related to:

- Reliability
- Bias
- Validity
- Generalisability

It is crucial for any research to reflect on the reliability, biases, validity and generalisability before it is initiated (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). Results that originate from research studies with a quantitative perspective are believed to be generalisable for bigger populations (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). Studies that emerge from qualitative methods, such as case studies or qualitative interviews, are often criticised by studies with a quantitative perspective, for not contributing to a research field with new knowledge that is generalisable, so that it can contribute to the general understanding of a field of study (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). For qualitative studies, the reliability is based on, to what extent the included cases are examples of what they have been argued to be, and if they are representative for other cases (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). One of the downsides of conducting qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews, is its lack of standardisation, which can generate concerns when considering the aspect of reliability, as it will be difficult for other researchers to replicate the same information in another research. However, this phenomenon has, for this particular study, not been investigated with a desire that the findings necessarily could be repeated, because they reflect the reality at the time they were collected, in a situation that might have changed, as well because the circumstances that has been investigated are dynamic and complex. Consequently, it has not be feasible for to ensure that the study could be replicated by other scholars (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

One of the biases for this research to be addressed, is related to the process of conducting the interviews. One bias that likely has occurred is 'the interviewer bias' (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016), because the researchers may have attempted to impose their personal beliefs through the asked questions. Another bias that is closely related is 'the response bias which can arise from the respondents' perceptions about the interviewer (Bryman, 2012). This bias can also have occurred for

this research, if the respondents intentionally withheld information, because they could fear that they could open up for probing undesired follow-up question, by revealing information. This scenario is likely to happen when conducting in-depth qualitative interviews, because the respondents are sensitive because they are emotional. Thus, the researchers should be aware of not harming the respondents (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016; Bryman, 2012). This study has proactively tried to reduce the aforementioned biases by reflecting on the cultural and social differences between the researchers and respondents prior to the conversations (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

The validity is an additional another important factor to consider for the researchers, because the study must ensure a certain level of validity (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016). Basically, validity refers to whether the researchers collect the expected findings, such as whether the respondents' answers matches the researchers' expectations, based on their profession. This research has intended to secure the validity by conducting interviews with respondents, who met the inclusion criteria that has been establish for the sample universe. Moreover, the researchers have investigated the respondents' social and professional background to understand their social context prior to formulating the asked questions. This was done to reduce the risk of asking questions that the interviewees did not understand.

A research should have a certain level of methodological generalisability. Methodological generalisability refers to the extent to which a research's findings are applicable to other settings (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative researches have been criticised for having a low level of generalisability, because such researches are difficult to replicate. However, qualitative researchers can achieve a certain level of generalisability by describing each steps of the investigation in details, allowing other researchers to develop an insight into the applied methods (Kristensen & Hussain, 2016; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). This particular research has sought to describe each step and acts from the very beginning until the final point detailed in order to create generalisability. Thereby, other researchers can somehow design a similar research that fits a different research setting (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

4. Theoretical Analysis

The following section will contain an overview of the theoretical framework and will provide an analysis on the literature to outline the different concepts of audio branding in order to answer the research question. Additionally, it underlines the different factors that contribute to the understanding and interpretations of audio branding in this study, and it thus provides an independent analytical contribution to answering the research question. Furthermore, the section will provide a basic understanding of the phenomenon, which will be used to provide a basis for the empirical analysis later. The theory has been chosen in order to contribute to the understanding and complexity of audio branding, including literature from a variety of literary topics and research areas. As such it provides a thorough introduction to the chosen research topic, as well as establishing a basis for the interpretation of audio branding in this research.

Audio branding has become a growing business, gaining attention from organisations, marketing agencies, academia and the music industry and has previously been researched within different fields of theoretical disciplines, such as neuroscience, musicology and branding. However, very little literature targeting those working with audio branding has been conducted. Therefore, this study will draw on literature from branding, as the execution of audio branding is embedded in the overall branding strategy, and as such, it is crucial to understand the basic concepts of this. Furthermore, the chapter introduces theory on audio branding to help define, explain and interpret the phenomenon from existing literature, and will thus draw on a variety of theoretical disciplines in addition to literature on audio branding, including branding, cognition, neurosciences and brand psychology.

4.1. Branding

Throughout the decades, several studies on the topic of branding and its impact have been conducted, each contributing to the understanding of the topic. Branding is not a newly invented phenomenon as such. In Roman time branding already existed. From Dr. G.S. David Sam Jayakumar and S. Dawood Ali's (2015) study, it is mentioned that "branding literally means distinguishing products from each other in order for the consumer to easily choose her favourite product". The study further state that the process of distinguishing a product from other products can be achieved in different ways through tangible factors such as the logo, design and the physical product (Jayakamur & Ali, 2015). According to Philip Kotler (1991), a brand can be defined through tangible and intangible factors, describing it as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the

goods and services of one seller or group of sellers to differentiate them from those of competitors"
(Kotler, 1991, s. 442).

Some researchers have uncovered how strong brands are thought to have an advantage compared to
lesser known brands when it comes to building brand awareness, image and brand preference
(Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). According to various studies on branding, organisations can benefit from
having a strong brand in several ways. Studies mention that one of the advantages for an organisation
is that a strong brand can lead to a high level of customer loyalty (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman,
& Hansen, 2012). Thus, establishing a strong brand has become an important marketing priority for
many organisations (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). Research has previously also revealed that a great
brand can lead to fundamental differences in consumer behaviour, as consumers can tend to prefer a
given product over others due to a strong brand (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). Another study based on
information organisation models, found that consumers will develop links to familiar brands and that
consumers are more likely to develop these links to strong brands (Kent & Allen, 1994). In the same
study, the researchers recognised that consumers pay more attention to advertising for a brand that is
well-known to them (Kent & Allen, 1994). However, research has also found that not all of the
advantages an organisation can gain from having a strong brand are voluntary, since consumers
automatically encode frequent information because they are repeatedly exposed to brand names,
slogans and logos etc. (Hasher & Zacks, 1979). Likewise, it has been studied that ambiguity in the
decision-making process should be in favour of the stronger brand (Mushukrishnan,1995).

Furthermore, researchers that have examined branding have presented findings which state that
organisations also benefit from having a strong and well-known brand, because it increases the
consumers' brand recognition and brand recall (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991; Smith & Park,
1992; Maheswaran, Mackie, & Chaiken, 1992; Kerin, Kalyanaram, & Howard, 1996). Increasing
one's brand recognition is important in order to survive in the marketing landscape. In the cluttered
advertising environment of today, most people do not have the ability to navigate in the many stimuli
they are exposed to daily, and it is therefore argued that in a majority of cases, people do not have
strong emotional feelings about brands. In fact, according to research from Havas Media (2019),
people would not care if 77% of brands disappeared. This indicates that brands are facing large
challenges when it comes to creating brand preference among consumers, and thus challenges the
idea of creating recognition and preference by relying on brand differentiation. Byron Sharp (2010),

argues that marketers tend to put more thought into the purchasing of a product than customers do, and suggests that segmentation and brand differentiation are mostly wasted effort. Sharp argues that brands actually exist in our minds, and as such most purchase decisions are based on the emotional brain, and the memory network of associations and experiences, images and sounds that help us encode and quickly retrieve these memories to solve our problems and needs in the moment of shopping (Sharp, 2010; Romaniuk & Sharp, 2015). Based on this assumption, brands need to work on becoming top-of-mind among consumers in the moment of choice or consumption in order to survive. Rather than focusing on differentiation and creating 'meaning' in the consumers lives, Sharp believes brands need to focus on creating consistent and constant, easily remembered brand assets to succeed (Sharp, 2010; Romaniuk & Sharp, 2015). According to Sharp (2010), this will create distinctive memory structures and mental availability in the consumers mind, and as such bring the brand top-of-mind when shopping for that specific product- or service category.

According to Birgitte Rode (2020), audio has the potential to do just that. She argues that branding is simply an attempt to approach us "through a list of psychological and sociological drivers intended to trigger our cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses" (Rode, 2020, p. 26), in order to "affect customers' purchasing and decision-making processes, and thereby provoke the buying habits of the potential customer" (Rode, 2020, p. 26). Rode argues, that because of its power to instigate emotions and connotation, audio is a very powerful tool to connect emotionally to consumers and create powerful associations.

4.2. Building Brands & Brand Equity

Being top-of-mind is strongly associated with brand equity. Brand equity represents the value of a brand within its environment and is determined by consumer attitude towards the attributes of the brand. In a general sense, "brand equity is defined in terms of the marketing effects uniquely attributed to the brand" (Keller, 1993, s. 1). In order to achieve a high level of brand equity, brands must aim at improving the knowledge created in consumers' minds, based on previous marketing activates. It therefore relates strongly to the consumers' awareness and perception of the brand. As brand equity is permanently located in the consumer's minds, the actual value of the brand is fundamentally built on two dimensions: brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993; Rode, 2020).

Brand awareness is simply based on the consumer's awareness of a brand's existence and relates to brand recall- and recognition. It relates to the consumer's ability to identify a brand based on its different distinctive assets, and its ability to create brand recall (Keller, 1993; Romaniuk & Sharp, 2015). Brand image relates to the consumer's perceptions of a brand and consitutes what is actually percieved based on the associations network recieved from the different information sources (John, Loken, Kim, & Monga, 2006). Therefore, these associations can help build the brand meaning in the mind of the consumer (Keller, 1993).

The association network identifies the brand's uniqueness and the values and personality traits that the consumers will end up associating with the brand (John, Loken, Kim, & Monga, 2006). Aaker (1997) suggests that by identifying the brand's associative uniqueness, it is possible to leverage the brand equity within the marketplace. Additionally, the number of associations connected to the brand (Sharp, 2010), and the strenght of the relation between the brand and brand assets (Keller, 1993), can play an important role in bulding a strong brand meaning. This is relevant when understanding the consumer's perception, and brand attitudes, that in turn, can help form the basis of consumer behaviour (Keller, 1993).

As indicated above, consumers hold a great deal of power when it comes to a brand's success. Keller (1997), argues that brand equity is highly based on consumers, and the concept of Consumer Based Brand Equity is based on this exact assumption. The associations and awareness of a brand is based on what the consumer has previously been exposed to, what they have learned, seen and heard through different brand experiences and the meanings associated with this (Keller, 1993; Romaniuk & Sharp, 2015). There are many factors behind brand meaning, which can be conveyed through many different brand symbols. Keller (1997) emphasises the importance of the brand name on the brand identities, however, other components of the brand identity are also to be considered, such as visual logo (Henderson & Cote, 1998), sound (Graakjær & Jantzen, 2009; Lindstrøm, 2010; Bronner & Hirt, 2009) and smell (Lindstrøm, 2010). This indicates that both tangible and intangible assets play a role on a brand's image, as the intangible factors such as the brand name, values and personality traits play a role in how the tangible aspects, such as the visual logo and prouct design is portrayed and communicated.

Keller (1993) argues that customer-based brand equity eminates from the consumer's familiar associations with the brand, and states that effective communication enables the formations of brand awareness consequently generating a positive brand image (Keller, 2013). Having a stong image and reputation enhances differentiation, and has a positive influence on buying behaviour. As mentioned, many factors contribute to the strength of a product, service or brand, and understanding these is important to consider when building a strong brand. Keller's (2013) Customer-Based Brand Equity Model (CBBE) is based on a very simple concept: If you want to build a strong brand, you must shape how your customers think and feel about your product or service. Hence, you have to build brand experiences that resonate positively with the customer, and creates specific, positive thoughts, feelings and perceptions about your brand. By creating a strong brand equity, consumers will purchase more, and potentially become more loyal.

Based on this, Keller's (2013) pyramid-shaped model suggests that there are four fundamental questions consumers will, to some extent, subconsiously ask when they are presented with a brand, and that each of these four steps contain six building blocks that need to be considered in order to develop a succesful brand. The four steps are:

1. Brand Identity – Who are you?
2. Brand Meaning – What are you?
3. Brand Response – What do I think or feel about you?
4. Brand Resonance – What about you and me?

These steps will be elaborated further in the following section in order to understand the different components that play a role in building a brand and brand equity. It is argued that understanding these things are important in order to fully grasp the complexity of audio branding. Even though the model has a customer-oriented point of view which is in contrast to this paper's organisational viewpoint the model is a useful tool to understand how brands are built. As mentioned, brands rely highly on consumers to buy or interact with their products or services in order to succeed, and the model is thus considered to give an understanding of what elements go into building and maintaining strong brands and brand identities. However, even though the model and the concept of brand equity in general has been widely studied in marketing literature, very little research has been done on how to actually measure the effect of brand equity. Therefore, the model is argued to create challenges for managers to in practice, as thus lacks a general framework for measuring the effects of the different activities

(Yu, Zhao, & Wang, 2008). Furthermore, the model does not specify what tangible and intangible elements that go into establishing brands and brand equity, and does, therefore, not take into account the different effects of using a different stimuli to communicate brand messages.

4.2.1. Brand Identity

The first step, brand identity, is about creating brand salience with customers, which refers to "various aspects of the awareness of the brand and how easily and often the brand is evoked under various circumstances." (Keller, 2013, p. 107). It is about distinguishing brand knowledge and the strenght with which a brand is able to create brand recall and recognition in the customers' minds through the different brand assets (Rossiter & Percy, 1987). Therefore, brand awareness helps give the product an identity by linking the different elements of the brand to a product category, which will help customers understand the product or service, so they understand which needs the product or service satisfies (Keller, 2013).

Keller (2013) distigushed between the "breadth" and "depth" of awareness. The depth of brand awareness measures how likely and how easily a brand element comes to a customer's mind. The deeper the awareness, the stronger the recall. The breadth of brand awareness refers to the range of situations in which the brand elements come to mind, and is therefore strongly linked to the brand and product knowledge in consumers' memory. Creating strong brand awareness is important, however, not always sufficient. It is often important to establish a strong brand image and how this corresponds with the customer. Therefore, step two in the pyramid is important.

4.2.2. Brand Meaning

In step two, the aim is to identify and communicate brand meaning and what the brand stands for. As mentioned above, creating brand meaning is an important factor, as it relates to the way consumers experience and categorise a brand product- or service based on previous experiences and interactions (Aaker, 1997). Brand meaning is based on two important categories of brand associations, and is related to performance and brand imagery. Both of these can be formed from the customer's own experiences and previous contact with the brand, or more indirectly, through advertising activitites (Keller, 2013).

According to Keller (2013), "*Brand Performance* describes how well the product or service meets customers' more functional needs." (p. 112). He argues that the actual product is at the heart of brand equity, as it functions as the primary influencing element of what people actually experience when

they interact with the brand; what they hear about the brand from others; or what information is provided by the brand through advertising. Therefore, it is essential that a product lives up to the customers' expectations in order to create loyalty and resonance. It relates to the attributes and features of the product that help differentiate it from competitors.

Brand imagery "depends on the extrinsic properties of the product or service, including the ways in which the brand attempts to meet customers' psychological or social needs" (Keller, 2013, P. 113). As such, the imagery refers to the intangible aspects of a brand, and how customers create imagery associations based on their own experiences or through advertising. This includes, but is not limited to: Brand personality and values; and history, heritage, and experiences.

4.2.2.1.Brand Personality

How consumers identify the brand's uniqueness is related to the association network (John, Loken, Kim, & Monga, 2006), and is an important factor in understanding how consumers perceive the brand (Keller, 2013). Stong and mature brands have endless networks of associations (Krishnan, 1996) and thus memory structures in the consumers's minds. According to Keller (2013), brand personalities play a big role in how customers create imagery associations of a brand.

Plummer (2000) suggests that brand personality is two-folded, which includes the brand personality statement and the brand personality profile. The first refers to the input, and includes what the brand actually wants their customers to perceive about the brand, and the latter refers to what the customer is actually thinking and feeling about the brand (Plummer, 2000). According to Aaker (1997, p.20), brand personality can be identified as "the set of human characteristics' associated with a brand," and is thus a way of associating brands with people by giving a brand human traits. It refers to how a brand acts, looks, communicates, smells, sounds and tastes from the consumers' perspective (Smit, van den Berge, & Franzen, 2002). Brand personalities can thus help create a set of unique and favourable associations in the consumer's memory, thereby helping increase brand equity (Keller, 2013). Therefore, brand personality is an important factor for brand success in regard to preference and choice, as it helps evoke associations and emotions, which are important motivators of consumer response (Biel, 1993). There are a number of factors that can contribute to creating emotional relationships with brands, such as the visual identity, feel or style of communication (Smit, van den Berge, & Franzen, 2002). As mentioned, Sharp (2010) argues that decisions are often made by consumers' subconscious minds and it is therefore important to create a cohesive brand personality and suitable assets to spark recognition and preference in the moment of purchase or consumption.

Even though the concept of brand personality is based on the idea of giving brands human traits to make them relatable, it is argued to be difficult to fully distinguish these human characteristics equally across all messages, and as consumers are all individual human beings with individual backgrounds and understandings of the world, it may be challenging to establish personalities that resonates equally with all consumers (Aaker & Keller, 1990).

Brand personality concepts have been conceptualised in different ways and have been investigated by several researchers. However, it is suggested that there are two overall perspectives; a corporate oriented perspective and a consumer perspective (Smit, van den Berge, & Franzen, 2002). From a corporate and managerial point of view, brand personality enables companies to efficiently communicate about their brands with the consumers through advertising and branding strategies, thus creating stronger differentiation and recognition (Diamantopoulos, Smith, & Grime, 2005).

