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## **Lifestyle for Sale**

Discussion of the effects of brand-based advertising from a consumer's perspective using denim brands as examples

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Abstract:

This study aims to identify the impacts of brand-based advertising and discuss why individuals perceive brands the way they do. It explores how a strong brand becomes iconic in consumers' minds and how this can be achieved. The study also explores how brand-based advertising differs when targeted to children, rather than media-savvy adults.

The theoretical literature provides the background on which traditional advertising is compared to brand-based advertising. The theoretical information will be compared with lifestyle advertising and then discussed and studied. Primary research in the form of a group session was conducted to better understand consumers' thoughts on brands. This data was used to support or argue the existing theories on brand-based advertising.

The research conducted for this thesis shows that one of the impacts of brand-based advertising is materialism among consumers, regardless of age. Furthermore, the impacts of advertising in general cannot be described as "good" or "bad", because the impact is a response to the consumer's perceptions and therefore always individual. However, a significant correlation can be discovered between materialism and advertising, but for methodological reasons an undisputable result on this topic is beyond the scope of this study.

**Key words:** Brand-based advertising, lifestyle advertising

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Tiivistelmä:

Tämän opinnäytetyön päämääränä on tunnistaa mahdolliset brändimainonnan vaikutukset ja ymmärtää paremmin miksi kuluttajat havaitsevat ja omaksuvat brändejä niin kuin he tekevät. Miten vahvoista brändeistä muodostuu kuluttajan mielessä ikoneja ja miten brändit voivat tämän saavuttaa. Tämä työ tutkii myös kuinka lapsiin kohdistuva brändimainonta eroaa medialukutaitoisille aikuisille mainostamisesta.

Teoreettinen kirjallisuus muodostaa pohjan jota hyväksikäyttäen perinteistä mainontaa verrataan brändimainontaan. Omana tutkimustyönä toimi ryhmäkeskustelu, joka käytiin ymmärtääksemme paremmin kuluttajien tulkintaa brändimainonnasta. Ryhmäkeskustelun avulla saavutettuja tietoja käytettiin keskustelussa brändimainonnasta.

Tutkimus osoittaa, että yksi mainonnan vaikutus ilmenee kasvaneessa materialismissa, ikäryhmistä riippumatta. Mainonnan vaikutuksia ei voida luokitella ”hyviksi” tai ”huonoiksi”, sillä mainonnan vaikutus on aina vastaus kuluttajan havaintoihin ja on siksi aina henkilökohtainen. Kuitenkin korrelaatio mainonnan ja lisääntyneen materialismin välillä on havaittavissa, mutta metodologisista syistä kiistattoman yhteyden todistaminen on tämän opinnäytetyön laajuuden ulkopuolella.

**Avainsanat:** Brändimainonta, elämäntapamainonta

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## **1. Introduction**

Advertising is one of the elements in the marketing mix and serves to raise the consumers' awareness, to persuade them to change one product for another and as a reminder of the product. Brand-based advertising is a tool used to promote and increase the consumers' involvement towards the brand. Loyalty and added value are the results gained when a brand has engaged and touched its audience. Primary research in the form of a focus group was conducted in order to understand how a brand's image is developed and then transformed into the brand's identity. Brands present their identities by using brand-based advertising to promote a certain lifestyle and by creating an image of that lifestyle's achievability through the use of their product. In recent years environmental issues have become an increasingly important topic, and in order for brands to maintain a dialogue with their audiences, brands have obtained different approaches to share this issue with them. Lifestyle advertising, which also touches the environmental issues and contributes to the strong consumer culture, has raised the question of increasing materialism which may have had an adverse effect on well-being of the environment.

Because of a demographic shift in Europe, where the average ages of populations are increasing due to a generally low birth-rate, children have become one of the biggest consumer segments in today's markets. Because of children's impressionability and psychological susceptibility to influences, questions of ethics and morality are strongly associated with advertising that is specifically targeted to this demographic group.

### **1.1 Background**

What is branding? In the book by Al Ries and Laura Ries (2002,):

“A branding programme should be designed to differentiate your product from all the cattle on the range, even if all the cattle on the range look pretty much alike” (p. ix).

Branding is a strategy used to differentiate one product from other products. Trout and Rivkin (2000) stated how in today's market no brand is able to survive in the long term without branding. The variety of choice in every industry, including clothing, has forced brands to stand out in sometimes extreme ways, and to approach consumers with the impression that their product is the only way to achieve a goal. Trout and Rivkin (2000)

further illustrate the increase of choice with a chart based on an annual report of Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas (1998). The number of Levi's jeans styles has increased from 41 in the early 1970s to over 70 different styles in the late 1990s. The increase in the range of styles has almost doubled during these thirty years, and this is only Levi's contribution to the increase. Different denim brands are entering the same market and consumers' choices have grown rapidly. Naturally, brands have dissimilar types of approach on how to differentiate the brand in the eyes of its targeted audience. Most consumers are aware of major denim brands such as Levi's and Diesel, but how are they perceived by consumers? Moreover, how do the images the consumers have of the brands match the brand's created identity?

Advertising is one the elements of the promotional mix and therefore it needs other elements in order to support its message. According to Jobber in *Principles and practice of marketing* (1998), advertising holds characteristics of efficiency in raising awareness, repetition and it contributes to sales, but it lacks flexibility to answer possible questions that an advert may raise and may not be able to confirm the final sale. Jobber (1998) emphasises the role of advertising in comparing the discrepancy of the advertised and the real advantages of the features and benefits of the product. Therefore, an advertising strategy must follow the clear path set by the marketing strategy. A well conducted marketing strategy should create brand equity. According to Aaker (1991) brand equity is a set of assets and liabilities associated with a brand's name and symbol, which add or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to the customers. Brand equity can be divided into four main attributes: "brand name awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand associations", (p. 9). Because of the existence of examples in daily life where traditional models such as AIDA (awareness, interest, desire and action) and DAGMAR (defining advertising goals for measured advertising result) do not fit, McDonald (1992) suggests an alternative approach in addition to these theories in his *Review of current thinking, how advertising works*. McDonald (1992) shows through a report conducted by Hall and McClay, how five conceptual models could be discovered in relation to advertising, and points out three models (*persuasion, salience and involvement*) that possibly contain theories on how advertising really works. In the persuasion model, advertising can be measured by a linear sequence from awareness to understanding to choice. The second model, salience, is based on the power of advertising in the sense of

differentiation. The involvement model is a matter of establishing a relationship with consumers. Aaker also highlights how brand equity creates value for both customers as well as the firm of the brand, generating “lovemarks”, which Roberts and Lafley present in their book *The future beyond brands* (Aaker 2002; Roberts 2005).

