BUILDING A BRAND IMAGE

A Case Study of How GANNI Can Best Create a Positive Brand Image Perception

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0. Abstract

In this thesis, we study how brands can create the most positive brand image perception using its existing marketing initiatives, using the Danish fashion brand Ganni as a case. We have studied this through semi-structured research interviews with eight British women, whom we consider to be within Ganni's target audience. Working within the social constructivist paradigm, our theoretical framework consists of theories concerning the creation of a brand image in modern society, types of marketing initiatives and perceptual processes, included in both the analysis and the discussion. The interviews consisted of us exposing the interview participants to selected marketing initiatives from Ganni, which we had grouped into six categories, whereafter we asked them to place their perception on a Likert scale created specifically for this purpose and subsequently elaborate on their perceptions. The interviews with the eight women, which was conducted online using Zoom on the basis of our predefined interview guide, has been analysed using thematic analysis, coined by Braun & Clarke, as our method of analysis. The analysis, which was divided into eight subchapters corresponding to each of the participants, found that the perceptions of the participants were very different for each of the categories, but they were generally on the positive side of our Likert scale. Through the analysis and the subsequent discussion, we found that the interview participants' perceptions were the most positive in the category of content marketing, as they consider the efforts in this category to substantiate what Ganni claims to do, while they were negative to the efforts they did not perceive as reflecting this notion. This desire for brands to substantiate their words with actions is in line with the ideology of the modern consumer, as they want brands who deliver additional value beyond the physical product. This is exactly what Ganni succeeds in doing in the category of content marketing, which is why this is the category where the participants have the most positive brand image perception of Ganni.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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1. Introduction

We are living in a time where responsible and ethical consumption is a focal issue for many consumers (Goldsmith 2021, 5-6). The focus on spending less, minimising CO2 emission and making eco-friendly decisions is bigger than ever, with many consumers making small changes to their lifestyles every day (Angus & Westbrook 2022). Despite this rising awareness of preserving the planet for future generations, many industries producing consumer goods continue to grow bigger and bigger. When looking at different industries and their level of pollution, energy and agriculture are the two industries that contribute the most to pollution, sharply followed by the fashion industry (Howell 2021). In contrast to the first two industries, the fashion industry consists of shopping goods[1], meaning that the need the products fulfil is more materialistic and indulging (in Western Europe) than the somewhat "basic need"-products made in the energy and agriculture industries. We therefore perceive products from the fashion industry as products belonging at the higher levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as clothes can be utilised by people to meet one's need for social belonging, self-esteem and self-actualisation (Maslow 1943). The mismatch between the increasing focus on responsible consumer behaviour and the continuing mass production, makes us wonder how it is possible for brands to keep increasing their sales, a direct result of mass consumption, while the focus on consuming less seems to increase at the same time. It is this paradox that forms the basis of our research.

According to statistics, fashion brands continuously increase their revenue year after year (Smith 2022). Therefore, as the need for clothing in the Western world has surpassed a mere physiological need, we believe that the various brands within the fashion industry must be succeeding in two ways: 1) in creating a need for contemporary fashion items that contribute to satisfying consumers' self-fulfilment needs, making them disregard their perceived importance of ethical consumption and 2) in differentiating themselves from similar brands, thereby creating a need for their specific products rather than those of the competitors. One way for a brand to differentiate itself from the competitors is through different marketing

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[1]Consumer goods can be divided into four categories; convenience products (food, beverages, cleaning products etc.), shopping products (clothes, phones, furniture etc.), speciality products (jewellery, rare artwork and other luxury goods) and unsought products (goods not often needed, such as snowshoes and life insurance) (Boyce 2022).

initiatives, which can be used to create a positive image perception of the brand, which ultimately can result in a purchase and thus revenue. Based on this, we find it relevant to study how brands can create a positive brand image perception through the use of their marketing initiatives. In order for us to be able to do this, we have chosen a brand that appears to differentiate itself from its competitors when it comes to the marketing efforts, style of clothing as well as price point of the brand, namely the fashion brand Ganni.

Ganni is a Danish fashion brand that makes shoes, clothes and accessories, targeted towards the millennial consumer who is currently approximately 25-40 years old (The Analyst Team 2021). Ganni's price point is described as hitting a 'sweet spot' where the prices are "*high enough to be aspirational, yet more affordable than luxury*", ranging from €55 to €1295 (The Analyst Team 2021; Lemaire 2021). In 2021, Ganni had a revenue of US$27.6 million on its own webshop, ganni.com, making Ganni the 29th most profitable fashion brand in Denmark (ecommerceDB n.d.). Moreover, Ganni appears to have established a strong community online with loyal supporters of the brand, which is evident in the more than 1 million followers on Instagram and the popular use of the hashtag #GanniGirls, which more than 85,000 posts have been tagged with (Appendix 1.1.4; Appendix 1.2.4.1). Furthermore, Ganni is very active and distinctive in terms of its marketing efforts, both when it comes to the number of platforms, frequency of social media posts and types of marketing activities (Appendix 1). These marketing efforts include initiatives such as podcasts, publishing a book, launching an online re-selling and rental service and numerous collaborations with other brands (Appendix 1). Because of this, we deem Ganni the ideal case for examining how a brand can best build a positive brand image perception, as Ganni has clearly created a demand for its products despite that they are sold at a high price point and thereby require a certain degree of involvement as well as being conflicting with the notion of consuming less.

1.1 Problem Statement

Based on the introduction above, we have created the following research question for our thesis:

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How does Ganni create the most positive brand image perception using its existing marketing initiatives?

We will investigate this by interviewing a group of young British women about Ganni's marketing initiatives, where we will expose them to marketing stimuli and subsequently ask them about their perception of what they have just seen and how this makes them perceive Ganni. The reason for choosing young women is that, as mentioned above, we perceive Ganni's target audience as being the millennial woman who is currently aged approximately 25-40, as it requires a certain economic latitude to purchase Ganni's items. At the same time, we choose to focus on British women as it will increase the chance of the participant having little or no preceding knowledge about Ganni, while Ganni is also quite present on the British market, as it is evident from the number of stores in the UK, the British version of the website and Ganni being written about in British media (Appendix 1.1.1.1; appendix 1.2.4.3). Working with participants with little or no prior knowledge about the brand, will ensure that the participants do not have a strong preconceived perception of Ganni's brand image, which will make it more evident which of Ganni's marketing initiatives contributes the most to creating a positive brand image perception. This is the case as the participants having no preconceived perception of Ganni, will help avoid underlying biases that could potentially influence their answers. This will result in more reliable answers and subsequently an analysis that reflects their actual perceptions of the initiatives as they have not been influenced by any preconceptions of Ganni's brand image.

The aforementioned marketing stimuli that we will expose our interview participants to is based on Ganni's existing marketing initiatives. These initiatives will be grouped into six categories based on the type of content rather than the platform they occur on. The initiatives that make up the categories are selected as we deem that it is with these initiatives that Ganni seems to excel and thereby differentiates itself from the competitors. We will elaborate on this dividing of the initiatives into the six categories in chapter 5, Case Description.

1.2 Line of Procedure

In this thesis, the first thing you will meet - following this first chapter, containing introduction, problem statement and clarification of concepts - is chapter 2, which concerns our scholarly approach. In the chapter, we present and discuss our scientific theoretical approach, social constructivism, as well as discuss the implications it has for our research, and our ontological and epistemological stance. Following this, we will present and argue for the research design we employ in our research, including a graphic depiction of the components of our thesis.

The third chapter contains our literature review. The purpose of this chapter is to obtain knowledge about the existing field of research our research inserts itself into, in order to ensure that our research contributes to the field with new knowledge. As our research concerns branding and more specifically branding in the fashion industry, our literature review has two focal points: branding in general and tendencies of consumer behaviour in the fashion industry.

In chapter 4, we present our theoretical framework. The chapter is divided into three subchapters corresponding to one for each of our theories as well as a fourth subchapter in which we discuss the correspondence between the theories. The theories that make up our theoretical framework concern building a brand image in modern society, theoretical knowledge about the categories of marketing initiatives which we have grouped Ganni's marketing efforts into as well as theory regarding perceptual processes. Following each of the subchapters about the theories, we discuss the implications the individual theory has for our research.