Aaker (1997), on the other hand, defines brand personalities from the consumer oriented perspective, and suggests that the human characteristics associated with a brand, is what makes them unique and differentiates them from other brands. Aaker (1997) provides a detailed description on how brand personality can create market differentiation and suggests that personality can help increase memorability and interest, because brands without personality experience difficulty gaining awareness and building relationships with customers. Additionally, personalities help stimulate consideration of constructs such as 'honest' or 'cheerful'. Aaker concludes that, if brands understand the personality metaphor, relationship development becomes more motivating. Aaker (1997) suggests five brand personality dimensions: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness. This provides a framework to describe the profile and traits of a brand through the five dimensions, each divided into a set of facets. Each facet is measured by a set of traits using a five-point scale meant to rate the extent to which each trait describes a brand. As such, the dimensions provide a framework for measuring brand meaning, and introduces a multi-dimensional assessment of meaning and brand assets.

The five dimensions do, however, not take into account social and cultural differences and how these may affect the dimensions to resonate differently, and that human attributes and traits may be understood differently. Additionally, scholars worldwide have suggested that Aaker's (1997) dimensions show evidence of non-applicability, and new dimensions have thus been introduced to replace old ones. As changes in demographics, cultures, societies and lifestyles emerge, new variations are introduced (Kumar, 2018).

4.2.3. Brand Response

Brand associations make up the brand image and meaning, and are built on the strength, favourability and uniqueness of a brand through brand personality, that contribute to building brand equity (Keller, 2013). If done successfully, these dimensions help produce positive brand responses. It can be challenging for marketers to build strong, favourable and unique associations, however, these are essential in creating and establishing associations and meaning in the costumers' minds. Brand meaning stimulates brand responses. According to Keller's (2013) Consumer Based Brand Equity model, brand responses can be distinguished by brand judgements or feelings.

Brand judgements refers to the customers' personal opinions and evaluations regarding the brand, all of which is formed through brand performance and imagery associations. Judgements include a number of different types, such as quality, credibility, consideration and superiority, which refers to a consumers' overall evaluation of a brand, and ultimately form the basis for brand choice.

Brand feelings relates to customers' emotional responses and reactions to the brand, and strongly relates to Sharp's (2010) argument that choice of consumption is highly influenced by emotional responses and are often linked to brand personalities (Aaker, 1997) and the brand assets, which create recognition and responses (Sharp, 2010).

Ultimately, the aim is to achieve positive customer responses, whether those driven from the head or the heart, as brand "judgements and feelings can favorably affect customer behavior only if consumers internalize or think of positive responses in their various encounters with the brand" (Keller, 2013, p. 120).

4.2.4. Brand Resonance

The final step of the Consumer Based Brand Equity model (Keller, 2013), focuses on the ultimate relationship and level of identification that the customer has with the brand. It relates to brand resonance, which describes the nature of the relationship and refers to the level of intensity or psychological bond customers have with the brand, as well as the level of activity and loyalty. Keller (2013) suggests four dimensions of brand resonance: behavioural loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community, and active engagement. The first, refers to purchase frequency, i.e. loyalty and purchase volume; the second relates to strong personal attachments to brands; the third refers to consumer identification and sense of community connected to the brand; and the latter focuses on

brand engagement and the level to which consumers invest time, energy and money in the brand beyond the actual purchase, such as joining loyalty clubs and signing up to newsletters.

Ultimately, the four steps of the Consumer Based Brand model (2013) offer a framework for understanding and measuring consumer driven brand equity, which make up important steps in building brands. Brand personality provides a deeper understanding of the human traits that brands possess and how these influence brand image and brand recognition (Aaker, 1997). These are important components to understand in order to fully grasp the underlying factors, which influence branding and thus audio branding. Working with sound in branding requires knowledge and sophistication in order to fully utilise the potential of the medium. In the following section, distinctive brand assets will be defined and discussed in order to underline the strength of utilising audio.

4.3. Brand Assets

As the theory implies, a brand is the most essential part of a business. It is the physical and emotional embodiment of what consumers see, feel, hear, taste, experience and remember. Due to increased competition, coupled with the enormous increase in advertising spend and the overall proliferation of new products, the marketplace has become an increasingly competitive landscape for brands to manoeuvre in (Davis, 1995). Therefore, it is crucial that consumers are able to recognise the brand that is being advertised, however, "figures routinely show that on average 1/2 of people who see an advertisement fall to correctly identify the brand" (Romaniuk, 2018, p. 2).

As previously mentioned, creating brand meaning can play an important role in building successful brands, however, according to Sharp (2010), there is little evidence that suggests that consumers actually want a relationship with brands, or that brands can benefit from creating meaning in consumers' lives, and, as such, brand personalities are in many ways an unproductive endeavour. Instead, Sharp (2010) argues, that making a brand easy to buy, by maximising physical availability and developing attractive and memorable brand assets, has a much larger impact on brand recall. His study suggests that consumers buy products and services out of habit, not commitment. Therefore, the secret is to build clear and distinctive brand assets using sensory clues, such as logo, sound, design and colours that stimulate distinctive memory structures and, consequently, create mental availability by becoming top-of-mind in the purchase situation.

Brand assets were originally defined by Byron Sharp and Jenni Romaniuk of the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute as non-brand name elements that help trigger memory structure in consumers, therefore, consist of cues and signals of a brand that leverage non-verbal stimuli, such as logos, visual colours, audio, scents and taste when engaging with the brand (Romaniuk & Sharp, 2015). Romaniuk (2018, p. 2), suggests that distinctive brand assets are essentially built on brand identity elements and are "anything that signal the brand name to consumers". Therefore, they can be defined as memorable and attractive assets that provide sensory and semantic cues. However, an element needs to fulfill two certain criteria in order to be identified as an asset: They need to be unique and they need to be famous (Romaniuk, 2018). Unique elements should be uniquely related to the brand, and thus evoke only the actual brand and not be associated with competitors. Famous elements should be easily identified by consumers as representing the brand (Romaniuk & Sharp, 2015; Romaniuk, 2018).

With the increase in advertising stimuli and introduction of new brands, services and products, consumers are bombardet with choices and thus ambivilance about which to choose, making distinctive assets ideal for providing creative-friendly ways of signalling the brand (Romaniuk, 2018). A study by Romaniuk from 2018, suggests that creating distinctive and creative assets has great potential benefits, such as increase the brand footprint, create neuro-richer brands and improving in-store performance, as they move people to adopt new behaviours and can reinforce existing ones.

However, developing distinctive assets requires commitment from marketing managers to keep the elements consistent and cohesive, because according to Sharp (2010), the real challenge of marketing is about staying available in the mind and in the store. Therefore, it is important to continuously recall buyers in the category, ensure availability, refresh, build and respect exisitng memory structures that consumers associate with the brand, and be consistent in order to stay competitive (Sharp, 2010). Whatever sense the distinctive assets engage, the aim is for them to act as brand cues without mentioning the actual brand, and leaving positive imprints in consumers' memories.

4.3.1. Smash Your Brand

From a cognitive perspective, branding and brand choice behaviour is strongly related to learning (Wang & Lin, 2012; Da Silva & Alwi, 2006). Studies suggest, that the physical and emotional reactions triggered by different branding stimuli creates an interesting link to sensory integration, multi-sensory branding and learning (Lindstrøm, 2010; Spence & Gallace, 2011; Rode, 2020). For a long time, visual elements have been the primary focus in terms of differentiation and creativity

(Rode, 2020), however, a more sensory oriented approach to advertising has grown in interest as a strategic weapon to persuade the customer.

According to Martin Lindstrøm (2010), the vast majority of the impressions human beings form when communicating are non-verbal, that is sensory. Therefore, repetition has been one of the most prominent techniques used in branding and advertising to create cognitive knowledge, stimulate memory and change behaviour (Lindstrøm, 2010). However, according to Lindstrøm (2010), repetition is not enough. Brands need to provide creative and unique sensory experiences to maintain memory associations. He suggests that creating strong sensory experience of a brand is complex, as it is important that the brand does not lose its identity, thus misrepresenting the brand and confusing the consumer' perception of the brand. He uses the term "Smash Your Brand", which is based on the assumption that a brand should be easily recognisable through each individual element. He defines it as the trick "to create each element so it's so strong, so able to stand alone, yet at the same time so well-integrated that it can take the brand to a whole new level of familiarity" (Lindstrøm, 2010, s. 44). Lindstrøm's theory suggests that a brand need to integrate multi sensory assets in order to create a sustainable brand that can help communicate brand identity and personality throughout all possible touchpoints. This underlines the need for brand managers to consider integrating brand elements that go beyond visual assets, such as sound and music.

The "Smash Your Brand"-theory points to the increase in attention given to sensory branding, and audio branding in particular, by marketers (Wren, 2019; Minsky & Fahey, 2014; Richards, 2019) to create differentiation, get attention and create recognition. As such, it underlines the importance of brands recognising the opportunities related to developing strong unique audio identities. As Rode (2020) suggests, "many companies could face big problems when aiming to prompt recognition by implementing pre-existing music, either that of a brand artist or from a music library, in advertising on websites or other mediums" (Rode, 2020, s. 84). Therefore, it points to the fact that – like all branding efforts – it requires constant reinforcement to create branded stimuli and thus create behavioural change as suggested by Byron Sharp (2010). However, if done right sensory branding can at the end "offer the potential to create the most binding form of engagement between brand and consumer we've ever witnessed." (Lindstrøm, 2010, s. 104). Lindstrøm (2010), concludes that marketers' primary objective should be to ensure that all historical memory structures and associations are always supported, because the more positive synergies brands are able to establish between consumers' senses, the stronger the connection between the sender and receiver becomes.

Hence, being able to communicate with consumers without them being aware must be the ultimate goal of every company. If brands are able to send messages to their customers and sneak it under their skin in order to communicate to their subconsciousness, they have the potential to reach a strong memory flow and store information in their customers' brains (Rode, 2020). According to Rode (2020), this is exactly what sound has the ability to do.

In fact, according to a recent study by Adam Sheridan in association with Ipsos from February 2020, "the presence of brand assets is strongly linked to positive branded attention effects, more so than just directly showing or talking about the brand". Audio assets especially proved to be more effective than visual assets, suggesting that brands can greatly improve their branded attention over time by leveraging audio in their creatives.

In the following section, audio branding will be investigated further in order to establish a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and includes a variety of studies on audio branding and the effect of leveraging sound in advertising situations. Moreover, it touches upon the power of music on human cognition in order to uncover how audio effects consumer behaviour. Lastly it discusses some of the challenges related to the medium and how these may affect the audio branding industry to provide insight into why more brands are not using it.

4.4. Audio Branding

The concept of audio branding is not new. Also referred to as sound branding, acoustic branding and sonic branding, using sound in branding has been recognised and acknowledged for years within the field of branding and academia. Studies on audio branding have contributed to the understanding of how sound increases brand memory (Venkataraman, 2007), effects consumer emotions (Spence & Gallace, 2011; Baker, Trahan, & Müllenseifen, 2016), how sound logos are best structured (Palgat, 2009), its ability to increase willingness-to-pay (Krishnan, Kellaris, & Aurand, 2012), and even how sound can help convey and promote eco-friendliness in brands (Joshi & Kronrod, 2019).

Although, the phenomenon has been studied from many perspectives, it is difficult to find one universal definition on audio branding, however, some of the more popular definitions are that sonic branding is the structured process, in which the acoustic becomes a part of the brand and its brand identity, and that it may consist of an audio logo, a short jingle, or a brand theme (Jackson & Fulberg, 2003). Another definition from Minsky & Fahey (2014) looks at sound branding from a wider

perspective and defines it as "the systematic creation of an entire audio language for the brand based on its essence, vision, values promise, and personality – a language that gets expressed across every point at which your brand interacts with your key constitutes, from web and apps to trade shows and business meetings to TV to the retail environment and even the product itself (Minsky & Fahey, 2014, s. 3). According to these definitions, audio branding is essentially used just as any graphic or creative element in a branding strategy, but through auditive elements in order to trigger consumers' memories and create recognition.

4.4.1. Brief History of Audio Branding

As the studies mentioned above indicate, there are many benefits to using audio. From an advertisement point of view, one of the large benefits of audio branding is that it is a very strong vehicle to convey a memorable message to the consumer (Meier & Beyer, 2011), and it has thus become an increasingly used tool in branding today. However, the phenomenon has, like most things in the media communication discourse, seen a rapid change over the last century. Originally used as a jingle in radio and television advertisements or as a background component in shopping centers, nowadays sounds are used on a wide spectrum of platforms (Jackson & Fulberg, 2003; Meier & Beyer, 2011; Minsky & Fahey, 2014).

According to audio branding pioneer John Groves (2009), the church is, historically, the first fully integrated corporate identity that has a clear corporate structure, corporate behaviour, a (very well-branded) corporate logo and a brand sound – the bell (Groves, 2009). In the 20th century, commercial radio and later television became an obvious vehicle for companies to explore these new opportunities. Hence, the use of music in advertising began to appear as jingles in radio and television commercials and as background music at the point-of-sale or at sales events (Jackson & Fulberg, 2003; Meier & Beyer, 2011). Today, sound is used on a multiple of platforms. Since the emergence of the internet, audio branding has become increasingly sophisticated, providing new opportunities for incorporting sound in branded communication. Audio is used in many different advertising contexts and appear in various forms. Some of the major variations are: Sonic logos, jingles, background music and sound objects.

Sound logos function as the equivalent to a visual logo, but through sound (Rode, 2020). It is a short, distinctive piece of music, melody or tone, usually between one to three seconds long, which should ideally establish a symbiosis with the visual version of the logo. The sonic logo is usually played at

the beginning or ending of an ad, and often in combination with the visual logo. As such, it should add to the overall creative identity of a brand (Meier & Beyer, 2011; Ventkataraman, 2007).

Advertising jingles are short songs to convey a slogan and is thus often played along with lyrics. They differ from the sonic logo, as they do not only transport brand associations, but function as a mnemonic device for the slogan. Therefore, jingles tend to follow a melodic rhythm and tone, and often integrate other brand elements such as the brand name (Meier & Beyer, 2011).

Background music is commonly used purely instrumental and aims to create a specific atmosphere in ads and at the point-of-sale or in other physical spaces. It thus becomes a supplement to other branding stimuli such as images, voice or retail settings. It helps to further convey a brand's identity and as such the memorial associations consumers will create (Meier & Beyer, 2011).

Sound objects are particularly popular in the automotive industry, which has spent much time and resources creating the perfect sound of a car door slamming (Lindstrøm, 2010). Sound objects are connected to the activities of a product or brand, such as the closing of a car door (Kilian, 2009).

In literature and advertising studies, more types and subtypes of audio branding are described, such as brand voice, soundscapes, branded audio (such as podcasts), and product sound, just to name a few (Treasure, 2007). These elements are used in a variety of different application areas and have been transferred to various different platforms, such as television, radio, the internet, mobile phones and in retail-settings. As the media landscape evolves, more platforms become available for marketers to integrate sound in the brand strategy, however, according to Birgitte Rode (2020), applying sound in marketing does not necessarily mean you are "doing" sound branding. Sound branding requires a strategic approach to implementing audio into communication and should ideally be expressed by a signature sound or music, that is a sound identity, which is used consistently and strategically across marketing channels and intrinsically incorporated in the overall corporate identity. Additionally, it is important to implement sound only where sound is expected. Otherwise, you run the risk of disturbing consumers and as a result create negative associations (Rode, 2020).

Even though the functions of sound in branding are manifold, music is the core foundation of audio branding. It is therefore necessary to understand how music is used strategically in order to understand how to use it.

4.4.2. The Power of Music

There are many functions of music in branding and advertising. According to Kellaris et al. (1993), sounds are used to gain and maintain the attention of the listener. However, music is also used to influence the mood of consumers or to persuade consumers by using rhetorical elements like rhythm, repetition and identification (Meier & Beyer, 2011). Analogically, sound can be characterised from its objective properties, such as frequency and loudness, or, by structural components, such as pitch and texture (Krishnan, Kellaris, & Aurand, 2012). Wallace (1994) suggests that music provides a powerful retrieval tool, as it has the ability to provide information about the nature of a text and advert, and as such music helps define the words and phrases, identifies the number of syllables and sets the pattern of the overall text. Hence, music acts as the frame that connects words and music at encoding, increasing memorability.

From an evolutionary point of view, music as a form of communication is deeply rooted in humans (Rode, 2020). According to neuroscientist Daniel Levitin, human beings have become genetically 'hardwired' for music and that music's antiquity and ubiquity has become essential for humanity (Levitin, 2007), and functions as a universal language that can communicate across culture (Jackson & Fulberg, 2003).

According to Julian Treasure (2007), sound and music unconsciously effect human beings in four ways: Physiologically, sound effects our internal rhythms, such as heartbeat and breathing; psychologically, sound can change our feelings, moods and thus our perception of reality; cognitively, sound affects our ability to think and can cut productivity in work spaces with a lot of noise; and behaviourally, sound has the ability to change behaviour, such as how we move away from unpleasant sounds and towards pleasant sound, which means retail stores can greatly affect consumer behaviour by introducing pleasant and congruent soundscapes (Treasure, 2007).

4.4.2.1. How Music & Advertising Works

Understanding the broader context of how music works in branding and marketing is strongly related to the areas of human cognition and decision-making (Müllensiefen & Baker, 2015). According to Müllensiefen and Baker (2015), the work of psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky on rational and irrational decision-making and neuroscientist Antonio Damasio on the importance of emotion for behavioural change has helped change the understanding of branding and advertising and how it affects sales and brand perception.