## **1.2 Theoretical framework**

According to Jobber (1998), the ongoing debate on how advertising works has led to a consensus of “there can be no single all-embracing theory that explains how all advertising works because it has varied tasks” (p.327). One of the tasks of advertising is to generate long-term value for a brand. As branding is targeted to differentiate a product or an entire brand, it ought to create equity for a brand as Aaker determines in *Building strong brands* (1996). Associations and experiences are parts of an image of the brand. Building a brand means creating strong associations in the minds of the consumers, something Silén (2001) emphasises in *Quality, brand and competitiveness*. Morris (2007) stated in *The effects of branding on your business* that branding is a shortcut when entering a market. The ready brand image helps customers to understand the benefits and values they are offered. The brand image also explains the price behind the product. In *Creating powerful brands* (2003), De Chernatony and McDonald explain that a brand’s price premium reflects its ability to determine a higher price, or its lower price sensitivity when compared to its competitors.

According to Aaker et al. (1996), a brand can be divided into three aspects: brand identity, brand image and brand positioning. Brand identity is how the brand is desired to be perceived by its audience. The brand image determines how the brand’s audience perceive the brand. Brand positioning is how the brand’s identity and value propositions are actively communicated to its target audience. The identity and value propositions of a brand can be communicated by using different methods. Lindstrom (2005) in *Brand sense, build powerful brands through touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound* suggests a five-dimension model of “smell, sound, taste, sight, and touch” for brands in order to be more effective.

## **1.3 Agenda of study**

This paper aims to study the characteristics of denim brands and how they are moulded with brand-based advertising. Using acknowledged denim brands, such as Levi’s and Diesel, as examples, this study examines how they have evolved into the iconic brands

they are today. This study also explores the brands' identities and how consumers' perceptions of these identities vary. These identities are discussed and studied from a consumer's perspective.

The agenda for this study is to find out if there exists a relation between brand-based advertising and consumers' perceptions of the brand. In order to answer this query, this paper studies how a brand's image is constructed in the minds of its consumers, as well as what methods brands use to persuade their consumers to see the brands as it is presented to them. In continuation, the five-dimension model's contribution to materialism is studied together with the effects of brand-based advertising on children.

#### **1.4 The role of focus group as primary research**

A focus group was held in order to determine out there exists, from a consumer's perspective, a relevancy between the theories discussed and the possible effects of brand-based advertising. The agenda for the group session was to understand potential emotional involvements consumers experience in relation to certain denim brands. The session was recorded both on video and audio, with the length of the session being approximately forty minutes. Interviewees consisted of "youthful" and "trendy" participants who can be considered as members of the target market of denim brands discussed (Levi's, Diesel, Lee, and Wrangler). The group session was constructed of a group interview and free group conversation which was led by a moderator. The focus group's usage in the parameters of this paper is justified by its potential effectiveness in gathering information, thoughts and genuine opinions. Main questions for the focus group were: a) how they perceived the denim brands in question, and b) what images they associated with the brands.



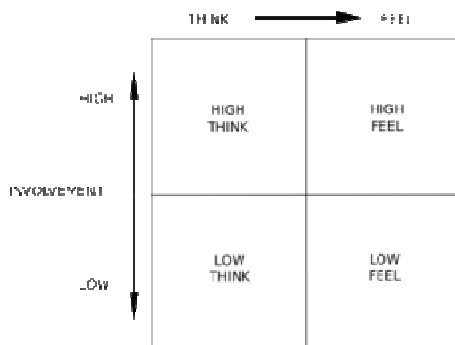
## 2. Branding

In this part, the definitions of a brand and brand equity will be discussed. A brand is the image of a product or a service in the market, including but not limited to, its sign, name, symbol or slogan. A brand creates a combination of images and experiences which generate added value.

### 2.1 Debate on how advertising works

The FCB Grid (see Figure 1.), developed at the Foote, Cone & Belding advertising agency, illustrates four different categories of response to advertising, according to whether the predominant responses are “think” or “feel”, and whether the product in question is considered a high or a low involvement product. For example, the purchase a pair of jeans involves “feel” and “high involvement”, because it requires thought as well as emotional attraction (McDonald, 1993). Gordon Brown (1991) argues that even successful brands may fail due to failures of creating attractive advertisements. They have failed to include properties of the brand into the product itself, thus creating a memorable advert rather than an advert directly related to the product. Successful advertising is based on an assumption that people remember the brand, not the advertisement.

Figure 1. FCB Grid



Source: [www.wikimedia.org](http://www.wikimedia.org)

Aaker (1996b) tells how “advertisers have the raw power to manipulate consumers” (p. 673) and that many companies have resources to generate great numbers of advertisement exposures. This capacity combined with the scientific techniques used to increase the effectiveness of advertising are, as a form of manipulation, often debated. Solomon et al (2006) raise an issue of “free will”, claiming that advertising wrapped in “imaginary or

underlying motivations” perplex consumers, who therefore are not capable of deciding independently. Additionally, Solomon et al. in *Consumer Behaviour: a European perspective* (2006) describe how “functionality and utility are also important images of a specific cultural context that uses references to our reason to seduce us” (p. 21). In other words, purely informative advertising which is often associated with rational choices may not be any less of a manipulative. However, Aaker (1996b) reminds us how “consumers-choice behaviour” is also influenced by factors other than advertising, such as “friends, and decisions of lifestyle and family members, news stories, prices, and distribution variables” (p. 674).

Nevertheless, In *Creating powerful brands*, De Chernatony and McDonald (2003) explain how people interpret messages and images through their own perceptions and therefore often with different results. On one hand, to some people a purchase of a pair of jeans may involve high involvement rather than low, because some people spend more time considering the transaction. Therefore purchasing a pair jeans may be attached to an illusion of becoming part of the brand. In other words, a person who decides to buy the pair of jeans also buys themselves into the world the brand represents. As McDonald (2005) writes; “emotional attraction” is followed by a sequence of “learn-do”. Thus, purchasing a pair of jeans might not involve strong emotions or careful consideration. For these people a purchase decision may fall into any other section within the FCB Grid.

Solomon et al. (2006) raise a phenomenon of materialism in which consumption itself is the goal. Goods are not bought to satisfy needs or wants, or in order to become a part of a brand. Materialism, as Solomon et al. (2006) define it “refers to the importance people attach to worldly possessions” (p. 125). Effects of materialism play a major role in people’s buying habits, especially since advertisements are laid in front of us in so many ways that individuals do not even always notice them. One of the basic reasons for a brand to advertise is to increase profit, whether the advertisement is used as a reminder or a persuasion. In any case, advertising in both the short and long run aims to gain results by increasing consumption (McDonald, 1991). Aaker et al. (1996) define materialism as:

“Tendency to give undue importance to material interests and presumes there is corresponding lessening of importance to non material interests...” (p.680)

Advertising provokes people to consume. Even Aaker et al. (1996) describe how it is a “contributing force to materialism” (p. 680). This is the main reason why purchasing a pair of jeans may not involve significant “emotional attraction” to or “high involvement” with the brand. However, Trout and Rivkin (2000) argue how emotion and intelligence are related to one another. An interview with psychologist Dr. Carol Moog, conducted by Trout and Rivkin (2000) reveals how “regardless of the emotional pull, loyalty, or arousal properties of products” (p. 42) no action is made based on only emotional elements among adults. In short, consumers need reasons to buy goods.

