THE INFLUENCE OF AUTHENTICITY AND TRANSPARENCY

-HOW AUTHENTICITY AND TRANSPARENCY BECOME INTEGRAL VALUES OF NEWLY ESTABLISHED FASHION COMPANIES BUSINESS MODEL.

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to investigate how the socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, have become integral parts of newly established fashion companies’ business model in Sweden. Previous researches have focused on how to redesign conventional fashion companies’ business models. From an academic approach, the problem discussion emphasize on lacking research in how newly established fashion companies have made authenticity and transparency integral parts in their business model. The purpose has been answered by asking the following questions; How have authenticity and transparency influenced the innovators of newly established fashion companies in Sweden? Which parts of the business model have been altered in order to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency?

Method: This study is based on qualitative research method with an abductive approach. The empirical data collection has been performed through seven interviews, five emails and two face-to-face deep interviews. The theoretical framework and literature review have primary been based on previous researches in the research area.

Conclusions: This study shows that newly established fashion companies in Sweden have made authenticity and transparency integral parts in their business model. This is strongly influenced by the companies’ founder, their characteristics and ability to understand and translate socio-cultural forces and integrate them into their business model. The design of the clothes and fabric selection, production techniques and supply chain, marketing strategies and communication tools in the business model have been altered in order to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency. These changes have been implemented in order to meet consumers’ newfound desire for authenticity and transparency. Cues of craftsmanship, traceability in the production techniques and supply chain, creating storytelling in the marketing strategies have been added in order to enhance the consumers’ experience of the company’s authentic and transparent attributes

Key Words: socio-cultural forces, authenticity, transparency, business models, newly established fashion companies & sustainability
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1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the background and previous researches will be presented. The problem will be clarified and discussed in the chosen study field. Delimitations of this thesis will also be mentioned. The study’s purpose and research questions will also be presented. This chapter ends by describing the thesis outline.

1.1 Background

The essence of this study is to investigate the common aspects of newly established fashion companies’ business models and core values. The focus in this section is on previous studies in the research area. Consumers changing demand are being presented were several researchers suggest that consumers in todays Western society have been influences by the two socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). How these two socio-cultural forces have transformed the fashion industry is being explained in the following section. Researcher implies that conventional fashion companies ought adapt and include authenticity and transparency into their organization and business model (Holt 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Minney 2011). How these two forces are affecting the innovators of newly established fashion companies and emerge of new type of business model are being discussed (Davies & Ryals 2010). Several researchers state that authenticity and transparency explains the development of new type of business model Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009).

1.1.1 Consumers changing demand

“People are begging for authenticity”

Gilmore & Pine (2007) p.27

During the last decades, awareness about sustainability and the negative environmental impact caused by overconsumption has increased in the Western countries (Welford 1995; The Nordic Textile Journal 2012). The first green consumerism movement started during the 1970s and from this time on a gradual increased interest in environmental and social issues can be seen among consumer. This green movement have affected and changed the consumers’ buying behaviour (Shaw & Newholm 2002). An increasingly number of people has started to choose a more environmental friendly lifestyle (Beverland 2009). Carbonaro (2014) claims that there are different factors in the Western society that indicates the public’s willingness to change. People living in cities leaves
their cars at home and instead use their bicycles and farmer’s markets have become popular as people are actively trying to rediscover and reconnect with their tradition and culture. Several researchers also claim that other factors in the society demonstrate the publics’ willingness to change. Ehrenfeld (2005) and Gilmore and Pine (2007) mean that emerge of different kind of lifestyle magazines, blogs, books, slow food movement with an environmentally focus implies the increased interest among consumers. The researchers deem that consumers have started to realize that they actively need to take responsibility and action towards a more sustainable everyday life. Consumers’ willingness to change their buying behaviour and lifestyle can also be seen in other industries, such as the music industry (Beverland 2009). For instance, the American hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar (2012) raps; ”My New Year’s resolution is to stop all the pollution” (Rapgenius.com 2012). This demonstrates that the public is aware that changes in the society are required and consequently, they are trying to reform their old buying behaviour, habits and way of living. It can be said that a new type of social class has emerged where a sustainable lifestyle is highly prioritized (Florida 2002). The researcher Boyle (2003) calls these consumers for the “New Realists” as they are yearning for authentic, transparent and sustainable attributes. This indicates that a new desire in the society has arisen where consumers are tired of unauthentic (fake) products and therefore demanding authentic and transparent attributes (Gilmore & Pine 2007).

The publics yearning for authenticity and transparency have emerged from the desire for something that is already recognizable deem Gilmore and Pine (2007). Consumers want to change although they are not looking for something new and artificial, the feeling of “going back to the roots” has never been stronger than today states Burnett and Hutton (2007). It can be said that authenticity and transparency are important forces in the society since they reflect the current consumer demand (Boyle 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Even though the definition of these forces are vague and individual, in this study authenticity has been defined as “being real”, “honest”, “trustworthy” and is associated with “heritage” (Peterson 1997; Cappannelli & Cappannelli 2004; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009), and transparency is equal to “openness”, “integrity” and similar to authenticity, “honest” (Burnett & Hutton 2007, Ball 2009, MacLean 2011). Along with consumers yearning for authentic and transparent attributes, experience is what consumers of Western society are seeking for mentions Gilmore and Pine (1999, 2007). The product or service itself is inadequate, memorable

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1 Professor Simonetta Carbonaro. The Swedish School of Textile in Borås, presentation 2014-03-14
2 Ibid
events create experiences that are more valuable than the product itself (Gilmore & Pine 1999, 2007).

It is clear that the publics’ consumption behaviour is changing where they want to include more sustainable and environmental friendly activities into their everyday life (Beverland 2009). It can be said that the consumers in the Western countries are in a transformative phase, meaning a shift into an experience economy with a focus on the socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency (Gilmore & Pine 1999, 2007). This transformation has automatically influenced different kinds of industries, including the fashion industry (Beverland 2009). The following part profoundly explains this matter.

1.1.2 The transformation of the fashion industry

Several industries have been identified being the environmental offenders and one of them is the fashion industry. Poor working conditions, mass production, pollution and increasing numbers of collections per year are just a few examples of the fashion industry’s negative impact on the environment and on our society (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2010). As Minney (2011) underline, the financial results have been prioritized and the social and environmental aspects have been overlooked and somehow ignored. These neither complies with, nor reflects the consumers’ demand of today (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). The majority of conventional fashion companies has based their business models on traditional scholar, meaning “statement of how a firm will make money and sustain its profit stream over time” and contain parts such as target consumer, strategies, infrastructure, operational processes and different kinds of policies (Stewart & Zhao 2000; George & Bock 2011). Other researchers have defined the traditional business model in another way, they mention that business model is about how companies creates, delivers and gains values (Osterwalder & Pingneur 2010). Holt (2002) estimates that the traditional business model is based on the interactions between demand and supply, with a financial focus. In this study, the traditional business model is equal to how companies produce products and services, strategies and approaches in order to gain financial profit. Various researchers deem that companies with a traditional business model should adjust their business models in order to meet consumers new demands, and consequently they recommend redesign (Holt 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Minney 2011). By focusing on the current socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, a new type of business model can be developed where it reflect and satisfy the consumers’ newfound consumption behaviour claims Sebastiani, Montagnini and Dalli (2013). Jackson (2011)
argues that a new type of business models and economy system is required and explains that wealthy nations and companies should take more responsibilities in being sustainable and environmental friendly as they are considered being role models. Martin and Schouten (2009) mentions that the current financial crises provide companies with an excellent opportunity to re-build and re-shape their organization and integrate sustainable activities into their business model. The researcher explains that by including long-term solutions and stability into the organization, a new economical structure can be developed with focus on sustainability. The mentioned statements from these researchers indicate that the traditional business model ought be modified where including sustainable and environmental friendly activities are highly recommended (Holt 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Minney 2011; Jackson 2011; Sebastiani et al 2013).

Several researchers suggest about attributes that ought be included in the new type of business models. Researchers, such as Boyle (2003) and Gilmore and Pine (2007), stress that consumers are longing for authentic products that carries elements of tradition and culture and transparency is a highly sought after in companies these days. Consumers are increasingly interested in knowing more about the product and want to be able to track the origin of raw material and the production techniques used (Boyle 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). This increased knowledge affects consumers buying behaviour, which have a significant impact and might drive the industry towards an environmental and social direction and performance (Kniazeva & Venkatesh 2007; Thompson & Coskuner-Balli 2007; Huybrenchts & Reed 2010). Arguments from these researchers show that integrating authentic and transparent attributes are central parts when redesigning the company’s business model. The majority of conventional fashion companies have failed to understand the importance of integrating the socio-cultural forces, which has significantly affected consumers’ subjective worldview claims Cherrier (2005). However, a change can already be seen, some companies have started to appreciate authenticity and transparency as a competitive advantage- the new business imperative (Gilmore & Pine 2007). Several conventional fashion companies have endeavoured to respond to the new consumer desire by including elements of authenticity and transparency into their business models (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Martin & Schouten 2009). This approach is considered being a way to demonstrate the company’s actions towards a more sustainable and environmental friendly production techniques and supply chain as authenticity and transparency can be used to demonstrate the company’s sustainability (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). However, Holt (2002) mentions that some consumers find the conventional companies attempts to become sustainable by including cues of authenticity and transparency somehow doubtful. A huge number of
products from conventional companies are claiming to be sustainable, making consumers overexposed and a feeling of scepticism have emerged (Nielsen 2010). Consumers consider these products as unauthentic (fake) since their business models have a “wear and tear” concept meaning the life cycle of the clothes are shorter since the quality is low consequently this lead to more consumption (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Gwozdz, Netter, Bjartmarz & Reisch 2013). The primary values of these companies are quality, convenience and price, meaning that the ethical aspects are neglected (Crane 2005). According to Fredriksson (2012) consumer consider these attempts being a paradox since the term fashion is generally strongly associated with renewal and mass consumption. Consequently, consumers also consider these attempts being utilized in order to increase sales volume and improve the company’s reputation (Fliess, Lee, Dubreuil & Agatiello 2007). Some consumers have even chosen to boycott companies that seem unauthentical and are now searching for products that reflect their desire for authenticity and transparency (Hye-Jin & Nelson 2009). This indicates that these consumers are searching for alternative products in the fashion industry that are coherent with their requirements. This provides an excellent positioning opportunity and an opening window for new companies to build their business models, products and services on this newfound consumer demand (Crane 2005); authenticity and transparency.

The mentioned studies show that the fashion industry is changing along with consumers changing demands (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Minney 2011). This indicates that conventional fashion companies that have integrated the traditional business model should modify in a reflective way, consequently a redesign are necessary (Holt 2002; Boyle 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Minney 2011). The current “wear and tear” concept, that is the base of conventional fashion companies business model is not up-to-date and do not match with consumers new desire (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Gwozdz et al 2013). The following indicates that new emerge of new form of business model are essential.

1.1.3 The emerge of new business model

As stated in previous section, authenticity and transparency are the two current socio-cultural forces that have influenced the entire society, consumers’ mindset and their buying behaviour (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Davies & Ryals 2010). Many researchers indicate that integrating authenticity and transparency into companies and their business models can be significant to survive in the future markets (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Numerous researchers emphasize on the importance of
storytelling and experience (Urde 2003; Fog, Budtz & Yakaboylu 2005; Beverland 2009; McLellan 2006; Burnett & Hutton 2007; Mathews & Wacker 2008; Spear & Roper 2013). Gilmore and Pine (2007) state that consumers of today are seeking to create experiences and this requirement can be met by telling stories about the company. The researcher also explains that storytelling is implemented to enhance the feeling of authenticity and transparency, which consequently increases consumer experience. This indicates that the consumer’s memory of the companies’ products enriches when experiences of the two forces are being added into the storytelling. Gilmore and Pine claims that authenticity and transparency are considered as the fundamental building blocks of newly established companies’ business models.

Before establishing a new company, many innovators were able to understand that authenticity and transparency have influenced the Western society (Boyle 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Davies & Ryals 2010). They saw a business opportunity to create a new company with business model based on authenticity and transparency. These innovators identified these forces as newfound desire that consumers are yearning for and consequently included them into their business models, core values, concept and offered products and services in a reflective way (Crane 2005; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Davies & Ryals 2010; Sebastiani et al 2013). In an early stage, these innovators were able to realize that consumers are confused about conventional fashion companies’ sustainable arguments (Nielsen 2010). Flies et al (2007) explain that the consumers’ doubtfulness concerned the company’s environmental friendly approaches. The researchers deem that consumer considered these activities being utilized or manipulated in order to increase the companies’ sales volume. This indicates that a new wave of fashion companies have arisen where they take these socio-cultural forces into account and try to satisfy consumers wanting to change. Several researchers address that these company’s distinguish themselves from conventional fashion companies by focusing on producing fewer numbers of collections per year and offering high quality products (Minney 2011). Cues of craftsmanship and hand skills have also been assimilated in order to express the company’s authenticity and transparency (MacCannell 1976; Beverland 2009; Minney 2011). Other researchers deem that the production techniques and supply chain is another part of the traditional business models that have been changed in order to respond to consumers new demands. Explicitly illustrating the production techniques and the supply chain by including traceability is a vital strategy for these newly established companies business models. This strategy is applied as a way to demonstrate the companies’ authenticity and transparency (Koping 2005; Lakhal, Sidibe & Mida 2008 De Brito, Carbone & Blanquart 2008; Fritz & Scheifer 2009; Pagell & Wu 2009; Faisal
By producing the collections nearby, alternatively locally, the negative environmental impact decreases mentions Beverland (2009). Informing and educating their customers about how to actively become more sustainable are also included in their business models (Fliess et al 2007). These companies believe that education can influence the consumer behaviour in order to become sustainable. Minney (2011) states that these kinds of social business and new economics are one of the leading actors in the fashion industry as they have included strategies that are environmental friendly. Including storytelling as marketing strategy has become to be central as it demonstrates the company’s authenticity and transparency attributes claims Minney. As stated earlier, consumer experience is significant strategy and can be enhanced by storytelling. This will consequently enlighten the company’s authenticity and transparency attributes (Koping 2005; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Lakhal et al 2008; De Brito et al 2008; Fritz & Scheifer 2009; Pagell & Wu 2009; Faisal 2010; Stokes 2011; Caniato et al 2012).

Martin and Schouten (2009) implies that newly established fashion companies have prioritize to create the feelings of authenticity and transparency, meaning that the financial aspects are being not being as prioritized as conventional fashion companies. Being authentic and transparent in order to demonstrate the company’s sustainability are considered being more valuable (Beverland 2009). Sebastiani et al (2013) stress that the interplay between socio-cultural forces and corporate power is crucial and functions as a supporting tool during the start-up phase of new business projects. The researchers Davies and Ryals (2010) explain that socio-cultural forces influence the market mechanisms and consequently these forces should be analyse and translated in order to interpret and understand the consumers’ current and future requirements. This information should be implemented into the company’s business model and organization (Ibid). Acknowledging that socio-cultural forces that are influencing consumers’ requirements and purchase behaviour is considered being competitive advantage (Crane 2005). According to Jackson (2011) a new type of business model is essential and ought strive to achieve long-lasting solutions in order to balance the current over-consumption and over use of the natural resources.