With their work, the focus has shifted from a predominant focus on conveying the message, towards the importance of using heuristic and contextual cues, such as music, in communication. Damasio (1994) and Kahneman's (2011) works indicate that human beings are not as rational as we would like to think, and that we are not able to divorce our emotions from our decision-making.

Damasio (1994), suggests that a person's ability to make decisions is not grounded in pure reason, but is a more complicated process, which is largely influenced by our emotions. In fact, our emotions and feelings play a large cognitive role in how human beings behave, and as such, how we buy and interact with brands and products.

In Kahneman's bestseller *Thinking, Fast and Slow* from 2011, his work with Tversky on human decision-making is presented. The framework proposes that the human brain function utilises two separate, yet inter-connected systems. System 1 is unconscious and driven by experience. It is a resource-efficient mechanism, which is always switched on, and thus processes all inputs unconsciously and helps filter and focus one's attention. It influences our thoughts via emotions and intuition. System 2 is a rational, linear and resource-driven system, which is dependent on conscious processes (Kahneman, 2011).

Based on these assumptions, psychological and neurological processes are therefore highly involved in the perception of advertising. Robert Heath's (2012) model of advertising effectiveness is based on the idea of decision-making and cognition as a dual process. The model proposes two pathways by which a person is able to process advertising information; a low processing route and a high processing route. The low route processes heuristic cues, such as audio and music, and the high route is a conscious process capable of understanding and evaluating coherent messages and arguments in advertising (Heath, 2012).

The high-attention route processes information through a channel, which is able to extract the salient aspects of a persuasive advertisement message, such as offers of "half price". This forms a cognitive response in the receiver, which can result in a possible attitude change toward the product or brand and, and thereby, lead to a change of buying behaviour. The low-processing route, however, does not deal with conscious consideration of the message. Instead, the low route is an unconscious process, which bypasses any rational advertising messages, instead relying on emotional processing, evaluative conditioning and mere exposure. This route is therefore strongly related to priming, and thus very advantageous for brand- and marketing managers (Heath, 2012).

According to Müllensiefen & Baker, priming is a "phenomenon that allows for a faster, more accurate recognition of a stimulus due to prior exposure of similar or related stimuli" (Müllensiefen & Baker, 2015, s. 36), which can be extended to music and branding.

In a branding context, music would act as the priming stimulus, as it has an ability to convey affect without needing to rely on rational or conscious input processing. Presenting brand and music simultaneously will therefore result in an enhanced perception of the brand, because of the congruency of the positive effect of music and the brand personality. In addition, the use of audio and music in branding situations facilitates strong stimulus recognition, memory and thus brand empathy.

According to Heath's (2012) dual process model, advertising functions via two routes. Similar to Kahneman's two systems, Heath's model proposes a high and a low pathway for advertising information to be processes. The models, however, differ in the type of information they pass on and thus the effect that the information has on the consumer. The high route focuses on rational product information, such as pricing messages, and as such yield immediate and short-term behavioural responses. This type of marketing can drive an increase in short-term sales but will usually decay when the offer ends. As such, the high route does not contribute to long-term brand building such as the low processing route can do. This pathway creates and stores emotional brand associations, increasing long-term changes in brand attitude and preference. Here, the focus of adverts is not to convey useful information and immediate response, but rather to speak to the unconscious pathway by using stimuli such as music, audio and other heuristic cues to stimulate consumers' emotions (Heath, 2012). This contributes to long-term brand building, rather than short burst in sales, by appealing to consumers' emotions, which, in time, can reduce their sensitivity to price (Binet & Field, 2013).

Based on these two opposing types of advertising techniques, it is argued that music and audio is especially powerful and effective through the low-processing pathway by appealing directly to consumers' emotions instead of the rational and conscious process. Branding should ideally result in awareness, recognition, generating positive memorial associations and recall, preference, behavioural changes and in turn an increase in brand equity (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2013; Kotler, 1991; Sharp, 2010; and Romaniuk & Sharp, 2015).The models established by Kahneman (2011) and Heath (2012) imply the processing of information in the brand consist of two singular systems or pathways, however according to Evans and Stanovich (2013), this can be considered

misnomers, as neither of the models consider the multitude of reactions each system or pathway triggers in the brain.

4.4.3. Sound in Branding

Sound in branding is not just applying a generic sound and expecting long-term brand building and positive return on investment. According to Rode, sound "is the key towards differentiation and recognition" (Rode, 2020, s. 12). As established earlier, brand personality is the set of human characteristics applied to the brand (Aaker, 1997), and the personality profile is based on both the brand's identity and how this is perceived by consumers (Plummer, 2000). The audio identity plays a vital role in establishing this. Therefore, sound branding is the strategic use of sound to create an auditory identity for the brand (Jackson & Fulberg, 2003). Creating corporate sounds that are appropriate for the specific brand and aligning it across all communication touch points to create a strong auditory identity that supports the visual brand identity. Therefore, an audio identity is not necessarily about creating entertainment, but rather about creating an easily recognisable red thread across all corporate touch point. Rode (2020) emphasises that creating unique and trademarked sounds are a strong tool in establishing a coherent sound identity, as it entitles brands to legally use the sound signature and sound identity across touchpoints and media, thus incorporating it into the brand's overall identity. If used and implemented successfully, consumers should be able to recognise the brand from the audio identity and sound alone. This relates to Lindstrøm's "Smash-Your-Brand idea", as it emphasises the importance of creating significant and unique sound elements that stand out, functioning as an equally important brand element as a visual logo, colour or font (Lindstrøm, 2010).

However, using sound alone is not necessarily the ideal way of building brand personality. According to research from Charles Spence, using sound that is congruent with visual communication can increase the power more than 1000 percent, and decrease it by 86 percent if used incongruently (Spence: in Treasure, 2007). As such, sound can help change the impact of visual communication on an incredibly large scale.

Apart from these strengths, one of the big strenghths of audio branding, is simply that it is very hard to ignore. As a consumer, you are able to close your eyes, and thus ignore visual billboards, television commercials and digital banner adverts, however, it is extremely hard to close your ears (Rode, 2020). Moreover, Rode suggests that graphic logos demand attention and eyesight, which is argued to be threatned by the speedy evolution of smartphones and tablets. These devices have small screens, and

users are often occupied when watching content on them, which means there is a lack of focus. This is why sound becomes even more important. As mentioned before, sound can not be blocked from the hearing or tactile sense as easy as vision, resulting in easier access to the potential customer" (Rode, 2020, p. 86).

Even though audio is difficult to ignore, Lindstrøm (2010) points out that there is an important difference between hearing and listening and being concious of this is critical to fully understand its branding potential. Lindstrøm (2010) stipulates that hearing is passive and listening is active, and both should be targeted in branding, as each of them hold importance influence in purchase behaviour. In short, "hearing involves receiving auditory information through the ears, while listening relies on the capacity to filter, selectively focus, remember and respond to sound" (Lindstrøm, 2010). This relates to Kahneman's (2011) system 1 and its ability to help filter information, as well as Heath's (2012) low processing pathway, which indicates that auditory information can help direct focus, increase memory availabilty and change behavioural patterns.

As mentioned, sonic logos are one of the major genres within audio branding, and are described as the auditory equivalent of a brand's visual logo, typically a sound of limited duration with music characteristics (Jackson & Fulberg, 2003). Therefore, the sonic logo can be a big part of establishing an auditory identity. Graakjær and Jantzen describe it as "An important tool in creating such corporate sounds is the sound logo, i.e. a distinctive, short melody that serves to generate an identity in a company's various interactions with its various publics. Just like visual logos these short sonic sequences help to distinguish the company from possible competitors in the mind of the consumer" (Graakjær & Jantzen, 2009, p. 255).

Jackson and Fulberg (2003) define, a sonic logo as a short and simple piece of music in three to six notes, such as the legendary Intel Inside sound. However, there are multiple examples of successful sonic logos that are longer than that, such as the McDonald's, which points to show that – like with visual content – brand assets need to be distinctive to that specific brand and reflect the brand's personality rather than following written rules on creative advertising.

4.4.4. Linking Sound and Brand

In advertising a visual brand asset, such as a logo, is often used in combination with a brand name or headline that consumers read and derive meaning from based on the different elements presented. They process the brand in association with the headline and create meaning and perception based on

this (Jackson & Fulberg, 2003). Studies have suggested that auditory images are processed the same way (Hung, 2010), further underlining the importance of using sound to create meaning and strengthen brand perception.

Creating and choosing the optimal sound or piece of music to best align with a brand's identity is not a simple procedure, and requires careful consideration. Groves (2009) suggests that effective sonic logos need to meet certain requirement in order to be successful. However, it is argued that these characteristics apply to all types of auditive brand elements. According to Groves (2009), an effective corporate sonic logo must include memorability, distinctiveness, flexibility, conciseness and brand fit. Memorability is a crucial quality of a good sonic logo and is strongly dependent on the sound designer's ability to create a suitable and distinguished sound. Memorability relates to the recognition and recall, which is important as is helps quickly evoke associations in consumers' minds (Groves, 2009).

Distinctiveness is an important factor in creating memorable associations and create positive brand perceptions. An auditive brand element needs to be distinctive in order to be correctly recognised and identified by the consumer to avoid confusion. Hence, it is important to find an unmistakable sound characteristic by analysing the market sector and investigate how competitors deal with sound (Groves, 2009; Baker, Trahan, & Müllenseifen, 2016).

Flexibility in sonic elements especially refers to two important factors; musical and technical flexibility. Musical flexibility means that the auditive element is able to be combined with different contexts and emotional situations in advertising. This can be done by recording it with different styles or instrumentations. Technical flexibility refers to the sound element's ability to be perceived across different platforms, such as phone, computer speaker or television, without impairments (Groves, 2009).

A good sonic logo needs to be concise, i.e. short, with tone combinations usually lasting a few seconds. As they are often combined with visual logos or other graphic elements, they need to be able to fit these circumstances. According to Groves (2009), a good sound takes less than two seconds to communicate a brand message. Hence, conciseness is important in all audio branding situations, as you only have a few seconds to catch the consumer's attention.

The last characteristic refers to brand fit, which means the sonic element's representation of the brand. A sonic asset should reflect the brand's values and communicate its attributes and personality on the acoustic level (Groves, 2009), but also add to the overall identity of the brand. It should, thus, be

congruent with the rest of the corporate branding communication and provide additional information to the consumer, enabling stronger memorial associations to grow.

Linking a sound and a brand can be explained through the spreading-activation theory (Collins & Loftus, 1975), which outlines the networks of associations, which are stored in consumers' minds, and how it is retrieved when a person is exposed to stimuli. An association can be represented by a variety of things, such as feelings (Spence & Gallace, 2011), brands and prodcuts (Krishnan H. , 1996). Sound and music contain a set of attributes that, according to Schubert (1996), are semanticlly linked to the brand through conditioned associations. The hierachy in a sound element forms a semantic representation of different musical nodes that stimulate a consumer's mind and help explain meaning.

Just as sounds and music hold associations, so do brands (Keller, 1993). As mentioned, brands are bulid on a number of attributes and associations, which help categorise them and create meaning for the consumer. These associations are established by repeated and coherent exposure (Sharp, 2010), and carried out in distinctive brand assets that carry phonemic and semantic similarities to outline the values and identity of a brand.

The aim of an effective audio identity is to create a sonic object or piece of music, which is distinctly recognisable and congruent with the emotional core values of the brand as well as its target audience's perception of this. According to Müllensiefen and Baker (2015), this can be done by systematically considering three components of an audio identity: the positive and emotional values of a brand, the properties of sound or music, and the target audience.

The first part deals with the positive and emotional values of a brand, as thus aims to establish the core values. Most marketing managers should have an accurate idea of what this is, who their target audience is and thus who they are tailoring the brand assets to. Additionally, brand managers have an exact overview of the brand's profile, personality and distinctive characteristisc, and should include an understanding of how the brand is percieved by its target audience, indicating a need to consider the consumers' role in the creation of audio identities (Müllensiefen & Baker, 2015). These should give a good idea about the human attributes that a brand carries, i.e. the brand personality (Aaker, 1997). The last component refers to actually choosing sound or music content. This part can be tricky, as it is very common to experience open disagreements and flawed communication when selecting and evaluating music, as it is such a subjective matter. Therefore, introducing a sound expert is a

good idea to help facilitate a suitable discussion (Müllensiefen & Baker, 2015). The frameworks provides a useful overview of the main components to consider when creating an auditive identity and gives a simple and managable tool to help execute the proces. However, the tool is also argued to be too simple, as it does not take into account the different aspects of each of the steps. Moreover, it does not elaborate on how the music or sound content is best chosen, and therefore, relies heavily on the individual to chose the sound, providing no additional guidelines on how to best utilise sound and brand fit.
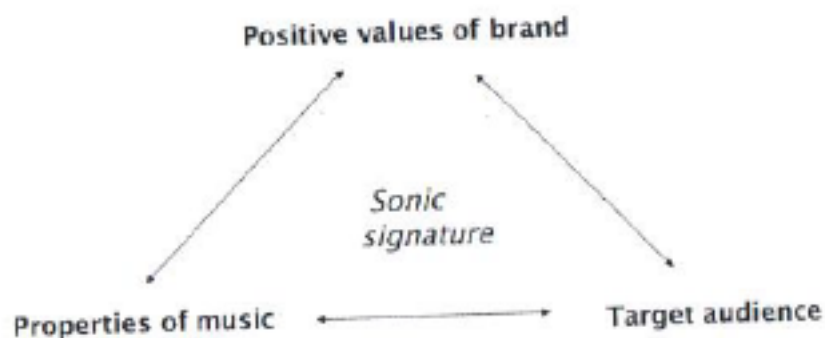

Figure 2. Sonic Signature

Figure 2: Sonic Sinature Müllensiefen and Baker, 2015

Finding and producing a sound that fits the brand is a complex process, as it can be difficult to define what constitues fit. According to MacInnis and Park (1991), fit refers to the way in which music and sound corresponds with consumers' subjective perception of the attributes relevance or approriateness to the advertising message. They specifically focus on emotion-laden experiences and how these fit with both high- and low-involvement products. Their study suggest that musical fit has an impact on consumers' positive emotions and brand perception (MacInnis & Park, 1991). In relation to this, North et al. (2004) suggest that the fit of music and voice effects consumers' response to adverts. Their study suggests that "both musical and voice fit can prime certain aspects of the listener's knowledge and also increase liking for ads, so much that it might improve knowledge-based and affective responses to advertising" (North, Mackenzie, Law, & Hargraves, 2006, p. 1675).

The fit between brand and brand attributes has also been investigated by Diamantopoulos et al. (2005) in relation to brand personality dimensions (Aaker, 1997). The study suggests that creating a suitable fit between a brand extension, i.e. a brand asset such as sound, and the brand, implies that the

extension is perceived to be consistent with the brand personality (Diamantopoulos, Smith, & Grime, 2005). Managing a good fit, results in an increase in positive perception, hence a poor fit will result in a perceived inconsistency between the brand and the extension, creating a shift and incoherence in brand personality.

Creating a link between a brand and a sound has proven to be difficult. Nonetheless, if done successfully by carefully considering the how the asset fits with the brand's personality, the effect can be greatly advantageous. As the theories and studies introduced so far indicate, audio branding carries great potential in terms of long-term brand building (Binet & Field, 2013; Heath, 2012), emotional affect (Spence & Gallace, 2011) and positive brand perception (Diamantopoulos, Smith, & Grime, 2005). Considering the rich history of literature and stories pointing out musics positive influence on branding, audio branding seems to still be sparsely used by brand (Rode, 2020). Though it has seen a rise in interest in recent years, many brands neglect the importance of constucting distinctive sound identities that are unique to them, and instead opt for the 'easier' solution of licensing strategy, whereby they 'rent' songs for specific campaigns. "As a result, they are being associated with culture, instead of driving it" (Armstrong, 2019). So why are brands missing out on this opportunity? Below, some of the common implications and challenges associated with producing sound are introduced.

4.5. Challenges in Audio Branding

There are a number of challenges related to the implementation of audio branding, such as a general misconception of standards in regards to; terminology, methodology, deliveries, prices and business techniques (Rode, 2020); a lack of general frameworks to systemise selection of sounds (Baker, Trahan, & Müllenseifen, 2016); and an overall lack of tools to facilitate constructive communication to choose the right sound (Carron, Bubois, Misdariis, Talotte, & Susini, 2014).

According to Rode, "The advertising business is facing some serious barriers and threats regarding the implementation of corporate sound identity as an accepted approach to corporate branding" (Rode, 2020, p. 96). She argues that the mind-set in the advertising and branding business continues to be highly focused and based on visual communication, and, as such, sound branding agencies are facing problems. Advertising agencies tend to implement music as an entertainment added value rather than an integrated part of the corportate identity. Therefore, it is argued that the existent

literauture is not sufficient in educating about the vitality of auditive design and music or the implementation of it (Rode, 2020).