### **3. Brand identity, image, and position**

According to Aaker (2002) brand identity consists of twelve dimensions organized around four perspectives:

“The brand-as-product (product scope, product attributes, quality/value, uses, users, country of origin), brand-as-organisation (organisational attributes, local versus global), brand-as-person (brand personality, brand-customer relationships), and brand-as-symbol (visual imagery/metaphors and brand heritage)” (p. 68).

Associations of these perspectives represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organisation. Brand identity serves to provide direction, purpose and meaning for a brand (Aaker, 2002).

In this part all three dimensions of a brand (identity, image and position) (Aaker, 1996) will be discussed through advertising, and more specifically, how advertising modifies a brand in consumer’s perspective.

#### **3.1 Brand identity**

Aaker (1996) defines brand identity as involvement of how a brand wants to be perceived. Bernstein (1986) in *Image & reality: a critique of corporate communications* specifies it to be the “sum of all the ways a company chooses to identify itself to all its public (p.61).

A case study conducted by Aaker et al. (1996) with courtesy of Levi Strauss, tells a story of how Levi Strauss had grown from a company serving the needs of miners during Gold

Rush era into a conglomerate making two billion pounds from both domestic and international operations in 1979. At this time Levi Strauss had six different divisions, jeanswear, sportswear, womenswear, youthwear, activewear, and accessories (p. 533), and was among one of the hundred largest advertisers with an expenditure of \$38.5 million. Two kinds of campaigns were identified in the study. The most important was of corporate image, whose overall objective was to build and maintain Levi's brand image promoting the concepts of "Quality" and "Heritage" which are the most meaningful and universal aspects of the Levi's corporate personality, and have remained strong during the past decades (Levi Strauss & Co., 2009).

### **3.2 Brand image**

Brand image is how consumers perceive the brand (Aaker, 1996). According to Bernstein (1986), corporations can be examined as a person because of the personality features they possess. Therefore brands can be evaluated according to their behaviour. Bernstein raised a question of the effects of traditional forms of communication of companies and explains how in a traditional form, companies often send out messages in a "one-way" fashion where they delude themselves by calling it communication. Instead, Bernstein reckons the importance of "two-way" communication and suggests problems involving the "one-way" model to be lack of attention towards the receiver of messages. In commercial communication with the target being in persuading consumers, Bernstein (1986) suggests how it should not only be about aesthetic questions, but a matter of effectiveness.

The second part of the focus group session aimed to study associations interviewees have with different brands. Certain images from different denim brands' advertising repertoires were presented. One of the images was a swamp with a background of numerous pairs of eyes (see appendix, Focus group, no. 5), is from Wrangler's *We Are Animals* campaign (Wrangler, 2009). The focus group associated this image with "cannibalism" and "horror". In another image from the same campaign (see appendix no. 3), the image is cropped to create a point-of-view effect on a pair of torn jeans and bare feet. Compared to other images shown, this particular image raised strong emotions (see appendix, Focus group) among the group. One of the interviewees called the image "agonizing", because she associated it with violence. According to her explanation, she saw a corpse which is the outcome of violence. When further requested, the interviewee commented: "...it is

agonizing how violence is used in an attempt to sell clothes”. Moreover, the interviewee questioned how such subject can be used for commercial purposes and still be accepted in today’s society. Other interviewees suggested associations such as, “danger” and “accident”. No doubt this image raised shocking emotions among the group due to its dark atmosphere creating a feeling of something unpleasant. However, when asked what they thought of the images related to the campaign slogan *We Are Animals*, one interviewee expressed confusion; another did not see the relevance between the slogans and the images of that campaign.

According to Aaker (2002) slogans exist to “capture the essence of a brand” and argue its relevance in generating brand equity, the use of “symbols, names, slogans” and even “new products” may create the contemporary image of a brand (p. 58). Another role of slogans is to create an identity that springs emotions favourable to the brand. In the case on Wrangler, the creation of brand equity failed because the interviewees could not identify with the slogan *We Are Animals* and attach it to their perceptions of Wrangler.

A problem with the current view of branding is that the term is used to signal a broad range of issues, increasing the possibility of confusion (De Chernatony and McDonald, 2005). As Bernstein (1986) says “one-way” communication is mostly the messages brands send to their audiences and how the brands risk their message in assuming things rather than having a dialogue with their audiences. Assumptions should not take place in communication.

Another possible outcome of the focus group’s interpretation could have been seeing the relevance between the Wrangler’s slogan and its images. The images may have been interpreted as highly relevant in terms of the theme in them. Apparently, both of the presented images involved elements of “danger” and “horror”, showing how similar people are in comparison with animals, hence *We Are Animals*. By placing people in nature and revealing the “animals” within people and perhaps, stating how people in the end are just animals following their instincts. In assumption, the idea of the images was to impress consumers with the simplicity of Wrangler and create an emotional attachment to the brand. Dunn and Barban (1982) in *Advertising: Its role in modern marketing* explain why interpretations or lack of them are caused by a lack of knowledge of the brand itself.

### 3.3 Brand position

“Tell me and I’ll forget, show me and I might remember, involve me and I’ll understand.”

-Benjamin Franklin

Lindstrom (2006) states how a brand has to be “powered up to deliver a full sensory and emotional experience” (p. xi) in order to become a distinctive brand. Products or services presented in a visual way alone are not enough to make a brand recognizable. It is the combination of visual and audio stimuli that creates synergy and creates remembrance in consumers.

Lindstrom (2006) also introduces a “five-dimensional” approach by including other senses of smell, sound and taste into the “traditional-dimension” of sight and touch. Brands are utilizing these other senses in creating a brand personality and engaging people to involve them with the brand. For example, through a brand extension of Diesel, Fuel For Life-fragrance is created to deepen the lifestyle images of the brand, but at the same time it also gave a scent to the brand (see appendix, image:4.). Consumers became able to wear Diesel not only as clothing, but also as a scent. Sound has been also utilized by jeans brands. Inter alia, Diesel and Levi Strauss have all launched their versions of MySpace where people can listen to music online by various artists promoted by the brands. In Diesel’s and Levi Strauss’ versions of MySpace, U Music (see appendix, image: 2.) and Original Music Magazine allows people to read featured news and see time schedules of numerous non-mainstream artists. Levi Strauss has also released a music recording of “Levi’s music” album (see image 5.2) for its audiences (Diesel, 2009; Levi’s, 2009). By involving people through music, brands have gained the element of sound for their brands.

In the Financial Times article “Brands and bands sing the same tune” (2009); Leah McGrath Goodman identifies a trend boosted by the proliferation of several television channels, independent film houses and internet. Goodman (Financial Times, 2009) tells how the new trend of artists and corporations coming together and forming alliances differ from traditional methods, where companies ordered jingles for their product or service.

Goodman also notifies changes of attitudes whereas in the past artists and bands were usually considered as “sell-outs” after allowing their music to be used for marketing purposes, but now that appears to be approved by public as long as the music is the priority (Financial Times, 2009).