In summary, innovators of newly established fashion companies have developed and altered the traditional business models in order to met the current consumer demands (Crane 2005; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Davies & Ryals 2010; Sebastiani et al 2013). Some parts of the traditional business model, such as the production techniques and supply chain and marketing strategy have changed in a reflective way (Koping 2005;
Gilmore & Pine 2007; Lakhal et al 2008; De Brito et al 2008; Fritz & Scheifer 2009; Pagell & Wu 2009; Faisal 2010; Stokes 2011; Caniato et al 2012). It can be said that a new form of business model have emerged where the focus is on creating and demonstrating the company’s authenticity and transparency attributes. This modification of the traditional business model in this sense has not been researched earlier, indicting a current research gap.

1.2 Problem discussion

Many researchers have emphasized on the importance of authenticity and transparency in the society and its impact on consumers’ demands (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). However, the mentioned studies have not focused on how these two forces have influenced and changed the mind-sets of founders and innovators of newly established fashion companies in the Western countries. Nor have studies examined how authenticity and transparency have become integral parts of newly established fashion companies’ business model. Similar studies have been addressed in the food industry, although these factors have not been studied in the fashion industry (Kniazeva & Venkatesh 2007; Sebastiani et al 2012). It can be said that currently, there is a research gap regarding authenticity and transparency and how these two factors have influenced entire the fashion industry, especially new established fashion companies.

Previous researches have emphasized and focused on the current problem with today’s fashion industry and mentioned that the majority of conventional companies have failed to rebuild or adjust their business model according to customer’s new willingness to become authentic (Sebastiani et al 2013). They highlight the importance of authenticity and transparency, and demonstrate that conventional companies should re-design and re-build their business models according to these forces and consumers newfound requirements (Holt 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Minney 2011). Researchers, such as Crane (2005) and Gilmore and Pine (2007) mentioned about companies that have integrated attributes of authenticity and transparency into their business models, and states that consumers feel sceptical since these companies have a “wear and tear” concept in their business model. This indicates that their organization, business models and core values are strongly associated with renewal and mass consumption (Fredriksson 2012).

It is apparent that the focus of previous research area has been on conventional fashion companies and strategies have been developed on how to deal with the forces in a
trustworthy way (Burnett & Hutton 2007; Ball 2009). It can be stated that it exists a research gap regarding how innovators have been influenced by authenticity and transparency in a higher degree. Previous researcher suggest how conventional companies should adapt after these forces and indicate that authenticity and transparency in the organizations is the key to succeed (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). However, they do not address how these forces are the reasons why new type of fashion companies has emerged. According to Gilmore and Pine (2007) a huge paradox many conventional companies are facing is to provide authentic products in a world where the perception of authenticity is blurry and individual. Gilmore and Pine’s study has not tackled and mentioned about the innovators of these newly established fashion companies and their ability to understand these forces in an early stage and offer products in a reflective way. Nor have previous studies investigated how newly established fashion companies have adjusted their business models according to authenticity, transparency and consumers newfound desire. As mentioned earlier, previous studies have focused on developing and providing recommendations, suggestions and strategies on how to modify conventional fashion companies’ business models after the two socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency. Based on the existing research gap and previous studies regarding the socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, the purpose of the study have been formulated.

1.2.1 Delimitations

The focus of this study is to investigate how current socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, have influenced newly established fashion companies business model in Sweden. In this study, it is suggested that innovators of newly established fashion companies in Sweden have become inspired by the current transformation in the Western society to achieve a more sustainable and environmental friendly lifestyle (Florida 2002; Beverland 2009). The changes in the consumer requirements and their yearning for authenticity and transparency attributes are one of the main factors and reasons why innovators have chosen to start a fashion company and offer products in a reflective way (Gilmore & Pine 2007). Through the entire research paper, when talking about “newly established fashion companies” is referring to companies that design, produce and sell fashion garments and collections based on authenticity and transparency. This implies that the style of product, selection of production techniques and marketing strategies in the business model have been modified in order demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency. These kinds of companies have been established during the beginning of 21th century year, but most importantly, they must have integrated a sustainable and
environmental friendly approach in their organization already from the start. Having authenticity and transparency as their fundamental building blocks in their business model is a significant criterion. Other parts in the business models, such as target group, the company’s purpose and policies will not be addressed throughout this thesis since the researcher of this study considered them being inapplicable for the purpose. Possible interest in the participated companies business models is on production techniques and supply chain, marketing strategies, core values and cues to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency such as craftsmanship and hand skills. Given the fact that the participated newly established fashion companies already have integrated sustainability in their organization and applied authenticity, transparency and craftsmanship to demonstrate their environmental friendly mentality, these was found most relevant to study.

In this study, the interest and focus has been from a corporate perspective, rather than consumers behaviour’ perspective since the purpose is to investigate how authenticity and transparency have been integral parts of newly established fashion companies business model in Sweden. Fashion companies in Sweden have been selected since they were willing to participate in this study. The selection of the companies was based on several criteria (see p. 19), meaning that companies that did not fulfil or meet these standards was excluded. The interviews have been with the founder or co-owner of newly established fashion companies in Sweden and experts with a unique knowledge in the fashion industry. This study will not examine newly established fashion companies in general or in other countries as qualitative interviews have been completed with a limited number of companies. Since lack of research in this study field, this thesis is suitable as a pilot study and preliminary examination of development of a new form of business model adapted and altered after authenticity and transparency and the customers yearning for this forces.

1.3 Purpose and research questions

1.3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, have become integral parts of newly established fashion companies’ business model in Sweden.
1.3.2 Research questions

The purpose of this study will be answering by the following research questions;

- How have authenticity and transparency influenced the innovators of newly established fashion companies in Sweden?
- Which parts of the business model have been altered in order to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency?

1.4 Thesis outline

Methodology (Chapter 2): The working process of this study will be presented in this section. Firstly, the methodological approach and collected empirical data will be described and discussed. The criteria for empirical data and a background description of the chosen companies and other participants will be depicted. This section will finish by demonstrating the reliability and validity of this research paper.

The Theoretical framework (Chapter 3): In order to facilitate the understanding of the theoretical framework and literature review, this following section are divided into three categories. The definition of authenticity and transparency are explained in the first part. Discussion and the essential of the combination of these two forces are also distinguished. The second part contains of a literature review on innovators behind the brands, craftsmanship, production techniques and the supply chain. Marketing strategies are being described, where storytelling and the implementing of authenticity and transparency as marketing strategies are being demonstrated. This chapter ends with a summery of the theoretical framework.

Analysis (Chapter 4): This part is focused on analysing the collected empirical data and combining the identified pattern with the theoretical framework and selected literature review.

Conclusion and discussion (Chapter 5): The findings of this study and discussion will be conducted in this chapter. Additionally, the purpose of the study and research questions will be answered and discussed. The conclusions will be portrays and the contribution to the academic world will be defined.

Future research (Chapter 6): Based on the defined research gap and problems in the study field, suggestions for future research will be explained.
2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is focused on explaining the methodological framework that has been implemented in this study. This section starts with an introduction of the research strategy and the working process of the collected empirical data will also be explained. The next part is about the participants, where background information them is provided. The methodological framework ends with a discussion regarding the research’s quality.

2.1 Research strategy

In order to gain a deeper understanding about the collected empirical data; a qualitative research method has been applied (Bryman 2012). This research strategy provides a significant understanding about the contexts and structures, but also render a comprehensive view of the collected empirical data (Holme, Salvong, Floistad, Kjeldstadli & O’Gorman 1997). The qualitative research method was considered being the most suitable research strategy since the participants’ perceptions of the reality and world-view is in focus (Alvesson & Deetz 2000; Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). The participants use word instead of figures to express their thoughts about the given subject, consequently quantitative research method were excluded (Bryman 2012). The researcher of this study has been interested in establishing close relationships with the participants and has aiming to create an understanding of the participant’s behaviour, values and opinions. Because of mentioned reasons, the qualitative research method is required and implementation of quantitative research method was eliminated (ibid).

The focus of this study is on understanding how the socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, have been integrated into the business models of newly established fashion companies in Sweden. The interest throughout the study has been on understanding and interpreting the participant’s perceptions of their reality. Answers from the participants have been compared to each other in order to find patterns that are coherent with the research questions and the purpose of this study (see p. 10 & 11). These identified patterns help to understanding the relationships and variations between different themes, this contributes to more efficient analysis (Diekelmann & Magnussen 2006).
2.1.1 Abductive reasoning

An abductive reasoning has been selected where the researcher of this study first makes predictions of the data’s outcome, before the actual collecting process take place. Once the collection of the empirical data has been completed, the researcher investigates if pre-established predictions are corresponding with the data. If not, those predictions are being modified in a reflective way (MacKinnon 2007). This indicates that the research questions (see p.11) have been redefined throughout the research process, also the theoretical framework has been reformulated. Consequently, the research questions and the theoretical framework have been selected after patterns found in the empirical data and the purpose of the study. However, after finding important theories and terms that matches the study field and the purpose, questions to the participants (see Appendix 1 & 2) were formulated. This working process was found most suitable for this thesis as the lack of research in the study field. Finding correlations and patterns that could explains how socio- cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, have become integral parts of newly established fashion companies’ business model in Sweden was significant. These associations play a vital role since the aiming of this study is to find explanations of the reality (Bryman 2012). This means not adapting the theoretical framework after data (deductive) nor adjust the data after the theoretical framework (inductive). Instead, the abductive reasoning provided opportunities to open-mindedly study important details in the empirical data in order to find new and interesting perspectives (MacKinnon 2007). This continuously process of adjusting the empirical data in association with the theoretical framework in a reflective way leads to better explanation of the reality and the participants world-view (Hitchcock 2006). The researcher of this study found the abductive reasoning being the most suitable approach, the constant interplay with the purpose, research questions, theoretical framework and the collected data help identifying patterns, which improved the conclusions (MacKinnon 2007).

2.2 Data collection

The collected empirical data this study is based on are divided into two sections; the primary and secondary data. The primary data is in form of interviews, both face-to-face deep interview and via emails. The second data consists of litterateur review that has been collected by searching on different kinds of electronic databases.

2.2.1 The primary data

The interest in this study has been on gaining deeper understanding the opinions of innovators and experts perceptions regarding the socio- cultural forces from a business
point of view, consequently deep interviews with a semi-structured approach have been selected (Bryman 2012). This approach was implemented with the consumer physiologists Carbonaro (2014) and textile designers Smith (2014) as both of them are teachers for the course Art of Business at The Swedish School of Textiles in Borås. The course took place during February until Mars 2014 where Carbonaro and Smith held lectures about how authenticity and transparency have become the new socio-cultural forces in the Western society and have influenced consumers’ mind-sets and consumer behaviour. The inspiration for this study field was found during this course. These individuals are called experts thought this study since they have an exceptional knowledge in the research area and the fashion industry. Interviews with these experts were found essential in order to gain an illuminating understanding about the research area. The majority of the deep interviews were approximately 60-90 minutes long.

Email interviews were conducted with the founder or co-founders of the selected companies and the socio- anthropologist Wittrock (2014). This approach was found most suitable because of long distance, also the majority of the participants wished to replay via emails because of lack of time and flexibility (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009).

2.2.2. Qualitative interviews

The aim of the interviews was to get a better understanding why the innovators of the newly fashion companies have chosen to integrate authenticity and transparency into their business models. This indicates that their perspective was in focus. The researcher of this study wanted the participants to be able to feel comfortable and naturally answer the questions without any interruptions or interferences (Bryman 2012). Follow-up questions were asked if the researcher wished to know more about a valuable or specific point. The interviews were similar to a normal conversation between two persons where the researcher played a neutral role (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Since the researcher in a early stage and before the interviews already had chosen a specific subject to study, the semi-structured interview method was found to be the most suitable approach (Bryman 2012). Face-to-face interviews was preferred with the participants but because of long distance and inconvenient, some of the interviews was accomplished and completed via email conversations (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009).

During the face- to- face interviews, a memo was used as a tool to recall the prepared questions but the focus was on the statements from the participants. The interview questions were decided into two, this means that the experts were asked questions
regarding their knowledge about the fashion industry and the two socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency (see Appendix 1). The participated companies were asked questions regarding why they established fashion companies based on the socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, how these forces have influenced them, their definition of authenticity and transparency and how these forces are applied in their organization (see Appendix 2). This approach was found beneficial since the chosen fashion company emphasize on different kinds of factors in their business model, even though authenticity and transparency have been identified the driven forces of their establishments. Closed or leading questions were avoided since the participants’ own reflections were in focus (Bryman 2012). These types of questions were excluded in order to reduce limited or incomplete answers. Other features that could have a negative impact during the interviews were also excluded, consequently open and flexible questions were preferred (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009; Bryman 2012). The reason for this approach was to encourage the participants to contribute with detailed and accurate answers (Bryman 2012). The face-to-face interviews was located at undisturbed and unbiased environment in The Swedish School of Textiles in Borås, the participants’ felt comfortable and relaxed (Trost 2010). The permission to record the interviews were asked before every face-to-face interviews and the possibility to be anonymous was provided to all participants (Bryman 2012). The researcher of this study was not capable to ask follow-up questions directly to the participants who wished to be interviewed via emails. The opportunity to ask further questions was availed to those participants. Personal information about the participants was not asked during the interviews since they were not considered being useful. Before every interview, selective information about the subject and the purpose of the study was send to the participants in order for them to understand what the subject of the study is about (see Appendix 1 & 2). Too detailed or precise information was avoided, as there is a risk that excessively information can influence the participants’ mind-sets, answers, and opinions (Bryman 2012). How the participants’ answers are going to be used in the study was also mentioned to the participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Dalen 2008).

2.2.3 Secondary data

The secondary data is based on litterateurs, articles and journals that have been selected on The University of Borås different kinds of electronic databases, such as BADA and Summon but also Google Scholar. The researcher of this study used keywords such as “authenticity”, “transparency”, “socio-cultural forces”, “business models” and “consumer new demand” in order to find the most relevant litterateurs. Information about
the chosen fashion companies where found at their own website. The litterateurs were selected according to the study’s purpose and research questions. Lecture presentations have been used from the course Art of Business that took place of The Swedish School of Textiles during February until Mars 2014.

2.3 Companies

The selected fashion companies are located in Sweden and fulfil the majority of the criteria (see p. 19). The aim has been to interview the founders of these newly established fashion companies and ask questions that are connected to the purpose and research questions of this study (see Appendix 2). Snowball sampling have been used since the researcher of this study have selected and made contact with those fashion companies that were considered being the most suitable for the purpose of this study. Some of these fashion companies, for instance Conceptual Tailors were recommended while other companies such as Uniforms for the Dedicated and Black Book have been chosen via the purposive sampling since the researcher of this thesis previously were familiar with them. A disadvantage with the purposive sampling is that the results gained from the study are difficult to generalize to other situations. However, since the participants’ statements, opinions and reflections are in focus, the researcher considers those being valid, adequate and reliable (Bryman 2012). Simultaneously the conclusions from the study can be applied and used as a pilot study or used as inspiration for further research in the research area (Larsen 2009).