The fifth chapter, in which we describe the case we are working with, namely Ganni, contains an introductory subchapter about Ganni as well as another subchapter in which we discuss Ganni's marketing efforts. In addition, we discuss how we have grouped Ganni's marketing initiatives into the categories we employ for our research.

The sixth chapter consists of our methodology and has four subchapters. The first concerns our methodological approach, in which case studies are the focal point. Secondly, our data collection takes place, in which we account for how we have gathered the data for our analysis, including a presentation of our interview guide and how we have found the interview

participants for the interviews. The third subchapter consists of the descriptions of this data, where we both include the specific information about the conditions under which the interviews were conducted as well as an account of the information we have attained about the participants through the questionnaire we sent out prior to the interviews. The fourth and last subchapter concerns our method of analysis, which the method of transcription, thematic analysis and structure of the analysis are all part of.

In chapter 7 and 8, we analyse the interviews and discuss our findings, respectively. The analysis chapter is divided into eight subchapters, one for each interview participant, in order to uncover where each participant has the most positive perception of Ganni's brand image. Ultimately, the findings of the analysis are discussed in the following discussion chapter, where we draw parallels between our findings and what we know to be true about the modern consumer based on our theoretical framework.

In closing, our final chapter, chapter 9, consists of our conclusion in which we answer our research question.

1.3 Clarification of Concepts

Throughout this thesis we will make use of several terms that are characteristic for our field of research concerning branding and in relation to Ganni being the chosen brand for this case study. In order to make sure that you – the reader – are on the same page as us and understand our thought of reasoning, we have chosen to include this subchapter where we will now clarify these concepts, terms and words.

1.3.1 Brand

Because this research focuses on different marketing initiatives within a brand's marketing, we deem it important to clarify what we mean when we say 'brand'. The word 'brand' is often defined as "*an intangible marketing or business concept that helps people identify a company, product or individual*" (Kenton 2022). However, we use the term brand in two different ways, the first being in the sense described in the aforementioned definition, which is predominantly

used in our theoretical framework as well as when discussing brands in general in our discussion. The other usage of the word is used when referring to Ganni as an entity, in order to create variation in the language used in the thesis.

1.3.2 Referring to Ganni

We perceive Ganni as a living organism and as the brand is created by more than just one person. At the same time, Ganni is also the name of the brand and thus, the brand is one unity in terms of being one whole constellation. Because of this, we will refer to Ganni as singular in this thesis, namely as 'it' rather than 'them'. Consequently, we do this to create synergy between the one brand in focus and the way we choose to speak about it, despite us being aware that Ganni is also a product of human interactions as well as a collective performance from all the members of the staff.

1.3.3 Writing #GanniGirls

Ganni refers to the brand community, which will be introduced thoroughly later on, as #GANNIGirls (Appendix 1.1.4). However, in order to increase reader friendliness, we will only write this as '#GanniGirls', as we believe that the capitalisation makes it harder to read a sentence with the hashtag included.

CHAPTER 2: SCHOLARLY APPROACH

2.1 Philosophy of Science

2.2 Research design

2. Scholarly Approach

In this opening chapter, we will start by presenting the philosophy of science which we take on in this thesis. This includes a description of the paradigm we are working within, accounts for our ontological and epistemological stance as well as continuous discussions of the implications it all has for our thesis. In closing, we will present our research design and argue for our choices.

2.1 Philosophy of Science

When working in academia, an important - yet often slightly neglected - aspect of one's research is presenting the scientific theoretical approach that you take on. Knowing the scientific theoretical approach that a piece of research takes on is pivotal to fully understand the assumptions and foundations that form the basis of the research. Starting your academic work with initiating your readers in your scientific standpoint will help them understand the taken for granted reasoning that might happen when conducting research, allowing them to obtain a better understanding of how the researcher views and interprets reality and the concept of research. Although the concept of philosophy of science can be hard to explicate, it can be defined as a set of research traditions which each entail its own distinct ontology, epistemology and methods for producing, substantiating and applying scientific knowledge (Presskorn-Thygesen 2012, 22; Holm 2011, 14).

Fundamentally, there are three overall scientific fields: humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Despite that many academic fields clearly belong to their respective scientific fields, there are also several academic fields that exist in a borderline territory between two of the overall scientific fields (Collin & Køppe 2003, 13). Two of these fields are marketing and communications. Traditionally, many universities and other institutions of higher education place the academic field of marketing in the group of social sciences, often in correlation to a business school, while communications are most often categorised as being within the humanities. However, both marketing and communications also entail many elements that link the field to the humanities and the social sciences, respectively. For marketing this is the case as it to a large degree also revolves around how consumers behave and react to stimuli, while

it for communications is the case as e.g. many socio-political factors impact how communication is created and perceived.

As our study centres around both marketing and communications, we find it important to note that we are working within the humanities. We do so because we wish to uncover how a small group of people perceives the marketing stimuli that the brands make use of in their own social context, and not how it is perceived on a collective level, which is traditionally what the social sciences focus on (Collin & Køppe 2003, 12-13). More specifically, we work within the social constructivist paradigm which we will account and argue for in the first subchapter of this chapter. Subsequently, we will describe our ontological stance in the second subchapter, before finally describing our epistemological stance in the third and last subchapter.

2.1.1 Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is a philosophy of science used within both humanities and the social sciences. Social constructivism is based on the notion that society and what we perceive to be *real* and *true* are social constructions, mutually agreed upon through time, which can be created on both an individual and a collective level (Collin & Køppe 2003, 248-249). This means that how we all view the world is dependent on our own personal situation when it comes to our attitudes, beliefs and values. These things are results of our personal environment and the social groups we take part of. At the same time, many things are social constructions created on a collective level through time. These things come in numerous forms and include - but are definitely not limited to - counties, school systems, businesses and democracy. These things are great examples, as they are both physical and abstract things, that can be seen geographically, in a school, in a store, and when elections take place, respectively, but still involve more than what meets the eye, hence the abstract level. At the same time, these four examples are examples of things that are very different across cultures and countries, as the terms have different connotations and denotations depending on who you ask.

Researchers working within the social constructivist paradigm often wish to dissolve what is considered to be "natural" and true, in order to unveil that it is in fact a social construction (Holm 2012, 121-122). An example of a such thing that was considered to be true but has since been dissolved, could for example be the concept of gender, where we (at least in the Western

world) used to believe that there were only two genders: man and woman. In modern times, most of us (at least in the younger generations) differ between biological and perceived gender, and acknowledge other and fluid gender identities.

The theoretical foundation of social constructivism is constructivist, which means that reality is not experienced in a direct, objective and universal way, but rather in a context of social structures and interactions. This also means that knowledge has an intersubjective, linguistic and collective foundation (Sonne-Ragans 2012, 116). Both of these characteristics of social constructivism will be exemplified in the next section. Social constructivism thereby disputes the conception of empiricism and positivism that reality prevails over the subject, and posits that everything that can be studied is a product of social processes (Sonne-Ragans 2012, 116).

In practice, a marketing-related example (as we are working with marketing initiatives in this thesis) of reality being experienced in a context of social structures and interactions could be a situation where a person is exposed to an advertisement for a new type of alcoholic beverage. If the person seeing the ad is a person who likes to go out and drink alcohol with their friends, the ad will most likely be perceived in a positive way. On the other hand, if the person watching the ad has lost a parent to excessive alcohol use and does not drink alcohol themselves, such an ad is likely to be perceived in a negative way. For knowledge it means that knowledge is not something that simply exists, but on the contrary is created by people through the use of language.

2.1.1.1 Implications for Our Research

In our opinion, working within the social constructivist paradigm is not much of a choice rather than a truism. By this we mean that it would not be possible to study how individuals perceive something (in this case how they react to marketing stimuli) without taking on a scientific theoretical approach that acknowledges that reality is subjective and dependent on the individual person's social, cultural and linguistic perspective.

Another philosophy of science that is closely related to social constructivism and also believes that reality is subjective is social constructionism. Whereas social constructivism commits to the idea that reality is constructed over time by both individuals and collectively, social

constructionism posits that reality is created in and through the use of language. This means that the way we perceive the world is solely based on the societal context we exist in and the relationships we have, where we have mutually agreed upon what is true, through on-going dialogue (Gergen 2015; Trudslev, Schmidt, Steele & Voldby-Ravn 2021, 7).