This is supported by Baker et al. (2016), who suggest that chosing a corporate sound is "rife with opportunities for miscommunication that can lead to frustration". Brand managers are often faced with the task of creating and selecting music that fit the brand profile. Oftentimes, this is left to the creative department of an advertising team to find the right solution for the client based on their needs. However, accurately articulating the request and brand personality can create problems. MacInnis and Park's (1991) concept of brand and music fit is commonly used, however, research still lacks the ability to quantify generalisable metholologies or techniques to demonstrate how to model and accurately classify brand fit. Thus, a practical, psychometric tool has been introduced by Baker et al. (2016) to accurately quantify the perceived distance between brands and musical elements in an emotional space as tool to identify brand-music fit. The tool is based in research on music cognition, music and advertising, as well as input from industy professionals. The aim is to provide an "objective reference point to frame discussions regarding the relationship between music and brand", as well as "serve as a perceptual similarity tool to find similarity between tracks of music that share the same effective categorization bit may not share the same features such as copyright detailing" (Baker, Trahan, & Müllenseifen, 2016, p. 4). By providing a set of factors such as "vibrant", "dark" and "tranquil", that are related to attributes such as "playful", "humerous" and "calm", the researchers were able to rate them through an exploratory factor analysis. The factors and attributes were then rated based on percieved effect on two seperate measures: songs and brand profile.

The tool does provide a quantitative framework to match brand and music, however, as this study has indicated, the point of audio branding is to create distinctive and unique auditive assets, and it is therefore argued that a tool like this is better suited as an initial reference point to frame discussion about brand and sound, and that creating and choosing a unique sound does need a more quantitative approach.

In a study by Carron et al. (2014), the process of designing a sound identity has been investigated to provide new communication tools for building brands and a 'corporate sound'. This study draws on branding theories and theories from the field of musical design, as well as qualitative data from experts in sound design and sound identity. The study uncovers common implications of designing a corporate sound and addresses common communicative issues when designing sound. The study

concludes that there are three main complementary approaches to sound identity and explains major steps of a sound design process. Based on this, the study presents a framework for designing sound identity, and introduces two different design tools. The tools consist of "sounding cards" that offer a didactic way to build a brand audio identity with marketing professionals and acoustic researchers, in order to allow the different stakeholders in the process to have a say, and as such, the cards offer a vocabulary that contain associations from both musical- and marketing concepts. Through this process, the study offers 'ready-to-use' guidelines to help address some of the common communicative issues related to reaching a consensus when producing a sound identity. In relation to this, the study identified that describing sounds can be difficult when building a sound identity, and it thus explored the way of describing sounds in order to build a sound vocabulary using scientific methods. This helps categorise sound descriptors and can thus help explicitly communicate the information provided by specific sounds and how to use these within a corporate audio branding setting.

The study provides a deeper insight into the process of developing a strong corporate sound and the resulting communicative implications that come with this when marketers and sound designers need to reach consensus. The study, therefore, raises an interesting question regarding the corporate process of developing an audio identity, and as such, does not dwell on the effect and consumer perspective such as many branding studies. Tt thereby helps shed light on the debate of why more companies do not invest in unique sound identities, when sound has long been known to create brand recall and emotional reactions (Sheridan, 2020; Sharp, 2010; Romaniuk, 2018; and Lindstrøm, 2010).

The theory discussed in this chapter provides a literary overview of audio branding, based on a variety of different theoretical disciplines. The chapter contains a presentation on a number of theories regarding branding, human cognition and its effect on consumer behaviour and audio branding in order to analyse the different aspects involved in the definition, strenghts and weaknesses as well as the use of audio branding. The section underlines the complexity of the phenomenon, audio branding, and provides a deeper insight into the understanding and the practice of creating an audio branding identity. It is argued that understanding sonic branding is rooted in an understanding of branding as a practice, as branding generally relies the process of distingusihing products and services from other, making it easily recognisable for consumers (Kotler, 1991). Thus, building strong brands is about increasing recognition and establishing memorial networks of associations and experiences through

consistent and congruent brand assets, creating brand recall for consumers (Sharp, 2010). In the cluttered and competitive advertising landscape today, brands need to work strategically on creating distinctive brand assets that can trigger human cognition, affect and behavioural responses in order to build a strong brand and increase brand equity. The chapter argues that music and audio has the ability to do just that (Rode, 2020). According to Keller's (2013) Customer Based Brand Equity model, a brand must shape how consumers think and feel about its product or service, this building brand experiences that resonate positviely with the consumer. It is, therefore, essential that a brand works strategically on communicating its identity, meaning and personality in order to expect brand response and resonance. By having a clear understanding of the brand, it is possible for brands to work strategically with audio branding. The chapter suggests that audio branding is a strong medium to create brand response and brand resonance, as the heuristic cues of music effects the human cognition and decision-making process more than other explicit marketing stimuli (Müllensiefen & Baker, 2015; Kahneman, 2011; Heath, 2012; Damasio, 1994). Consequently, the literature underlines the strenghts of audio in branding, indicating the possible benefits of using it as an integrated part of an organsation's brand guidelines. The aim of an effective audio identity is to create a sonic object or piece or music, which is distinctive, unique and easily recognisable and in line with the emotional core of the brand and its target audience, and a piece of music should thus be created and selected based on this (Diamantopoulos, Smith, & Grime, 2005; Jackson & Fulberg, 2003) (Müllensiefen & Baker, 2015; MacInnis & Park, 1991). Also, the theoretical analysis has touched upon some of the challenges related to implementing an audio brand strategy, such as a lack of tools to facilitate constructive communication to choose the right sound, as well as the difficulties relating to expressing a visual brand through sonic elements.

5. Empirical Analysis

This chapter will contain a structural examination of the researchers' findings, coupled with an analysis and discussion that will take its departure from the sub-question presented previously.

First, audio branding will be defined with a focus on the benefits of applying the phenomenon strategically. Secondly, a discussion and analysis of how companies can create an audio brand identity will be discussed. Finally, this paper will explore the challenges organisations are faced with when creating and implementing audio branding. Furthermore, this chapter will be based on the four respondents' experiences and opinions on audio branding, and, as such, must be viewed through the lens of their social context and interpretation of this. This will be supported by the theoretical findings.

5.1.   The Complexity of Audio Branding

The complexity of audio branding is argued to be related to the complexity of the act of defining the phenomenon. Although a multitude of studies have been undertaken to explore audio branding, a universal definition of the phenomenon has not yet been agreed upon. The different kinds of definitions are endless. Nonetheless, audio branding is often defined as a structured process, where acoustic elements are incorporated into a brand and its brand identity (Jackson & Fulberg, 2003), or as the systematic establishment of a business' entire audio language for its brand based on its essence, vision, values promise, and personality (Minsky & Fahey, 2014; Rode, 2020).

In order to develop a more in depth understanding of audio branding, with which to enrich the discussion of the definition, it will be relevant to supplement the discussion with universal branding theories, as audio branding contains a number of the same elements, such as visual branding (Interview 4, 2020). As outlined in the theoretical analysis, there are several definitions on branding. Kotler (1991) expresses a brand as the sum of tangible and intangible attributes, but the phenomenon has also been described as the business activities for any business in order to "…distinguishing products from each other in order for the consumer to easily choose her favourite product" (Jayakamur & Ali, 2015). Jayakamur and Ali (2015) further state that a product can distinguish from other products in several manners. This supports Mouritzen's arguments, who defines branding as any activity a business is performing. When defining branding, Mouritzen additionally suggests that, when branding a business, the main purpose is to place the brand in that part of the brain that triggers a consumer journey by being placed 'top-of-mind'. Mouritzen emphasises, that it is not possible for

any business not to practise branding. Even if a business is not actively utilising any strategic branding practises, these should still be considered a branding strategy (Interview 2, 2020).

Moreover, researchers and experts within this field disagree on the aim of branding, as well as the methods of implementation of strategies to strengthen brand image. Some argue that, for organisations, creating a high level of brand recognition is the ultimate goal (Sharp, 2010; Interview 2, 2020), while others claim, that ensuring consumer's perception towards the attributes of its own brand is positive should be the definitive objective (Keller, 2013). Mouritzen contributes to the debate by stating that an organisation's brand should be adapted to a specific target groups, and that the delivery of the brand, its message and image should be presented in a unique and remarkable way. Moreover, he believes that the purpose of branding is "…to build empires in the minds of consumers…" by focusing on the following three steps:

1. Consumers must be aware of your existence.
2. Consumers must be familiar with what you are selling.
3. Differentiate from the competitors (Mouritzen, Interview 2, 2020).

Whilst many researchers agree that having a strong brand can led to advantages for an organisation (Keller, 2013; Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman, & Hansen, 2012; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003), there are, however, varying opinions on how to quantify and detail the exact advantages provided. Some argue that utilising a strong branding strategy leads to a higher level of customer loyalty (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman, & Hansen, 2012). To support this belief, Mouritzen argues that organisations that have a stronger brand attain the ability to build an empire within the consumers mind, increasing their preference and brand loyalty towards the organisation (Interview 2, 2020).

Due to a recent decline in both the number of consumers actively utilising traditional mass media, such as: television and radio, as well as those engaging with brands through this medium, organisations have been forced to challenge their historical operating processes in regards to these (Interview 3,2020). Additionally, Schwartz mentions that radio is the slowest dying media, in terms of users (Interview 1, 2020). Hence, audio branding has gained importance because organisations thereby have the opportunity to create brand recall in a less intrusive manner (Interview 1, 2020; Interview 2, 2020). This has resulted in a debate between researchers as to how to most accurately

define audio branding, a similar occurrence also emerged when experts attempted to classify and define the traditional methods of branding.

5.1.1. Defining Audio Branding

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, audio branding can be defined as the systematic creation of an audio brand language based on values, personality and identity of the brand (Minsky & Fahey, 2014). Domnick stipulates that, "Audio branding basically means every single sound a company makes that can be heard, wherever that is" (Interview 4, 2020). This definition is reinforced by Schwartz, who also interprets audio branding from a wide perspective, travelling beyond merely considering just music and sonic logos. He suggests that audio branding "is not just about the music, but about the whole tone of voice of a brand. When it's best, it's done across all platforms, from physical stores to all the media that the brand found in. Including the pure sound medium" (Interview 1, 2020).

Utilising sound as a medium across multiple platforms, enables a coherent brand building across all touch points, allowing consumers to fully understand the identity and personality of the brand through concrete and continuous stimuli (Sharp, 2010). Domnick argues that, audio branding consists of more than just having a sonic logo, although this is a good place to start (Interview 4, 2020). He stipulates that audio branding should be considered as an option in every situation where the brand is able to be heard. Audio branding considers "every single sound you hear that a business makes", and its strength derives from its ability to transcend "from all your advertisement to your retail spaces to your products, whether they are physical products or digital products" (Interview 4, 2020). As such, audio branding encapsulates more than exclusively music and sonic logos; consisting also of jingles, soundscapes for retail stores, speech guidelines, podcasts, product sounds, the tunes used on the telephone line during the call holding process, as well a wide multitude of alternative usages. Domnick highlights that "the more touch points you have, where the ears are involved in some way, the more opportunities you have to create and take your brand to the customer's brain" (Interview 4, 2020). In relation to this, it is argued that audio branding corresponds to the overall goal of branding and brand building, which focuses around the creation of memorable positive associations in the consumers' brains, resulting in the recall of the brand in the top-of-mind during the moment of purchase (Sharp, 2010; Romaniuk & Sharp, 2015). Creating a brand strategy that enhances a positive perception in the consumers' minds is critical, and, as suggested by Byron Sharp (2010), serves to create distinctive memory structures in order to become the brand of choice.

Additionally, audio branding can facilitate the efficient communication of a brand's meaning and what the brand stands for. These characteristics lay the foundations for how consumers experience and categorise a brand product or service (Aaker, 1997). This is congruent with sound technician, Bjørn Vidø's definition of the phenomenon. Vidø argues that sound branding's fundamental principal is concerned with "translating a company's profile in sound. That's it" (Interview 3, 2020). Additionally, Vidø asserts that sound consequently offers the ability to guide us and offer suggestibility to consumers as to where to focus, when presented with a particular image or sound, "it can just pin-point where you're supposed to look" within a picture and commercial. Hence, audio becomes the glue or "the poly-filler that lies between the picture and a voice-over and creates one cohesive expression" (Interview 3, 2020). Creating sound that is able to acutely express one specific brand's profile poses challenges, however, for Vidø, "audio branding is essentially all the things that are written down, from how the voice over should sound, to how you address it" (Interview 3, 2020).

The above-mentioned points supplement the discussion to best clarify audio branding, conforming with the common definition of its utilisation primarily through music, jingles and sonic logos. However, as Domnick points out, "people are slowly beginning to hear and know about audio branding; what it means, although for many it's still just a sonic logo or just a piece of music in their commercial" (Interview 4, 2020). This indicates, that even though there is still confusion regarding the definition of audio branding, it is starting to garner interest across both the marketing and branding sectors, suggesting a growing demand for clearer definitions and guidelines in terms of understanding, utilisation and the beneficial application of sound. In addition, it suggests that there are many myths and conflicts associated with the phenomenon, creating confusion and challenges within the industry.

Although the three definitions above all hold some similarities, it is evident that even people within the industry today have different nuances to their definition based on their specific background. It is evident from the difference in definitions that the interviewees' professional backgrounds greatly influence how they interpret audio branding, and consequently, how they define it. For instance, Rune Schwartz, whose expertise stem from an extensive background within radio, and is currently working at a media agency, whose primary focus is radio- and podcast advertising, centres his interpretation of audio branding upon his relevant industry experiences. In the interview, Schwartz mainly used examples from his own work, and they were thus used in relation to the radio and podcast mediums.

However, he does acknowledge that audio branding contains far more than just these mediums, pointing out that it is about the whole tone of voice rather than just music and sonic logos (Interview 1, 2020). Similarly, the interview with Bjørn Vidø was highly influenced by his work as a sound technician, and his definition of audio branding was therefore used in relation to the actual tones and rhythm of sound in branding. It is, however, also obvious that Vidø has undergone an MBA, and his academic understanding of branding is therefore evident. He explains the importance of establishing sonic guidelines, which are suitable for both tactic- and branding campaigns and that the visual and auditory element must fit together (Interview 3, 2020).

Domnick's definition is very broad, interpreting audio branding from a perspective that includes every single sound used in branding. He looks at sound as an element, and interprets audio branding just as he does any other type of branding. His job is highly influenced by client communication, and, as such, he has developed a vocabulary to explain and communicate audio branding in a way, which is simple, and that allows people to view auditive elements as an equally important tool in branding as visual elements. He argues that for him, audio branding is "pretty much exactly the same as visual branding. I mean because, we are very consistent with our visual branding, I mean every company has their logos, their fonts, their colours, their kind of image, the style of images they are using, and audio branding is exactly the same. We just have to adapt to the idea that instead of using only visual elements, you should be using audio elements as well" (Interview 4, 2020).

As indicated above, the understanding of audio branding can be highly complex. Even though it has seen an increase in interest and understanding from brands in recent years, there is still some confusion surrounding what clearly defines the phenomenon. According to the four interviewees, audio branding draws on many of the same elements that the classic branding theories imply. It is concerned with expressing a brand's identity and core values to consumers, through the usage of distinctive, branded stimuli with the purpose to create a response in favour of that specific brand. Using auditive elements is one of these types of stimuli. According to the interviewees, audio goes beyond music and sonic logos, instead encapsulating a wide variety of sounds (Interview 1, 2020; Interview 2, 2020, Interview 3, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). It is similarly evident, that interpretations of audio branding differ according to professional and social setting. Even though there are certain differences in the interpretation of audio branding, it is apparent that all respondents realise great potential in using sound, and the numerous advantages to using it in terms of creating differentiation, emotional responses and build strong brands, if done correctly.

Audio branding can serve different purposes, and there are divergent opinions on what these functions should be for the organisations which utilise it. According to Jackson and Fulberg (2003), the purpose of audio branding concerns the strategic application of sound, which should help organisation establish an auditory identity for its brand. Rode (2020) mentions that sound is the key for any organisation seeking to differentiate from its competitors. Another view on the utilisation of audio branding proposes organisations should strive to create corporate sounds, aligning them across all communication touch points (Rode, 2020). This statement is supported by Mouritzen, who remarks that an organisation can create a stronger brand recall among consumers by applying the same unique brand sound across all its communication platforms (Interview 2, 2020). According to the Ipsos study (Sheridan, 2020), using auditive brand assets creates the strongest brand recall, and is thus a great opportunity for companies to increase their brand equity.

Audio branding is a tool to express a brand's identity through the medium of sound, and, as such, it is the auditory equivalent of utilising visual assets to express values and communicate a message. Jackson and Fulberg (2003) propose, that a sonic logo is the auditory version of a brand's visual logo, and should be used as such. Domnick (Interview 4, 2020) mentions, that audio branding is far more than just creating a sonic logo, instead, it can play a vital role in establishing an auditory identity, proving a great focus point for strategy development. According to Domnick, "the most important thing is just to start somewhere. Even if you just have a sonic logo. If you just go with a sonic logo, that's a great start, because after that you can develop it, you can take it to different channels and different places" (Interview 4, 2020).

5.1.2. Benefits of Audio Branding

Audio branding theory and the empirical findings indicate that an organisation positively benefits by having a strong audio branding in a number of ways. One key advantage of sonic branding is that it offers the organisations an opportunity to differentiate themselves from their competitors; developing and increasing brand recognition among consumers (Wren, 2019; Minsky & Fahey, 2014; Richards, 2019), increasing consumers' brand memories (Venkataraman, 2007), as well as dictating where the consumers focus should be directed when any visual brand advertisement is encountered, such as video advertising and television adverts (Interview 4, 2020).