2.3.1 Black Book

The founder André Lorenz Stock established the fashion company Black Book in 2009 without education, experience or start up capital. The company’s idea was to sew home made label on white T-shirts, and later sell the items via the company’s web shop. Shortly, Black Book became famous among fashion bloggers and during 2010, Black Book made a collaboration with Hennes & Mauritz (H&M). The aim of the collaboration was to design organic T-Shirts with Black Book’s famous leopard printed logo. This collaboration was considered being a milestone for Black Book since it made the label famous.

Black Book offers high quality stylish items accessible to everyone. All of the garments from Black Book are produced in Turkey where the company continuously visits and controls the factories and suppliers in order to ensure no child labor or other anomalies occur. By offering high quality products, it adds longevity and durability to the garments
the life cycle of the production, which is considered being environmental friendly (Bbook.se 2014). The researcher of this study had an email interview with the founder of Black Book, André Lorenz Stock.

2.3.2 Uniforms for the Dedicated

Uniforms for the Dedicated were founded in 2007 and offers classic clothes with the inspiration of tailoring with a modern twist. The fabrics, contrasts, details and cuts are considered being significant attributes. Offering fashionable and stylish yet comfortable men’s wear is what Uniforms of the Dedicated is famous for (Uniformsforthededicated.com 2014a). The founders of the company have included the followings in their business model; firstly, they promise that the products have high quality and are comfortable. Secondly, the productions techniques are environmentally friendly and sustainable, and lastly, Uniforms for the Dedicates always strive to do better (Ibid). This means to be honest to the customers and changing the fashion industry towards sustainability, which also is one of the company’s fundamentals building blocks (Uniformsforthededicated.com 2014b). Being sustainable is permeated throughout the whole organization, from design of the garments, production techniques and supply chain to sharing knowledge to their customer in how to become sustainable in their everyday life (Uniformsforthededicated.com 2014c). In 2013 Uniforms for the Dedicated opened The Collection Library where selected items from their latest collection are availed for short-time lease. The aim of this idea is to provide an alternative for consumers, instead of buying a garment and merely use it a few times. “When you are undecided, need the product only for a short period of time or just that one special party, the best option is to rent” (Uniformsforthededicated.com 2014d). An email interview took place with Michael Lind, one of the founders of Uniforms for the Dedicated.

2.3.3 Conceptual Tailors

Conceptual Tailors was launched in 2006, under the name SOM Concept. The company have decided to re-launch its concept in 2015 with the name Conceptual Tailors. The concept is to produce and sell standardised and customized fashion products on demand. The focus is on offering products that reflect the consumers current needs and by producing products after each consumer’s unique measurements, its provides a higher customer satisfaction. The company described to call themselves for “The modern Savile Row”, meaning that the inspiration comes from British traditional men’s tailoring. Other
values of Conceptual Tailors are on individuality, personal experience and service and high-quality products.

The company’s applied production technique is called “One Piece Flow” and is a crucial factor in Conceptual Tailors business model. The production is divided into two sections; cutting and sewing. Experienced craftsmen and craftswomen are making all of the customized products and have an outstanding knowledge in craftsmanship and production techniques. By producing on demand, no sales and no excess will occur. The manufactures and productions occur locally, which is the company’s environmental friendly approach. The products are being sold via retail channels. Christopher Gustafsson, one of the co-founders and Finance Director for Conceptual Tailors, participated in this study where the interview was occurred via email.

2.3.4 ÆTHER

The label ÆTHER offers women’s wear and are based between London and Stockholm. Neliana Fuenmayor and Paula Maso established ÆTHER since they shared a common passion for fashion and sustainability. The founders wanted to offer products that have “a balance between style and sustainability” and consequently offer apparel through exclusive limited editions with a forward-thinking design (Aetherstudios.co.uk 2014). Offering products with a feeling of timelessness and by designing creative products that reflects the current time is one of the fundamental building blocks for ÆTHER. Ensuring every product is environmental friendly and sustainable is significant for the company and therefore the manufacturing process is as local as possible. The co-owners closely monitor and control every step in the production techniques to ensure the quality of their products. The founders of ÆTHER want to share information about the company different kinds of processes such as the production techniques (Ibid). In their website, they clearly state about transparency and mentions that all of the information about the suppliers, origin of the fabrics and manufacturing processes are provided to the consumers, “we love to see brands that are honest about their purpose and we want to be that way too.” (Ibid) By including Digital Textile Printing, overproduction and water waste are avoided. Also offering high quality products is included in the company’s business models. By producing products with high quality, the durability and life cycle of the items increases. Not following trends and focus on designing timeless products is another significant part for ÆTHER. Another approach to become sustainable,

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3 Conceptual Tailors Business plan (request on demand)
4 Ibid
environmental friendly and avoid overproduction is offering pre-orders (Ibid). An email interview was conducted with the co-founder Paula Maso.

2.4 Criteria

The focus of this study is on newly established fashion companies in Sweden that have been influenced by the two socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, and made them an integral part of their company and way of doing business. In order to be considered as “newly established fashion company”, the company should have been established during the beginning of 21st century, but most importantly, they must have integrated a sustainable and environmental friendly approach in their organization already from the start. The company should fulfil the majority, preferably all of the following criteria;

- The founders of the company have been influenced by the current discussions about the fashion industry’s negative impact on the environmental. In a certain extent, this is the base and the reason why the founders established the company.
- The fashion company are producing sustainable and fashionable collections with influences from craftsmanship and hand skills. The designs of the garments are creative and should reflect consumers’ current need.
- The fashion company as a whole are continuously educating and encouraging their consumers about how to become more sustainable in their daily life.
- The fashion company are active in reducing the company’s negative environmental impact.
- The fashion companies are using marketing as a way of informing their costumers about their sustainable products.
- Authenticity and transparency are one of the fundamental building blocks that are permeated throughout the organization.

2.5 Experts

Interviewing experts and professors at The Swedish School of Textiles in Borås were conducted since they have a unique knowledge in this study field. These individuals have been selected since they have exceptional knowledge and understand how authenticity and transparency become significant elements in the Western society. This knowing is considered beneficial for this study as it provides an increased understanding about the influences of authenticity and transparency.
2.5.1 David Smith

Smith is a textile designer but works at adjunct professor at Parsons The New School for Design in New York City. Furthermore, Smith is writing his PhD at The Swedish School of Textiles in Borås. His research is focused on small/local/artisanal textile production and use in the context of slow and sustainable fashion. A face-to-face interview with Smith occurred during May 2014 at The Swedish School of Textiles in Borås.

2.5.2 Hanna Wittrock

Wittrock is a social anthropologist and is currently a teacher in Department of Fashion Science at Lund University, Helsingborg Campus. Wittrock also have experience and have been teacher for the Department of Service Management and Service Studies at Lund University, Helsingborg Campus. The interview was occurred via an email.

2.5.3 Simonetta Carbonaro

Carbonaro is an expert in consumer psychology, strategic marketing and design management and have researched in consumer ethos and behavior. Since 2002, Carbonaro have been a professor in Design Management and Humanistic Marketing at The Swedish School of Textiles in Borås. She has an excellent knowledge in socio-cultural forces that have been influenced by new cultural movements, societal changes in the society and development of new lifestyles (Wiser-quarter.org 2014). Since 10 years ago, Carbonaro have been a partner and a member of the advisory board of the Swiss Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute for marketing and social studies and also been teaching at the postgraduate design school Domus Academy in Milan. Carbonaro is also a partner at a business consulting firm based in Germany called REALISE. Other positions that Carbonaro has are co-founder and member of the European Cultural Parliament where arts, cultures and other discussions and debate connected to democracy and culture (Ibid). A face-to-face interview with Carbonaro took place during February 2014 at in The Swedish School of Textiles in Borås.

2.6 Research quality

Reliability and validity is two significant terms that determines the credibility and quality of a study (Bryman 2012). Validity has been embedded in every step of this study as the findings of this study reflect the participant’s statements (Bryman & Bell 2011). The reliability of this study is high since the researcher of this study ensured that the findings
and conclusions are reflecting the participants’ reality and worldview. This approach is most suitable when conducting quantitative research method (Bryman 2012). Since the empirical data is based on words and not statistics, this research focus more on validity. Reliability means whether the findings of a study can be repeatable in another situation (Bryman & Bell 2011). In this study, reliability has been conducted during the interviews. However, the participants’ statements might vary in another context, the researcher of this study is aware of this weakness. This indicates that the collected empirical data of this study is difficult to transfer and replicate to other similar situations (Bryman 2012). The mentioned disadvantage has been solved by clarifying and exactly described the participants’ statements in a reflective way. Quotations from the participants have been used in the analysis chapter in order to reinforce and illuminate the researchers interpretations. As mentioned in previous sections, interviews have been conducted with the founders or co-founders of the participated fashion companies. How they have been influenced by authenticity and transparency are the fundamental building blocks of their companies. Based on these findings, the reliability can be ensured since changing the entire company from the base are likely not going to happen (Bryman 2012). Another approach to ensure the reliability of this study is that the working process of this study has been described thoroughly and the researcher strived to be transparent (Silverman 1997; Bryman 2012). Additionally, possible misunderstandings were examined during the interviews. This approach was considered being crucial since the researchers aimed to be as objective as possible and provide a realistic and accurate description of the collected empirical data (Brink 1987; Bryman 2012). Other kinds of inconveniences that might have occurred during the interviews were that the participants responded in a way that they though would satisfy and please the researcher. This is called social desirability and has been avoided since the focus has been on the participants’ answers. Alternatively, the participants might have felt uncomfortable during the interviews. These kinds of situations could have had a negative effect on their answers (Brink 1987, Bryman 2012). The researcher strived to reduce and minimize these unfortunates by given the participants the opportunity to respond via emails, telephone or other communication tool. The face-to-face interviews took place in a neutral place, which made the participants feel comfortable and relaxed, consequently the social desirability were avoided. The possibility to not comment and reply to any questions that would have feels difficult was provided to the participants (Bryman 2012). Error the empirical data was additionally avoided since the researcher carefully selected newly established fashion companies that have build their business models around the socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency (Brink 1987). By using quotations, risk for error in the empirical data was also reduced (Bryman 2012).
3. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework is divided into three categories. Firstly, authenticity and transparency is being described. What is considered authentic (real) and inauthentic (fake) products are also discussed. In the second category presents the characteristics of innovators behind companies, craftsmanship, and production techniques and the supply chain. The following section is about marketing strategies such as storytelling, and how authenticity and transparency can be implemented as marketing strategies. This chapter ends with a summary of the theoretical framework.

3.1 Authenticity

“There is no such as inauthentic experience because experiences happen inside us.”

Gilmore and Pine (2007) p. 81

Authenticity is one of the new socio-cultural forces that the public are longing for, however, the definition of authenticity is vague and can vary between individuals (Gilmore & Pine 2007, Beverland 2009). Many researchers have attempted to identify the term authenticity, cultural analyst King (2003) argues that nothing in our society is actually authentic since the beginning of the humankind, everything around us have been adapted and reshaped to fulfil mankind’s needs. The author Peterson (1997) has established a clarification of the term authenticity, and says that authenticity is socially constructed and can change across time. This indicates that a product or service that is considered authentic in another context be inauthentic and ubiquitous. This definition might be in consistent with Gilmore and Pine (2007), they deem that authenticity can vary and differ between individuals. Beverland (2009) and Schmeltz (2012) share the same definition with previous researchers and mentions that authenticity is socially constructed and an expression of the consumer self-image, therefore authenticity is reflected by social norms. Burnett and Hutton (2007) stress that authenticity goes hand in hand with trustworthiness. Authenticity has also been identified as worthy of acceptance, false or imitation and conforming to an original claims Cappannelli and Cappannelli (2004). Beverland (2009) mentions that when authenticity is connected to a certain time and place and it reaffirms tradition.

The above stated definition of authenticity indicates that many researchers have trying to
find a clear meaning of the term. However, since the broad explanations of the term consequently makes the definition vague and individual. This means that distinguishing and determining what is authenticity (real) and inauthenticity (fake), are also blurry. The discussions about what are authentic and inauthentic in our society have significantly increased during the late decades (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Some people consider Disneyworld as authentic while others argue by saying that Disneyworld is artificially staged and therefore are highly inauthentic (Gilmore & Pine 2007). Factors in our society indicates that people are urging to see more authentic attributes, even though they are aware that these attributes are somehow artificial and fictional (Beverland 2009). For instance, reality Television programs, where regular people participate and share their daily life has become popular state Rose and Wood (2005). The viewers are aware that many of the scenes are rehearsed, however they are still want to see other people’s “real” daily life (Gilmore & Pine 2007). Other authors, for instance Newman (1997) and Beverland (2009) means that the term authentic is individual and goes hand in hand with culture, in order words, authenticity occurs inside of us. This indicates that one person translates a product as authentic, while another person can consider the same product inauthentic.

As explained in this section, the definition of authenticity is blurry, individual and socially constructed. The term is based on factors such as heritage, culture and personal experience (Peterson 1997; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). In order to avoid confusion and misunderstanding, in this study, the definition of authenticity is equal with being “honest”, “real”, “trustworthy” and associated with “heritage” (Peterson 1997; Cappannelli & Cappannelli 2004; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). The following section focus on how companies can use authenticity in their organization in order to gain consumers trust, build brand value and the consumers perception of the term. Explanations are given in order to understand consumers yearning for authentic attributes.

### 3.1.1 The influence of authenticity

By merely establishing the definition of authenticity, it does not profoundly illuminate explanations and reasons why authenticity is soughed after in the Western society. Recently, numerous researchers have become interested to study how authenticity has increasingly influenced consumers’ mindset and consumer behaviour. Findings from these studies indicate that consumers in the Western Society are yearning for authentic attributes.

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5 Extreme Makeover, The Hills or The Bachelor
attributes (Boyle 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Davies & Ryals 2010). The researchers Arnould and Price (2000) have identified three elements, globalization, deterritorialization and hyperreality, of today’s postmodern society that can explain the consumers longing for authenticity. The first element is globalization and implies that during the last decades many local companies have chosen to expand their organization globally. The researchers mean that this situation has made customers to experience difficulties to understand their place in a global world. Holt (2002) has also addressed this matter and suggests that companies should connect more with local regions as it enhances the feeling of authenticity. Deterritorialization occurred when people started to immigrate to other countries with different cultures and traditions. These people are now experiencing a feeling of disconnection to the own culture deem Arnould and Price (2000). This relation to the individuals’ original culture and tradition is meaningful as it shapes the personal identity. The last element is called hyperreality, indicating the confusion among people to determine the authenticity (real) from the inauthenticity (fake). The researchers emphasize that the combinations of these three elements can explain why consumers in the Western society are yearning to see authentic attributes and also searching for cues to connect with collective identity.