We profess to social constructivism over social constructionism - or any of the other related paradigms - as we attempt to uncover what type of marketing stimuli each of our participants react the most to, based on an understanding that these reactions are created inside the individual person based on their perception of reality which is then again a direct result of the social groups they take part of. Therefore, the acknowledgement that everyone perceives things differently depending on their personal circumstances (this includes life situation, social status, culture, upbringing and more) and that every perception is considered valid and in accordance with reality, is an important requisite for carrying out research like ours. Also, the concept of marketing is in itself an example of a social construction that you only know to exist if you are part of a society where there is consensus that goods can be advocated in a way that will convince consumers to buy it. Marketing as a concept thereby only exists when people know the concept and have a worldview that allows for the phenomenon to exist. That being said, it does not mean that what we refer to as marketing cannot exist for other cultures under another definition, or that you cannot be influenced by marketing efforts if you do not know the phenomenon. It does, however, mean that you are not influenced by *marketing* as that phenomenon is not known to you and thereby not something that you can knowingly experience.

How our scientific theoretical approach will impact our thesis, will be addressed further in the two following subchapters, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3, in which we will present our ontology and epistemology, and in 2.2 where our research design is discussed.

2.1.2 Ontology: How We View Reality

We will now move on to describe the concept of ontology, including an account of our ontological stance. As described previously in this chapter, each paradigm commits to an ontology, epistemology and a set of methods. Simply put, ontology is the philosophical question of what is perceived as reality. Ontology concerns itself with the being, in the sense

that it deals with what exists in the world, how it exists and what the nature of things are. This means that the ontology of a scientific paradigm bears witness to how the science perceives and relates to its own field of research (Presskorn-Thygesen 2012, 27; Sonne-Ragans 2012, 209-210).

We are working within the social constructivist paradigm and therefore, we take on the ontology that is typical to social constructivism, namely a relativistic ontology in which reality and what exists is subjective, meaning that it depends on the eyes of the beholder and the social context that they exist in (Presskorn-Thygesen 2012, 36). This means that there is no such thing as an objective reality, whereby the relativistic ontology makes up an opposition to realism, which posits that an objective reality exists independently of how people perceive it (Peter 1992). As for our thesis it means that we acknowledge that the outcome of our research is dependent on as well as a direct result of our view of what and how things exist, which is then again a result of the social contexts we exist in.

In that connection, it should be noted that we are aware of our own privileged position in this world. Despite being students and thereby not in a high social class when looking from a Danish perspective, our living standards and opportunities to excel in life are at a completely different level than most of the population on earth, where many live in poverty and/or bound by expectations and conventions of an unjust society. We acknowledge that marketing initiatives such as the ones we study the impact of in this thesis are a concept that require a certain amount of affluence to concern oneself with, as we are working with consumer goods that fulfil self-realisation needs and are not available to everyone. However, as our participants are young British women we expect them to share a similar life situation and view of the world, as we do. By this we mean that we assume that they also live privileged lives where they do not have to worry about fulfilling their physiological needs, where they have the opportunity to get an education, have a voice in democracy and are able to move around freely. Having this type of life means that they are more likely to care about fashion, sustainability and both their own and other's images, than if they had the opposite life situation. We will describe our participants and the method for selecting them in section 6.2.4.

One could argue that our scientific theoretical approach, manifesting that *reality* is something different to everyone, makes it impossible to determine what type of marketing stimuli that

contributes the most to creating a positive brand image, as it would depend entirely on the person that is being exposed to it. However, acknowledging that people perceive things differently and that there is no such thing as an objective truth or reality, our case study (more precisely our analysis and discussion of the eight interviews) will still make us able to conclude whether or not there is a tendency for one type of marketing stimuli to outperform the others and, if so, which type.

2.1.3 Epistemology: How We Understand Knowledge

As we move on to the final subchapter of chapter 2, we will account for the concept of epistemology as well as our epistemological stance. Whereas ontology has to do with the perception of reality and how and what things exist, epistemology is the question of what there is to know about the world and how this knowledge can be acquired. Epistemology thereby concerns what forms the basis for knowing anything about reality (Presskorn-Thygesen 2012, 27; Sonne-Ragans 2012, 16).

Being social constructivists, we take on a subjective epistemology. This means that all knowledge is constructed socially, including one's own, through language in the social context we exist in, while it also entails that interpretation plays a large role in creating a person's knowledge. It also means that there is no such thing as objective knowledge, as it is all constructed socially in the given social context we each exist in (Presskorn-Thygesen 2012, 29, 36; Holm 2011, 189).

When it comes to our thesis, the subjective epistemology results in a large degree of interpretation, as the knowledge that is to be uncovered through our research will be based on our existing knowledge which is also subjective, made up of the knowledge created by us as individuals and us as members of our socio-cultural group. It also means that people reading our thesis might not agree with our findings or consider the knowledge we create to be true, if they have another ontological stance than we do, resulting in them perceiving reality and what exists in a fundamentally different way. Despite this, our research will still be relevant and create new knowledge, as it will present one version of numerous realities.

2.2 Research Design

In the first chapter we presented the research question that we seek to uncover an answer to in this thesis, namely *how does Ganni create the most positive brand image perception using its existing marketing initiatives?* In this subchapter, we now account and argue for exactly how this research is to be carried out.

As we have just discussed in chapter 2.1, our research is conducted within a social constructivist paradigm, where our ontological stance is relativistic and our epistemological stance is subjective. Taking on a social constructivist scientific theoretical position, with all that it entails, means that our research will not be able to reach a conclusion that translates to one universal truth, as such a thing simply does not exist. We will rather be able to conclude what the eight women that make up our group of participants perceive as being true for their own individual perception of Ganni's brand image. Due to our subjective epistemological stance, it also means that the knowledge we produce through our research might not be congruent with what others would find, due to our world view and the unconscious biases we are subject to. However, it is our goal that through the reasoning and arguing done throughout this thesis, we will create arguments compelling enough for others to accept them.

We strive to uncover a solution to our research question using an instrumental case study, where Ganni is our case, in which we use mixed methods to collect the data foundation for our analysis. More specifically, the mixed methods we use are semi-structured research interviews and a short questionnaire, which is sent out to our participants prior to the interviews taking place. While we are in principle working with mixed methods, as the interviews are qualitative while the questionnaire is of a quantitative character, our research is predominantly of a qualitative character, consistent with the conventions of the social constructivist paradigm. This is the case, as the data created through the questionnaire is only meant as supportive knowledge to help explicate and interpret the data gathered through our interviews. In practice, the interviews consist of us showing the participants an extract of Ganni's marketing efforts (exactly what and how will be discussed in chapter 5 and 6), after which we ask them what their immediate perception of Ganni is. Hereafter, we ask them additional questions for the purpose of uncovering what they believe to be the reason for having this perception.

The eight interviews are analysed using thematic analysis, as we wish to identify overall themes in each of the interviews. We are thereby not interested in how the participants utter their perceptions, but rather what their statements mean. Through the use of thematic analysis, we are able to decode what the individual participant reacts most positively to in terms of building a positive perception of Ganni's brand image.