In 2008, Levi’s launched a summer promotion of “Buy Levi’s for 120 Euros and get a tent for free”. This summer campaign was conducted mainly for promotional purposes but it also contributed to Levi Strauss’ identity. It was an attempt to reinforce consumers to the lifestyle the company wishes to present (see appendix, image:4.). According to a press release on *Live Unbuttoned*, Levi Strauss’ first integrated global marketing campaign of videos targeted to young men offered:

“...an entertaining and amusing platform for consumers to engage with the Levi’s brand and 501 jeans.” (Levi Strauss, 2009)

Television advertising of *Live Unbuttoned* includes series of videos which are meant to “evoke unstrained self-expression” by using visually and emotionally engaging effects. In the *First Time*- video, directed by Fredrik Bond, a boy and a girl exchanges flirtatious dialogue of “first time” creating an illusion that they are sharing thoughts of sexual intimacy while unbuttoning their 501 jeans but end of the clip reveals that the “first time” is jumping off a peer (see appendix, image: 5.). This humorous and affectionate commercial engages its audience on an emotional level by reminding viewers of their “first times”. In creating an emotional attachment, Levi Strauss aims to generate emotional benefits with its core identity. According to the press release the campaign was set to:

“Let a new generation of jeans consumers around the world know that the original, quintessential 501 jeans are contemporary and relevant to their lifestyle. No other jeans brand can do this.” (Levi Strauss, 2009)

Levi Strauss with the integrated global campaign of viral videos, print and TV adverts, digital campaigns and outdoor advertising is one of the biggest campaigns ever conducted by the company and according to John Anderson, the president and CEO of Levi Strauss & Co., was a way of: “...stepping up and being a global leader” (Levi Strauss, 2009). In a

working paper of Marketing Science Institute by Tellis (1987), the writer emphasizes the importance of loyalty over advertising as a significant moderator of the effects of advertisement exposure. Tellis (1987) explains how advertising is not the most powerful determining factor of buying behaviour, but rather loyalty in the brand choice stage and volume loyalty at the quantity stage. Leading to a statement where advertising is effective only in increasing quantities purchased by loyal buyers and not in winning new buyers over. Hence advertising has only a small effect on current purchases. Consequently, if current purchases have an influence on future purchase as determined by the loyalty variable, then brand loyalty is not caused by advertising (Tellis, 1987). However, in *The ultimate secrets of advertising*, the author (Jones, 2002) argues that: “a brand grows mainly by gaining new users” (p. 133) because the theoretical framework suggests that “penetration – the measure of the size of the user base – driven market share”, therefore equalling growth (p.133).

Tellis’ (1987) theory explains how advertising has the best effect in depth of the loyalty but not in the amount of volume. As Weinreich stated previously, (1999) Levi’s has gained loyalty to an extent of reaching an iconic status. The loyalty of its consumers has generated a problem with credibility within its targeted new younger audience. In another theory by Jones (2002), for mature brands in well-established markets, the odds against advertising changing perception of the brand’s intrinsic values are high as: “advertising works best at reinforcing current beliefs” (p.266, p.267). Therefore, “*Live Unbuttoned*” campaign within this theory may succeed in presenting original message being contemporary and relevant to the new target audience.

Aaker (2002) highlights in augmenting the identity of a brand and equity should be used as a base and that it should be allowed to evolve, but still be able to stay cohesive with its underlying values (p.236). The underlying value of Levi’s is based on the heritage of gold miners and the myth of the brand. Even though Levi’s has linked its iconic 501 jeans to its new campaign by using its heritage, problems may still occur because the iconic meaning of 501 jeans may be unknown for Levi’s new audiences of younger consumers (Aaker, 2002). As Dunn and Barban (1982) stated previously, lack of knowledge of the brand itself may still lead to low response among audiences.



#### **4. Debate on the effects of branding**

In first chapter of *Brand sense*, the author Lindstrom begins with a story of a teenager, Wilhelm Andries Petrus Booyse who goes through a procedure to remove the letters G-U-C-C-I from his skin. This tattoo was copied from the Gucci Corporation's logo due to Booyse's obsession with the brand. Gucci was much more than just a brand to Booyse and through Lindstrom, Booyse's referred to Gucci as: "my one and only religion." Booyse wore his tattoo for five years before he decided to remove the barcode on his neck after realising one morning that the magic was gone. Gucci failed to excite him as it always had before (Lindstrom, 2005).

Berger (2007) states in *Ads, fads, and consumer culture observe advertising's impact on American character and society* how brands can be interpreted as a promise of quality because one of advertising's roles is to heighten expectations for the brand. Having a differentiating name or a symbol makes a brand unique to its audience and distinguishes it from other similar products while protecting both customers, and the producer from competitors who would attempt to provide products that appear to be identical (Aaker, 1991). Lindstrom's story of Booyse's tattoo can be used as an example of how much power a brand can hold over its customers. Booyse once held Gucci in such value that he went to extremes in order to show his identification with the brand by tattooing himself with not only the letters of the brand but also the barcode, the symbol of the brand on his skin. A unique brand association is acquired by using attributes of the brand, names, packages, distribution strategies and advertising (Aaker 1991, p. 7). In today's modern society people are freer to select the products, services and activities that define them, creating social identities which are communicated to others through the brands (Solomon et al, 2006).

A brand needs a unique idea or concept. According to Ries and Ries (2002) a brand needs to possess a certain word in the mind of its consumers in order to survive, because in the long term the unique idea or concept will disappear.

## **5. Brands**

A strong brand needs a clear statement of the function of a product or a service. The brand also needs specific resources in order to clarify its message explaining the function to the target market. As De Chernatony and McDonald (2003) stated previously about how confusion may take place when branding is used to signal great broad of messages, care needs to be taken when creating the message. People do not passively process whatever information happens to be present, but rather only small fractions of it. The small numbers of stimuli, input that enter people's consciousness, are not processed objectively, therefore individuals interpret stimuli in different ways based on the certain person's unique biases, needs and experiences (Solomon et al, 2006).

### **5.1 Strong brands**

Until the early 1970s, logos on clothes were generally hidden from view and labels were placed discreetly on the inside of garments but by the mid-1980s several labels, such as Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein gradually transformed labels from ostentatious showing offs to an active fashion accessory. In *No logo* (2000), Klein described this phenomenon as being a transformation of logos into becoming a social statement. It showed precisely what premium the wearer was willing to pay for style.

People are willing to pay more for a better product, but quality should be made visible and according to Trout (2000), brands are visible factors of quality and offer prestige. Perceived quality will influence purchase decisions and brand loyalty, also supporting price premiums which, in turn may create a gross margin that can be reinvested in brand equity. This makes successful brands valuable because they guarantee future income (Aaker, 1991; De Chernatony and McDonald, 2003).

Nilson (1998) writes in *Competitive branding*, that three factors can be identified among strong brands, market leadership and good positioning being more or less causes and effects of one another. A company must pay attention to how customers perceive their first experiences with products or services offered by the company, or the company itself is perceived. The second characteristic for strong brands is reputation. With a solid reputation, products will rise to achieve market leader status, because consumers are prepared to pay more for quality goods. Consumers believe that a brand with a good

reputation offers higher quality and added value, and that the product or service is better than products offered by others. The third factor is indeterminate lifespan. A strong brand does not have short lifespan. When a brand gains loyal customers and achieves a certain status, it can stay in the market for a very long time (Nilson, 1998).