Other researchers, such as Beverland (2009) have studied authenticity and its influence on the Western society, from a consumer perspective. Beverland have studied how consumers judge and estimate company’s authenticity and identified three attributes; quality leadership, heritage and sincerity. The first attribute suggests the innovators of a company and their main passion is to offer the finest quality material and constantly meeting customers’ requirements. Meanwhile heritage is associated to a specific time, nation and culture. The last attribute, sincerity, indicates that the company fulfil the stated values and promises. If disconnections happen between these attributes, inauthenticity (fake) may occur. Beverland deem that in order to provide a feeling of authenticity, it should be a clear linkage between these three attributes. However, providing feeling of authenticity can be manipulated, cues added on products and services can stimulate the sense of authenticity. Beverland also says that brand value, is vital as it helps to build brand authenticity. Burnett and Hutton (2007) also have address the importance of including authenticity in companies from both consumer- and corporate perspective. The researchers mention that a company’s authenticity is successful when meeting consumers’ three identified needs; knowledge, authenticity and personal experiences. Companies should invest in creating positive experiences by providing a sense of authenticity. Knowledge have become to be a crucial tool in current society where increasing numbers of people are actively becoming involved in gaining specific
knowledge about different kinds of topics, such as environment, health, social issues and so on. This knowledge is used during the purchase process deem Burnett and Hutton (2007). Since authenticity is strongly associated with being trustworthy, consumers gained knowledge is applied when determining how trustworthy a product’s authenticity is. The combination of knowledge and authenticity shapes the personal experiences as experiences are connected to the humans’ emotions and perceptions. This means that companies are able to create positive experiences by establishing relationships with costumers. This will stimulate and affect their knowledge and increase the feeling of authenticity mentions Burnett and Hutton.

Despite the vague definition of authenticity, it can be said that authenticity is the new consumer desire in the Western society (Boyle 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Davies & Ryals 2010). Different kind of researcher have studied authenticity and consequently provided suggestions and strategies for companies to how include authenticity into their organization. Arnould and Price (2000) have identified three elements, globalization, deterritorialization and hyperreality, of today’s postmodern society that can explain the consumers longing for authenticity. Beverland (2009) have studied how consumers judge company’s authenticity and identified three attributes; quality leadership, heritage and sincerity. The researcher Burnett and Hutton (2007) deem that including authenticity in companies is successful once it satisfies consumers’ three identified needs; knowledge, authenticity and personal experiences. Along with authenticity, integrating transparency is significant deem several authors (Schemltz 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007). The next part focus on the definition of transparency and explanations are provided about the central role of transparency.

3.2 Transparency

“Transparency has been the key to honest practice since early times.”


Different kinds of researcher have studied the term transparency and stressed the importance of transparency in a company. Even though, the majority of researchers agree about the value of transparency, the definition of this term is obscure (Schemltz 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007). Ball (2009) has identified transparency as open decision-making, accountability and openness. Once transparency is implemented, the company express and convey a feeling of openness and honestly, since documents are being available to the
public. The aim to render transparency is to improve and increase the information and trust among consumers. Implementing transparency can also indicate that the companies’ secrecy is reluctantly relinquished mentions Ball. Burnett and Hutton (2007) suggest that transparency means being honest and stimulates integrity. The authors recommend companies to apply the paradox of transparency, meaning building the organization from inside out. This can be achieved by encouraging the members of staff to become advocates and promote the brand during interaction with consumers. When having an ongoing and constant dialogue about the company’s vision, business operations, production techniques and other kinds of systems, internally and externally, the company is going to be considered transparent. Alternative method to accomplish transparency is to be aware of the current and desired brand personality. Burnett and Hutton also mention that once a company have identified the brand personality, it should be communicated both internal to the employees and external to the costumers. The interaction between the two dimensions will increase the felling of transparency since merely one kind of information is being transmitted. MacLean (2011) states that some companies’ emphasis excessively on how to look good to the consumers and the problems that occurs inside the company is neglected. Real and honest transparency starts from the inside of a company and should have a clear and unblemished communication. If the internal transparency is lacking, the external transparency will also be affected negatively state MacLean.

Different kinds of researcher have tried to define the vague definition of transparency (Schemltz 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007). In order to facilitate the understanding about the definition of transparency, in this study, the term is equal to openness, open decision-making and honest (Schemltz 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007, Ball 2009). To be transparency, the company makes some documents available to the public. This approach will make the company more open and honestly (Ball 2009). By applying the paradox of transparency, the company’s transparency is build from the inside out, indicating that the members of staff will promote the brand during interaction with consumers. This shows that transparency can be both internally and externally (Burnett & Hutton 2007; MacLean 2011). However, many researchers argue that the combination of authenticity and transparency is crucial (Gilmore & Pine 2007). This matter will be presented in the section below.
3.3 The combination of authenticity and transparency

“The two elements go hand in hand.”


The two socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, have often been described together, even though each term are independently strong. This means that companies can be authentic without being transparent and vice versa. Companies’ authenticity is based on making associations with a specific culture and tradition in order to shape the consumers personal identity (Beverland 2009). When adding values and attributes to a specific time, place and region, consumers can identify themselves with the brand and the feeling of authenticity will arise. The companies’ authenticity can escalate when making associations with the local attributes, even though the company is operating globally (Holt 2002; Arnould & Price 2000). Consequently, companies can also be transparent without being authentic. Making certain corporate documents official, being honest and open about the production techniques and the supply chain is a few examples of being transparent without implementing authenticity. Additionally, have an open communication and discussion, both internally and externally can make a company transparent without being authentic (Holt 2002; Burnett & Hutton 2007; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Ball 2009; MacLean 2011; Schmeltz 2012).

As discussed and demonstrated above, the two socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency are independently and individually robust, but the combination of these two are essential since they compliment each other. Anderberg and Morris (2006) emphasize on the importance of authenticity and transparency in companies and mentions that consumers perceive the company as trustworthy once these forces are combined. When making documents official, meaning being transparent, the authenticity of the company is also being demonstrated (Ball 2009). The companies’ authenticity becomes more effective with the implementation of transparency. For instance, the companies authentic an attribution to a specific culture and tradition becomes stronger if the company openly demonstrates their productions techniques and supply chain (Holt 2002; Anderberg & Morris 2002) Burnett & Hutton 2007; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Ball 2009; MacLean 2011; Schmeltz 2012). As mentioned, the combination of authenticity and transparency is powerful, however, the implementation of them should be applied in a suitable way. If the founders or innovators of the companies do not understand the importance of these two forces, they are useless. The characteristics of innovators and their ability to understand these forces are discussed in the following section.
3.4 The innovators

“Behind authentic brands are dedicated people, led by passionate, imperfect leaders.”

“This ‘warts ’n all’ approach to leadership enhances the authenticity of the brand.”

Beverland (2009) mentions that the feeling of authenticity has its original source deeply in the innovators of the company. These innovators have established authentic companies and have founded a relationship to a certain culture, tradition, nation and region. By belong to a community that have culture and tradition, is what these innovators are looking to emerge. This is a result of people experiencing loss of their tradition and culture deems Beverland. Today’s consumers also feel difficulties to find their place in a global world; making authentic attributes highly attractive since authenticity is associated with heritage (Arnould & Price 2000; Beverland 2009). What companies with an authentic approach are providing to their consumers is the connection to the specific nation and its tradition, culture and identity (Holt 2002). This indicates that integrating authenticity into the newly established companies’ business models is not merely a strategy approach; the innovators behind the brand have other intentions. It is vital that authentic companies continuously makes local attributes and not lose these connections, even though the company may expand their business and operate globally (Holt 2002; Beverland 2009). Another characteristic that innovators of newly established companies have is being creative and innovative state Deiser (2011). An increasingly number of newly established companies are being innovative by focusing on design, which is a huge competitive advantages and differentiator compared with similar companies. This is a positive transformation since during last decades; innovators have had focused on financial aspects where the creativity and innovation was somehow forgotten. However, recently a growth in science indicates an evolutionary movement towards a consciousness about sustainability, ethical and social aspects (Goswami 2009; Deiser 2011). Fashion companies are able to quickly response to different kinds of changes and trends in the world, for those reasons, creativity and innovation are essential elements (Kisfaludy 2008).

Additional feature that makes authentic brands and their leaders exceptional are their understanding regarding relationships, both internal with the member of staff and the suppliers, and external to the costumers mentions Beverland (2009). Since costumers are searching for companies with similar interest and passion as themselves, the employees’
passion is considered being a significant element. In most cases, leaders of an authentic company employees’ people with comparable passion and interest that is coherent with the company’s values. By establishing a mutual understanding with member of staff concerning the company’s values, this will consequently influence customers. Beverland (2009) state that the leaders ability and enthusiasm to inspire the entire organization is significant since it provide a feeling of authenticity. Other vital characteristics with innovative and creative leadership are the ability to understand consumers desire and offer products in a reflective way. These individuals have been influenced and stimulated by all of the factors in our society, for instance; environmental, economical, political and social issues, technological developments and multicultural effects (Kisfaludy 2008).

It is clear that the characteristics of innovators behind the companies play a significant role. Their ability to translate the current socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, and consequently offers creative products that match consumers’ newfound demand are exceptional (Arnould & Price 2000; Beverland 2009). The innovators focus on producing authentic and transparent products that is connected to the specific nation and its tradition, culture and identity (Holt 2002). Also their leadership skills are special where they understand the importance of internal and external relationship (Beverland 2009). However, it is significant that the offering products contain elements of authenticity and transparency. A strategy to do so is by including cues of craftsmanship and hand skills into the offering products.

### 3.4.1 Craftsmanship and hand skills

The term “craft” means consumption activity where the product both is made and designed by the same person (Campbell 2005). Hanks (1979) deem that the verb to the term “craft” indicates making products that required hand skills. When the word “craft” is applied, it refers to activities where the craftsman or craftswomen are using their hands in order to produce. Embroidery, weaving, hand block printing and so on are just a few examples of hand skills activities. A significant element in hands skills is that the craftsman or craftswomen controls every step in the manufacturing processes. This means that craftsmanship is associated with products that are being produced by hand, instead of machine (Campbell 2005).

Currently, craftsmanship products are the future trend since consumers are yearning after the feeling of the preindustrial time mentions Minney (2011). An existing interest in craftsmanship among consumers can be seen where hand skills products are sought after.
This can be considered as a reaction towards the conventional fashion companies and their mass production techniques, encouragement to mass consumption and environmental degradation. A change can be seen where consumers are searching for meaningful factors, such as craftsmanship products, that can positively contribute to the society, additionally be gentle to the environment (Campbell 2005; Minney 2011). Handicraft production adds value of longevity and durability regarding the life cycle of the production, which is environmentally friendly. This indicates that handicrafts are an alternative for consumers who appreciate the art of craftsmanship and hand skills (Minney 2011). These statements are not representative, meaning that not all consumers are yearning for products with craftsmanship attributes, however a growing interest among consumer can be seen. Campbell (2005) claims also that since consumers currently desire a simpler lifestyle where they are able to connect a certain culture and tradition, craftsmanship products contain elements that respond to this desire.

A acknowledge of this future trend have been used as a source of inspiration and a guidance for many young designers and fashion companies. By implementing elements of craftsmanship into their collections, they are responding to consumers’ new demand (Minney 2011). According to MacCannell (1976), consumers consider handicraft products as authenticity as it is associated with cultural and traditional elements. Companies are adding tradition and cultural values, in form of craftsmanship, to the offering products as an approach to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency (Holt 2002; Arnould & Price 2000). Beverland (2009) state that the consumers’ emotional connections with craftsmanship provide a feeling of high service. This implies that craftsmanship and hand skills are significant elements when demonstrating a company’s authenticity and transparency. Many newly established companies with an authentic and transparent approach prefer hand skills since the physical work do not require oil in order to produce. This approach can be seen as a way to demonstrate companies’ active strategies to reduce global warming (Minney 2011).

Craftsmanship and hand skills have been identified being the future trend in the fashion industry since consumers are yearning after the feeling of the preindustrial time (Minney 2011). Craftsmanship and hand skills are strongly associated with cultural and traditions, it can be said that craftsmanship and hand skills are considered being authentic (MacCannell 1976; Campbell 2005). Craftsmen or craftswomen controls every step in the manufacturing processes, craftsmanship is associated with transparency (Campbell 2005). Conclusions can be drawn that craftsmanship and hand skills can be used as a strategy for fashion companies to be considered authentic and transparency. This strategy means that
by including cues of craftsmanship and hand skills into the products, the company will automatically be considered authentic and transparent (Beverland 2009).

Along with including cues of craftsmanship and hand skills to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency, integrating suitable production techniques and supply chain are consequently vital. The next part focus and describe the essence of this subject.

3.4.2 Production techniques and supply chain

A huge number of fashion companies have relocated their manufacture and productions processes to developing countries since they have cheaper human labour and fewer regulations regarding environmental laws (Minney 2011). Supply chain is a complex and hard to control as it contains all of the divisions in “fulfilling a customer request, including the suppliers, transporters, warehouses, retailers and customers themselves” (Cox 1999 p.168) Since the production is outsourced, many companies are not aware of the productions negative environmental impact. Losing track of the raw materials origin is another factor that caused the falling appreciation of the company’s authenticity and transparency (Koplin 2005).

In order to be considered transparent, including traceability in the supply chain is necessary. Traceability means finding the current location of a certain product and controlling every step in the supply chain in order to locate the origin of the materials, named backward tracing. Monitoring the finish product at the end of the supply chain is called forward tracing (Fritz & Schiefer 2009). Integrating traceability in the entire supply chain is significant as the company’s increased the control of the raw materials origin and is able to access data about the products mentions Lakhal et al (2008). Information gathered from traceability could be communicated internally in the organization and externally to the consumers (Pagell & Wu 2009). In order to make supply chain and logistics processes environmental friendly and sustainable, collaborating with the suppliers is recommended. Together with the suppliers, the company can take environmental actions and approaches in order to find long-terms sustainable solutions (De Brito et al 2008; Failsal 2010). Sustainable approach and action in the entire supply chain are required and enhance the company’s transparency claims Caniato et al (2012). Information about the outsourced suppliers, their production techniques, spillage and negative environmental impacts, supply chain and so on are crucial and increases the feeling of authenticity and transparency (Ibid).
It can be said that including traceability in the supply chain and production techniques are necessary (Fritz & Schiefer 2009). The increased control over the raw materials makes the company trustworthy, a word that is connected to authenticity. Information from traceability in the supply chain and production techniques can be used both internally to members of staff and externally to consumers (Pagell & Wu 2009). This strategy ought be integrated in the business models as it enhances company’s authenticity and transparency. Another approach to do so is via marketing strategies, which is the essence of the next section.

### 3.5 Marketing strategy

Using suitable marketing strategies are significant for companies as it works as a way to communicate with the consumers (Azar 2011). By choosing the right kind of marketing strategy, companies can establish and remain long-term relationships with their consumers (Fader, Hardie & Lee 2005). The following section focuses on marketing strategies that can be applied in order to demonstrate the company’s authentic and transparent attributes.