Our research design can be summarised in the following graphic depiction:
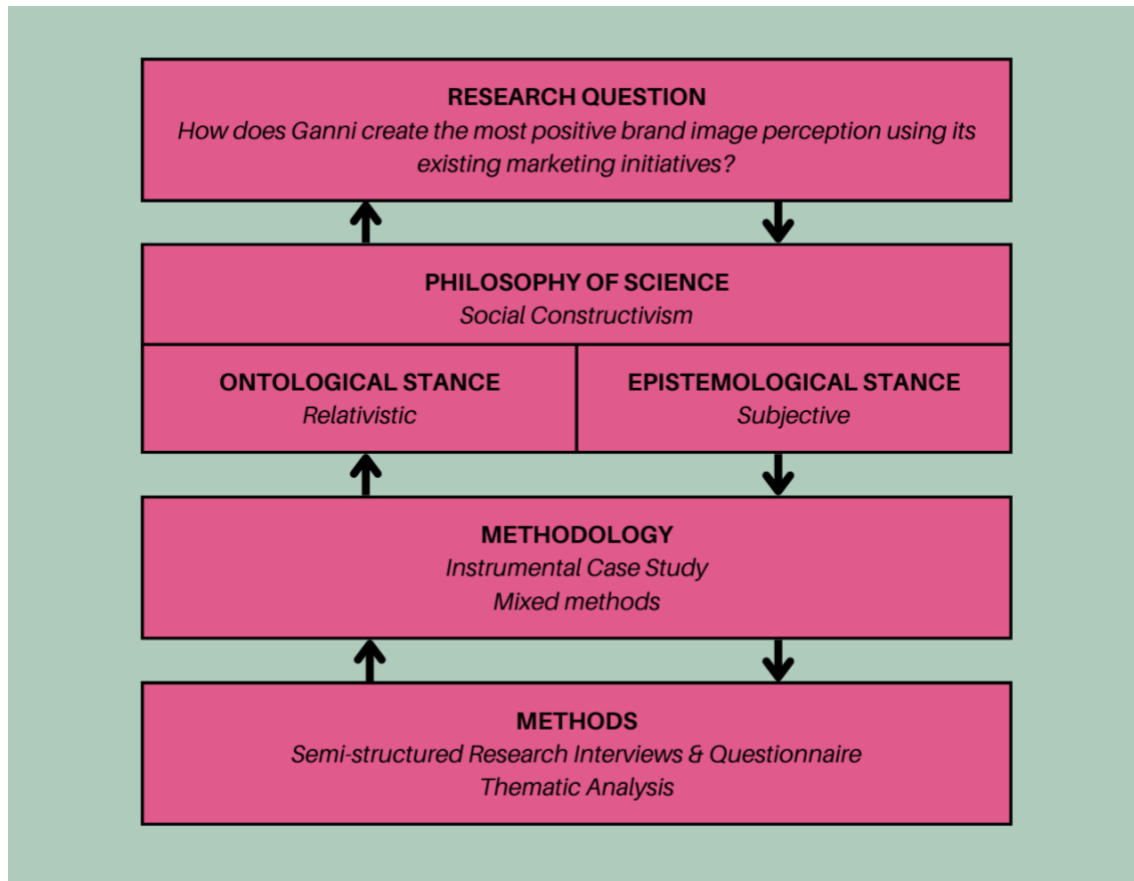
Figure 1: Our Research Design

As the figure above shows by the use of the arrows pointing in both directions, it is through the interaction between the different elements that our research is founded. The elements included in the research design above can naturally not stand alone, as it is in unison with our theoretical framework, which will be discussed in chapter 4, and through the analysis and subsequent discussion that our research is created.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Branding

3.2 Fashion

3. Literature Review

This chapter will consist of our literature review, which will include previous research that relates to our field of research. Before conducting the literature review, we have had to make decisions regarding focus, the extent and limitation of the literature review. Because our thesis revolves around different types of marketing initiatives in the fashion industry, we have chosen to have two focuses in the literature review: branding and the fashion industry. This means that the literature review will consist of two main subchapters. Firstly, we will include relevant research concerning branding and secondly, we will include research concerning the fashion industry, both for the purpose of uncovering a potential gap in our field or research. When saying that there are two focuses in the literature review, we want to note that the first subchapter, branding, will have a wider focus area, namely branding efforts on a rather broad scale. On the other hand, the second subchapter concerning the fashion industry will be more narrow, as we wish to tighten the focus on fashion brands. Thus, we will be able to create an overview of both research concerning branding in a more general way as well as consumer behaviour within the fashion industry. Lastly, this funnel-shaped focus will allow us to account for the foundation of research that makes up the scientific field that our thesis will enter into and also contribute to. This knowledge is imperative for us as researchers in this thesis, as we wish to build our research on correct and existing research, in order to ensure that our thesis will fill a gap in the field.

3.1 Branding

This section consists of the chosen research concerning branding and will include the four separate research articles we have chosen, namely "Consumer Perception of Product Quality", "The Impact of Social Media Content Marketing on Consumers' Brand Perception and Attitudes", "Building Brand Authenticity in Fast Moving Consumer Goods via Consumer Perceptions of Brand Marketing Communications" and "Branding: Effectiveness of Marketing Cues on Consumer Perceptions of Quality: the Moderating Roles of Brand Reputation and Third-party Information". All four research articles concern how consumers perceive a brand and/or factors related to a brand, whereby they share some similarities with our research.

3.1.1 Consumer Perception of Product Quality

A research article written by Crentsil Kofi Agyekum, Huan Haifeng and Amma Agyeiwaa at Beijing University of Technology in 2015 with the title "Consumer Perception of Product Quality" studied the relationship between consumers' perception of the quality of a product and their age, income levels and educational background (Agyekum, Haifeng & Agyeiwaa 2015).

Agyekum, Haifeng and Agyeiwaa, while referring to Palmer 2001, state that "*consumers purchase a product or service on the basis of satisfying their recognized needs.*" (Agyekum et al. 2015, 25). Moreover, they argue that a brand's consumers prioritise the quality of a product and the satisfaction it provides, rather than the technical details in the production of the product itself (Agyekum et al. 2015, 25). In order to examine the connection between consumers' background and their perception of the quality of a product, the researchers conducted a case study. The total number of respondents included 300 persons, where 20 respondents (constituting 7%) were below the age of 18, 90 respondents (constituting 30%) were 18-25, 180 respondents (constituting 60%) were 26-60 and 10 (constituting 3%) were 61 and above (Agyekum et al. 2015, 27). It was discovered that consumers have different ideas or perceptions of the product quality based on their ages, income levels and educational background, which are also major factors when the consumer is determining the quality of a product. Moreover, it was discovered that consumers use the price of a product and the name of the brand more than other variables, when determining the quality of a product (Agyekum et al. 2015, 28).

3.1.2 The Impact of Social Media Content Marketing on Consumers' Brand Perception and Attitudes

The research paper, "Conversation, Storytelling, or Consumer Interaction and Participation? The Impact of Brand-owned Social Media Content Marketing on Consumers' Brand Perceptions and Attitudes", explored the effects of three different forms of content: storytelling, conversation and consumer's interaction and participation with the brand (He, Cai, Cai & Zhang 2021, 420). The study focuses on content marketing and on what is labelled as owned social media (OSM), which is a brand's communication which the brand itself has created and shared through its social media platforms (He et al. 2021, 421). The researchers argue that

owned social media content marketing (OSMCM) benefits both consumers and marketers by allowing *"(...) interactive and more efficient brand-consumer communications through independently created content on their owned media platforms"* (He et al. 2021, 421). This way, *"(...) more personalised, interactive information can be provided, and consumer's involvement and engagement can be strengthened"* (He et al. 2021, 421).

The researchers state that a conversation between a brand and its consumers strengthens the consumer-brand relationship, brand attitude as well as brand awareness and intentions (He et al. 2021, 421). Knowing this, together with knowing that consumers generally react positively towards a real conversation between a brand and its consumer, when used as content on social media, the researchers set up a number of hypotheses for them to confirm or deny in their case study (He et al. 2021, 421-422). They began by forming three hypotheses, all with the same wording in the end of the sentences, namely *"Conversation form OSMCM has a more positive effect on consumers' brand attitudes than a general introduction"*, *"Storytelling of OSMCM has a more positive effect on (...)"* and *"Customer interaction and participation of OSMCM has a more positive effect on (...)"* (He et al. 2021, 422). In order to test the hypotheses, the researchers conducted two pre-studies with experiment materials, a pilot study and two experiments. This was done in order to identify the experimental materials, verify the effectiveness of the manipulation of the experimental material, test the reliability and validity of the questionnaires used in the experiments, assess the effects of the three forms of OSMCM and test the moderating effect of the brand content relevance in relation to the different forms of OSMCM and consumers' perception of a brand (He et al. 2021, 425-431).