## **5.2 Iconic brands**

In *Getting your message heard in a noisy world* (2003), Kaplan Thaler et al. state when brands surpass their pragmatic function by intruding into people's lives, they become iconic. One of the brand equity attributes is brand loyalty (Aaker, 2002), but instead of loyalty Lindstrom (2005) suggests how brands should aim beyond and generate traditions associated with the brand. Lindstrom presents tradition to be stronger than loyalty because:

“Tradition is partly formed by long-term loyalties that have become so ingrained within in a culture that rational behaviour has long since given way to emotional affiliations.” (p.167)

The status that tradition holds in people's lives is recognisable because it makes people act despite the fact that most of tradition-based behaviour does not match our rational scrutiny in the twenty first century. Examples of this are getting married in white, consuming certain foods during particular celebrations and so on. However, people follow these traditions and most likely always will. Perhaps, as Lindstrom (2005) suggests, people's participation to these customs give them a sense of safety and belonging in the continuously changing world.

In the focus group session, interviewees were asked to say what they associated with the nine images presented to them (see appendix, Focus group, 5.). Image no.8 portrays a group of men posing as a team creating several lines (see appendix, Focus group, no. 8). When asked to identify the brand behind the image interviewees immediately associated it with Levi's. Even though the image does not include a logo of Levi's but the numbers 501 on the background alone was enough for the interviewees to link the image with Levi's. The “501” triggered this association to Levi's, because to them the interviewees they are synonymous. The results derived from the focus group may be interpreted as Levi's 501 jeans having reached an iconic status because the simple appearance of the combination of

the numbers 5, 0, and 1 resulted in immediate associations to Levi's. According to Weinreich (1999) in *11 steps to brand heaven*, an icon can be a "picture of the product, the brand name or, frequently, a combination of both in juxtaposition" (p.39). But Levi's success acquiring iconic status with 501 jeans have resulted a problem. Weinreich (1999) reveals how iconic status have resulted negative effects.

Levi's users have become so loyal that they have continued purchasing the brand despite they have grown older and created a tradition by wearing them despite of life stage changes in their lives. Weinriech (1999) writes, because of that specific tradition Levi's are worn mostly by people over forty and this tradition has inadvertently damaged the youthful image Levi's wishes to present to its younger audience. Hofmeyr and Rice (2000) acknowledge in their book *Commitment-led marketing: the key to brand profits is in the consumers mind* how seductive it is to use advertising to change people's perceptions of the brand, but how success rate its is extremely low. They continue:

"For mature brands, in well-established markets, the odds against advertising changing perception of the brand intrinsic are high and advertising works best at reinforcing current beliefs" (p.266, p.267).

### **5.3 Evolving from strong to iconic**

Wienreich (1999) brings attention to the power of cults. To reach success, a brand needs to create a cult of followers. Wienreich describes how regular purchasers have the power to lift a brand onto the iconic level. A loyal group is persuaded to have faith in the brand's cause and they must believe it has touched their lives on some levels with a degree of understanding, passion and charisma. Believing passion plays a key role in persuasion, Wienreich (1999) explains how without passion no brand is able to communicate its worth to its audiences. Roberts and Lafley (2005), perhaps, put it best: "if you are not in Love with your own business, they would not be either" (p.75).

## 6. The role of brand-based advertising

“If you are advertising any product, never see the factory in which it was made... because you see when you know the truth about anything, the inner truth – it is very hard to write the surface fluff which sells it.” (Helen Woodward, cited in Klein, 2001, p. 345)

Advertising has taken its place in people’s daily lives and has become a new form of art. Solomon et al. (2006) state how advertising uses different tactics to penetrate into people’s minds and create a condition where advertising is becoming self-referential, where advertisements are in many ways independent from the goods actually advertised. The new form of art has become appreciated in itself, rather than being “deceptive information about products”.

According to Haig (2003) branding is used to protect the product from failure. Therefore when a product fails it is actually the brand that fails, not the product. Consumer’s purchasing decision is based on images of the brand and not the product, the added value gained, rather than the product itself. Therefore a brand is much more valuable than the sum of its physical attributes; its perception being fragile and needing constant nurture.

In the late 1990s, Levi Strauss Co. began losing market share despite all the spending on its products. In the New York Times, Jennifer Steiner proposed, that the lack of a lifestyle advertising approach resulted in the failure of Levi’s. Steiner highlights how making blue jeans was not enough to survive the battle of differentiation. Therefore the company needed “denim-toned house paint” to portray the lifestyle the label promotes in order to increase sales (Steiner, 1999). The new lifestyle-branding trend was elevated during that period of time, during which advertising agencies began to sell not individual campaigns, but their ability to act and identify, articulate and protect the corporate soul. Renzo Rosso, the founder of Diesel jeans declared: “we don’t sell a product; we sell a style of live” (Klein, 2001, p. 23). Diesel’s *Successful Living*- campaign has repeatedly promoted and emphasised the lifestyle of the company through its advertising. It is a bold and provocative advertising campaign which appears to be questionable and has raised doubts about the company’s branding strategy. In a Creative Review (Creative Review, 1998) Diesel’s former account manager of a Swedish advertising agency Paradiset, Stefan Ostrom commented that the problems Diesel had in screening its commercials on Music

Television (MTV) to be a positive reaction in terms of Diesel's brand image. According to the article, Ostrom believes being banned from MTV is considered as a positive matter because it proves their strategy to be right on the money. Consequently Diesel has continued to produce controversial advertisements in order to get banned from the media to craft its brand image by promoting a rebellious lifestyle (Creative Review, 1998).

## **6.1 The scope and impacts of lifestyle advertising**

Berger (2007) states that "advertising must be examined not only in terms of its economic impact but also in terms of its influence on people's beliefs and value" (p.23). Berger shows how advertising has made its impact on the countries personalities, cultures and societies in such profound ways that everything ranging from food preferences to political opinions are under the influence of advertising.

The importance of lifestyle in contemporary consumer societies is presented in *Consumer culture and Postmodernism* by Featherstone (1991):

"...the new heroes of consumer culture make lifestyle a life project and display their individuality and sense of style in the particularity of the assemblage of goods, clothes, practices, experiences, appearance and bodily disposing they design together into a lifestyle." (p.86)

Featherstone (1991) adds how a modern individual within the current consumer culture is taught that one speaks not only through his wardrobe but also with one's "home, furnishing, decoration, car, and other activities" (p.86) which can all be evaluated and classified in terms of the presence or absence of taste. Berger (2007) supports this argument by cementing the role of advertising in promotion of a lifestyle, as advertising is used in order to teach people what is fashionable.

Semiotics is also studied for advertising purposes. As semiotics, signs that signify messages, is largely unconscious, it can be deduced that all mannerisms can be interpreted as messages to others (Chandler, 2009). According to Berger (2007), one's decision on "clothes, hairstyles, cars, homes, and other material goods as well as our bodies, facial expressions, and body languages" combine messages one sends to others all the while

expressing a lifestyle (p.24). Advertisements for a certain lifestyle must reflect the desired identity of the brand. For example, dressing in the right brand of jeans is not enough. They show that one is “in” and has good fashion sense, but the advertisements for fashionable jeans must also be trendy and reflect a sense of “coolness” to appear cohesive.