#### 3.5.1 Storytelling

“*A brand’s roots matter*”

Beverland (2009) p. 101

Stories have been a central part of people’s life since the development of languages (Burnett & Hutton 2007; Beverland 2009; Heijbel 2010). Stories are a powerful tool since it stimulates emotions and trigger the human’s senses (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant 2008). This will provide positive associations, meaning that consumers will have a positive mindset about the company and its products. Recently, more and more companies have started to implement stories in their business model as a marketing strategy as it effects the consumers’ emotions (Fog et al 2005). The researchers McLellan (2006) and Kadembo (2012) deem that storytelling can be used as a way to convey and communicate about the companies’ core values, brand identity and visions, in a way that is understandable to the consumers. Burnett and Hutton (2007) state that when no other marketing strategies are effective, storytelling will be. Storytelling can also be used in order to create and associate the company and its products with a feeling of heritage, culture, place and tradition. The stories can also be used when inducting the consumers
into the community of the brand. In order words, storytelling is strongly associated with authenticity since many people relate authenticity with heritage (Burnett & Hutton 2007; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Urde (2003) and Aaker (2010) also emphasize that storytelling can be integrate as a communication tool, especially for companies with a specific history and heritage. The researchers suggest that companies that lack these elements should connect their storytelling with something ancient as it increases the feeling of authenticity. Burnett and Hutton (2007) state that consumers appreciate these associations, since they are able to connect better with the company. Beverland (2009) stress that consumers embrace stories from brands in order to create a feeling of authenticity. In this matter, brands play an important role as it provides an opportunity for consumers to reconnect to a certain place, time and a mutual culture. This demonstrates that brands can help consumers to reshape and find their identity (Postrel 2003). These elements might also enhance the feeling of the company’s authenticity, which is a competitive advantage mentions Blombäck and Brunninge (2009). Mathews and Wacker (2008) claims that the companies’ authenticity can also be demonstrated by script marketing into the storytelling. The researchers mean that the advantages of script marketing can function as a differentiation method where the company discerns against comparable companies. However, all not storytelling can be successful deem Neumeier (2003) and furthermore mentions that a company’s storytelling is successful and effective when no errors have occurred in the stories. This will lead to positive consumer experience, which is the most effective and essence of a great brand value state Neumeier. Dennisdotter and Axenbrant (2008) claim that the authenticity of a company is a sum of different parts of the organization. This indicates that merely one part or element of the company’s authenticity is vulnerable but a combination of authentic attributes is powerful (Ibid).

Different kinds of researchers emphasize the importance of storytelling and deem that it is the most suitable marketing strategy to implement when communicating and demonstrating the company’s authenticity (Burnett & Hutton 2007; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Storytelling stimulated consumers’ emotions and enhance their experiences, additionally facilitating the connection to the company (Burnett & Hutton 2007; Dennisdotter & Axenbrant 2008; Beverland 2009; Heijbel 2010). However, no errors should occur in the company’s storytelling as it decreases the sense of authenticity (Neumeier 2003). For those reasons, the internal and external storytelling should be coherent, which is the essence of next section.
3.5.2 Internal and external storytelling

According to Dennisdotter and Axenbrant (2008) storytelling can be implemented to convey stories about the brand, both internally to the member of staff and externally to customer (Fog et al 2005). Beverland (2009) and Spear and Roper (2013) also highlights that the company’s storytelling and mentions that it should be external as marketing communication and internal, the company’s should act in a reflective way as their stories. Additionally, storytelling can enhance and reinforce the consumer experience about the company (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant 2008). Strong connection between the internal and external storytelling will reinforce and enhance the essence of the stories mentions Beverland (2009). However, the company’s storytelling should contain elements that consumers can relate to (Burnett & Hutton 2007).

It can be said that storytelling as a marketing strategy is efficient when there exists a coherent between the internal and external stories. This indicates that the company’s storytelling and actions should balance (Beverland 2009; Spear & Roper 2013). As mentioned in earlier section, companies are using storytelling as a marketing strategy to decrease the feeling of authenticity. However, several researchers suggest that by merely stating being authentic and transparent, the company are automatically marketing themselves. This indicates that the company’s authentic and transparent elements can be used as marketing strategy. This matter is profoundly described in the following part.

3.5.3 Authenticity and transparency as marketing strategies

Along with storytelling, authenticity and transparency can also be implemented as marketing strategies. According to Holt (2002), being an authentic company is considered being a postmodern branding technique. Making the company’s document accessible to the public, meaning being transparent, is also a way of empathizing the company’s authenticity. This can be perceived as marketing strategy since the publication is a form of advertisement mentions Ball (2009). When revealing significant documents, consumers’ trust towards a company increases and arises the likelihood to loyal consumption (Ibid). Gilmore and Pine (2007) state that it is crucial to be transparent in the publication of the company’s documents as it increases the likelihood of the company’s authenticity to be perceived as honest. Updating a previous product that is already considered being authentic can also stimulate the feeling of authenticity (Ibid). Beverland (2005 & 2009) suggest that fashion companies should draw associations and indications with something that is already considered authentic in the consumers’ mind-
sets, such as Harley Davidson motorcycle or 1950s American style. The consumer will automatically convey a feeling of authenticity for the company’s products. When making these kinds of associations, the company automatically draw attention to attributions that are well known to the consumers and merely this, can be a marketing approach mentions Beverland (2005 & 2009). Postrel (2003) also mentions that some brands, such as the new VW Beetle are an update of an older brand but the public considers this new model as authentic. Stating to be authentic might be a marketing strategy, such as the example above (Postrel 2003; Beverland 2005 & 2009). The reason is that consumers of today is yearning for authenticity and transparency (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009) and the companies are producing and marketing their products in a reflective way because people buy it! (Gilmore & Pine 2007 p.34).

Another strategy to create the feeling of authenticity and transparency is by given the consumers access to the behind-the-scenes processes and systems, such as providing traceability of the goods (Fritz & Schiefer 2009). Traceability is a form of authenticity and transparency since the company have all of the necessary information about the products that can be communicated via marketing strategies, in form of storytelling for instance (Lakhal et al 2008). This approach will make the company look less commercialized and reinforce the feeling of authenticity, which can increase the possibilities to stimulate consumption. That is one of the aims of marketing strategies deem Gilmore and Pine (2007). According to Anderberg and Morris (2006) authenticity should be in the core of the company and demonstrate this element in a reflecting way as a marketing strategy. This approach will conduce to an increase perspective in the consumers mind as real. Another way authenticity and transparency can be used marketing strategies is by the two-ways communication and dialogue with the consumers (Ibid). Two- ways communication can be implemented as identification factors where the companies are distinguish themselves from their competitors (Beverland 2009).

It can be said that authenticity and transparency contains elements of marketing strategy, this is interbraided in their definitions. Researchers suggest that making the company’s document accessible to the public and traceability is a form of marketing approach since the company’s authenticity and transparency are being demonstrated (Holt 2002; Ball 2009; Fritz & Schiefer 2009). Other researcher mentions that by updating or marking associations to something that is already recognizable to be authentic and transparent can also be a marketing strategy (Postrel 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Also by integrating two- ways communication to demonstrate the authenticity and transparency of a company is marketing approach (Anderberg & Morris 2006).
3.6 Summary of the theoretical framework

In order to facilitate the readers understanding and better appreciate how the different concepts, terms and studies mentioned in previous sections are connected to each other, the next section is a summary of the theoretical framework.

3.6.1 Authenticity and transparency

Many researchers have studied the two socio- cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, and emphasize the importance of them. These researchers deem these forces have affected consumers’ mind-sets and consumption behaviour, even though the definitions of them are vague and individual (Boyle 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Davies & Ryals 2010). The blurry definitions have also hampered when distinguishing the authentic (real) from the inauthentic (fake) attributes (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Several researchers have tried to define the term authenticity. Peterson (1997) claims that authenticity is socially constructed and can change across time, meanwhile Gilmore and Pine (2007) and Beverland (2009) associate authenticity with heritage, culture and personal experience. In this study, the definition of authenticity is equal to being “honest”, “real”, “trustworthy” and is associated with “heritage” (Peterson 1997; Cappannelli & Cappannelli 2004; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Along with authenticity, integrating transparency into company’s is also significant deem many researchers (Schemltz 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007). Even though the term transparency is vague, in this study, transparency is equal with openness, open decision-making and honest (Schemltz 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007, Ball 2009).

Several researchers have studied how and why authenticity and transparency has become important in the Western society. Studies shows that products from conventional companies do not satisfy consumers newfound desire for authenticity and transparency and recommend a redesign of the business model (Holt 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Martin & Schouten 2009; Minney 2011). By focusing on the two current socio- cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, a new type of business model can be developed where it better reflect and satisfy the consumers’ newfound consumption behaviour (Sebastiani et al 2013). Jackson (2011) argues that a new type of business models and economy system is required and necessary.

Several researchers have studied authenticity but have different outcomes (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). These researchers have developed strategies for companies to include authenticity into their organization. Arnould and Price (2000) state that the
publics longing for authenticity can be explained by three elements, *globalization*, *detrimentalization* and *hyperreality*. Beverland (2009) have studied how consumers judge company’s authenticity and developed three attributes; *quality leadership, heritage* and *sincerity*. Burnett and Hutton (2007) indicates that the company’s authenticity is successful when it satisfies consumers’ three identified needs; *knowledge, authenticity* and *personal experiences*. Many researchers have also different opinions on how companies can implement transparency. Ball (2009) mentions that a company is transparent once documents become available to the public. Burnett and Hutton (2007) state that companies ought apply the *paradox of transparency*, meaning that the company’s transparency is build from the inside out, indicating that the members of staff will promote the brand during interaction with consumers. MacLean (2011) deems that transparency can be applied both *internally* to employees and *externally* to the customers. Even though, authenticity and transparency are individually strong, the combination of them is recommended. Anderberg and Morris (2006) mentions that consumers perceive companies as trustworthy once these forces are combined. By making documents official, meaning being transparency, the authenticity of the company is also being demonstrated (Ball 2009). The companies’ authenticity becomes more effective with the implementation of transparency. For instance, when a company’s authenticity is associated with a specific culture and tradition, the transparency also being demonstrated since the company openly demonstrates their productions techniques and supply chain (Holt 2002; Anderberg & Morris 2002) Burnett & Hutton 2007; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Ball 2009; MacLean 2011; Schmeltz 2012).

### 3.6.2 How to demonstrate authenticity and transparency

Since the purpose of this study is to investigate how socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, have become integral parts of newly established fashion companies’ business models in Sweden, the *characteristics of innovators* behind the companies are crucial. The innovators ability to understand and translate the two socio-cultural forces is a vital characteristic. Establishing companies that offers innovative and creative products that reflects consumers newfound desire are other important characteristics (Kisfaludy 2008). Additional feature that makes innovators/ founders of newly established companies exceptional, are their understanding regarding relationships, both *internal* with the member of staff and the suppliers, and *external* to the costumers. By employing people that shares the same passion and interest is significant as employees influence this to the customers. Innovators ability to inspire the entire organization is meaningful as it
provides a feeling of authenticity (Beverland 2009). Another approach to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency is by including cues of *craftsmanship* and hand skills into the design of the garments. Minney (2011) mentions that craftsmanship and hand skills are the future trend in the fashion industry as consumers are yearning after the feeling of the preindustrial time. MacCannell (1976) and Campbell (2005) state that craftsmanship and hand skills are strongly associated with cultural and tradition, it can be said that craftsmanship and hand skills are considered being authentic. When a craftsmen or craftswomen are controlling very steps in the production techniques and supply chain is a indicator of transparency (Campbell 2005). It can be said that craftsmanship and hand skills can be used as a strategy for fashion companies to empathize their authenticity and transparency (Beverland 2009). Other strategy to stress the company’s authenticity and transparency is by including traceability in the supply chain and production techniques deem Fritz and Schiefer (2009). Control over the raw materials makes the company seem trustworthy, a word that defines authenticity. The information from the traceability can be used both *internally* to members of staff and *externally* to consumers, which enhances company’s authenticity and transparency (Pagell & Wu 2009).

The right kind of marketing strategy is crucial when demonstrating the company’s authenticity and transparency. Many researchers mention that in this case, *storytelling* is the most suitable marketing strategy (Burnett & Hutton 2007; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Storytelling is used to create and associate the company and its products with a feeling of heritage, culture, place and tradition. In order words, storytelling is strongly associated with authenticity since many people relate authenticity with heritage (Burnett & Hutton 2007; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Urde (2003) and Aaker (2010) suggest that companies should connect their storytelling with something ancient, thereby the feeling of authenticity increases. By adding *script marketing* into the storytelling, the companies’ authenticity can also be demonstrated. This approach can functions as a differentiation method where the company discerns against comparable companies (Mathews & Wacker 2008). Storytelling is successful and efficient when it exists a coherent between the internal and external stories. This indicates that the company’s storytelling and actions should match (Beverland 2009; Spear & Roper 2013). Several researchers suggest that by merely stating *being authentic and transparent, the company are marketing themselves*. By making the company’s document accessible to the public and including traceability in the production techniques and supply chain is a form of marketing strategy. This approaches demonstrates the company’s authenticity and transparency (Holt 2002; Ball 2009; Fritz & Schiefer 2009). Updating or marking associations to something that is already recognizable to be
authentic and transparent can also be a marketing strategy (Postrel 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Another suitable marketing approach is integrating a *two-ways communication* when demonstrating the company’s authenticity (Anderberg & Morris 2006).
4. ANALYSIS

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the collected empirical data with the selected theoretical framework and literature review. Parallels are going to be drawn where identified patterns will be analysed. The first part of this chapter is about the definition of authenticity and transparency according to the participants. How these have influenced them in order to establish their companies are also introduced. The importance of craftsmanship, production techniques and supply chain are also being described. Finally the marketing strategies will be presented.

4.1 The importance of authenticity and transparency

In this section, the definition of authenticity and transparency according to the studies participants are going to be described. Also, parallels are going to be drawn with the researchers definition of the terms.

4.1.1 The definition of authenticity and transparency

Several researchers have identified that authenticity and transparency as the new socio-cultural forces that have influenced the Western society and effected consumers’ mind-sets and their consumption behaviour (Boyle 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Davis & Ryals 2010). The definitions of these forces are individual and vague deem researchers (Schemltz 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). These researchers discussion about what are authentic (real) and inauthentic (fake) in our society, some mean that everything in our society is altered after human’s needs (King 2003). Other researchers explain that unauthentic attributes can easily be manipulated and consequently be considered authentic (Rose & Wood 2005; Beverland 2009). Since authenticity is associated with culture, the definition of authenticity is individual and occurs inside us (Newman 1997; Gilmore & Pine 2007 & 2010, Beverland 2009). In this study the definition of authenticity are being “honest”, “ trustworthy” “real” and is associated with “heritage” (Peterson 1997; Cappannelli & Cappannelli 2004; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009), and transparency means “openness”, “integrity” and similar to authenticity, being “honest” (Burnett & Hutton 2007, Ball 2009, MacLean 2011). These forces have influenced consumers’ demands where they are searching for attributes that carry a feeling of tradition and culture (Boyle 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). In order to reconnect to the study’s purpose, how the socio-cultural forces,
authenticity and transparency, have become integral parts of newly established fashion companies’ business models in Sweden, the participants’ individual definition of authenticity and transparency were found essential.

The majority of the participants had a clear understanding about these forces, however individual interpretation of authenticity and transparency were provided. The co-owner of Conceptual Tailors, Gustafsson (2014), defines these forces by saying;

“For me authenticity and transparency is all about following your predefined aims and goals and not being afraid to show it to everyone. For example, we thinks we reach a high level of authenticity by working with a different business model, focusing on individuality, and a high level of transparency by producing locally and in our factory shop, allowing our customers to see every step of the production process”.