The findings of the study resulted in the conclusion being that both storytelling, conversation and consumers' interaction and participation with the brand *"(...) exert significant positive effects on both consumers' brand personality perceptions and brand attitudes, with conversation and storytelling each having a larger impact than consumer interaction and participation"* (He et al. 2021, 433). Thus, all three forms of content can be classified as ways to increase consumers' perception of a brand in a positive way. However, the researchers differentiated between the three types of content and found that storytelling and conversation appear to be most successful when used to convey and emphasise brand personality. In addition, customer interaction and participation appear to be most successful when used to maintain customer contact and loyalty (He et al. 2021, 433). Consequently, the findings in the

study stated that brands can use social media marketing to enhance the customers' perception of the brand personality in a positive direction (He et al. 2021, 433).

3.1.3 Building Brand Authenticity in Fast Moving Consumer Goods via Consumer Perceptions of Brand Marketing Communications

In 2018, Abhishek Dwivedi and Robert McDonald published their research paper with the title "Building Brand Authenticity in Fast Moving Consumer Goods via Consumer Perceptions of Brand Marketing Communications", which had the purpose of examining "*(...) the effect of consumer perception of brand marketing communications on brand authenticity of fast-moving consumer goods*" (Dwivedi & McDonald 2018, 1387).

In their study, Dwivedi and McDonald put great emphasis on the concept of authenticity and how brands can ascribe authenticity to their products and services. However, they focus on brands that do not possess authenticity in their product naturally, but still attempt to distinguish themselves from other brands (Dwivedi & McDonald 2018, 1388). Thus, they are focusing on brands that are "*(...) mass-produced, frequently purchased and consumed, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs)*", which are products that are normally classified as "low-involvement" products, such as a bottle of Pepsi Max, as customers do not need to involve themselves to a high degree in order to determine to purchase the product (Dwivedi & McDonald 2018, 1388).

Dwivedi and McDonald focuses on what they refer to as perceived brand authenticity as they focus on the consumer's interpretation of how they choose to determine and view the brand (Dwivedi & McDonald 2018, 1388). In order to examine the effect of consumer perception of brand marketing communications on brand authenticity, the researchers conducted a case study where the focus was on energy drinks in the U.S. (Dwivedi & McDonald 2018, 1396). They recruited respondents for their online survey who were all using the brand, as they would have a wider knowledge of the brand, compared to people who were not brand users (Dwivedi & McDonald 2018, 1396). 315 undergraduate students constituted the group of respondents and they had on average purchased energy drinks 19 times in the past six months (Dwivedi & McDonald 2018, 1388).

The results of the survey indicated that brand marketing communications affect brand authenticity in two ways; it has a direct effect on brand authenticity and a more mediated effect, where the "*(...) brand marketing communications clarifies the brand positioning, which in turn shapes brand authenticity.*" (Dwivedi & McDonald 2018, 1404). Moreover, the researchers found "*(...) that other elements of the marketing mix - except for brand satisfaction - have little influence on brand authenticity judgements.*" (Dwivedi & McDonald 2018, 1404). For this, the researchers suggest the product belonging to the low product category involvement as a possible explanation for the fact that the respondents seemed to not focus on things such as price, distribution or images of the stores that carry the product (Dwivedi & McDonald 2018, 1404). Consequently, the research stated that brand marketing communication has a strong effect on brand authenticity (Dwivedi & McDonald 2018, 1400).

3.1.4 Effectiveness of Marketing Cues on Consumer Perceptions of Quality: the Moderating Roles of Brand Reputation and Third-Party Information

In 2012, the research "Effectiveness on Marketing Cues on Consumer Perceptions of Quality: The Moderating Roles of Brand Perception and Third-Party Information" conducted by Billur Akdeniz, Roger J. Calatone and Clay M. Voorhee was published. The study explored how different marketing- and nonmarketing-controlled product cues affect consumers' perception (Akdeniz, Calantone & Voorhees 2013, 76). Akdeniz, Calantone and Voorhees conducted two different studies with its own focus: in the first study they examined how high-scope and low-scope marketing cues influence consumer perception and in the second study they examined the effect of interaction between third-party quality ratings and marketing cues on consumer perception (Akdeniz et al. 2013, 76).

The First Study

Akdeniz, Calantone and Vooshees argue that when customers purchase a product without being able to observe the actual quality of the product, they use other cues related to the product to make the decision to purchase the product or not. These cues include both marketing-controlled cues, such as brand, advertising, warranty and price, and nonmarketing controlled cues, such as third-party information, reviews and ratings (Akdeniz et al. 2013, 76). Moreover, when

focusing on marketing-controlled cues, they differentiate between low-scope marketing cues, such as price and warranty, and high-scope marketing cues, such as brand reputation (Akdeniz et al. 2013, 77). The researchers argue that both of the two categories of cues can be seen and used by the consumer in order "*(...) to reduce information asymmetry when the true product quality is not easily observable*" (Akdeniz et al. 2013, 76).

In the first study, the researchers asked the participants to first provide their opinions and thoughts concerning the subject of the research, namely a hypothetical car brand, and subsequently answer survey questions concerning the hypothetical car brand compared to other cars, which they were told had identical technical specifications with the hypothetical car brand (Akdeniz et al. 2013, 79). Thus, the participants were only rating and evaluating the hypothetical car based on the parameters that the researchers provided them, namely brand reputation, warranty and price of the hypothetical brand.

The result of the first study was that the participants that were presented with consistently positive cues, such as high price and strong warranty, perceived the brand as being of a higher and better quality (Akdeniz et al. 2013, 81-82). When the cues were inconsistent, the participants still saw the perceived quality of the brand as significantly higher than the product with low price and weak warranty (Akdeniz et al. 2013, 82). Therefore, the study suggests that consumers perceive a low-scope cue as being more credible when the sender has a strong brand reputation (Akdeniz et al. 2013, 85). Thus, the study concludes that a strong brand reputation improves the credibility of low-scope cues.

The Second Study

These results can also be seen in connection to the second study, where the role of third-party rating was examined. The participants were once again given a made-up car brand and they were also exposed to manipulation parts, such as other car brands, in order to ensure a higher level of reliability in their answers (Akdeniz et al. 2013, 83). In this study, the contestants were asked to rate three things; third-party rating, warranty and price of the brand (Akdeniz et al. 2013, 83).

The results of the study showed that when it comes to third party information, other kinds of information are of less importance to the contestants, as the biggest decisive factor is in fact

the third-party information from an independent and credible source (Akdeniz et al. 2013, 86). Therefore, the study confirms empirically that brand reputation has a direct connection to credibility. It has found that when a brand has a bad reputation, the consumers are more likely to think that the brand could be making false promises towards its customers (Akdeniz et al. 2013, 85-86). Consequently, "*(...) in most cases involving a manufacturer with low reputation, consumers tend to infer higher prices or better warranty cues as an offsetting mechanism for low reputation*" (Akdeniz et al. 2013, 86). This means that if a brand has low reputation, the positive strengths of a product can become a disadvantage because the consumers perceive the positive cues as a way to compensate for bad reputation.

3.2 Fashion

We will now move on to the second part of our literature review, namely the part concerning the fashion industry. This section includes the three separate research articles we have chosen, namely "Consumer's Transition to Online Clothing During the COVID-19 Pandemic", "Predicting Consumer Purchase Intention on Fashion Products in Online Retailer" and "Linking Fashion Consciousness with Gen Y Attitude Towards Prestige Brands". All three research articles concern consumer behaviour when it comes to purchasing fashion items, whereby they share some similarities with our research.

3.2.1 Consumer's Transition to Online Clothing During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In 2021, Ivana Kursan Milankovic and Dario Miocevic published the research titled "Consumer's Transition to Online Clothing Buying During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Exploration Through Protection Motivation Theory and Consumer Well-Being" (Milankovic & Miocevic 2021, 1). Their research explored "*(...) consumer's motivation to engage in adaptive behaviour envisioned through a transition from offline to online clothing purchasing during the COVID-19 pandemic*" (Milankovic & Miocevic 2021, 1).

Milankovic and Miocevic has their focus on the COVID-19 pandemic, as it has had major repercussions for many industries, such as on the fashion industry (Milankovic & Miocevic 2021, 1-2). Despite the fashion industry growing the past decade, the brands have had to rethink

their strategies and business models in order to survive the pandemic (Milankovic & Miocevic 2021, 2). One way to do this is by converting an offline store to an online webshop, which could also be seen as a challenge, as around 70% of consumers purchase their clothes in a physical store rather than online (Milankovic & Miocevic 2021, 2).