Solomon et al. (2006) supports this view by writing how in today’s modern society people are freer to select the products, services and activities that define themselves, creating social identities which are communicated to others. Berger’s (2009) definition of consumer cultures:

“...those in which there has been a great level of expansion of commodity production, leading to societies full of consumer goods and services and places where these consumer goods and services can be purchased.” (p. 23)

Solomon et al. (2006) identify how consumers choose products, services and activities that define them, thus creating social identities that are used to communicate to others. This enables people to recognize other those with similar identities from others.

Discussed theories raise a phenomenon where people desire to be seen as different. They want to be filtered through a crowd regardless of their need to belong to a certain group that represents their values and beliefs. Diesel’s advertising can be interpreted as a challenge to its viewer. By provoking people to stand up and become individuals and stand out from the crowd Diesel invites people to become one with the brand. Like brands, people differentiate in order to stand out from others. But is this a result of brand positioning, where brands wish to be seen as a persona with similar attributes like an individual, or are people seeking confidence and admiration by branding themselves? As Bernstein (1986) stated previously, brands can be regarded as people. The logical question then is can people be regarded as brands? Eventually this situation raises an overall question of differentiation among brands and people. If brands can be reckoned as personas and individuals as brands it would lead to an unavoidable question of the power that differentiation holds. The main purpose for differentiation is to become special in the eyes of others but in a situation where consumers differentiate themselves with similar products, a brand differentiates with similar attributes. Causally, no individual then would be special,

nor any brand. For example, global warming - the increase in the average temperature of the Earth's near-surface air and oceans since the mid-20th century and its projected continuation - has raised a lifestyle-based trend to advertising. Several brands portray themselves as “green” and promote the same ideology in living. “Green” living consists of ecological choices in consumption where individuals can make a difference by choosing less polluting goods due to their more environment friendly production. Many organisations, such as Green Peace, promote this ideology. Clothing industry is forced to adapt to this new trend by producing “green” products. Organically produced cotton appears to be an answer to this trend. Nudie Jeans Co., a Swedish denim brand was one of the first to bring out jeans manufactured with organic cotton (Nudie Jeans Co., 2009).

In *The ethical consumer*, Harrison et al. (2005) compare the green trend with the perceptions of consumers:

“Looking at public behaviour across a range of social, environmental and community activities, it is possible to identify a group of people more engaged in social, environmental and community activities than the population as a whole.” (p. 198)

Organisations such as Green Peace aim to increase consumers’ involvement in the matter and encourage them to pressure brands to take action and responsibility to take part in saving Earth for our posterity. This trend has generated another attitude for brands to absorb and use as a language in communicating with their target audiences, as environment conscious consumers will most likely choose green brands. Diesel, for example, launched an entire campaign focused on global warming (see appendix, image: 6.). The concept of choosing to purchase a pair of organic cotton jeans is ethical and, weighing in the main reason of environmentally conscious living, contains identical messages for both food also: do not consume more than you need. Yet, advertisements based on environmental messages appear to persuade people to “consume ecologically”. Is that not another form of materialism only painted in green? According to Berger (2007), one of the roles of advertising is persuasion. Instead of attracting consumers to buy a pair of jeans, it tells them to choose a certain brand that has an ecological print. This appears to be an extension, another cult, a form of materialism as identified by Solomon et al. (2006). Only this time, it



uses the green trend as its base. This bipolarity is further supported by Berger's (2007) identification of advertising teaching people how to appear trendy.

## **6.2 Brand-based advertising to children**

An international research digest, *Commercial television and European children*, written by Ward et al. (1986) argues that concerns involving children's responses to advertising evolve from basic concerns:

- (1) "Age related differences in the key effects of television advertising,
- (2) the underlying processes by which children perceive and evaluate advertising,
- (3) and message characteristics which some feel may be more or less "effective" depending on the age of the child." (p.29)

Frontline correspondent Douglas Rushkoff (2001) examines in *The Merchants of Cool*, produced by Barak Goodman and Rachel Dretzin, the techniques, tactics and cultural consequences of branding for children. Rushkoff questions whether the creators of popular culture who are considered responsible of making teenagers the hottest consumer demographic with \$100 billion spent in advertising on them. This in addition to the \$50 billion spent on their parents in America alone. According to Sharon Lee, Teen Market Executive, called this increase of direct and indirect consumption by teenagers "guilt money". Parents do not spend as much time with their children as they want to, so instead parents compensate by giving and spending great sums on their children (Rushkoff, 2001). Are brands simply answering to the demands of teenagers or are they generating an insurance policy for their future market share by developing relationships with teenagers in an attempt to generate the next generation of loyal consumers? Scholar (2004): "the more children shop, the more voice they have in parental purchases" (p. 23) and the more children consume the more aware they become of brands. He also adds that "the increased salience of brands is a predictable outcome of kids' greater exposure to adverts" (p. 26). Rushkoff (2001) recognises how other approaches are needed in attempts to advertise to children since they do not react to the traditional methods of advertising. New tactics were implemented but they needed another kind of approach to traditional market research. According to Malcom Gladwell, writer of New York Magazine, it is "structured around

search of a certain kind of personality in certain kind of player in a given kind of social network” (Ruschkoff, 2001). “Cool hunting” as Ruschkoff refers to, concerns studies of what teens considered being “cool”. Companies have learned to listen to teenagers who are considered cool among other teens. These trendsetters are studied and evaluated by companies so they can be aware of what is cool. Because what teens consider as cool has a tendency to change continuously, companies have to be aware to find the next hot thing. Ruschkoff (2001) raises another phenomenon concerning cool hunting by companies. He considers cool hunting as stealing from teens, since it is a subculture manufactured and adapted to mainstream and then sold back to teens who originated it.

In 1999, when Levi’s discovered how market is created in terms of children, it launched the Red Line Jeans and indie brand of Levi’s that did not advertise that it was another product line from a multimillion corporation. Red Line Jeans was targeted to underground audience who think highly of cool (Klein, 2001). However, this attempt of Levi’s being cool failed as soon as the word of it belonging to Levi’s got out. The attempt of reaching the underground scene was doomed before its time; it failed to reach its target audience. According to Rob Stone (Ruschkoff, 2001), Teen Marketing Executive brands must understand the key element in branding to children, the need to use a “...precise message that you are trying to reach them in their terms”. This clarifies the fact that two-way communication is even more important when advertising to children than to adults. *Merchants of Cool* explained how companies in fact kill cool in the process of selling. As soon as a brand behind it is discovered, cool stops being cool. This was the problem Levi’s faced as it did not reach its target audience at the right time. When Red Line Jeans hit the stores, it was already known by the majority of teens and therefore it was not cool or underground (Klein, 2001). Ruschkoff (2001) also questions the meaning of cool and concluded with a definition of anti-marketers and explains how teens do not want to be advertised to, they want to seek something that is real and can be touched, as in the five-dimensional model Lindstrom (2006 s.p.14) introduced. Provocative images or jingles do not work with teens but, as Ruschkoff explores, lifestyle marketing responses of children, it seems that the key for brand success is in branding kids. This has resulted in teen cultures, pop-culture and teen television. Both of these cultures are advertised as cool and because teens do not like being advertised to, or being told what to do, brands have discovered the power of anti-marketing-marketing. The main element behind anti-

marketing-marketing is basically utilizing reverse psychology using advertising where advertisements include slogans of “do not listen to us”- messages in order to promote sales. Companies, such as Sprite have utilized this method to build relationships by showing an understanding of teen culture and, most importantly, the ability to be able to listen to what teens have to say. But as Ruschkoff (2001) explained before, cool changes rapidly and nothing is cool for very long.