This statement indicates that authenticity and transparency have started internally from the organization and are being communicated externally in a reflected way (MacLean 2011). Maso (2014) from ÅTHRER mentions that authenticity and transparency is “being honest about everything” and explains that it is significant to be honest about the production techniques, environmental impact of the manufacturing processes, costing and pricing. The founder of Black Book says than authenticity and transparency is all about the external communication. Lorenz- Stock (2014) states that the communication should be open and informative, she claims “we tell it like it is - literally and figuratively speaking.” Other representative from participated fashion companies, such as Lind (2014) from Uniforms for the Dedicated, defines these two forces by saying

“Doing things for the right reason, obviously the definition of the right reason is a matter of opinion. In this case of our business it comes down to creating a brighter future. Transparency is a way of proving the path you are on, and much needed according to traditional ways of working with a supply chain in the textile industry.”

The participants’ opinions conforms researchers statements about authenticity and transparency being individually interpreted (Schmeltz 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Some participants associated authenticity and transparency as being open, honest and informative. Gustafsson (2014) mentions that Conceptual Tailors are striving to be open about every process in their organization, from business model to production techniques. This replies shows that being transparent and openly communicating about every process in the organization, both internally and externally are
crucial elements (Holt 2002; Burnett & Hutton 2007; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Ball 2009; MacLean 2011; Schmeltz 2012). By being authentic and transparent, the brand personality is being demonstrated externally mention the participants (Burnett & Hutton 2007). Even though authenticity and transparency are independently strong, all of the participants associated and combined these two elements together (Anderberg & Morris 2006).

Likewise several researchers, Wittrock (2014), that works as a socio anthropologist and teaches fashion science at Lund University, mentions that authenticity and transparency do not have a single definition but many (Schmeltz 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). The meaning of these forces depends on the context they are related to explains Wittrock (2014). Authenticity is constructed and created by the fashion industry, therefore “authenticity is almost a fetish”. This fetishized authenticity in the fashion industry can be constructed via the idea of beauty that can be altered with digital techniques. The designer of a brand is considered as authentic genius, however, the creative members of staff and marketers that also contributed to the company’s authenticity are somehow forgotten and neglected. The third example of why the authenticity in the fashion industry is fetish is the brand itself and finally, the culture and history behind a brand mentions Wittrock. Authenticity is a vital attribute in the fashion industry as it can manipulate prestige and social status. Wittrock’s statements about authenticity goes hand in hand with Beverlands (2009) three described attributes, quality leadership, heritage and sincerity, that is connected with evaluation of the company’s authenticity.

The consumer physiologist Carbonaro (2014) explains the emerge of authenticity by mentioning that authenticity in our society is required as the public is yearning for something romantic and nostalgic, thereby authenticity is connected to a certain time. The publics longing for authenticity have emerged from decades of living in a fictional world where the focus has been on technology. For those reasons, the public has developed a feeling of nostalgia for craftsmanship and primitive products deem Carbonaro. The statements confirms Arnould and Price (2000) identified elements; globalization, deterritorialization and hyperreality, that illuminate why consumers are yearning for authenticity. There is a noticeable difference between the participated fashion companies’ statements and Wittrock (2014) and Carbonaro (2014) explanation regarding authenticity and transparency. The participated fashion companies generally combined the meaning of these forces and had a more trivial definition while the remaining participated with a unique knowledge were able to give a more immersed answers. These individuals also
provided the underlying explanations why authenticity and transparency have emerged in our society. This can be stated that the knowledge of the participants, individual definition of the forces and the personal experiences plays a crucial role in the ability in understanding and rendering authenticity and transparency (Burnett & Hutton 2007).

The participants’ replies indicate that, even though authenticity and transparency are individually interpreted, the general definitions of these terms are correlated with researchers statements (Peterson 1997; Cappannelli & Cappannelli 2004; Burnett & Hutton 2007; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Ball 2009; Beverland 2009; MacLean 2011). It can be said that these forces have clearly influenced the founders’ minds sets and might explain the reasons why authenticity and transparency have been included in their business models. For instance, Gustafsson (2014) mentions that authenticity and transparency have been integrated into in business models by calling themselves as “the modern Savile Row” and openly illustrating every step in the production process. This indicates that Conceptual Tailors manipulate authentic attributes by defining themselves with a modern version of Savile Row, a place connected to heritage, culture and tradition (Boyle 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Illustrating the production techniques is an approach in being transparent.

4.2 The innovators behind the companies

In order to appreciate how authenticity and transparency have become integral parts of the newly established fashion companies in Sweden, acknowledging the innovators/founders’ characteristics are vital as these individuals are the minds behind these companies. The characteristics have a significant impact on why they choose to start a fashion company based on these two forces. Many researchers have studied the characteristics of founders of innovative companies. The innovators enthusiasm regarding authenticity and transparency is crucial as it affects and influences the entire company. This interest explains the innovators awareness and longing for tradition and culture elements, which are coherent with the rest of the public and are the fundamental building blocks of the company. The lack of relationship to a specific country, tradition and culture may explain why authenticity and transparency is significant for these innovators and consequently have been implemented into their business models (Beverland 2009). Other vital identified characteristics for innovators are creativity and innovative. Founders of newly established companies focus on design, being innovative and solve problems rather than merely concentrating on the financial aspects (Kisfaludy 2008; Deiser 2010).
In order to understand the characteristics and underlying reasons to why the founders of newly established fashion companies in Sweden have started their company, questions regarding this matter were asked (see Appendix 2). It is crucial to determine their characteristics in order to understand how the socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency have affected them. Gustafsson (2014) mentions that Conceptual Tailors were established, as they wanted to change the consumers purchasing behavior regarding environmental tailoring. By producing products on demand, meaning customizing and manufacturing every product according to the customer’s individual requirements, are the base of the company’s business model. Interpreting demands in the society were the reasons why Conceptual Tailors integrated this approach into their business model. Gustafsson says “we seek to fulfill the needs and wants of all consumers on the market but initially we will attract consumers who seek something extra, consumers who want something extra and totally customized to his or hers specifications”. One of the co-owners at the sustainable fashion company ÆTHER, Maso (2014) also state about the gap in the fashion industry they want to fulfill by clearly stating, “we felt there was a gap in the market regarding ethical clothing that also offered an aesthetic value. We felt the need to create beautiful and luxurious garments without having the obvious environmental and social implications that most labels have.” Carbonaro (2014) emphasize the importance of innovators and mentions that these individuals have a unique ability to understand the current and old socio-cultural movement and consumer needs in the society and respond in a reflective way. They consider these movements as a challenge and strive to find innovative solutions. Innovators are valuable and consequently should be seen as potentials. The founder of Black Book, Lorenz-Stock (2014) reveals that she established her company since she desired to express herself in a creative way and says; “by a chance a clothing brand became my way to do so”. Lacking necessary education, knowledge and experience in the fashion industry was not considered as barrier. Lorenz- Stock were still able to understand the gap in the fashion industry concerning organic clothing and respond in a reflective way. This demonstrates her characteristic where she realized a problem in the society, lack of organic stylish T-shirts and responded with an innovative and creative way (Deiser 2010; Beverland 2009).

Lind (2014) has appreciated the impacts innovation leaders have on a company. The entire Uniforms for the Dedicated shares the mutual vision; being a sustainable brand. This vision is communicated internally through the organization and externally to customers by informing about their ideas and current projects. They are hopping to inspire others to include a more sustainable lifestyle in their everyday life. This is achieved by continuously communicate about their vision and current projects. By
externally sharing information and educate people about becoming more sustainable, conducting workshops is a part of their business models. This is also used internally in order to inspire the members of staff (Kisfaludy 2008; Beverland 2009). However, Lind (2014) does not believe in forcing education and information to their consumers, instead the company wants to become a role model and inspire their consumers. Maso (2014) from ÆETHER mentions about the importance of educating their costumer and explains that external education is essential, she says, “It is essential for us! Because otherwise it is just an expensive product. I believe that fashion will go through the same process as organic food, which is now everywhere, and we’ve reached that point through education. We just need to keep joining forces to create a global movement of fashion consciousness.” This demonstrates that ÆETHER consider the external communication more important that the internal. Perhaps, ÆETHER is a small size company with few employees, where the internal communications about these matters are not significant, as they already exist.

Statements from the participants indicate that they are creative innovators that are able to understand, translate and respond to these newfound consumer demands in an early stage (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). By integrating current socio-cultural forces in their business models in a creative and innovative way, they are responding to the customers’ requirements. This ability is a significant characteristic (Deiser 2010; Beverland 2009). It is apparent that the founders’ ability to inspire and educate both internally and externally is important. When the members of staff have an understanding about the company’s vision and goal, successively they are able to communicate, inspire and influence the consumers externally (Kisfaludy 2008; Beverland 2009).

Being a creative and innovative fashion company can be considered as an approach to demonstrate the authenticity and transparency of the business model. The mentioned characteristics of innovators/founders of the participated companies indicates the parts of the business models that have been altered and adapted in order to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency attributes. The next section focus on craftsmanship and hand skills that are used by the participated companies when showing their authentic and transparent attributes.
4.3 Craftsmanship and hand skills: an approach to demonstrate authenticity and transparency

Along with innovators characteristics, that have influenced the company in order to include authentic and transparent attributes, adding craftsmanship and hand skills cues are also considered essential. These cues can emphasize the authenticity and transparency of the company and consequently have become included in the business models. Studies have show that consumers are longing for authentic products that carry a feeling of tradition and culture. Transparency in companies is also coveted since consumers’ are interested in knowing the origin and manufacture techniques of the products (Boyle 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). Different researchers have tried to explain the reasons why consumers are looking for authentic attributes (Arnould & Price 2000). Several researcher associates authenticity with a certain culture, tradition and heritage (Burnett & Hutton 2007; Beverland 2009). The socio anthropology Wittrock (2014) interpreted authenticity and said that the term is associated with “history, an unbroken continuity and belonging to something that is larger than itself”. The feeling of authenticity increase once associations are imbedded to a certain place, tradition and culture (Holt 2002; Arnould & Price 2000). These authentic attributes become more effective once transparency is included, therefore the combination of authenticity and transparency is important. The trustworthiness of the companies associations to a certain place, time, tradition and culture becomes stronger with authenticity and transparency attributes (Anderberg & Morris 2006).

Carbonaro (2014) mentions that authenticity have become to be a significant term in our Western society since the public are longing for “a simpler life, not cluttered with so much stuff”. In our global world, people have lost track of their identity and trying to find attributes in their everyday life in search to find their own identity. Carbonaro explains that in previous decades, people knew exactly the origins of the products they were purchasing, a feeling that is lost in our society. Smith (2014), a textile designer and adjunct professor at Parsons The New School for Design in New York City expressed similar arguments as Carbonaro (2014). These statement are coherent with Arnould and Price (2000) three elements that can explain the public yearning for authenticity; globalization, deterritorialization and hyperreality. Since the public are trying to find their own identity and reconnection to a certain place, companies have integrated authentic attributes in their organization in a reflective way. This can also be considered as an attempt to help consumers reshape their identity (Postrel 2003).
The consumer psychologist Carbonaro (2014) along with social anthropologist Wittrock (2014) and textile designer Smith (2014) mentions that craftsmanship and hand skills are the future and up-coming trend in the fashion industry. A factor is that consumers are yearning for the sense of the preindustrial time, a certain tradition and place, which craftsmanship products provides (Campbell 2005; Minney 2011). Carbonaro (2014) explains about the reasons why this future trend has emerged and says, “now people want to do stuff with their hand and are ready to learn how to sew. Its like a desperate attends to getting back something physical and material that you can do with your hands. This is also a big socio-cultural movement.” Studies have demonstrated that the feeling of authenticity and transparency will increase once traditional and cultural attributes, in form of craftsmanship and hand skills, is included (Holt 2002; Arnould & Price 2000). Elements of craftsmanship and hand skills can be seen in many companies’ products as it provides a sense of authenticity. The cues are strongly associated with high quality products, which also enhance the feeling of authenticity and transparency deems Carbonaro (2014). Another reason to why companies have started to integrate craftsmanship and hand skills cues into their products is to provide a feeling of luxury goods. Since the term “craft” is associated with activities that are made by hands, extra value is added. Craftsmanship provides a feeling of uniqueness and exclusiveness that is related with high service and high quality as every step in the production is controlled by a craftsmen or craftswomen (Hanks 1979 Campbell 2005). Carbonaro (2014) also states that working with hands in order to produce items where the same person is controlling every step in production and manufacture processes provides a feeling of luxury (Campbell 2005).

The company Conceptual Tailors have been influenced by Savile Row, a street in London that is well known for British traditional tailoring for men. By offering products that emphasize on individuality, personal experience, high quality products, and craftsmanship, the brand is adding attributes of authenticity and transparency into the garments. By making associations with a certain place, such as Savile Row that have a long history and culture in traditional men’s tailoring, the offering products of the brand automatically is considered authentic. Consumer associates products with elements of craftsmanship as authentic since the cues are connected to a certain culture and tradition (MacCannell 1976). Other fashion companies that have participated in this study, such as Uniforms for the Dedicated, also have included attributes associated with craftsmanship in their collection. The brand offers “timeless yet exciting garments for confident and demanding men” state Lind (2014). High quality garments with a focus on design and
materials are other cues that relate Uniforms for the Dedicated with a specific culture and tradition (MacCannel 1976). Offering high quality garments with handicraft cues demonstrates the company’s environmental friendly approach as these factors adds value of longevity and durability (Minney 2011).

Conclusions can be drawn that craftsmanship and hand skills are significant attributes when demonstrating the authenticity and transparency of a brand, as craftsmanship is strongly linked with tradition and culture. Consequently, tradition and culture cues provide a feeling of authenticity and transparency (Beverland 2009). Including attributes of craftsmanship in garments are considered being a reaction towards mass production and indicate that the company is gentle to the environment. Craftsmanship and hand skills also demonstrate the transparency of the company, as physical work does not require oil in the production processes (Minney 2011). As mentioned earlier, craftsmanship and hand skills are the future trends in the fashion industry (Minney 2011). This indicates that the participants companies have integrated these attributes as a respond to up-comings trends and consumers new desire to relate to a specific tradition and culture (MacCannell 1976; Campbell 2005; Minney 2011).