The research aimed "*to investigate the effects of threat (threat vulnerability and threat severity) and coping (self-efficacy, response efficacy and response costs) appraisals on the online clothing buying intention.*" (Milankovic & Miocevic 2021, 2). For this research, data was collected in May and June 2020 through an online survey with 502 respondents, all from the Republic of Croatia (Milankovic & Miocevic 2021, 3). The results of the research indicated that consumer's threat appraisal does not increase their adaptive behaviour (Milankovic & Miocevic 2021, 11). Moreover, the results indicate that the respondents performed no aberration as a result of threat appraisal, which Milankovic and Micocevic explains with ties to Protective Motivation Theory that suggests that "*(...) individuals might not engage in adaptive behavior if they perceive a threat as highly harmful and dangerous*" (Milankovic & Miocevic 2021, 11). Consequently, the study showed that consumers are more prone to purchase a product from a brand if they feel that the brand is making them calmer and feel reassured about health and environmental issues (Milankovic & Miocevic 2021, 14).

3.2.2 Predicting Consumer Purchase Intention on Fashion Products in Online Retailer

In 2017, the research article "Predicting Consumer Purchase Intention on Fashion Products in Online Retailer: Integration of Self Determination Theory and Theory of Planned Behaviour" was published (Widyarini & Gunawan 2017, 7). Widyarini and Gunawan argue that online shopping can be seen as not only a need-fulfilling tool but also as a social function (Widyarini & Gunawan 2017, 7). Because of this, they argue that it is relevant to know if a consumer purchases a product because of an external stimuli, also called extrinsic motivation, or because of a psychological or basic need, also called intrinsic motivation (Widyarini & Gunawan 2017, 7).

In order to test consumers' purchase intention, the researchers conducted a survey research for 240 Indonesian respondents who all were older than 17 years, had no experience with purchasing fashion products online but still had experience in accessing media used by online retailers to sell fashion products (Widyarini & Gunawan 2017, 9). The results of the research confirmed that there is a linear correlation between a change in consumer attitude and a change in consumers' purchase intention of fashion products from online brands, which is in line with previous research on online shopping (Widyarini & Gunawan 2017, 13). Consequently, it was discovered that subjective norms affected the consumers to a very small degree, meaning that a brand should seek to convince the consumer to buy their product based on their own effective and easily understandable communication (Widyarini & Gunawan 2017, 14).

3.2.3 Linking Fashion Consciousness with Gen Y Attitude Towards Prestige Brands

The research titled "Linking Fashion Consciousness with Gen Y Attitude Towards Prestige Brands" was published in 2015 by Riza Casidy, Asti Nafia Nuryana and Sri Rahayu Hijrah Hati (Casidy, Nuryana & Hati 2015, 406). The research seeks to examine the relationship between the three following elements; fashion self-congruity (FSC), fashion consciousness (FC) and attitude towards prestige brands (ATT) among Generation Y consumers (Casidy et al. 2015, 406).

Casidy, Nuryana and Hati argue that generation Y "*(...) tend to spend excessively when it comes to prestige brands and products*" (Casidy et al. 2015, 406). Moreover, an explanation for this tendency can be found in the desire to own prestige brands in order to increase their social standing (Casidy et al. 2015, 406). Previous research regarding fashion and prestige fashion brands refers to self-congruity theory, "*(...) which suggests that consumers prefer brands that best reflect their ideal or actual self.*" (Casidy et al. 2015, 407). Thus, the theory suggests that consumers purchase a product based more on their perception of the inherent social meanings of the brands and how the products can allow the consumer to express one's own desired status and self-image, rather than the perception of the quality of the product (Casidy et al. 2015, 407).

The study took place in Indonesia and conducted a descriptive study with 210 respondents, who were all between 19 and 34 years old (Casidy et al. 2015, 410). The majority of the respondents were female, namely 66.19% and 76.67% of the respondents spent less than US$84 on fashion products in a month (Casidy et al. 2015, 410). The results of the study indicated that there is a significant relationship between Fashion Self-congruity and Fashion Consciousness, more specifically that "*consumers that see fashion as a reflection of their self-image are likely to be more involved with fashion-related products*" (Casidy, et al. 2015, 413). Moreover, there is also a connection between the consumers' individual Fashion Consciousness and their attitude towards prestige brands, meaning that consumers who are conscious of fashion previously to the study, perceive prestige brands as being more appealing (Casidy et al 2015, 413-414). Furthermore, this connection is also seen in terms of an actual purchase of a prestige fashion product, and that consumer Fashion Self-Congruity cannot result in a positive attitude towards prestige brands (Casidy et al. 2015, 414). Thus, the researchers state that it is "*(...) only through consumers' sense of FC that they eventually "transform" their FSC to positive ATT*" (Casidy et al. 2015, 414). Consequently, this emphasises the role of the consumer's own Fashion Consciousness, as it will determine the actual action to purchase a product from a prestige fashion brand.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Defining Brand Image

4.2 Marketing Initiatives

4.3 Consumer Perception

4.4 Correspondence Between Theories

4. Theoretical Framework

In this fourth chapter of our thesis, we are presenting the theoretical framework for our research. The chapter will consist of three overall subchapters of which the first will revolve around the concept of brand image, and how brands can build a brand image targeted towards the modern consumer.

The second subchapter concerns the marketing initiatives that we have chosen to include in our research. In this subchapter we will discuss the theoretical knowledge about the different types of marketing and argue why we have chosen exactly these categories. It should be noted that the first two "theories" are not theories that have been coined by any one scholar, but rather a composition of several theories and research results that together make up the theoretical stance we take on in our thesis. We will elaborate on this during the respective subchapters.

The third subchapter will consist of theory concerning the concept of perception, more specifically when it comes to the perception of consumers, including perceptual processes which can be employed by the receivers of a given communicative event.

In continuation of each of the subchapters, we will account for the role which the theory in question will play in our research as well as discuss why and how we have chosen these theories. Finally, in our fourth and final subchapter, we will discuss how the different theories correspond with each other and how they in unison will impact our research.

4.1 Defining Brand Image

Ever since companies began existing, how the brand was perceived by the public has played a large impact in how successful the business is (Lin & Chuang 2018, 93). Being liked by consumers is pivotal for keeping your market share, especially if your company sells consumer goods that are not characterised as necessities (as opposed to necessities such as food, hygiene products and cleaning supplies) and thereby often exist in markets with strong competition for the consumers' spending (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman & Hansen 2019, 337). This perception that the consumers have of the brand is often referred to as *brand image*.

The term brand image is closely related to the term *brand identity*, which can be defined as the way a brand wishes to position or identify itself (including their products and/or services) in the minds of the consumers (Kotler et al. 2019, 379). Brand image, on the other hand, has to do with how the brand is actually perceived by the consumer. It concerns the psychological and/or emotional associations that are created in the minds of consumers, based on the visual and verbal expressions of the brand (Kotler et al. 2019, 379). A positive brand image does not necessarily occur by itself, but requires effort and many strategic decisions both when it comes to the planning as well as the execution of the brand's marketing (Kotler et al. 2019, 381). These strategic decisions concern both the external marketing and communication initiatives, but also internal aspects such as employee satisfaction, work environment and CSR efforts. Whereas the internal aspects have previously been kept "hidden" from the public inside the organisation, the modern consumer tends to have knowledge of these things. This knowledge is passed on from contacts at the organisation, through (social) media or from the organisation itself, as they know that a transparent business model can help you avoid a potential shitstorm (Lipschultz 2015, 10-19). Having a positive brand image also directly influences how likely the consumer is to purchase one of the brand's products (also known as the consumer purchase intention), as the knowledge about and positive perception of a brand is crucial in a buying decision (Wu & Chen 2019, 301). We will revisit how recent research indicates that a brand image should be built in subchapter 4.1.1.