Advertising to children builds together the cornerstones of pop culture, such as MTV, which used music to channel its messages to children. Sponsorships of bands and artists developed their messages for their audiences, and simultaneously created a world where the artists could be reckoned as brands as well. Brannan (1993) tells how celebrities “ascribe the right emotional values to a product (p. 120). Through music brands assured teens just how cool they were because artists or bands wore their clothing and performed under their logos (Ruschkoff, 2001). And so MTV became today’s form of advertising (Ruschkoff, 2001). Advertising a certain lifestyle to teens, in Bergers (2001) opinion, teaches audiences what is cool. Ruschkoff (2001) questions other effects lifestyle advertising brings to teens. Mainly how it blurs the roles of advertising. Brands seek trend setters in order to find the next hot thing and after finding it, advertise it back to the children. The kids then absorb what lifestyle adverts teaches by mirroring the behaviour shown to them and then brands, encouraged by the positive reception, continue. Thus a vicious cycle of repetition is born.

As nothing stays cool forever, signs of resistance to branded teen hood have emerged. According to Quart (2003), during the late 1990s high school students held anti-school sponsorship campaigns to notify corporations of the actions conducted by their brands. This group demanded a change in the methods of advertising used by companies and accused brands intruding their lives and manipulating their behaviour. Attitudes have also evolved with a new generation of teens. As Goodman (2001) stated earlier, changes were in part caused by the attitudes in how bands and artists have adapted to the teens’ market.

Social effects of advertising to children are recognizable and brands are targeting younger audiences with detours to other fields, such as into the toy industry. In *Consuming kids* (2004) Susan Linn tells how the toy manufacturer Mattel Inc. responded when realizing that Barbie was “relegated to the preschool market” (p. 143). MGA Entertainment Inc.

gained market share by selling to tweens, the young girls targeted with Bratz dolls: “The Bratz hit the markets as the brand that was going to bring tweens back to doll play” (p. 143). They became a hit because the dolls were suddenly outgoing and sexy and dressed in fashionable clothes and advertised during popular programmes (Linn, 2004). Mattel Inc. responded with new generation of Barbie. The “My Scene” Barbies were a more contemporary version of the classic doll and advertised on MTV (Linn, 2004). Brand logos soon appeared in accessories that came with the dolls and dresses (see appendix, image: 7.). But Linn (2004) questions the real target audience for Bratz and My Scene Barbies since the “sexy little Bratz are bestsellers for five- to seven- year- olds, who are now going to be even older even younger” (p. 144).

### **6.3 Debate on the effects of advertising to children**

Effects of advertising have been continuously debated, but due to ethical issues related to the advertising targeted to children, this debate has surfaced more strongly. In 1977, as a reaction to food advertising to children, the Federal Trade Commission staff recommended that (1) all advertising on television to be banned by any product that is directed or viewed by audiences composed of a significant proportion of children who are considered too young to comprehend the selling purpose of advertising, and (2) either to balance advertisements played in television for sugared food products directed or seen by audiences of a significant proportion of older children with nutritional and health disclosures funded by advertisers or to ban it completely (Aaker et al, 1996; Federal Trade Commission, 2009).

As a result great debates evolved, and due to the nature of the topic several arguments opposing this recommendation were raised. According to Aaker et al. (1996) this recommendation was considered as (1) interdiction on the right of free speech of the advertisers to communicate with other audiences, and (2) the professional competence of the FTC to serve as a “national nanny” (, p.677) on what children should be exposed to. Additionally (3), no scientific evidence existed to relate food television advertising exposure to poor dental hygiene.

According to Commercial television and European children, edited by Ward et al. (1986):

“Some people base their concerns about advertising’s effects to children on their perceptions of age- related differences in children’s abilities to properly evaluate advertising.” (p.13)

One argument concerning children and television advertising is that it is unfair because children are more sensitive and therefore more vulnerable to advertising (Ward et al., 1986). As a result they are confused by it because they do not understand “what a commercial is or the meaning of specific message elements” (p. 47). In a paper by Mary Gardiner (1969), *The cultural and social impact of advertising on American society*, she defines commercial advertising to be:

“The message of the commercial that all major problems confronting and individual can be instantly eliminated by the application of some external force – the use of the product.” (p. 14)

However, according to a report from the Advertising Association, (2009) *Children’s Wellbeing in a commercial world* explodes the myth of toxic childhood claiming that “the impact of the commercial world has not affected negatively the emotional wellbeing of children over the past fifteen years” (p.3) and that “the commercial world is making a positive contribution to children’s lives...” regarding their “relationships, their safety, their enjoyment, and their education have been positively affected by companies, their products, and their services” (p.3). General myths concerning advertising to children appear to be (Advertising Association, 2009):

(1) “Children’s wellbeing is in sharp decline, and indeed children’s fundamental values are being undetermined, (2) this decline has been substantially driven, directly, by the commercial world, and (3) any benefits of the commercial world to children are greatly outweighed by the dissatisfaction and inequalities it fosters”. (p. 4)

With data obtained from Youth TGI, a biannual nationally-representative survey of 7-19 year-olds in Britain, Advertising Association finds “indications of increased media literacy and resistance to advertising” (p. 11), which would explain the decrease in “involvement with television” and the “decline in materialism; positive trends in the role of family and increased self-esteem” (p.11-12). Yet Berger (2000) argues by saying: “unconscious

behaviour determines many actions” (p. 49) and people who think in such a way overestimate their willpower and think nothing happens to their mind if they do not so choose. This is an “illusion of control” (p.47). Ruschkoff (2001) argues how today youth culture is reflected through consumption and not through expression and how physical objects have become to define individuals as personalities. Ward et al. (1986) answer to these statements by questioning how empirical research can only “present ways of viewing the interaction of children and television advertising, and data concerning the incidence; it cannot specify “good” and “bad” effects of television advertising” (p. 12) because it is “dependent on the value-position of individuals” (p. 12).

#### **6.4 Children as the future market**

It is difficult to say whether brands set their priorities in advertising to children for short- or long-term success. Advertising changes with rest of the word because it needs to speak the same language as its target audience. In order for brands to achieve communication with its audience it needs to understand how they have evolved (Jones, 2002). According to Euromonitor’s statistics, the median population age within the European Union is rising, caused by the increasing number of pensioners in comparison to teens (the age grouping of 13-19 included (Euro Monitor international, 2009)). This demographic shift will have a major impact on our social structures and economic systems. Advertising targeted to teens, tweens and children has grown along with demographics but also because the number of pensioners is increasing. Will brands then adapt to this demographic shift by targeting its advertising to pensioners by foregoing their youthful brand images and seek profits from the older demographic? May be, but perhaps something else entirely. Companies have acknowledged this future change in demographics and are therefore advertising to children more aggressively than ever in order to establish relationships and making them loyal to the extent that they continue purchasing the brand even when older. Nonetheless, brand-based advertising will continue to raise awareness by captivating its audiences in an attempt to secure potential future purchases.