Modern consumers are exposed to a wide and varied range of advertising stimuli from many different angles. In fact, Domnick mentions that a study from Helsinki from 2017, showed that people are exposed to more than 5000 visual branding cues every day and expresses that "5000 is a lot, I mean, try and stand out from 5000 a day. That's a difficult task" (Interview 4, 2020). It is important to note the correlation between consumer attitudes and exposure. With increased exposure to visual branding cues, irritation towards the advertising sector grows proportionally. As a consequence, the amount of attention paid towards adverts is decreasing (Mindshare Danmark, 2019). As such, it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract, keep and maintain attention from consumers, making it increasingly hard to create successful advertising. According to both theory and the interviewees, music and sound, therefore, offers an ideal opportunity with which to promote advertising goals whilst causing minimal irritation. In fact, Kellaris et al. (1993) suggest that sounds are a great tool to gain, and maintain the attention of the listener, as well as influence and persuade consumers (Meier & Beyer, 2011). The structural components of music make it a powerful retrieval tool providing the ability to help frame and connect words, visual and music in a way that increases memorability (Wallace, 1994). This corresponds to Vidø's point, that music is like the poly-filler between the picture and the message, and that it can help create such strong associations, that people sometimes start humming a song without realising it is an advert (Interview 3, 2020). Music, as a branding tool, has the ability to gently convey a message, without creating the same amount of obvious push advertising (Interview 4, 2020).

Damasio (1994) suggests, that human beings are emotionally influenced by music, through utilising heuristic cues the decision-making processes can be impacted, over time, inducing behavioural changes and brand response. Damasio (1994) stipulates that human decisions are not based on rationale as much as we think, but rather highly influenced by our emotions. Domnick mentions that "You can always ask people how they feel about something, how they like this, but as you might know, the stuff you might say is more or less a lie, because your emotional response could be totally different from what you are actually saying" (Interview 4, 2020). A study, from Mindshare US' NeuroLab from 2019, surveyed participants to establish the reactions and emotions towards adverts they had seen, and whether they preferred visual or auditive messages. According to the study, respondents preferred the same brand story told with just visuals 22% more compared to just audibly. However, their non-conscious neurological responses told a different story. In fact, neurological research showed that their subconscious feelings preferred audible brand stories. Additionally, the

study indicated that audio adverts elicit much stronger emotional responses from consumers as compared to visual ones. Brand stories told just audibly elicited an average of 21% higher emotional intensity than visual messages, with audio messages eliciting an average of 50% more positive emotional peaks as compared to brand stories told through a visual method. Moreover, it was proven that consumers are much more receptive to audio branding, with this style producing a significant increase in positive emotional responses towards brands, as well as creating a consistent increase in emotional engagement and prompting uniquely positive emotional experiences from auditive call-to-actions (NeuroLab, 2019). This study helps underline the results from cognitive research, such as Damasio's (1994) study on how emotions influence decision-making and brand response, whilst adding to the discussion on the psychological and neurological processes included in human decision making and purchase behaviour. As mentioned in Robert Heath's (2012) model of advertising effectiveness, music and sound stimulate the low processing route to decoding advertising and branding messages. These heuristic cues rely heavily on emotional processing rather than rational, conscious consideration, creating enhanced brand perception and emotional associations. It is argued that this functions as a less intrusive stimulus, resulting in reduced irritation from consumers whilst also increasing consumer attention levels, contributing to long-term brand building. At the same time, it can be argued that Kahneman's (2011) system 1 is triggered as a result of these heuristics, which act to unconsciously help filter and focus one's attention, such as Vidø mentions (Interview 3, 2020).

Creating a unique sound can thus, help increase cognitive, emotional and neurological responses, influencing consumer behaviour without creating the same amount of irritation as other types of advertising has been proven to do (Mindshare Danmark, 2019). Through by-passing the conscious encoding processes, music and audio has the ability to create an ongoing positive emotional response and recall, contributing to the ultimate goal of audio branding, to create associations that are so strong, they instantly trigger recognition and response or a sound that lingers in people's' brains.

5.1.3. The Power of Audio Assets vs. Visual Assets

Now that the advantages for audio branding have been analysed and discussed above, an analysis and discussion of the opportunities the utilisation of purely audio branding provides an organisation, compared with an organisation that applies purely visual branding will take place. Domnick points out, that elements connected to audio branding are more efficient than any visual elements. According to Rode (2020), audio branding can be beneficial to apply, simply because it is hard to ignore the

sense of hearing, but one can close the eyes and thereby ignore visual branding. Rode also draws on the importance of technological evolutions, such as the introduction and widespread usage of smartphones. Thus, Rode (2020) has observed that a shift in the consumers' focus has occurred, resulting in less consideration being given to visual elements, for example, television adverts. Rode advocates, that this shows the importance of sound, because sound cannot be ignored as easily as visual elements can, and audio branding can thus facilitate access to potential customers more easily for organisations. However, Domnick also offers an alternative view on this discussion. He contends that the best way for organisations to do branding, is neither focus solely on audio branding, nor visual branding. Instead, he suggests that branding should incorporate both audio branding, as well as visual branding, simultaneously. Thus, this combination will yield the best results for organisations to maximise exposure to the target consumer base, develop strong connections and expand reach. Domnick expressed that "...I just want to, like, get people to see that once you put those two together, it's not like one plus one, they multiply by each other" (Interview 4, 2020).

Both researchers and marketers have argued on how organisations can most effectively benefit from the development of a strong brand, whether utilising visual or auditory mediums is best. Moreover, it has been suggested that organisations have the capacity to differentiate their branding strategy as compared to the branding strategy the competitors apply (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Rode, 2020). However, Mouritzen argues, that it is limited how much organisations can differentiate its brand strategy from their competitors without losing familiarity, which in turn becomes confusing for consumers (Interview 2, 2020). Mouritzen further proposes, that organisations can differentiate from the competitors within their industry, but that organisations must ensure that the consumers still are aware of what the organisation offerings, as well as promoting which industry its core competencies and competitive advantage lie (Interview 2, 2020). Although Mouritzen mentions that organisations should try to differentiate themselves, he emphasises it is more important for organisations to be recognised by the consumers compared to the importance of differentiation. Mouritzen has experienced that organisations change branding strategy too often by editing their branding elements such as: jingle, visual logo and colours. This actually results in an adverse effect, rather harming the organisation's brand recall. Thus, one of the challenges of doing branding, whether auditory, visual or a combination of both, is the lack of consistency. Kellaris (1993) contributes to the examination on the differences between audio branding and visual branding, stating that sounds can be used to gain and maintain the attention of the consumers. Additionally, Kellaris suggests music can be used

to impact the mood of consumers and to persuade consumers. Julian Treasure (2007) argues that sound and music unconsciously affect humans physiologically, through sound effects, via internal rhythms such as heartbeat and breathing. Therefore, sound can directly influence human feelings, moods and thus their perception of reality. Rode (2020) expands this theory, adding that music is deeply rooted in humans from an evolutionary standpoint. Additionally, Damasio (1994) indicates that a person's ability to make decisions is a complicated process, not grounded in pure reasoning, but rather largely influenced by cognitive aspects, such as how humans purchase and interact with brands and products. Thus, it can be inferred, that emotions and feelings play an important role in how human beings behave. Simultaneously, Levitin (2007) points out that music has become essential for humans. Music offers the ability to function as a universal language, which can be understood equally across differing cultures (Jackson & Fulberg, 2003). In terms of the differences between establishing a high level of brand recall by utilising auditory branding or utilising visual branding, Mouritzen highlights that brand characters and sound are the most useful tools for organisations seeking to achieve a significant brand recognition from consumers (Interview 2, 2020). A recent study by Sheridan (2020), together with Ipsos, found that audio branding assets are more effective compared to some visual branding assets, suggesting that organisations can improve their brand attention over time, by incorporating audio elements into their branding strategy.

In Summary, there are multiple definitions of audio branding. One overall theme is, however, that audio branding can be understood as, simply every single sound a company makes that can be heard. The section has also touched upon the advantages a strong audio brand identity can provide for organisations, with the most important allowing for companies to differentiate from its competitors, increase their brand recall, and facilitate it to become 'top-of mind' among consumers. Likewise, it has been analysed how many of the elements that exist when doing visual branding are also applicable when creating an audio branding identity.

5.2.   Creating an Audio Branding Identity

After highlighting several definitions of audio branding, as well as analysing the opportunities it may offer businesses, and a discussion on the difference to visual branding, this section will present an analysis and discussion on how businesses can create an audio branding identity.

For an organisation to apply music within a marketing strategy, does not fundamentally mean sound branding is being utilized (Rode, 2020). Instead, Rode (2020) argues how sound branding should be

approached in a strategic manner, through implementing audio in its communication. Ideally, this should be expressed in a signature sound or music, employed repeatedly and strategically across marketing channels, to augment the overall corporate identity (Rode, 2020).

Schwartz advocates, that an organisation's branding strategy, whether it is visual or auditory, should be based on the organisation's strategic goals, while also considering which perceptions the organisation wants to change (Interview 1, 2020). Mouritzen concurs with this view, underlining the importance of creating branding strategies based on the consumers' needs and perceptions (Interview 2, 2020). In other words, organisations should aim to establish a link between the visual brand, and the auditory brand. Although this has been proven difficult, if applied correctly, employing carefully considering as to how the asset fits with the brand's personality, the effect can be very advantageous. Schwartz mentions, that audio branding, provides the opportunity for organisations to engage with consumers through new channels, such as podcasts, expanding the possibilities to uniquely interact with consumers (Interview 1, 2020). As creating an audio brand identity is a challenging task, a number of varying approaches regarding how to approach it exists. Domnick states, that for an organisation to create an audio brand identity, "sometimes you just have to dig in and see what comes out" (Interview 4, 2020). In order for Domnick to support his statement, he compared his opinion with the following quote by Julian Treasure: " Sound is a bit like a bowl of spaghetti – sometimes you just have to dig in and see what comes out".

In relation to how an organisation can apply auditory elements cohesively, Domnick argues that there is no 'holy grail', and no one right way. Instead, suggesting that each organisation should utilise an approach that fits their corporate identity and image, as well as their circumstances because "...there is no one right way to do it" (Interview 4, 2020). Also, organisations should consider where to utilise audio branding. It should only occur, where consumers find it meaningful, perceive it as a occurring naturally and expects auditive elements to happen (Rode, 2020).

According to Mouritzen, there are two approaches for organisations to utilise in order to create a brand identity. Firstly, where an organisation has data on the industry: competitors, consumers, and the marketplace situation already. Secondly, where the organisation is not in possession of the aforementioned data (Interview 2, 2020). Hence, there are a variety of approaches when working with audio branding. In the following paragraphs this will be investigated further, and will thus contain an

analysis and discussion on how organisations can establish an audio branding identity based on the respondents' experiences.

Moreover, this discussion will only be based on the presented theory and the collected empirical findings. Although people are slowly beginning to pay more attention towards the importance of having an audio branding identity, instead of merely perceiving it the phenomenon of the applied music in their commercials (Interview 4, 2020), it is evident, that there are extensive opportunities for organisations to consider improvements regarding their future.

For some organisations, it can be a challenge to create an audio branding identity, as some perceive the task as something completely different than visual branding. When reflecting on the differences and similarities when formulating a visual branding strategy, Domnick mentions: "Well, for me it's pretty much exactly the same as visual branding. I mean because, we are very consistent with our visual branding, I mean every company has their logos, their fonts, their colours, their kind of image, the style of images they are using, and audio branding is exactly the same. We just have to adapt to the idea that instead of using only visual elements, you should be using audio elements as well…" (Interview 4, 2020).

5.2.1. The Process of Audio Branding

As the respondents emphasise in the conducted interviews, there are multiple ways for an organisation to create an audio branding identity, although the approach differs from organisation to organisation, based on their current situation (Interview 1, 2020; Interview 2, 2020; Interview 3, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). Based on his experiences, Mouritzen suggests that, in some of the scenarios where organisations are able to establish an audio branding identity, they do not have access to data on the: marked situation, such as the movements in the market, the current trends or the perceived direction of the market; their competitors; and the consumers, resulting in a situation where the audio branding identity formulated, is based on hypotheses and assumptions on how the brand's market situation may look like (Interview 2, 2020). Mouritzen, however, also infers that an organisation can actually form an advantageous audio branding identity, in terms of increased brand recall and positive brand perception, when they are not in position of the data, as long as those responsible for the establishment have sufficient knowledge regarding their own organisation and industry (Interview 2, 2020). It is, nonetheless, preferable to have the aforementioned data in advance prior to the creation of an audio branding identity.

In order to gain access to this data, an organisation should conduct an analysis of the current market situation, providing the business with important knowledge on the consumers, i.e. consumer perception, market movements and current market trends. Likewise, it is beneficial for the organisation at this stage, to conduct a study of its competitors, which can be accessed by analysing the competitors to figure out what their strengths and weaknesses are, contributing to the development of a more accurate measure of the competitive playing field (Estay, 2020). However, any organisations should consider the effort it will put into this process, as it can be a costly and time-consuming process (Interview 2, 2020).

There are multiple opinions on how organisation should structure the process when creating an audio branding identity, regarding which elements to include, and how to adequately use it when it is initially launched. Domnick argues, that these considerations vary between organisations, and that there as such is no right manner with which to approach the subject (Interview 4, 2020). However, he acknowledged that it is important for any organisation simply just to start somewhere, even if it is on a smaller scale, for instance by implementing sonic logo. Thus, the sonic logo is important for organisations to develop, because it facilitates it for them to be distinctive (Graakjær & Jantzen, 2009). Moreover, it can be beneficial to combine the sonic logo, with a brand name or slogan that consumers create meaning from. They process the brand in association with the sonic logo and slogan, thereby creating meaning and perception based on this (Jackson & Fulberg, 2003)

According to Domnick, starting at a smaller scale can be a prudent way to approach the process of developing an audio branding strategy, as it allows an organisation to further develop this at later stages. Providing an organisation has initiated its process of creating an audio branding identity, it is moving in the right direction (Interview 4, 2020). Also, sonic logos have the ability to function as the equivalent to a visual logo, although through sound (Rode, 2020). As pointed out previously, auditive elements can impact human beings both physiological and psychological state of mind (Treasure, 2007). This is in alignment with Vidø, who suggests that sound has multiple functions. It can be used to emphasise where the consumers' focus should be attracted to visually, when auditive elements are included in connection with the visual. Likewise, Vidø supports the theory that validate the usage of audio branding to: Create a specific atmosphere, convey desired emotions to consumers or to entertain and maintain consumers attention (Interview 3, 2020; Müllensiefen & Baker, 2015). Therefore, organisations must determine the purpose of the brand and its values prior to establishing an audio

identity in order to implement an audio branding strategy (Interview 1, 2020). Hence, Vidø thoughts regarding sound functionality, becomes relevant when including Damasio (1994) and Kahneman's (2011) work on how human beings' behaviour are not grounded in rational, and that consumers are not able to divorce our emotions from our decision-making. Thus, organisations can consider the emotions their auditive elements are constructing in the consumer's mind when formulating its auditive elements.

Domnick, however, warns that "...there is really not one wrong way to use audio branding. But obviously, it would be wrong to create sounds for a business that doesn't fit the brand" (Interview 4, 2020). This is in line with Mouritzen and Schwartz, who mention that an organisation's audio branding should concur with its visual branding strategy (Interview 1, 2020; Interview 2, 2020). Vidø states, that the process of establishing an audio branding identity can occur through different approaches. However, Vidø does not believe that there exist any rules for organisations seeking to formulate an audio branding identity, contradicting with the mentioning on how an audio branding identity should fit an organisation's visual branding identity (Interview, 1, 2020; Interview 2, 2020; Interview 3, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). The aforementioned considerations on the importance to creating an audio brand identity, while still having in mind the organisation's visual brand corresponds with Groves' (2009) theory, which points out how the auditory elements should be aligned with an organisation's visual brand.

As mentioned earlier, the aspect of memorability, relating to recognition and recall, as well as the aspect of flexibility, denoting that the auditive element should be able to combine with different contexts and emotional situations in advertising, should also be considered when aiming to create an audio branding identity (Groves, 2009). The element of memorability is addressed by Mouritzen and Schwartz, who state that it is crucial for brands that their audio brand is easily recognised by consumers (Interview 1, 2020; Interview 2, 2020). They further argue how an organisation can achieve a high level of memorability through consistency, such as by not changing the elements of an audio identity with regularity, and through differentiation (Interview, 2020 ; Interview 2, 2020). This is also in line with Lindstrøm (2010), who asserts that repetition has been one of the most prominent techniques used in branding and advertising, because it can be used to: create cognitive knowledge, stimulate memory and change consumer behaviour. Vidø touched upon the element of flexibility, emphasising the importance of creating auditive elements which organisations are able to make small instrumental changes to, whilst still maintaining the 'same piece of sound' (Interview 3,

2020). This can be through establishing a jingle, which often is played along with lyrics. A jingle functions as a facilitator for organisations to convey a slogan, simultaneously acting as a mnemonic for the slogan (Meier & Beyer, 2011). In organisations, this can be achieved by creating a catchy jingle that consumers can recall and if done correctly, consumers will hum the jingle unconsciously (Interview 2, 2020 ; Interview 4, 2020).

Moreover Groves (2009) has highlighted the importance of being conscious when establishing a sonic logo because it often is combined with visual elements. Thus, it needs to be short and, Groves (2009) argues that a good sound takes less than two seconds to communicate a brand message. This is supported by Vidø, who affirms that a good sonic logo should be able to be recognised when delivered in different variations, without losing its essential message. Moreover, Vidø elaborates on this, explaining that an organisation's sonic logo sometimes just consists of three or four tones, which is in line with the theory that a sonic logo should be short as well as including a simple piece of music (Jackson, 2003; Interview 3, 2020).