Carbonaro (2014) deem that newly established companies are the ones that “bringing back craftsmanship. But the craftsmanship of today is not the same of the craftsmanship of the past.” This statement is consistent with the brands such as Conceptual Tailors and Uniforms for the Dedicated as they have made an upgrade and a modern version of craftsmanship attributes that is coherent with the Western society and the new consumer needs. Conclusions from the participants’ statements imply that newly established companies have included attributes and elements of craftsmanship as an approach to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency. It can also be considered being a respond to the current socio-cultural movement and the consumers longing to “go back to the roots” where craftsmanship is strongly associated with a specific tradition, culture and place (MacCannell 1976; Holt 2002; Arnould & Price 2000; Beverland 2009). Several of the participated companies have also integrated cues of craftsmanship and hand skills into their organization in order to demonstrate the brand personality (Burnett & Hutton 2007). It can be said that craftsmanship in the design process has been included in the business models of newly established companies in order to demonstrate their authenticity and transparency attributes. This can consequently also be seen as a strategy. Another approach to show the company’s authentic and transparency attributes is by changing the production techniques and supply chain in reflective way. This approach is described profoundly in the next part.
4.4 The impact of authenticity and transparency on production techniques and the supply chain

Demonstrating the company’s production techniques and the supply chain externally to the customers is an approach majority of the participants consider being central and therefor included into their business models. By not following current trends from the fashion industry, the company Conceptual Tailors are focusing on satisfying the current consumer need. By having the production nearby, locally and on demand, means no excess occurs, deem Gustafsson (2014). The feeling of transparency increases once the productions are placed locally, additionally this provides a feeling that the company is controlling every step in the production process in the factories (Lakhal et al 2008). Being honest about the production techniques is something the founders of the fashion company Conceptual Tailors consider being significant and have become to be one of the organizations fundamental building blocks. Gustafsson (2014) says, “through our local production, which allows us to produce on demand, rendering no excess and no sales in our business model”. This indicates that Conceptual Tailors may have a near relationship with their suppliers where they together are working in order to find long-terms sustainable and environmental friendly solutions (De Brito et al 2008; Failsal 2008). By monitoring the finish products at the end of the supply chain, Conceptual Tailors have integrated forward tracing (Fritz & Schiefer 2009). This control also means that the company have access information about the production, which can be communicated both internally and externally (Lakhal et al 2008; Pagell & Wu 2009).

ÆTHER is one of the companies that have included traceability into their organization (Fritz & Schiefer 2009). The company has sustainability as one of the core values in their business model and is imbued in the entire organization, from having biodegradable fabrics to selecting the most sustainable sourcing and production techniques. Maso (2014) from ÆTHER says that the garment production is located nearby, in United Kingdom and in Europe and says “when someone orders something we have a quick turnaround time –being based in Europe and doing production locally- and that way we do not have absolutely any waste.” Another approach to reduce the negative environmental affects is by producing and selling samples mentions Maso. By controlling every step in the supply chain, including the finish product, ÆTHER have implemented both backward- and forward traceability (Fritz & Schiefer 2009). Information about the company’s suppliers are broadly provided to the customers and stakeholders via their website (Pagell & Wu 2009), “You are free to call them and talk to them and make sure everything is true, which it is!” says Maso (2014). This shows that ÆTHER have
integrated traceability in order to enhance the company’s transparency (Burnett & Hutton 2007). The information about the outsourced suppliers, production techniques and supply chain provided to customer is another way to enhance the company’s authenticity and transparency (Caniato et al 2012).

Conclusions can be that that traceability and providing information and data about the production techniques and supply chain, both internally and externally, is an approach that the participants of this study have integrated into their business models in order to demonstrate their authenticity and transparency (Fritz & Schiefer 2009; Pagell & Wu 2009; Caniato et al 2012). By including traceability, these companies distance themselves from the assumptions that the majority of the fashion companies have neglected environmental regulations and lack control of the production processes (Koplin 2005). Traceability allows the companies to control and observe the entire production processes (Lakhal et al 2008). This indicates that traceability is a strategy used by newly established companies in their business models in order to be considered authentic and transparent. The traceability of the company can be used as a marketing strategy in form of storytelling. This subject will be explained the following section.

4.5 Storytelling as marketing strategy

Increasingly numbers of companies have stated to integrate storytelling as marketing strategy since studies have showed that storytelling is a powerful communication tool (Burnett & Hutton 2007). Stories stimulate people’s emotions and provide positive associations about a company and its products (Fog et al 2005; Dennisdotter & Axenbrant 2008; Beverland 2009). In order to communicate the companies’ core values, brand identity and vision in an understandable way, storytelling, both internally and externally have being applied, (Fog et al 2005; McLellan 2006; Dennisdotter & Axenbrant 2008; Beverland 2009; Minnay 2011; Kadembo 2012; Spear & Roger 2013). Storytelling contains cues that are strongly associated with heritage, culture and tradition (Beverland 2009). Since authenticity and transparency also contains elements of heritage, culture, history and tradition, storytelling is an effective tool to communicate about the company’s authenticity and transparency (Urde 2003; Burnett & Hutton 2007; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). This means that storytelling as a marketing strategy is integrated and a part of newly established fashion companies business models.

The majority of fashion companies participating in this study have included attributes to a specific place, time, history, tradition and culture into their organisation, which implies
the use of storytelling as marketing strategy. The teacher for fashion science at Lund’s University, Wittrock (2014) clearly states about this approach and by saying;

“Storytelling is an important technique to create authenticity. It almost always draws on ides of history or culture to show that purpose of the company is about everything else than making money. Around the same time the company Royal Copenhagen decides to shifts its entire production of Thailand (to increase profits) it markets itself as genuinely Danish. The branding of the company, the talk of history and culture, is part of a marketing strategy where authenticity is the central value.”

The brand Black Book consists of a unique story; an ambitious young women who needed to express herself creatively. Without education and previous experience in the fashion industry, Lorenz- Stock started to designing T- Shirts with a leopard spotted pig print. From working at her kitchen table to collaborating with H&M, Black Book is now a well-established brand. Lorenz- Stock (2014) says that the history of Black Book is special since it gives a feeling of “a lot of hard work, blood and tears as well as a unbreakable passion went into building this small brand”. The stated stories should reflect the entire company, both internally and externally. If a lack or disconnection between the company’s storytelling and actions occurs, the feeling of authenticity and transparency decreases (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant 2008; Beverland 2009). Lorenz- Stock (2014) mentions that currently, the company does not have the budget to “fully commit to a sustainable and environmental friendly approach but we definitely working on it”. However, ensuring the suppliers do not have child labor and is following the environmental regulations is considered significant. During the mail interview, Lorenz- Stock (2014) talks about her collaboration with H&M, a fast fashion company that have been criticized for lack of control regarding their environmental impact and suppliers. This can consequently damage Black Book storytelling since there is a gap between the company’s statements and actions (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant 2008; Beverland 2009).

ÆTHER describe themselves as a sustainable fashion company and is using sustainable as a marketing strategy, even though it has not been the company’s intention from the start, mentions Maso (2014). Although no clear explanation about the company’s marketing strategy was told, conclusion can be drawn that storytelling have been integrated into their marketing strategy as a way to express their authenticity and transparency (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant 2008; Beverland 2009). The fashion company Conceptual Tailors describe themselves as “the modern Savile Row” and by associating themselves with a specific place, it provides cues of stories strongly interlinked with the culture of tailoring. This means that by merely using the word “Savile Row” a range of
association with London, British traditional men’s tailoring, luxury and such as occurs in the consumers’ mindset (Urde 2003). Carbonaro (2014) deem that many newly established fashion companies have included associations with luxurious attributes into their organization as a way to enhance the feeling of craftsmanship, authenticity and transparency. These attributes are consequently being told as stories in form of marketing strategy. This association can also be seen as a consumer experience and will lead to a greater brand value (Neumeier 2003).

It is apparent that the mentioned fashion companies are using storytelling as a way to communicate and demonstrate about the company’s values, brand identity, authenticity and transparency (McLellan 2006; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Kadembo 2012). Storytelling stimulates and influence the consumers’ emotions and feeling, ergo storytelling is an effective marketing strategy (Fog et al 2005; Burnett & Hutton 2007; Dennisdotter & Axenbrant 2008; Beverland 2009). By telling extraordinary and unique stories, the companies are differentiating themselves from comparable companies (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant 2008). It can be said that there is a variation in the way participating companies uses storytelling as marketing strategies. Some companies are explicitly marketing their authenticity and transparency via storytelling while other companies have applied a more tacit approach.

Conceptual Tailors are making associations with the famous Savile Row that have a long history and heritage (Aaker 2010). These connections highlight the company’s authenticity and transparency, given competitive advantage (Blombäck & Brunninge 2009). Black Book is using the story of how the brand established as marketing strategy. This unique story can be seen as script marketing and used to differentiate Black Book from comparable companies (Mathews & Wacker 2008). The brand ÆTHER is using cues from their sustainable approach as storytelling. It can be said that ÆTHER’s authenticity and transparency are being communicated in a tacit storytelling (Beverland 2009). The fashion company Uniforms for the Dedicated do not believe in explicitly using marketing strategies to show their authenticity, transparency and sustainable activities. Instead, they believe in informing and educating the costumers about mentioned matters. Lind (2014) says that they are striving to “contribute to a more sustainable planet”. This can be seen as an indirect storytelling as the company uses education externally to demonstrate their authenticity and transparency (Fog et al 2005; Dennisdotter & Axenbrant 2008; Beverland 2009). When no other marketing strategy is effective, storytelling will be (Burnett & Hutton 2007).

Conclusions can be drawn that statements from the participants clearly demonstrates that
storytelling, by adding cues to a specific place, tradition and culture, are applied as marketing strategy (McLellan 2006; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Kadembo 2012). By stating unique stories, the companies differentiating themselves from comparable companies and create brand value (Neumeier 2003). Some fashion companies use more tacit storytelling while other companies explicit. However, some researchers indicate that by merely stating being authentic and transparent can be use as marketing strategy (Ball 2009; Beverland 2009). This matter will be further examined in the next part.

4.6 Authenticity and transparency as marketing strategy

Authenticity and transparency can also be integrated into the companies’ business models as marketing strategies. Studies have showed that these two current socio-cultural forces are affecting consumers purchasing behaviour (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). By making documents accessible, the company’s authenticity and transparency attributes are being demonstrated. Publishing these documents can be considered a form of marketing since the company openly demonstrating how trustworthy they are. (Ball 2009) By drawing attention to attributes that is already recognizable and authentic is a form of marketing strategies (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Postrel 2003; Beverland 2009). Since people are yearning for authentic and transparent attributes, companies are offering products in a reflective way, simply because people buy it! (Gilmore & Pine 2007 p.34).

All of the participated fashion companies are indicating that they are using authenticity and transparency as marketing strategies, however there is a different in their approaches. Lorenz-Stock (2014) mentions that Black Book’s authenticity and transparency is being communicated externally on a “person-to-person level” rather than “big-money-machine-company to person” as she expresses. The definition of authenticity and transparency according to Lorenz-Stock is being open and informative in their communication. Externally provided information regarding their production techniques highlights the company’s authenticity and transparency. It is clear that Black Book emphasize their authenticity and transparency on a two-ways communication and consequently distinguishing themselves from the competitors by doing so (Anderberg & Morris 2006; Beverland 2009). Uniforms for the Deditates have applied a more tacit approach when marketing the company’s authenticity and transparency. Lind (2014) says that their marketing strategy is to “share our vision and communicate what we believe in and share ideas and projects we hope will inspire others.” The founders of Uniforms for
The Dedicated do not want consumers to feel exposed by the company’s achievements to become sustainable, instead they want to inspire others to become more sustainable in their everyday life. The company is offering products with high quality and focus on designs that can “be worn year in and year out”. This means that the company is trying to draw attention to something that is already considered authentic in the customer mindsets, men’s tailoring, craftsmanship and hand skills for instance. The consumers will automatically convey a feeling of authenticity and transparency (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Postrel 2003; Beverland 2009). Conceptual Tailors is applying the same strategy as previous company but the difference is on the level of openness. While Uniforms for the Dedicated are marketing about their authenticity and transparency on a tacit level, Conceptual Tailors approach is more explicit. Gustafsson (2014) from Conceptual Tailors say that they are using transparency as marketing strategy and says;

“In our case we use transparency in all our marketing strategies by talking a lot about our local production, our value chain and the quality of our products”//...//“we are equally interested on marketing our value chain, production model and overall business model since we think they are our main core values.”

By demonstrating the company’s traceability, company’s authenticity and transparency automatically is being expressed (Ball 2009). Information about the company’s traceability is seen as a marketing approach since data about the products production techniques are being communicated externally to the customers. Regarding company, providing information and access for consumers to view the behind- the- scenes is considered as a marketing strategy (Lakhal et al 2008). This approach is considered being less commercialized and the feeling of authenticity and transparency enhances, ultimately it will stimulate consumption (Anderberg & Morris 2006). This implies that Conceptual Tailors are using transparency and authenticity as a marketing strategy.

Conclusions can be drawn that the participated companies confirm studies ‘results that demonstrating the company’s authenticity and transparency can be used as marketing strategies (Holt 2002; Anderberg & Morris 2006; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Lakhal et al 2008). However, some fashion companies such as Conceptual Tailors explicably demonstrate the authenticity and transparency, in form of traceability. Black Book believes in two-ways communication (Anderberg & Morris 2006) to express the company’s authenticity and transparency, while Uniforms for the Dedicated instead focus on sharing information in a more tacit way. This shows that along of storytelling, adding authentic and transparent attributes can be used as marketing strategies (Burnett & Hutton 2007).
CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, the purpose and the research questions are going to be presented and answered. The conclusions will be stated and discussed from the findings of the analysis.

Through the entire study, the purpose has been to investigate how the socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, have become integral parts of newly established fashion companies’ business models in Sweden. In this following section, the first research question will be answered where the focus is on clarifying how authenticity and transparency have influenced the innovators of these newly established fashion companies. Factors that have lead to innovators establishing their companies based on authenticity and transparency is going be identified and described. By analysing how innovators identify and interpret these forces, explanations are provided why modifications in the business models were found necessary. The next research question is focusing on explaining the parts of the traditional business models that the participated companies have altered in order to respond to consumers’ newfound yearning for authenticity and transparency. By answering these two research questions, the purpose of this study is going to be answered.

5.1 How have authenticity and transparency influenced innovators of newly established fashion companies in Sweden?

It can be said that the socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency have influenced innovators of newly established fashion companies in Sweden. The impacts of these forces might illuminate the reasons why these companies were established. All of the participated companies stated their individual understanding about these forces and recounted a combined definition of authenticity and transparency. “Being open”, “honest” and “informative” was the common definitions. A common pattern can be observed where the participated companies have restructured the style of the design and fabric selects (craftsmanship and hand skills), production techniques and marketing strategies in the business models in a way that reflects authenticity, transparency and consumers new demands. One of the main conclusions drawn from analysis chapter is that authenticity and transparency have influenced the founder’s mind-sets and consequently they have build their entire business models according to these two factors (Deiser 2011). The most vital factor of this study is the role of innovators behind newly established fashion companies. The innovators ability to inspire and share their visions, internally and
externally is a focal character. The most essential characteristics of innovators are the followings; they quickly translated and responded to the socio-cultural movements in the Western society and combined them with the current trends in the fashion industry in a creative and innovative way (Gilmore & Pine 2007; Kisfaludy 2008; Beverland 2009). In order to emphasize the company’s authenticity and transparency, attributes of craftsmanship, storytelling and traceability have been applied in participated business models. Even though, the participants with an expert knowledge in the fashion industry had a more profound understanding about authenticity and transparency, it is clear that the founders of newly established fashion companies put their thoughts in action and created a new form of business model, based on these forces. These innovators play a significant role in the fashion industry and as they are one of the leaders in the marketplace regarding innovative and creative products, however, they never perform market research nor implement consumer input. This indicates that these innovators are influenced and inspired by consumers trend and lifestyles (Beverland 2009). However, errors of judgment and mistakes are high and likely to occur with this working strategy. For instance, if the innovators accidently misinterpret future trends and changes in socio-cultural forces in the society that influence consumers’ buying behaviour, the entire company will be based on incorrect assumptions. In order to confirm the innovators presumptions about future changes in the society, trends and lifestyles, market researches are required and necessary. Market researches will provide vital inside information about the marketplace, positioning opportunities, market needs and business strategy. It can be argued that innovators consequently operate by assumptions of future needs and trends, where the tangible information is lacking. By implementing market search, this vital information is provided.