## 7. Conclusion

Brand-based advertising has had an undeniably influential role on different levels and aspects of people's lives. Debates regarding how advertising really works may vary but its effects are noticeable by all, despite the arguments of negative influences it has caused. The roles of advertising may vary, and so do the messages within them, but advertising alone is not enough to persuade the consumers. It needs other attributes to solidify its message to the targeted audience, whether it aims to persuade, raise awareness or teach its audience. Advertising can communicate the launch of a new product and the related brand image but does not secure the final sale. The argument on whether advertising simply answers to existing demand in the market or creates it is ongoing but correlations to both sides of the argument can be acknowledged.

Brand identity, image and positioning are the sums of how brands are presented, recognised, and received. In order for a brand to achieve dialogue with its audience it must first listen to and understand them. Strong brands are crafted by using two-way communication and the brand may evolve into being iconic if its message is clear enough. Through this iconic status the brand attains lasting loyalty. Brand-based advertising serves to reinforce current views on the brand and therefore the brand's heritage should be cherished and supported with other, new elements. Lifestyle advertising consists not only of the products of a brand, but rather the lifestyle they represent together. It invites its consumers to engage the brand and strengthen its existing values by living a life the brand promotes.

Generally, advertising to children is often considered to have negative effects on them. Albeit there being no solid evidence to support this argument, brands should take care in involving children, no matter how lucrative a future target market they now represent.

Impacts of brand-based advertising can be seen on the macro levels of societies but cannot be implemented on individual levels. The correlation between brand-based advertising contributing to materialism remains questionable. Because advertising in general cannot be proved to result in neither positive nor negative outcomes, its effects can only be examined on an individual level based on the perceptions and media literacy of the individuals.

## Appendices



Image 1. Fuel for life-  
fragrance



Image 2. Diesel, U:Music



Image:3.. Levi's, levi's music



Image: 4. Levi's, Free tent



Image: 5. Levi's, First time-  
commercial

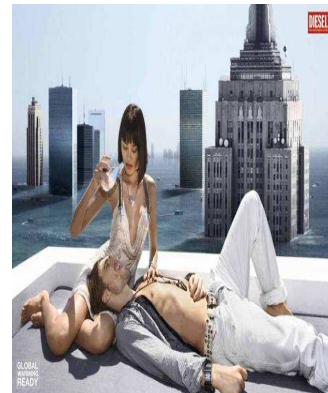


Image: 6. Diesel, Global Warming



Image: 7. Mattel Inc., My Scene  
Barbie



## **Focus group session**

In the beginning of session:

- Guidance for interviewees
- No right or wrong answers
- All opinions are highly appreciated

Part One:

### 1. Warming up

- What kinds of clothes are preferred?
- What do clothes mean to you?
- Do you follow trends? Why?
- What are your expectations for brands?

### 2. Brand associations

- What jeans brands can you think of?
- What kind of experiences do you have with brands mentioned?
- What are you wearing and why?

### 3. Strong brands or icons?

- Successful Living, Diesel
- 501, Levi's
- We Are Animals, Wrangler
- X-Line, Lee

### 4. What brands do you prefer and why?

- Use three words to describe the brands mentioned (Purpose to gain information do brands raise positive/negative emotions)

5. Recall and involvement of brand-based adverts

- What kind of advert campaigns can you recall?
- What imaginaries do you associate with the following images?

Part Two:

6. Free discussion (Purpose to gain more information of potential relationships between interviewees and brands discussed)

Focus group session key points:

Levi's and Diesel were most recognized brands within the category of jeans for example compared to Wrangler or Nudie Jeans. Most of the interviewees were able to identify which brand identities aim and aware of the "in" messages they attempt to send. Wrangler's "We Animals"- campaign was perceived negative due to its use of shock tactics and issues of advertising's impact on social beliefs and values. Interviewees did not feel "manipulated" by the brands because they feel they are not influenced by brands' advertising and reckon "not wanting to buy into any certain brand", as one of the interviewee said: "I want to be independent" from brands referring to lifestyle brand-based advertising with context of brand loyalty. Issue of materialism was discussed and negative feelings regarding on that subject could be identified. Many images shown aroused confusion and interviewees' interpretations varied among the group but a distinctive element of awareness could be observed. Interviewees did not find themselves engaged to certain brands but session shows how on the unconscious level brands' advertising have influenced their way to perceive what is "cool". However, during free discussion interviewees revealed strong negative emotions toward jeans brands advertising today.

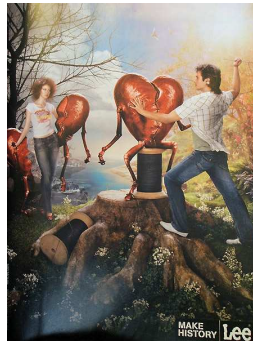
(Notice: session was conducted in Finnish and then translated to English)

Images:

(1.)



(2.)



(3.)



(4.)



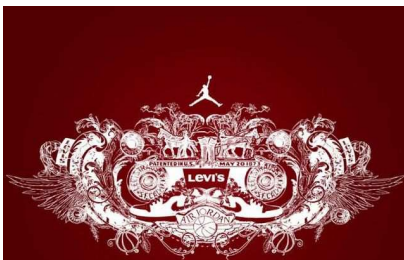
(5.)



(6.)



(7.)



(8.)



(9.)



Resources of images:

Figure 1. [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikibooks/en/thumb/4/4d/Fcb\\_grid.png/300px-Fcb\\_grid.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikibooks/en/thumb/4/4d/Fcb_grid.png/300px-Fcb_grid.png)

Focus group:

- (1) [www.theshermanfoundation.blogspot.com](http://www.theshermanfoundation.blogspot.com)
- (2) [www.d-log.info](http://www.d-log.info)
- (3) [www.adsoftheworld.com](http://www.adsoftheworld.com)
- (4) [www.adseduction.com](http://www.adseduction.com)
- (5) [www.adsoftheworld.com](http://www.adsoftheworld.com)
- (6) [www.virginmedia.com](http://www.virginmedia.com)
- (7) [www.sneakerspeaker.com](http://www.sneakerspeaker.com)
- (8) [www.101airborneww2.com](http://www.101airborneww2.com)

Appendix:

1. [www.trendhunter.com](http://www.trendhunter.com)
2. [www.cult.diesel.com/](http://www.cult.diesel.com/)
3. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)
4. [www.mr-ego.be/livejournal/2007-05/tent.jpg](http://www.mr-ego.be/livejournal/2007-05/tent.jpg)
5. [www.arabaquarius.blogspot.com](http://www.arabaquarius.blogspot.com)
6. [www.current.com](http://www.current.com)
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