Multiple theorists touch upon the importance for an organisation to distinguish its audio branding from its competitors. It is argued, this will lead to a stronger brand recall among the consumers. Mouritzen, agrees on the importance of being distinctive, but stipulates that an organisation cannot differentiate too widely from the criteria that are attached to any given industry, without losing the element of familiarity which will increase the consumers confusing to the organisation (Interview 2, 2020).

5.2.2. Creating a Sonic Signature

Creating a sonic signature can be difficult and as indicated, it can be done in various different ways, however, Müllensiefen and Baker (2015) suggest that the goal of an effective audio identity is to create sonic elements or music, which is: recognisable, memorable and congruent with the brand's emotional core values and its target audience. As such, these three components become undeniably interrelated, and it is therefore important to consider all three aspects when creating a sonic signature. The Müllensiefen and Baker (2015) framework provides a tool to systematically consider all three components. The triangular framework consists of: The positive values of the brand, the properties of the music or sound and the target audience. Using this framework can be a useful tool when creating an audio identity, as it systematises and helps give an overview of how to approach the work.

According to Vidø, there are no set rules in terms of creating a sound. Therefore, the procedure varies depending on the client and the task, however, the main objective remains to express the brand's image and "to figure out the soul and the backbone of the brand" (Interview 3, 2020). This requires insight into the business and the target audience. As suggested by Müllensiefen and Baker's (2015) framework, these are two important factors to consider when creating a sonic signature. According to Vidø, this can be achieved through different processes, such as conducting consumer surveys to attain a deeper insight into the target audience and their values and opinions on the brand. Analysing consumers' opinions and perceptions on a given brand, provides the brand a deeper understanding of not only how they are perceived, but also whether these consumer perceptions and opinions correspond to the way in which the brand views itself. Additionally, it provides insight into the values and preferences of the target audience, making it easier to adjust and create the sound accordingly, as well as spark ideas in terms of what rhythmic or tonal elements to include in the sound (Interview 3, 2020).

As indicated by Mouritzen, a brand needs to adjust according to the target audience (Interview 2, 2020). Therefore, creating a successful branding strategy often involves conducting a market- and situational analysis, as well as a competitor analysis. This will provide a thorough insight into the current market situation and the consumers, such as: "Who are the consumers? Who buys the product? Who does not buy the product? How many rejectors is there in the category? How many light users and how many heavy users and how do these look etc.?" (Interview 2, 2020). A competitor analysis will help provide insight into which other brands occupy the same market segment, highlighting possible strengths and weaknesses, and offering possible opportunities for differentiation of exploitation. These things all contribute to a deeper understanding of the target audience and the brand itself, which can be very valuable when creating any branding strategy, including an audio strategy. However according to Mouritzen, this can be a costly affair that many brands may not be able to afford, but Mourtizen contends that most brands know their brand quite well, and, as such, it can often be enough to provide insights and develop a strategy based on the brand- and marketing managers' knowledge of the brand (Interview 2, 2020). This corresponds to two of the corners in Müllensiefen and Baker's (2015) framework, however, it goes one step further, as it also takes into consideration how competitors play a role. According to Mouritzen, it is important to know how competitors position themselves, as it gives insight into ways of differentiating (Interview 2, 2020).

This is supported by both Domnick and Vidø, who suggest that including the marketing directors and advertising agency assigned to the brand, can provide sufficient insight into the brand to develop a sound identity (Interview 4, 2020; Interview 3, 2020). Domnick suggests that "We include the advertising agency in every project, if a client has one, because that is the only way it is going to work in the future" (Interview 4, 2020). By doing so, brands position themselves in a way where they are able to deliver creative and unique sensory experiences to maintain memory associations. Lindstrøm (2010) states that creating a strong sensory experience of a brand is complex, as it is important that the brand does not lose its identity, and thus misrepresent the brand, confusing the consumer' perception of the brand. Likewise, when an organisation has hired an external company to help them with the creation of the audio branding identity, it can be beneficial to collaborate because it, according to Lindstrøm (2010) increases the probability of the historical memory structures and associations of an organisation that are ensured in the consideration phase. This is important because the more positive synergies brands are able to establish between consumers' senses, the stronger the connection between the organisation and the consumers will likely become (Lindstrøm, 2010).

In regard to designing and creating an audio strategy, many different procedures can be used, however, both Domnick and Vidø suggest that it is crucial to include the brand itself in the process in order to get the best possible outcome. Domnick explains how he works with audio through a six-step process, which although it can be argued may be strongly related to the framework of Müllensiefen and Baker (2015), develops further to ensure a more thorough process.

First, a workshop with the brand is facilitated in order to uncover as much information about the brand as possible, "like the key attributes, the main thing, the most important stuff about the brand, like the core, the essence" (Interview 4, 2020). This is followed by a listening audit, where examples of audio from competitors and the brand itself are evaluated in order to establish a benchmark, and an analysis of "How the industry sounds at the moment, how everyone is using their sound, which helps quite a lot in the future, because then at least we know how not to use sound like the competition" (Interview 4, 2020). It can thus help establish a strategy to differentiate and thereby stand out from competitors. However, according to Mouritzen, it is important to stay true to the brand and the category it is in, avoiding differentiating too much from the market leaders, and competitors within the industry, which can cause the consumer to be confused, making it hard to distinguish what the brand is actually selling, and, as such loose the familiarity associated with a certain product- or service category (Interview 2, 2020).

Having established the brand's core values, identity, brand image, position and analysed competitors, it is time to focus on creating the actual sound (Interview 4, 2020). According to Domnick, this involves a listening committee with the brand itself. Here, different pieces of music and sounds are introduced based on the key attributes that the brand wants to portray. Domnick mentions "we always have like six to ten people from the client side, who are in the listening committee with us, and we ask them about their opinion on each piece of music" (Interview 4, 2020). This provides insight into how the brand sees itself, and how different components represent the brand's different attributes and personality traits. As such, it allows for a thorough understanding of what best represents the brand, making it easier to provide the right representation for the company. According to Domnick, "now we know how the industry sounds, we know about the client's opinion on themselves and how they think they should maybe sound like, and based on this we start to design their own sound" (Interview 2, 2020).

According to Müllensiefen and Baker (2015), the sound, brand values and target audience are interrelated, and important factors to consider when producing a unique sonic signature. Thus, it is argued that the triangular framework is a useful tool to consider when creating an audio strategy. The process mentioned by Domnick holds aspects from all three corners of the framework, underlining the importance of considering the audience, brand values and the components of music, before designing a unique sound. In addition, Mouritzen's arguments about drawing on data and insight on the market, situation and target audience, supports this (Interview 2, 2020). However, even though Müllensiefen and Baker's (2015) framework provides a useful tool, based on the interviewees, it can be argued that, the triangular framework is too simplified, as it does not take into account what all three steps actually consist of. According to Domnick and Mouritzen, brands need to consider aspects such as competitors, the market situation and a detailed overview of their audience (Interview 4, 2020; Interview 2, 2020), indicating that there are many more steps included in creating an audio strategy. Furthermore, it adds to the debate on whether audio branding is so different from creating visual branding. According to Domnick, Vidø and Mouritzen, the core of audio branding is to express a brand's values and identity through branded stimuli (Interview 4, 2020; Interview 3, 2020; Interview 2, 2020), and can thus be argued to be related to priming, as suggested by Müllensiefen and Baker (2015). As such, it is argued that the process of creating an audio strategy is heavily influenced by

traditional branding theories, and draws on the same processes as Keller's (2013) Customer-Based Brand Equity Model.

5.2.3. Finding the Right Fit

Finding a sound that fits the brand's identity can be difficult, and even though Domnick mentions a six-step process made to systemise the work (Interview 4, 2020), Vidø remarks that it can be challenging to come up with a sound that all brand representatives agree on (Interview 3, 2020). According to Meier and Beyer (2011), music is used to influence the mood of consumers through subconscious elements such as rhythm. Sound and music can be categorised and understood from objective properties like structural components, pitch and loudness (Krishnan, Kellaris & Aurand, 2012), which can evoke emotions and memories in people's minds (Wallace, 1994). However, music is also subjective, and can thus hold different properties depending on the listener (Interview 4, 2020). Vidø suggests that creating music for bigger brands can be particularly hard, as all people involved in the brand, such as CEO's and CMO's, have different subjective opinions on what constitutes good music and how this should be used to portray a brand. To avoid this, Vidø argues that it can sometimes be necessary to include all parts in one intense workshop to design music that corresponds with everyone's vision (Interview 3, 2020). This is similar to what Domnick mentions, when he underlines the necessity to include the brand itself to fully integrate the visions, values and identity of the company (Interview 4, 2020).

Both the theory and interviewees indicate that linking a sound to a brand is a difficult task, and as indicated above, there are no wrong or right ways of doing so. Collins and Loftus' (1975) spreading-activation theory, suggest that, sound and music contain a number of attributes that can be semantically linked to the brand through conditioned associations, with each node stimulating consumers' minds differently and helping explain meaning. Through repeated and coherent exposure, these musical attributes will build strong associations related to the brand (Interview 1, 2020; Sharp, 2010). According to Vidø, the main objective of sound branding, is to express a brand's values and core through sound, creating associations strong enough that the listener will not notice that it is an advertising sound (Interview 3, 2020). However, as argued by Domnick, "…you can't ever be one hundred percent sure that this is the right thing to do and this is going to work, but that's why it's so important to test it and try out different things, because we may be surprised more often than you would think with some of the results…" (Interview 4, 2020).

Having a sound design based on data, and thorough consideration of not only the brand's values, target audience and musical attributes, is the best way to generate favourable results (Interview 4, 2020). However, there are different ways of testing the effect of a sound element. Even though audio branding is argued to be considered a more long-term brand building tool (Binet & Field, 2013; Interview 4, 2020), it is still possible to test the more immediate effects, which in turn can be used to build on. Domnick mentions how background music or soundscapes in commercial spaces are easy to test in terms of the effect they have on: Customer satisfaction, dwell time in shopping centres or number of sales in retail stores. "We measure it by doing A/B testing, so for roughly four months, every other day we play the sound that we have designed for them, and on every other day we go back to the circumstances that were there before we designed their sounds", which he argues allows them to, "see on a daily basis, how the sales are going, how customer experience is going" (Interview 4, 2020). As such, it facilitates the documentation for the effect of a piece of sonic branding merely by testing it affects upon consumer behaviour.

According to Schwartz and Domnick, it becomes more difficult to test the efficiency of sound in advertising, as the effect can be influenced by many more factors than just music and sound, such as the visual elements (Interview 1, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). According to Domnick, "… you can't really say if you have a campaign, which is using your sonic logo, that the sonic logo was the reason that this campaign did so well" (Interview 4, 2020). Therefore, it can be necessary to test how the sonic element resonates with consumers within the target audience, by asking their opinion, and investigate if the emotional attributes of the brand correspond correctly with the audience (Interview 1, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). This can help give indications if the musical element fits the brand. Lastly, it is possible to look at neurological responses to a brand sound and establish if it creates emotional responses, however, this can be costly and is not always possible (Interview 4, 2020). Most importantly, Domnick argues that patience is the best weapon, and underlines that audio branding is not a quick fix to create instant return on investment, but rather a tool to help build a strong brand and create strong memorial associations and brand preference among consumers, and that it should be used as such (Interview 4, 2020). This is supported by Mouritzen and Schwartz, who both argue that branding with sound, is, like with visual branding, about creating congruent storytelling and differentiation through strategic use of sound and in turn become top-of-mind (Interview 1, 2020; Interview 2, 2020).

5.2.4. Customer Based Brand Equity

As briefly mentioned, audio branding is strongly related to brand equity, which is a representation of the value of a brand according to consumers' attitude (Keller, 1993). A brand's equity is strongly related to the knowledge, awareness and perception of the brand, which is determined by the association networks created in the minds of consumers based on experience, branding and marketing (Keller, 1993). According to Keller, customer-based brand equity is built on four building blocks, brand identity, brand meaning, brand response and brand resonance (Keller, 2013). Audio branding is about establishing an auditory expression of a brand's identity and meaning (Jackson & Fulberg, 2003; Minsky & Fahey, 2014), and as argued by Vidø "… branding is about translating a profile in sound" (Interview 3, 2020). It is about creating recognition and differentiation by expressing the core emotional values and attributes through sound in a way that corresponds to the target audience's perception of the brand (Müllensiefen & Baker, 2015; MacInnis & Park, 1991). According to Mouritzen, branding is about building empires in people's minds (Interview 2, 2020), hence establishing meaning through carefully considered communication. Therefore, consistency is key in audio branding, in order to build and maintain memorial associations through distinctive brand assets, as argued by Sharp (2010). Working strategically with sound by expressing the identity and build meaning should, according to Keller's (2013) Customer Based Brand Equity model, aim to create association built on the strength, uniqueness and favourability of the brand, and in return, stimulate positive brand response. As mentioned by Domnick, audio branding is a very strong tool to create behavioural changes (Interview 4, 2020), which is supported by both NeuroLab's study and Ipsos, who proved that auditive brand assets are strong tools to create brand recall (NeuroLab, 2019; Sheridan, 2020). Based on this, it can be argued that audio branding is a useful tool to achieve a strong brand and increase brand equity.

In summary, the sections above have touched upon how organisations can create an audio branding identity through several processes. Creating a sonic signature requires thorough considerations regarding the brand, the target audience and the match of music (Interview 3, 2020; Interview 4, 2020; Interview 1, 2020; Müllensiefen & Baker, 2015). According to Müllensiefen and Baker (2015), these three steps are the foundations for creating an audio identity, and correspond to the process explained by the respondents. Even though the framework is considered simplistic, it holds many of the same aspects to the establishment of audio guidelines as those suggested by Vidø, Mouritzen and

Domnick (Interview 3, 2020; Interview 2, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). Establishing an audio identity requires careful consideration and insight into the brand's values, visions and personality, as well as analysis on the marketplace and competitors, in order to achieve sufficient data to build the identity on. Additionally, incorporating analysis of the target audience and adjusting the audio to their beliefs and perception, is argued to be an important part, as audio branding is a useful tool to strengthen memorial associations and become top-of mind among consumers, and, should as such, be included in the process of developing an audio identity (Interview 2, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). Moreover, finding the right fit between brand and music can be challenging, however, the aforementioned insight and data provides a strong foundation for professionals to build the sonic signature upon. Finally, the use of audio should be considered a long-term investment in building a brand, and measuring the immediate effect of the sound is thus a challenging task, and should instead be seen as an effort to strengthen the overall tone of voice of a brand.

5.3. The Challenges of Audio branding

The analysis and discussion have so far focused on: Defining audio branding, its purpose, the advantages that having an established audio branding identity can lead to, and, how organisation can create an audio branding identity. However, audio branding is not as widespread amongst organisations as one would assume, based on the presented benefits it can have for organisations (Interview 2, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). There are several difficulties related to audio branding which are derived from both internal and external factors, namely; general misunderstanding of the phenomenon; the aspect of economic return on ad spend, and the added value audio branding contributes to; a lack of measurement opportunities on the effect audio branding has; a mismatch in supply and demand, in terms of who offers the service and how many brands demand it; as well as lack of applicable steps for organisations to follow in order to create an audio branding identity (Interview 1, 2020; Interview 2, 2020; Interview 3, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). Hence, this section will analyse and discuss the above-mentioned challenges associated with audio branding, based on the empirical and theoretical findings.

5.3.1. Lack of Awareness, Understanding and Knowledge

According to the four respondents, there are many different reasons why companies do not embrace audio branding (Interview 1, 20202; Interview 2, 2020; Interview 3, 2020, Interview 4, 2020). One of the main reasons all four agree upon, is the lack of awareness and understanding of what it is, how

it is done, and thus the value it comes with. According to Domnick, "we still have a long way to go. Not just in Finland, I mean all through Europe, all through the world", because "… worldwide roughly, maybe 20 percent of brands maybe mention audio branding in their guidelines, in their brand manual, which means that there is still 80 percent of companies that don't, so we have a long way to go" (Interview 4, 2020). This lack of awareness on audio branding can in turn cause a lack of knowledge, however, according to Domnick, more companies are starting to gain interest in sound, as well as work strategically with it. Therefore, he suggests that having more brands speaking about their work helps, as it can create more knowledge (Interview 4, 2020).

According to Mouritzen, however, "No one understands it. There is not anyone who actually focuses on it" (Interview 2, 2020). He argues that there is a general lack of knowledge and awareness about audio branding when it comes to how to communicate a feeling, and, as such, how to communicate a brand (Interview 2, 2020). He argues that many people working for brands and agencies often come from academic backgrounds, and therefore, "… tend to overthink branding and make it more complex than it is" (Interview 2, 2020). This results in a general mismatch between how professionals use branding and build brands, and how it actually should be done. According to Mouritzen, brands today "… are created based on how a company wants it, but in reality, you should include considerations on how and what a client thinks about your brand" (Interview 2, 2020). Therefore, Mouritzen does not only consider a lack of knowledge about audio branding, but branding in general, and suggests that; "People are not informed about alternative ways to create a strong brand" (Interview 2, 2020), such as by including audio guidelines in their branding. Mouritzen experienced a number of challenges connected to audio branding, which can be argued to be strongly related to his general experiences of working in the advertising and branding industry, as well as working with brand building and communication strategies. Therefore, he reflected that it can prove difficult to conceptualise and use audio branding, as the awareness and communication around the phenomenon is limited. According to Rode (2020), general misconceptions regarding audio branding, as well as a lack of standards in regard to terminology and methodology, are some of the widespread challenges when it comes to sonic branding.