When talking about brand image, it is natural to address and account for the related concepts of brand equity and brand awareness. Simply put, *brand equity* is the perceived value of the brand. It is, according to American marketing scholar Kevin L. Keller, "*the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand*" (Keller 1993, 1). The customer-based brand equity comes into play when a consumer has an existing knowledge of and an attitude about the brand, and therefore perceives their product or service in a different way than if the product or service had not been marketed under that name (Keller 1993, 1). Previous studies have found that when a consumer already has a positive image of a brand, it will also have a positive effect on the brand equity (Paetz 2021). *Brand awareness* concerns the level of awareness that consumers have of the brand's existence (Keller 1993, 3). It has to do with how well consumers remember the brand name and look, and how likely they are to recognise the brand under other circumstances than those they normally see them in (Keller

1993, 3). An example of a high level of brand awareness, related to our thesis, would be when a Ganni customer recognises a basic pair of Ganni trousers (with no visible logo or other branding on them), when they are worn by a stranger in public.

As we briefly mentioned in the introductory section to this chapter, both this and the following subchapter (i.e. 4.1 and 4.2) are not established theories coined by any one scholar. On the contrary, they are accumulated theories which in unison form the theoretical pair of glasses (or simply framework, if you will) that we put on when observing, analysing, discussing, evaluating and concluding throughout this thesis.

4.1.1 Building a Brand Image in Modern Society

So how do brands create a positive brand image? Naturally, that question can be answered in many ways. However, recent research in the field agrees that especially one specific channel is inevitable to use, if you wish to influence how your brand is perceived: Social media.

In the UK, 66% of the population are active on at least one social media platform (Statista Research Department 2022). Taking the amount of small children and elderly - who might consider modern technology as being too hard - into account, that is quite a large part of the British population. This easy access to millions of people gathered in one place is a gold mine for brands and organisations trying to build their brand image as well as their brand equity and brand awareness, as they can reach a very big crowd with just a few clicks (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou 2011, 21). While shooting your message out to a large audience is easy on social media, making sure that it is received by your target audience can be difficult, as it is harder to control who is exposed unless you spend money on targeting actual advertising towards specific segments (Lipschultz 2015, 9; 17). We will briefly discuss paid online advertising in section 4.2.1, Direct Marketing.

Building a brand image online is, however, much more demanding than simply being present in the right places online. It requires active engagement in the brand's social media accounts, where the goal for the brand should be striving to build a relationship with the consumers, as research shows that such a relationship is ideal for creating a positive brand image (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou 2011, 21). Before being able to build this relationship, it is crucial to

know how the modern consumer behaves, what they want both online and in the real world as well as how they wish to engage with the brand (Kotler et al. 2019, 409). We will discuss the wants and needs of the modern consumer in the next subchapter.

Another aspect of social media is that anyone can share what they wish with whom they want, whenever they feel like it. Whereas brands earlier had a large level of control of what kinds of stories they let out to the public and what story they told about the brand, the advent of social media has rendered much control to the consumers (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins & Wiertz 2013, 242). Brand stories are narratives about a brand that can work to build awareness, empathy, recognition and add a meaning to the brand (Singh & Sonnenburg 2012, 189). Research shows that consumers now have the power to write the story of a brand, by sharing their experiences and attitudes on online forums and social media (Gensler et al. 2013; Lipschultz 2015, 31-33). Consumers have thereby become active participants in the creation of brand stories, rather than observers or receivers (Singh & Sonnenburg 2012, 189). Brand managers must therefore be aware of this power that has fallen in the hands of consumers, and make sure that they co-write the story together. Should they fail to do this, there is a risk that the brand managers lose control of the narrative (Gensler et al. 2013). Instead, they should be aware of how to stimulate those stories that will benefit the brand, as well as how to react to those that might harm the brand (Gensler et al. 2013). Previous research indicates that there is no way to know for sure what is the best way to go about this challenge, but Gensler et al. propose that there is three overall strategies to choose from: 1) following the path of least resistance, by choosing a cooperative response that minimises potential conflict, 2) trying to win over the consumer by attempting to gain cultural resonance by showing that they understand the online cultural environment that their brand operates in or 3) attempting to leverage of the connectedness of social media and getting consumers to adhere to their agenda by creating branded artefacts, rituals and icons for consumers, which represent and work on behalf of the brand (Gensler et al. 2013).

4.1.2 The Wants and Needs of the Modern Consumer

As described in the previous subchapter, the modern consumer has quick and easy access to all types of information, at all hours of the day. With a few clicks on a screen, anyone can learn the latest news from around the world, what has happened on the stock market that day, and

even which brand is currently receiving backlash for something they did or did not say and do. At the same time, the modern consumer can just as easily share any type of information in just a matter of minutes. This means that there are millions of people contributing to the content on social media every single day. Brands thereby need to deliver interesting content, if they want to catch the attention of the consumer (Baer 2013, 15-17).

The modern consumer does not want to be marketed to, they want to be informed. In other words, consumers prefer brands that are useful to them in some way, whether it being useful for solving a problem, informing them on a topic or for entertainment purposes (Baer 2013, 15-17). This usefulness can thereby come in many forms, such as blog posts, video tutorials or funny posts. Keeping the consumers entertained and satisfied with the right content should be a priority for all brands, as the consumers have the power; a brand can spend millions of pounds and hours on building their brand image through engaging content, but any disgruntled consumer can ruin this image through just one negative story (Gensler et al. 2013).

In addition to the development in what type of social media posts appeals to them (those who fulfil the desire to be exposed to useful content), the modern consumer also values spending their money in a certain way. Newer research indicates that the modern consumer values the joy that money can bring you, and not the money in itself, and that they experience a higher level of satisfaction when purchasing experiences (such as travelling) rather than on durable goods (Goldsmith 2021, 5). This is in line with the focus on creating a nice work-life balance that the modern consumer also values highly (Delecta 2011). Another characteristic of the modern consumer is the focus on sustainability. This interest manifests itself in numerous aspects of their behaviour and values such as recycling, purchasing responsibly produced goods and cutting down on the usage of scarce natural resources (Goldsmith 2021, 5-6). Lastly, one of the main values and points of interest for the modern consumer is social justice (Goldsmith 2021, 8). Social justice cover a wide range of social issues, ranging from discrimination (both for race, gender, sexuality etc.), over inequality (e.g. financial or gender) to basic human rights, such as the access to food and personal freedom (UC Merced Library 2020). If brands wish to be perceived in a positive way by the modern consumers, they should articulate these focal points in their marketing and communication. Brands should thereby attempt to build a brand that appeals to the values of the modern consumers by utilising a strategy in which they address these issues.

4.1.3 Implications for Our Thesis

The theories about the creation and management of a brand's image, will influence and support our research in more ways than one. Firstly, the knowledge of what previous research has found to be true about brand image and the importance hereof, form a theoretical foundation about what generally works well when trying to make an organisation's brand appeal to consumers. This theoretical foundation will play a part when we later on discuss how Ganni creates their brand image, both when discussing what they do when it comes to the different marketing initiatives, but also in terms of discussing what our analyses show that our interview participants think about Ganni and how they perceive their brand image. In addition, our research design allows us to test this theoretical knowledge about what is the best way to build a brand image, as we can compare what the theory prescribes to what our participants actually think is effectful. Naturally, there is more to branding than the presence on social media. That is, however, the focus we have chosen for our theoretical framework, as the majority of Ganni's brand equity has been built through just that and therefore the theoretical foundation we deem suitable for discussing their efforts.

4.2 Marketing Initiatives

We now move on to the second "theory" in our theoretical framework. As our research strives to uncover what type out of six different marketing initiatives that contribute the most to creating a positive brand image perception, we consider it important to have a theoretical foundation of what these different initiatives entail. The six types of marketing initiatives are Direct Marketing, Website, Brand Community, Brand Stories, Physical Advertising and Content Marketing.

Before continuing to the discussion of the six specific marketing initiatives, we should clarify what we mean by the term marketing. *Marketing* refers to the craft of *"exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit"* (Kotler et al. 2019, 6). In other words, marketing is the efforts made by a brand or organisation to create awareness about the brand and what they do. This awareness can come in many forms, ranging from promotion

of specific products to the visual identity of the brand. Marketing thereby entails a wide range of practical efforts such as promotion, advertising and market research, all conducted on the foundation of strategic marketing management, done for the purpose of creating a specific perception in the eyes of the consumers (Kotler et al. 2019, 6-8).