5.2 Which parts of the business models have been altered in order to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency?

This study shows that the participated fashion companies have build their business models by including attributes that demonstrates the company’s authenticity and transparency. However, not all of the parts in their business models have been modified in a reflective way, meaning that merely four parts have been altered; the style of the design and fabric selection, production techniques and supply chain, marketing strategies and communication. In order to facilitate the understanding of business model reformed parts, the following sections will provide a profound explanation.
5.2.1 The style of the design and fabric selection

Conclusions from this study shows that newly established companies in Sweden have included cues of craftsmanship in style of the design as a strategy to demonstrate their authenticity and transparency attributes and also enhance consumer’s experience. Carbonaro (2014) says that newly established companies are the ones that are “bringing back craftsmanship”, although, an upgrade and a modern version of craftsmanship have been applied in order to meet the newfound consumer needs. By including transparency in craftsmanship cues, it increases the feeling of authenticity (Holt 2002; Arnould & Price 2000). When authenticity is associated with a certain place, tradition and culture, it strengthened the included transparency (Anderberg & Morris 2006). For those reasons, the combination of authenticity and transparency are profound. This can be considered being a respond to the current socio-cultural movement and the consumers longing to “go back to the roots” where craftsmanship is strongly associated with a specific tradition, culture and place (MacCannell 1976; Holt 2002; Arnould & Price 2000; Beverland 2009). The majority of the participated fashion companies have added cues of craftsmanship into their style of their design in order to emphasize and enhance the feeling of authenticity and transparency (MacCannell 1976). By offering high quality garment, the companies are adding value of longevity and durability since the life cycle of the items becomes longer, another approach to demonstrate authenticity and transparency (Minney 2011). Several researcher mentions that craftsmanship and hand skills are the future trend (Campbell 2005; Minney 2011). It can be assumed that the participated companies are simply responding to the consumer newfound needs by offering products in a reflective way. This indicates that integration cues of craftsmanship and hand skills in the business models merely are a business strategy to gain financial results, as it responds to the consumers’ demands. This argument shows that companies have not integrated craftsmanship in order to help consumers find their lost identity, the intentions can be based on financial results.

As stated earlier, craftsmanship and hand skills have been included into business models of newly established companies since it reflects consumers’ needs (Campbell 2005; Minney 2011). The questions remains, what will happen if consumer future requirements change? Will the participated companies modify or replace cues of craftsmanship? Since craftsmanship and hand skills are strongly associated with heritage, culture and tradition, this consequently means that the companies’ heritage must also be altered. The trustworthy of these companies will decrease and the lost of niched consumer target might occur, even though the company might attract a more mainstream consumer group.
The perception of consumers might also change negatively, resulting in decreased feeling of authenticity. A suggestion for these companies is to remain and continue with craftsmanship cues in their style of their design and met consumers’ future demands by merely altering some few attributes in a reflective way. A dramatically change might consequently damage the company.

5.2.2 Production techniques and supply chain

The production techniques and supply chain is another part of the business model that have been altered in order to emphasize the participated companies authenticity and transparency. All of the participated fashion companies have included traceability, either forward- or backward traceability or a combination of these two in order to demonstrate the company’s transparency and authenticity. Controlling every step in the production techniques was found significant as the companies ensured the quality of the garments and controlled the negative environmental impacts. Traceability was found beneficial as information from controlling the production techniques can be used both internally and externally to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency (Fritz & Schiefer 2009; Pagell & Wu 2009; Caniato et al 2012). This strategy operates as a competitive advantage as these companies distance themselves from the assumptions that the fashion industry is neglecting environmental regulations and lack control of the production processes (Koplin 2005).

An important conclusion from this study is that the participated companies have included traceability and are making documents reachable to the consumers as an approach to emphasise the company’s authenticity and transparency. However, it can be discussed whether companies have included traceability in their business model as a way to respond to the consumers desire to get all the necessary information about the origin of the product (Boyle 2003; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). By including traceability, the companies distance themselves from future criticisms regarding the production techniques. However, information from traceability can be manipulated in a way that benefits the company. If the case, the company merely emphasise the positive aspects of their production techniques where the negative factors are being neglected. This means that the authenticity and transparency are being overlooked where the company rather become inauthentic. Even if not the case, some consumers might believe that information provided by the company is being manipulated or misrepresented the reality. A possible solution for these companies is to include certifications from a third company that confirms and verify the traceability and information. When products contain
certifications, it signifies that the product met some specific regulations. This means that involving a third independent company increases the companies’ trustworthiness as it confirms the traceability and control of the production techniques and supply chain (Prv.se 2005). Even though these kinds of certifications do not lead to increased consumption behaviour, the trustworthiness of the consumers increases (Fliess et al. 2007). Also, the consumers’ experience of authenticity and transparency will be enhanced.

5.2.3 Marketing strategies and communication

One of the conclusions of this study is that the marketing strategies in the business models of newly established fashion companies have changed in order to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency. Stories have been created and stated to stimulate the feeling of authenticity and transparency. By adding cues to a specific place, tradition, heritage and culture to the storytelling, the participants clearly indicate the feeling of authenticity and transparency (McLellan 2006; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Aaker 2010; Kadembo 2012). These stories are also used as differentiation strategy, which also provide brand value and competitive advantages (Neumeier 2003; Blombäck & Brunninge 2009). A conclusion from the analysis chapter is that the participated fashion companies are using storytelling, both internally to the members of staff and externally to the customers, in order to expresses the company’s authenticity and transparency. Besides using storytelling as marketing strategies, the companies also market themselves as authentic and transparent (Holt 2002; Anderberg & Morris 2006; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Lakhal et al 2008). Publishing documents and make them accessible to consumers can be seen as a marketing strategy as the company is demonstrates their transparency (Ball 2009). By making associations with something that is already considered recognizable by the consumers, the authenticity of the company are being established. This approach can also be seen as a marketing strategy (Postrel 2003; Beverland 2009).

Answers from the participants shows that both storytelling and merely by making documents accessible can be used as marketing strategies since the authenticity and transparency of the company are being stated (Holt 2002; McLellan 2006; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Lakhal et al 2008; Aaker 2010; Kadembo 2012). It is interested to consider how these companies are going to respond when consumers’ demands are changing in the future. If the consumers’ demands are changing in a dramatically way, are these companies willing to change the company’s entire storytelling in a reflective way?
Several researchers indicate that if error occurs in the storytelling, consumers’ experience of company’s authenticity and transparency decreases (Neumeier 2003). It can be discussed that if the participated fashion companies alter their storytelling after the consumers’ future needs, will the consumers experience lose its powerful strength? However, luxurious and high-ends brands such as Louis Vuitton, Gucci and Burberry still have their core values in the storytelling since they are strongly embedded in the company. Without the company’s heritage, long culture in craftsmanship and tradition, the added values of these companies will dramatically be reduced. Deprived of storytelling can mean a total lost of brand value and image, this indicates that brands should continuously make their storytelling flourish. However, some minor changes in the storytelling can be accomplished in order to meet consumers’ future needs, but a total change of storytelling can damage the company.
6. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this final chapter, suggestions for future searches are being introduced. The first section contains previous researches about authenticity and transparency and the research gap is briefly explained. The contribution of this study is demonstrated in the following part. Finally, suggestions and research proposals in the research field are being presented.

In the scientific and academic world, there is a research gap regarding how authenticity and transparency have influenced the business models of newly established fashion companies. Previous researches in this research area have focused on conventional fashion companies. Strategies and suggestions have been presented and developed for how to reshape and rebuild conventional fashion companies and their business models in a way that complies with consumers’ newfound desire for authenticity and transparency (Holt 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009; Minney 2011; Sebastiani et al 2013). This indicates that research with a focus on authenticity and transparency, and how these two forces have influenced newly established fashion companies are required. These approaches have been applied in the food industry (Kniazeva & Venkatesh 2007; Sebastiani et al 2012) but it is lacking in research concerning newly established fashion companies. This indicates that there is a research gap concerning how authenticity and transparency have been integrated and become to be integral parts of newly established fashion companies’ business models. Thereby, the purpose of this study has been to investigate how the socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, have become integral parts of newly established fashion companies’ business models in Sweden.

Conclusions were drawn from the analysis chapter that authenticity and transparency have a focal influence in the innovators mind-sets and explain why they established their fashion companies (Beverland 2009). Providing authentic and transparent attributes are identified being the fundamental building blocks of these companies. The style of the design and fabric selection, production and supply chain, marketing strategies and communication in their business models have been altered in order to provide attributes of authenticity and transparency. Craftsmanship, traceability and storytelling have been included in the business models to emphasize the company’s authenticity and transparency (MacCannel 1976; Minney; Campbell 2005; Burnett & Hutton 2007; Lakhal et al 2008; Beverland 2009; Fritz & Schiefer 2009). Due to limit numbers of participated fashion companies, the findings of this study can be used as a pilot study and
a great inspiration to further research. A bigger number of participated companies would have made this study become generalizable and would have been applied into a bigger scale. This indicates that there are many fields in this research area that still have not been studied. From a consumer perspective, it would be interesting to investigate how consumers considers the authenticity and transparency of these newly established fashion companies. Questions regarding how consumers are experiencing the authenticity and transparency of these companies are essential to investigate in order to establish if their needs are being fulfilled. Several researchers deem that the definition of authenticity is vague and individual, the determination of authenticity and inauthenticity can consequently vary (Schmeltz 2002; Gilmore & Pine 2007; Beverland 2009). The Real/Fake Matrix developed by Gilmore and Pine (2007) can be used to determine the authenticity and/or inauthenticity of a company. The matrix contains of four different frames; real-fake, real-real, fake-fake and fake-real (see Appendix 3). The result of this model can be used to estimate if the companies’ authenticity is consistent with the offering products. The degree of the company’s authenticity and inauthenticity is determined by answering the following questions;

- Is the offering true to itself?
- Is the offering what it says is it?

When answering these questions, the company becomes aware of how the consumers perceive the company’s products as real (authentic) or fake (inauthentic). This model shows that the degree of the company’s offerings realness can be measured. Companies can apply the real/fake matrix as a tool when rendering authenticity into their offerings. The model can also be used to estimate whether the output of the company is authentic, additionally, to which extent is the company itself rendering authentic. The outcome of the test might be that company’s offerings are truly authentic, less authentic or just fail in both dimensions; they are not true to themselves as a company nor what they officially states. This matrix is beneficial for companies since it provides focal information about the company’s authenticity, which can benefit companies to apply suitable approaches (Gilmore & Pine 2007).

Other suggestions for future research is to develop a business model for newly established fashion companies to follow. One of the conclusions of this study was that some parts of the business model were modified in order to respond to consumers’ newfound desire. Cues of craftsmanship, changes in production techniques and the supply chain, and storytelling as a marketing strategy and communication tool, were altered in
participated companies business models. These alterations were found necessary in order to meet consumers’ yearning for authentic and transparent attributes. It would be helpful for newly established companies to follow a business model that will guide and provide all necessary information and strategies on how to demonstrate the companies’ authenticity and transparent attributes. All focal approaches would be to include market researchers in order to respond to consumers’ future needs in a reflective way. This business model would be successful and favourable since innovators have established companies based on assumptions about consumers’ lifestyle and up-coming trends. By including market researches, these innovators can have factual facts to verify or denounce these assumptions. Information from the market researches provides vital inside information about the marketplace, positioning opportunities, market needs and business strategies (Beverland 2009). Market researches would benefit these innovators to establish their company based on actual facts.
7. REFERENCES


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7.1 Appendix

7.1.1. Appendix 1

Dear (name),

Thank you for participating in my study. Here is a brief description of the purpose and the aim of the study.

**Purpose:**
The purpose of this study is to investigate how the socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, have become integral parts of newly established fashion companies’ business model in Sweden.

**Aim:**
The aim of this research is gain a clearer understanding about the business models the majority of newly established fashion companies in Sweden are based on.
Questions:
1. What is the definition of authenticity and transparency according to you?
2. Is authenticity and transparency important in our society? If so, why?
3. In which degree do you think authenticity and transparency have influenced the entire fashion industry?
4. Can you explain the reasons why many newly established fashion companies have integrated authenticity and transparency in their business models? Also, can you give examples of newly established fashion companies that have integrated authenticity and transparency in their business models?
5. In which ways do you consider fashion companies, that have integrated authenticity and transparency already from the starts, distinguish themself from the competitors that have gradually adapted authenticity and transparency into their business models?
6. Which tools or approaches do you think fashion companies in general use in order to state the company’s authenticity and transparency?
7. Do you think authenticity and transparency have changed fashion companies marketing strategies?
8. Do you think authenticity and transparency can be used or are suitable as marketing strategies?
   a. If yes, please explain why. And also kinds of approach and marketing strategies do you believe fashion companies is applying in order to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency.
   b. If no, why not? Please explain your reasoning
9. Do you consider authenticity and transparency as a competitive advantage? If yes, please explain why and if no, why not?

Do you have any questions or thoughts, please contact me on (email address) or (mobile number)

Kind Regards,
Tara Samvat
7.1.2 Appendix 2

Dear (name),

Thank you for participating in my study. Here is a brief description of the purpose and the aim of the study.

**Purpose:**
The purpose of this study is to investigate how the socio-cultural forces, authenticity and transparency, have become integral parts of newly established fashion companies’ business models in Sweden.

**Aim:**
The aim of this research is gain a clearer understanding about the business models the majority of newly established fashion companies in Sweden are based on.

**Questions:**

10. Can you describe your brand, the core values, the brands vision, aim, brand identity and such as?
11. Can you explain the reasons why you have established your brand? Is it any specific consumer needs you seek to fulfil or such as?
12. In which way do your brand distinguish itself from the competitors? Please explain your reasoning
13. What is the definition of authenticity and transparency according to you?
14. Do you consider your brand be authentic and transparent? Please explain your reasoning
15. Which tools or approaches do you use in order to state the authenticity and transparency of your brand?
16. Have your company used authenticity and transparency as marketing strategies?
   a. If yes, please explain why. And also kinds of approach and marketing strategies do you use in order to demonstrate the company’s authenticity and transparency.
   b. If no, why not? Please explain your reasoning
17. Do you consider authenticity and transparency as a competitive advantage? If yes, please explain why and if no, why not?
18. Have you included sustainability and environmental friendly approaches in your organization? If yes, please explain why and if no, why not?

19. Do you consider educating and encouraging your consumers in becoming sustainable and make environmental friendly choices as an important part in your organization? If yes, please explain why and if no, why not? Please explain your reasoning.

Do you have any questions or thoughts, please contact me on (email address) or (mobile number)

Kind Regards,
Tara Samvat

7.1.3 Appendix 3

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<td>Fake- Fake</td>
<td>Fake- Real</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is not what it says is it</td>
<td>Is not true to itself</td>
<td>Is true to itself</td>
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