Misconceptions regarding audio branding, coupled with a general lack of methodology and terminology is supported by Domnick (Interview 4, 2020). He believes that music and sound is challenging for people to conceptualise, suggesting that; "…the challenge with audio is that when

you have something visual, it's like very concrete, you can have an opinion about it, whether it fits or not. When it comes to audio and when we talk about music for example, it is so personal for all of us. We all know what good music is, but we disagree on what good music is" (Interview 4, 2020). Domnick suggests that, because music is so personal and resonates differently to different people, it becomes challenging for people to look at it from a brand perspective as "sound is something very personal, it's mostly something, which evokes different kind of emotions in your head, so I think that's maybe one of the reasons, we're not using it so much yet, because we don't really know that to do with it and how to use it" (Interview 4, 2020).

As suggested by Baker et al. (2016), the audio branding industry lacks knowledge and terminology in terms of systematised frameworks to select and understand sounds from a brand perspective. According to Domnick, this may be related to a lack of schooling. He argues that, "I think many marketers are very good with visual stuff, I mean you're taught visual stuff at marketing schools and so on. No one really teaches you, at least not in Finland, on how to use sound, what would be the right way, what would be the process of creating your own sound, but you are taught about all the visual stuff" (Interview 4, 2020).

As Domnick works with audio branding, and the development of audio guidelines for brands, his opinions are argued to be highly influenced by the experiences he has had. He has worked with many different brands and marketers from advertising agencies, and, as such, has experienced how many brand managers and marketers think about advertising and sound (Interview 4, 2020).

As previously indicated, there is a lot of confusion about the definition of the phenomenon, and even people within the industry have different nuances and perspectives depending on their work background and social context, making it difficult for brand managers and CEO's to fully grasp the potential of sonic branding. Furthermore, Vidø argues that the process of working with sound changes from case to case, and that there are no rules when creating sonic elements (Interview 3, 2020). Additionally, he argues that many people do not have the language and vocabulary to express their wishes: "The thing that makes it so difficult, it that there isn't an actual language" (Interview 3, 2020). As mentioned in the theoretical analysis, Baker et al. (2016) and Carron et al. (2014) suggest that the process of developing audio guidelines and choosing the right sound, can be challenging to communicate. Baker et al. (2016) provide a tool to help communicate how brand attributes can be translated into sounds, offering a reference point for brands. As argued by Domnick, there is a gap in terms of knowledge and schooling of sound, and branding (Interview 4, 2020). A framework can thus

act to resolve this gap. However, as suggested in the theoretical analysis, the frameworks suggested by Baket et al. (2016) and Carron et al. (2014) are argued to be too complicated, at times not providing sufficient details on how to use the tools. Creating objective translations of sound elements, and connecting them with brand attributes may work in some cases, but as suggested by Vidø and Domnick, creating a sonic identity is highly based on the individual brand, and how it understands itself, as well as how its target audience interprets the sound and the brand (Interview 3, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). It is therefore questionable whether an objective translation framework is applicable for all situations. Furthermore, Carron et al. (2014) suggest providing a deck of card to facilitate constructive communication, although it is difficult to conclude whether this is suitable for every situation. However, providing research on the process of establishing audio branding identities is positive, as it adds to the research, and thus lays the foundation for further insights on the subject.

5.3.2. The Economic Value of Audio Branding

Additionally, another obstacle for organisations could relate to the aspect of cost and the added value audio branding contributes with (Interview 1, 2020). According to Domnik, there are people who are willing to invest money in audio branding (Interview 4, 2020). Likewise, it is harder to argue the decisions to prioritise audio branding as compared to prioritising visual branding, because it is easier to introduce for the organisations decisions makers (Interview 1, 2020). Vidø mentions that an organisation's focus often is on increasing an organisation's profit (Interview 3, 2020), and Domnick states that; "The biggest part of selling audio branding to a client is proving it's working" (Interview 4, 2020). Domnick's statement indicates that organisations cannot see the connection between how having an audio branding identity can help increase an organisation's profit (Interview 4, 2020). Moreover, Schwartz mentions that it may sometimes be difficult to persuade brands into choosing audio branding, as it can be hard to defend the effect financially short term (Interview 1, 2020). That being said, Schwartz's opinion might to some extent be influenced by his background, which lead to him to identify the challenges relating to audio branding from an economic perspective, concluding that, from purely an economic perspective it is difficult to prove that audio branding alone directly affects an organisations profits.

5.3.3. Measuring the Effect of Audio Branding

The difficulties in terms of measuring the effect of establishing an audio branding strategy can have for an entire organisation could be another barrier for organisations to commit to prioritising audio

branding. It is, therefore, crucial to remember that it takes time before it becomes possible for an organisation to measure the effects its audio branding strategy has (Interview, 2020). This relates to Schwartz's opinion on how decision makers often are contradicting initiatives that shift an organisation towards prioritising having an audio branding identity. As establishing audio strategically can be such a costly process, as well as being difficult to measure the effect from an economical perspective, it often creates difficulties in terms of persuading decision makers to prioritising sonic branding. Therefore, the audio branding industry as a whole faces challenges in terms of providing easily accessible measurements on the immediate effects and economic benefits of having a sonic identity.

5.3.4. Lack of Agencies that Offers Audio Branding Solutions

Moreover, according to Schwartz, there seems to be a mismatch between agencies that have audio branding solutions in their offerings, compared to the number of companies that demand it (Interview 1, 2020). If identity agencies and advertising agencies had audio branding solutions in their offerings, it would most likely lead to a higher demand for such solutions among organisations (Interview 1, 2020), increasing the general awareness of the possibilities related to sonic branding. The lack of agencies that have audio branding in their offerings can be linked to the lack of academic teaching regarding the phenomenon (Interview 4, 2020). Additionally, it appears that there is confusion on how to communicate regarding audio branding, because there is a lack of a 'universal language' on the phenomenon (Baker, Trahan, & Müllenseifen, 2016; Carron, Bubois, Misdariis, Talotte, & Susini, 2014; Interview 3, 2020). Thus, it can be difficult for organisations to communicate their desires when they interact which agencies in order to formulate an audio branding identity (Interview 3, 2020). This miscommunication could arguably be resolved if academics and industry professionals were taught audio branding in universities and business schools (Interview 4, 2020). Additionally, if people were academically educated in audio branding, it might facilitate for people to raise awareness of the phenomenon, which according to Domnick is an obstacle for the wider utilisation of audio branding (Interview 4, 2020).

Lastly, the lack of applicable 'how-to models', acts to prevent the widespread usage of audio branding, because organisations do not know where or how to begin applying the phenomenon (Interview 4, 2020). If audio branding were a programme offered at an academic level, it could be argued that this would positively influence the general understanding on the topic, increase awareness of audio branding, as well as possible advantages (Interview 4, 2020). In addition, this could facilitate

for other researchers to study further on the phenomenon, thereby elaborating upon or creating practical frameworks and guidelines for organisations to utilise.

In summary, various challenges associated with audio branding for organisations have been identified. These range from: A lack of general understanding regarding the phenomenon, difficulties in terms of identifying the value of investing in audio branding versus the finance it requires, to a lack of applicable 'how-to' models. These challenges have acted to slow the widespread application and usage of audio branding. It has been identified how some of the obstacles arise both internally within an organisation, such as: distrust from decision makers and difficulties in terms of measuring the effect of applying audio branding, but also from external sources such as: A lack of agencies that offer audio branding solutions for organisations, and a lack of academic and professional teaching on the phenomenon. Thus, this section has outlined some of the challenges that can be connected to the process of creating an audio branding strategy.

6. Recommendations

Based on the aspects analysed and discussed above, this chapter will outline specific recommendations for organisations, in order to create an audio branding identity. These recommendations will build on the investigations that have been outlined previously, whilst taking into account the outlined challenges connected to audio branding, preventing organisations establishing and prioritising having an audio branding identity. The section will contain explicit guidelines for organisations with which to create an audio branding identity. Before the guidelines are presented, there will be a section which will reveal recommendations that will broaden the general understanding of audio branding.

This study has found that there seems to be a lack of understanding regarding the phenomenon, audio branding. One of the reasons for this lack of understanding on the topic, is because there is limited academic teaching on the phenomenon in marketing schools (Interview 4, 2020). Hence, the first recommendation, is that academics will start teaching the phenomenon at an academic level i.e. universities and business schools. Moreover, if people start to speak up on the phenomenon and share their experiences with fellow colleagues, more people would in the future attain insight into the topic, increasing awareness of audio branding. Increasing knowledge regarding audio branding, its functionality, and its impact, could likewise reduce the resistance among decision makers, and thereby increase organisation's willingness to invest and prioritise having an audio branding strategy further.

6.1. General Recommendations for Organisations

It has been experienced how organisations have multiple difficulties when establishing an audio branding strategy. Hence, this section will outline some specific guidelines, which should be considered for any business that wants to work strategically with the phenomenon, or to strengthen its audio branding identity. According to the four respondents, audio branding holds great strengths, and, if used correctly, offers a unique tool to achieve positive brand equity, and become top-of-mind amongst consumers (Interview 1, 2020; Interview 2, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). However, as outlined in the theoretical- and empirical analysis, there are a number of challenges associated with sonic branding. It is therefore crucial to address it through careful consideration and thorough use of data, which in turn can lead a company to achieve great results from using distinctive auditive assets in their branding (Romaniuk, 2018; Sheridan, 2020). Creating audio guidelines in a brand manual, can,

however, cause certain issues, and as indicated by Domnick, Mouritzen and Vidø, cause confusion, which in some cases seem daunting to a company (Interview 4, 2020; Interview 2, 2020; Interview 3, 2020). A lack of awareness, knowledge, understanding of the beneficial values to a brand, general schooling and methodology, are argued to affect the industry. This in turn will create challenges for brands. Therefore, in order to avoid these challenges, the following section will outline general recommendations for brands to keep in mind when initiating an audio branding strategy, and are aimed to contribute to the establishment of more insightful knowledge on the phenomenon. The recommendations are based on the researchers' interpretations of the theoretical, and empirical analysis, and, are thus influenced by this. It is therefore important to mention that the recommendations may not be universally applicable, however, it is argued that they still contribute to the development of knowledge within audio branding, and the establishment of auditive guidelines.

6.1.1. Understand Your Brand

According to Jackson and Fulberg (2013), the goal of audio branding for any organisation, is to express the core of its brand essence in an auditory manner, and, as such, is defined as the systematic creation of an auditory language to express a brand's vision, values, identity and personality (Minsky & Fahey, 2014). Based on this, it is important for organisations to draw attention to what the brand represents (Interview 1, 2020; Interview 2, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). Articulating the brand's purpose, value propositions, and defining its identity, is a crucial part of any strategic brand building (Interview 2, 2020). Knowing what the brand represents is essential, and, as argued by Mouritzen and Domnick, an organisation must understand its brand position by analysing the market situation, the brand's position, and the competitors within the industry in order to fully understand how to position and differentiate itself within the marketplace (Interview 2, 2020; Interview 4, 2020).

According to Müllensiefen and Baker (2015), an organisation's audio branding strategy should be based around the brand's core elements, as well as its target audience in order to help determine the right auditive elements to represent the brand. As indicated, their triangular framework can be argued to simplify the process too much, however, as suggested in the empirical analysis, it captures some of the essential steps of creating an audio strategy. Therefore, it is not only important to establish the brand's vision, core values and identity traits, but also to consider the target audience (Müllensiefen & Baker, 2015). Knowing your brand is strongly related to how well a brand knows its consumers.

As such, it is beneficial to conduct analysis of the target audience, their demographics, values and beliefs, to understand how the audio identity will resonate with them (Interview 2, 2020; Interview 3, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). Furthermore, it enables the brand to match the consumers' perception with the personality traits and the attributes the brand wants to convey (Interview 4, 2020).

Conducting thorough analysis of the brand's position, competition and target audience, as well as articulating the values of the brand, will help establish a clear understanding and direction of what core attributes the brand wants to convey. Moreover, it provides insightful data with which to base auditive branding decision, and, provides a strong foundation for establishing an audio branding strategy. Conducting analysis on this scale, can however be a costly affair, which can be difficult for smaller companies to finance (Interview 2, 2020). According to Mouritzen, creating a brand strategy requires work and investment and it can be argued that conducting surveys will provide data offering information to the company reaching beyond only the creation of an audio identity, but also offering a deeper insight into the customer mindset and mentality toward a brand (Interview 2, 2020). As suggested by the empirical analysis, audio branding should not be considered any different from other types of branding activities, such as visual branding, the data would therefore be applicable across all marketing strategies. Investing in thorough analysis of the brand and its target audience can thus be seen as an investment that can be used for a wide variety of benefits.

6.1.2. Aligning the Audio Strategy with the Visual Identity

As mentioned by Vidø, the core of audio branding is to express the brand's essence through a variation of stimuli (Interview 4, 2020), to establish an identity across platforms and activities. Consequently, audio branding is recommended to be seen as one aspect of a brand's entire storytelling, and, as suggested by Scwartz, is simply about setting the tone of voice of a brand through sound mediums (Interview 1, 2020). Additionally, Domnick argues that audio branding is essentially the same as visual branding, and indicates that just as brands have specific visual traits and distinctive colours that are used across all platforms and marketing activities to establish a brand identity, the same should be true for auditive traits (Interview 4, 2020). In relation to this, it is therefore important to be aware of the visual branding identity and align this correctly with the auditive elements.

Charles Spence (Spence: in Treasure, 2007) and Domnick (Interview 4, 2020) suggest that using sonic branding is best used in combination with visual communication. In fact, it is argued that using

sound that is aligned and congruent with the visual communication, can increase the power of a message up to 1000 percent (Spence: in Treasure, 2007). Therefore, as mentioned by Domnick, "you should not be forgetting about the visual assets, because the best combination is when you have both, I mean when you have a clear visual brand and a clear audio brand and when they are put together, your results will be through the roof" (Interview 4, 2020). The combined usage of audio and visual elements congruently, will create a synergy of the two, which, in turn, can intensify the impact of branding. Many brands spent great time and effort in creating strong visual elements to differentiate themselves, developing creative logos and memorable taglines to stand out from the crowd. Hence, bearing these in mind when creating an auditory identity is crucial, and helps create guidelines in terms of what attributes the music or sonic elements should convey. Thus, aligning the two can create a congruent identity, making it easily recognisable, which will stimulate a positive perception about the brand in the minds of consumers (Sharp, 2010; Keller, 1993; Rode, 2020).

It is argued that it can be difficult to conclude that combining sound and visual elements always increases performance. Given the nature of branding, it may not always be possible to prove that the sonic element alone is what causes an increase in performance (Interview 4, 2020). However, based on the theoretical- and empirical analysis, as well as the studies mentioned by NeuroLab (2019) and Ipsos (Sheridan, 2020), there is reason to believe that auditive brand assets can yield successful results. Additionally, it may be challenging to definitively conclude whether sound and visual combined is suitable in all situations. According to Rode (2020), it is important to only use sound, where sound is expected, and sound is therefore not always the ultimate solution. Establishing sonic guidelines should therefore not only take into account the brand's personality, the target audience's values and beliefs, and the visual identity and align these in auditive elements, but also take into account where and when to use this information (Rode, 2020).

6.1.3. Consult with Professionals

As suggested in the theoretical and empirical analysis, initiating the process of establishing a sonic identity can be daunting, and cause communicative challenges in terms of establishing what to express and how (Baker, Trahan, & Müllenseifen, 2016; Carron, Bubois, Misdariis, Talotte, & Susini, 2014). According to Vidø and Domnick (Interview 3, 2020; Interview 4, 2020), many brands find it difficult to express what they want, as there is no universal language to translate brand attributes into musical elements (Interview 3, 2020). As audio branding is an unknown territory for many, the lack

of universal methodology and terminology is apparent. It can be beneficial for brands to consult professionals in order to establish a strategy suitable for their specific company. As indicated by both Domnick and Vidø (Interview 4, 2020; Interview 3, 2020), the process of creating sonic elements can vary from company to company, and the recommended elements may also differ according to the company needs. Consulting with professionals within the audio branding industry is recommended, as they must be considered to be in possession of the best knowledge and knowhow regarding the entire process. For some projects, it may also be prudent to consult a sound technician with creation of appropriate sounds, where other situations may benefit from the assistance of audio branding agencies.

Either way, professionals should be able to guide the company through the process, from establishing the knowledge of the brand and its current situational- and market position, as well as helping facilitate guidelines to understand how sound elements correspond with the brand's attributes (Interview 2, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). Additionally, Domnick suggests that an important part of the process is to establish the needs of a brand, in order to best help create sounds suitable for different situations, whether soundscapes, sonic logos or jingles, as well as help create guidelines on how to best use these sound elements (Interview 4, 2020). He underlines that many marketing and brand managers need to prove the effect of creating audio branding guidelines, which for some, can be a costly affair, adding decision pressures from CEO's. However, according to Domnick, providing detailed videos of experts explaining what has been done and why as well as explaining how to use it correctly, many companies get a deeper understanding of the process, which helps ease the communication issues, which may sometimes appear (Interview 4, 2020).

Consulting with professionals can provide a more positive and productive process, establishing useful guidelines for each sound element. It is however still difficult to quantify the immediate effect of the investment, causing financial challenges and insecurities for companies (Interview 3, 2020). Therefore, it is recognised that consulting with audio branding agencies and professionals may be a financially difficult decisions to justify, however, as mentioned by Domnick, it is not always necessary to create elaborate strategies with many different sound elements uniquely designed for all mediums (Interview 4, 2020). In fact, it may sometimes be appropriate to begin with a sonic logo and await its effects before initiating following steps (Interview 4, 2020). Sound professionals are best positioned to provide the most appropriate advice to determine the best approach suitable for each

specific company, and are thus especially crucial in the initial phases of creating and launching the sound elements.

6.1.4. Create Different Sonic Variations but be Consistent

Another recommendation for organisations is to apply audio branding consistently, while simultaneously developing different variations that can be utilised for various situations. According to Vidø (Interview 3, 2020), human beings grow tired of listening to repetitions of a brand's auditive elements if unchanging. It is therefore important to create adaptations, which can be utilised across different platforms and adapt them accordingly. However, it is important to mention that creating variations does not mean changing the sound elements. Instead, variations should be based around the same musical tones and sound elements, but with slight adaptations, such as, by using different instruments or creating longer or short variations of a sound to be used for different purposes (Interview 3, 2020). This should, however, be considered carefully so the elements remain true to the original. Additionally, sound elements may differ across platforms, and a sonic logo and a soundscape may be different, however, according to Domnick, the goal should always be to express the brand's main attributes, values and personality (Interview 4, 2020). It is therefore essential to develop different variations for different situations, adapting the sound based on the context, i.e. a shopping retail environment may require a longer, calmer soundscape element to create a relaxed and pleasant environment for shoppers, whereas a sonic logo or a jingle may be shorter, designed to evoke more distinct and precise emotions and stand out from the crowd (Jackson & Fulberg, 2003; Graakjær & Jantzen, 2009; Interview 4, 2020). According to Schwartz, audio branding is about setting the tone of voice of a brand, and adapting it to different situations, whilst being thoughtful as to how the different sound elements corresponds to the attributes the brand wants to convey and creating synergies across all touchpoints (Interview 1, 2020; Sharp, 2010; Rode, 2020; Interview 4, 2020).

Applying sonic brand elements consistently is important, and should be considered a long-term brand building investment (Binet & Field, 2013; Interview 4, 2020). Domnick underlines that it is crucial that brands focus on the audio identity created, and that "you can't keep changing them. Exactly, just like you can't keep changing your visual logo all the times" (Interview 4, 2020). Thus, creating different variations does not mean a brand should create new and unidentifiable variations of the initial sonic identity, but rather adapt it according to the context, such as adapting voice over across

different languages, and advertising sounds according to culture (Interview 1, 2020; Interview 4, 2020).

As mentioned, it may be difficult to prove the instant effect of audio branding, and therefore, it is important to underline the importance of patience. As suggested by Domnick, "Audio branding as a whole is definitely not like a 100 meter sprint. It's a very, very long marathon. The most important thing I always say to the client is that 'when you feel sick and tired of the same song and the same sonic logo, that would be the point where the people, who are hearing it in your commercials, are just starting to realise that there is something familiar'. So you just have to keep using it, even if you are tired of it yourself" (Interview 4, 2020).

With the nature of audio branding being a long-term strategy (Interview 4, 2020; Binet & Field, 2013), organisations must value the establishment of an audio branding strategy as a long-term investment, just as the case is for visual branding. One of the challenges organisations are faced when creating an audio branding strategy is the daunting nature of the process, as it potentially involves numerous different elements for an organisation to include. Hence, this master thesis advocates for organisations to undertake a stepwise approach, launching a less comprehensive strategy for its audio branding initially. This affords an organisation to expand its strategy at a slower pace. Moreover, it is recommended that any organisations are patient when launching audio branding strategies, as earlier it was established the potential considerable costs associated with the development of an audio branding strategy. It is, therefore, important for an organisation to recognise that a sonic identity is not going to generate instant short-term success as is the case of McDonalds' *'Im loving it',* or the famous sound of *'Intel Inside'*, but instead consider that these sound logos have been established and used consistently for a long time before they became recognised and remembered by consumers and experts (Interview 4, 2020).

6.1.5. Speak Up

According to the empirical analysis, one of the main challenges of audio branding is the lack of knowledge regarding the phenomenon. As a result, a small percentage of brands have used sound strategically to develop unique audio identities (Interview 2, 2020; Interview 3, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). Based on this, it is suggested by Domnick and Schwartz (Interview 4, 2020, Interview 1, 2020) that it would be beneficial for the industry and the overall understanding of audio branding, if

organisations that currently use the strategy, or plan on implementing it, speak up on their experiences. Sharing business cases or experiences with establishing audio guidelines, can contribute to increased awareness and knowledge on the phenomenon, promoting awareness of the possibilities associated with audio branding.

Additionally, it could yield a positive impact for other organisation's willingness to invest and prioritise utilisation of an audio branding strategy. Domnick highlights Mastercard as an example on this, suggesting that having a large company like Mastercard speaking up on their audio branding journey is very positive for the industry as a whole (Interview 4, 2020). Having prominent market leaders speak publicly on the importance of having an audio identity, the process and the considerations behind each step of the process (Mastercard, 2019; Hearn, 2019), is argued to contribute to the general conception and knowledge on the phenomenon, as well as contribute to the development of general methodology and frameworks for organisations and agencies to utilise when creating an audio branding identity in the future (Interview 4, 2020).

Furthermore, Vidø, Mouritzen and Domnick all mention that selling audio branding to a company is often difficult, as it can be challenging to prove that it actually works (Interview, 3, 2020; Interview 2, 2020; Interview 4, 2020). Therefore, it is not only important that brands using audio branding strategically share their experiences. It also becomes increasingly important to conduct studies that prove the benefits of audio in branding, such as Ipsos (Sheridan, 2020) and NeuroLab (2019). However, as pointed out by Domnick, it may be important to develop surveys and studies to prove the benefit in Nordic countries as well, as it is often difficult for small Nordic companies to understand that results from American studies are applicable to them as well (Interview 4, 2020). Hence, conducting studies that prove the benefits across countries and cultures, can contribute positively to the industry.

The sections above have presented this paper's recommendations for organisations in order to work strategically with audio branding, as well as recommendations that could expand the general understanding of the phenomenon. Creating an audio branding identity can cause confusion and seem daunting, however, by conducting analysis on the brand's market position, target audience and competitors; aligning the audio identity with the visual elements; consulting with professionals; remaining consistent and patient, and sharing the experiences publicly like most brands do with visual campaigns, it is argued that a brand can achieve great results and simplify the process. These

recommendations are, however, based on the findings from this particular study and based primarily on the findings from the empirical material, and should be viewed and interpreted through that perspective. As the respondents are based in Denmark and Finland, their answers will be largely influenced by their social and cultural experiences and should therefore be understood as such. However, it is argued that, because the recommendations are made based on a combination of different experts' point of view, as well as theoretical contributions, they can be seen as a contribution to how companies can create an audio branding identity.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of the current master thesis is to explore how organisations can utilise audio branding strategically, to strengthen brand identity. For the purpose of exploring this, four interviews have been conducted with respondents, who have expertise within audio, branding or audio branding.

The research is designed as a theoretical/empirical master thesis, meaning that the design is two-sided. One the one side, the purpose was to investigate how organisation can establish an audio branding identity through analysing theory within the field. On the other hand, the research project argumentations rely on its empirical findings.

The theoretical analysis provides a literary overview of audio branding, based on existing theory within branding, human cognition and its effect on consumer behaviour, as well as theory on audio branding. This contributes to the discussion and analysis on how the phenomenon is defined, the strengths and weaknesses as well as the utilisation of audio branding. The chapter underlines the complexity of audio branding, and thus provides a deeper insight into the understanding and practice of establishing an audio identity. Understanding audio branding, is concluded to be highly rooted in a general understanding of branding as a practice, as branding - like audio branding - relies on the process of creating recognisable products and services that is easily distinguishable from others. The chapter therefore found that building strong brands is argued to be about increasing recognition and creating memorial networks of associations and experiences through consistent and congruent brand stimuli, which in turn helps increase brand recall. Furthermore, it is found that the competitive modern media landscape makes it increasingly difficult for brands to stand out, underlining the need for brands to work strategically with their brand identity to increase brand equity, by creating distinctive assets, which trigger consumers' cognitive responses and thus affect customer behaviour. The theoretical analysis concludes that sound and music have the ability to create such cognitive responses, and is argued to be a strong type of brand stimuli to trigger consumer behaviour and contribute to recognition. The Customer Based Brand Equity model by Keller (2013) helps shed light on the necessity for organisations to focus on, how consumers think and feel about a brand's product or service by building brand experiences that resonate positively with the consumer. Therefore, it is argued that brands can strengthen brand recognition, brand identity and brand image through consistent and congruent use of auditive brand cues. By establishing a clear understanding of the brand itself, it is possible for organisations to work strategically with audio branding to strengthen their identity. The theoretical chapter concludes that using audio is useful to crease brand response

and change consumer perception, as the heuristic cues of audio effect human cognition and the behavioural responses that stimulate decision-making processes, more than most other marketing stimuli. Thus, the chapter helps underline the strengths of audio branding. The theory also touches upon the aim of audio branding to create auditive objects, which are distinctive, unique and correspond with the emotional core of the brand and its target audience, and that audio branding elements should be created based on this. Lastly, the chapter argues that using audio branding may come with certain communicative challenges, suggesting that there may be a lack of tools to facilitate constructive procedures when working with audio branding. Also, it is found that there is a lack of overall terminology in terms of translating brand attributes into sounds.

The research has explored the phenomenon, audio branding, empirically by applying the interpretivist scientific approach. Thereby, this research has collected interviews from four respondents within the field of branding and audio branding.

The empirical finding from the four conducted interviews have contributed to the analysis and discussion on, how audio branding can be defined and understood. It is concluded by the empirical findings that one of the definitions is that audio branding is every single sound an organisation makes that can be heard. Moreover, it has been discovered, which advantages organisations can achieve by implementing auditive brand elements and thereby differentiate from the competitors. According to the findings, audio branding is an efficient tool to create differentiation and brand recognition, as well as create emotional responses in the minds of the consumers. Furthermore, it is found that audio is a strong tool to strengthen the overall brand identity, as it works as an additional element in the overall brand building process. According to the respondents, auditory cues should be used in combination with visual elements in order to get the best results, and it is argued that it can help increase brand recognition and increase the effect of advertising substantially.

Likewise, light has been shed on various processes organisations can follow in order to establish an audio branding identity. The chapter concludes that creating an audio branding identity requires thorough considerations regarding the brand, competitors, the marketplace, the target audience and the brand-music fit. According to Müllensiefen and Baker's (2015) framework, the brand's identity, the target audience and the musical fit are the foundation for creating an audio branding identity, which corresponds with the process explained by the interviewees in the empirical analysis. The framework is, however, argued to be too simplistic compared to the processes explained by the respondents. According to the empirical findings, it is concluded that the process is more complex

than that, and thus requires careful consideration and insight into the brand, the marketplace, the competitors and the target audience in order to achieve sufficient data to build the audio identity on. Additionally, it is found that understanding the consumers' beliefs and perceptions of the brand is important, as audio branding is a useful tool to establish memorial associations and become top-of-mind.

Even though the empirical findings suggest that there are many benefits to audio branding, a variety of challenges for organisations have been explored. The empirical findings identified multiple obstacles associated with audio branding, ranging from a general lack of understanding regarding the phenomenon, to lack of applicable 'how-to' models for organisations.

This research paper has contributed to the understanding of the phenomenon audio branding by recommending numerous actions that can increase the general understanding of audio branding and thus benefit the widespread application of audio branding among organisations. The theoretical analysis and the empirical findings have contributed to outlining a number of recommendations aimed at organisations. The study has stated the importance for organisations to consult professionals when establishing an auditive identity, as well as consistently applying its auditive cues once they have been created. On the one hand, the outlined recommendations can increase the general understanding of audio branding, which can assist organisations in their effort to work strategically with audio branding. The recommendations are addressed directly to organisations, by containing specific actions they can utilise to work strategically with the implementation of audio branding to strengthen its identity.

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Appendix 1: Interview 1, 2020

Interview guide for qualitative (semi-structured) interview with Rune Schwartz:
Place: Skype-interview
Dato: 19th March 2020
Duration: 75 minutes

Interview guide – Rune Schwartz, Bauer Media
Introduction: The interview is about your experience of working with audio as a branding medium, and your general experience of producing and planning audio productions for branding purposes. *Confidentiality:* Your name may be anonymized by appointment. *Recording:* The interview will be recorded for internal use. *Time:* The interview will take a maximum of one hour.

Subject	interview questions
Introduction	Can you briefly present yourself and tell a little about your role? ● What is your story? ● What are your typical work tasks? ● What specific types of audio media do you work with?
Audio Branding	● How do you define audio branding? ● How do you think audio branding differs from other branding, and what do you think the strength of this is? ● Which industries have the particular benefit of using audio branding? ● How do you experience organisations' use of audio branding today? ● What is the reason for this?

Bauer Medias arbejde	• How do you work with sound as a branding platform?
	• You work with podcasts and audio identities, among other things, but how do these differ?
	• On your website it is mentioned that that "An audio identity is the sound of your brand. A melody and mood that wraps your message and creates recognition and coherence from campaign to campaign and across platforms"- How do you work on this in practice?
	• How do you create an interaction between a company's visual identity and its sound identity?
The effect of audio	• How do you measure the effect of your work?
	○ Are you looking at the short-term, long-term or emotional effect?
	○ How do you advise your customers on the further use of sound in their other marketing and branding initiatives?

Appendix 2, Interview 2, 2020

Interview guide for qualitative (semi-structured) interview with Jacob Mouritzen:
Place: Skype-interview
Dato: 20th March 2020
Duration: 36 minutes

Interview guide – Jacob Mouritzen, Holst Moutritzen
Introduction: The interview is about your experience of working with audio as a branding medium, and your general experience of producing and planning audio productions for branding purposes. **Confidentiality:** Your name may be anonymized by appointment. **Recording:** The interview will be recorded for internal use. **Time:** The interview will take a maximum of one hour.

Subject	**Interviewspørgsmål**
Introduction	Can you briefly present yourself and tell a little about your role? ● What is your story? ● What are your typical work tasks? ● What type of inquiries do you typically get?
Branding	● How do you define branding? ● How do you work specifically with branding in terms of strengthening a brand's identity and image? ● How can organisations strategically work with branding? ● What is the process of developing a strategy that takes into account the brand's identity?

Holst Moutritzen	- How do you incorporate sound into a branding or campaign strategy? - How do you experience the demand/ interest in audio branding? - What do you think this is due to? - What is your opinion of audio branding? - We have read and heard in several places that sound is a powerful means of creating brand recall, but as Rune said, there are very few brands that work specifically with sound and create a unique sound identity. Why do you think that is the case?
The effect of branding	How do you measure the impact of your branding efforts?

Appendix 3: Interview 3, 2020

Interview guide for qualitative (semi-structured) interview with Bjørn Vidø:
Place: Skype-interview
Dato: 24th March 2020
Duration: 41 minutes

Interview guide – Bjørn Vidø, CPHSound Design
Introduction: The interview is about your experience of working with audio as a branding medium, and your general experience of producing and planning audio productions for branding purposes. *Confidentiality:* Your name may be anonymized by appointment. *Recording:* The interview will be recorded for internal use. *Time:* The interview will take a maximum of one hour.

Subject	Interviewspørgsmål
Introduction	Can you briefly present yourself and tell a little about your role? ● What is your story? ● What are your typical work tasks? ● What type of inquiries do you typically get? ● How do you define audio branding? ● Have you worked with audio branding? ● How do you work specifically with audio from a branding perspective?? ● How is the process of creating an audio identity?
Audio	● What can audio? ● What is the strength and weakness of audio? ● What influence does the sound have on the receiver? ● It creates a mood. To specify, how exactly?

Work	- How do you create a mood through audio? - What considerations do you make about encapsulating a brand identity through sound? - Do you experience a growing interest from brands in creating an audio identity? - Why do you believe that many brands still are not actively working to create an audio identity?
Further questions	- In-depth comments and examples. - Why do companies opt out of creating an audio identity?

Appendix 4: Interview 4, 2020

Interview guide for qualitative (semi-structured) interview with Lauri Domnick:
Place: Skype-interview
Dato: 2nd April 2020
Duration: 58 minutes

Interview guide – Lauri Domnik, Bauer Media
Introduction: The interview is about your experience of working with audio as a branding medium, and your general experience of producing and planning audio productions for branding purposes. *Confidentiality:* Your name may be anonymized by appointment. *Recording:* The interview will be recorded for internal use. *Time:* The interview will take a maximum of one hour.

Subject	Interviewspørgsmål
Introduction	Can you briefly present yourself and tell a little about your role? ● How long have you been working at Bauer Media? ● How long have you been working with audio branding? ● What is your story? ● What are your typical tasks? ● What specific types of audio media do you work with?
Audio Branding	● How do you define audio branding? ● How do you think audio branding differs from other branding, and what do you think the strength of this is? ● Which industries have the particular benefit of using audio branding? ● How do you experience organisations use of audio branding today?? ○ What do you think this is due to?

Bauer Media	● How do you work with audio as a branding platform? ● You work with podcasts and audio identities among other things, but how do these differ? ● How do you help create an interaction between a company's visual identity and its sound identity?
The effect of audio	● How do you measure the effect of your work? ○ Are you looking at the short-term, long-term or emotional effect? ● How do you advise your customers on the further use of audio in their other marketing and branding initiatives?