The marketing industry is a multi-billion dollar industry. In 2022, the estimated worldwide advertising spending comes to a total of $750 billion, resulting in a 9% increase from 2021 where the annual worldwide spending was $688 billion (Guttmann 2022). Of these large sums, more than half were spent on online advertising (Ho 2022). The company in the world with the largest spending on their marketing is also an online business, namely the American online retailer Amazon, who in 2019 had an ad and promotion spending of $11 billion (Johnson 2020).

4.2.1 Direct Marketing

Direct Marketing refers to the type of marketing that is targeted directly to one specific consumer. Often direct marketing even offers great possibilities for personalisation and interactive content (Kotler et al. 2019, 593). In this theoretical framework, and our thesis in general, we only concern ourselves with online direct marketing.

Within the field of online direct marketing we consider there to be two overall types of solutions: *paid media* and *direct mail*. In addition, a brand's website is actually also a form of direct marketing (Kotler et al. 2019, 594). However, we believe that there is more to a website than hardcore promoting, which is why we consider it to be a category of its own that will be discussed in section 4.2.2.

Paid media covers a variation of online advertising taking place outside of the brand's own online platforms (Meyer 2021). Paid media comes in different forms, the largest groups being search ads, which are featured on search engine results pages, and display ads, which can be featured on all types of websites and apps (Meyer 2021; Kotler et al. 2019, 600). Finding out what brands do when it comes to their paid media is difficult, if they do not choose to actively share it with the world. Therefore, we have chosen to only focus on Ganni's effort within the category of direct mail.

Direct mail is the term for promotional emails sent from a brand to its email subscribers (Kotler et al. 2019, 594). Direct mail is often built as email flows that a consumer will be set up for when signing up for a brand's newsletter, as current legislation requires permission to send promotional emails to consumers (Powell 2017). These flows typically consist of a couple of welcoming emails, sometimes including a coupon code for a small discount on the brand's webshop, should they have that, whereafter they join the "normal" flow of newsletters sent out to both new and old subscribers (Powell 2017). One of the strengths of direct mail is the great possibilities for personalisation; modern direct mail programs offer easy access to including the name of the receiver, while it is also common to personalise the content of the newsletter to the person receiving it, e.g. by featuring products that the person has viewed previously (Kotler 2019, 594-595). Another strength is the high level of automation, as the aforementioned automatic flow ensures that the emails are personalised and sent out to each individual subscriber (Kotler et al. 2019, 594-595). A disadvantage to direct mail is that people have to actively choose to receive the mails, which limits the pool of prospects that can be exposed to the content compared to the number you can reach through paid media. At the same time, it can work as an advantage as you are certain that the receiver is interested in content from the brand, as they have signed up for it themselves. Another disadvantage is the possibility of the email being characterised as "junk" by the mailsystem, causing the receiver not to see it (Kotler et al. 2019, 570).

4.2.2 Website

A brand's website is an online site operated by the brand itself. Often when a brand sells a physical product, their website is also a webshop where the consumers can purchase the products online and get them delivered at home or at a nearby parcel shop (Kotler et al. 2019, 16). As mentioned in section 4.2.1, a website is also a form of direct marketing.

In order for a website to be deemed good by consumers, it should follow the genre conventions of the website genre. These genre conventions especially concern the information architecture on the website, which includes having a main menu at the top of the page, a submenu in the left side on content pages and a footer at the bottom of the page, where information about the company can be found (Alonso-Virgós, Espada, Thomaschewski & Crespo 2020). When the

website also functions as a webshop, it is custom that a shopping cart can be found in the top right corner of the website and that products are listed in a lattice display.

For branding purposes, a brand's website should reflect the visual identity of the brand, so there is no doubt for the consumer that she is visiting the website of that particular brand (Kotler et al. 2019, 599). A great website will both entice visitors to return to the website and/or to make a purchase. For a great website, the strengths will include an information architecture that is easy to navigate in, where all necessary information is to be found, fast loading of the content and an aesthetic website design (Kotler et al. 2019, 650). A weakness for any website, regardless of how well designed it is, is the physical distance between the consumer and the brand; there is no human contact to establish trust (Schlosser, White & Lloyd 2006). At the same time, there is - for webshops - the challenge that the consumer cannot see, touch or try the products before purchasing them.

4.2.3 Brand Community

The modern consumer spends many awake hours online engaging in all types of social contexts on social media (Johnson 2022). For some, one of these contexts is sharing their love for specific brands with other like-minded consumers - a context referred to as a *brand community*.

A brand community is "*a social network of individuals who interact through specific technologies, potentially crossing geographical and political boundaries in order to pursue a mutual interest in a specific brand*" (Kotler et al. 2019, 417). In other words, a brand community is an online community spanning across physical distance and demographic differences, bound together by the interest for the brand.

Sometimes the online brand communities are initiated by the brand itself, while consumer-initiated brand communities also exist (Kotler et al. 2019, 217). Recent research has found that creating a connection to their customers is crucial for the modern brand, as continuous interaction is a prerequisite for the brand's survival (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou 2010). Even though the online world is intangible and marked by uncertainty, it creates an arena for interactive real-time interactions between the brand and the consumers, as well as between consumers (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou 2010). These continuous interactions will over time

build mutual understanding, trust and ultimately result in a brand community to occur (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou 2010). An advantage of brand communities is thereby the close and personal connection that brands have the potential of developing with their customers. A potential disadvantage to brand communities - for the brand itself - could be if a disgruntled customer shares her experience in the community, which could cause other community members to change their attitude towards the brand.

4.2.4 Brand Stories

In section 4.1.1, we discussed the topic of brand stories. As we described then, modern technology in the form of the emergence of social media has rendered much control of a brand's story to the consumers. We will therefore not discuss the concept of brand stories in depth here.

It should be noted though that when we talk about *brand stories* as a part of Ganni's marketing initiatives, we do, however, simply stick to the stories told about Ganni from the brand itself and other media outlets, and not from the consumers. Instead, the use of consumers in building their brand image is incorporated in the category we discussed in the previous section, namely brand community.

4.2.5 Physical Advertising

Despite the positive effects of online marketing and the use of social media, brands should not neglect the effects of analogue marketing. In this thesis we focus on the physical advertisements from Ganni in the form of billboards, the design of their physical store and physical merchandise in the form of stickers (read about these in section 5.2.6). Besides the aforementioned types of physical advertising, other advertising includes adverts in magazines, TV commercials and online advertising (Kotler et al. 2019). Here we will, however, focus on the physical types that appear in public.

The purpose of advertising is to create awareness of a brand's existence, and sometimes specific products, in the hopes of ultimately generating sales (Kotler et al. 2019, 564-565). The advantages of physical advertising include increased awareness about the brand and its

existence in the consumer's perception (Kotler et al. 2019, 565). At the same time, it is a cost effective way to reach a large number of people, should the advertisement be placed in a public and bustling place (Kotler et al. 2019, 565). In addition, as the modern consumer spends a lot of time (and is exposed to many advertisements) online, physical advertising has shown to leave a bigger impression on the observer than digital advertising (Shafer 2021). Some disadvantages of physical advertising are the large financial costs they involve, and the limited amount of people that are exposed to them, as they have to be physically present to see them (Kotler et al. 2019, 570).

4.2.6 Content Marketing

The last of the six categories of marketing that we include in our research is *content marketing*. Being one of the newer marketing "religions", content marketing is a marketing technique with the objective of driving profitable customer action (Steimle 2014). It is about "*creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience*" (Steimle 2014).

Content marketing is thereby not about selling a product and its qualities, but on the contrary to create value for the receiver (Steimle 2014). This is in line with what we described in section 4.1.2, The Wants and Needs of the Modern Consumer, namely that the modern consumer does not want to simply be sold to, but rather wants content that makes them smarter, better or entertained.

Whether or not something is content marketing, depends - to a certain degree - on the eyes of the beholder. Naturally, it requires some kind of informative or entertaining element, but whether or not something creates value (the foundation of content marketing) is an individual thing (Steimle 2014). For instance, if a fashion brand made a guide for choosing the right dress cut for your figure, using their own items to illustrate the different types of dresses, that guide would only appeal to people who wish to wear dresses. For those who do not, the guide will simply be considered as an advertisement (Steimle 2014).

4.2.7 Implications for Our Thesis

The marketing initiatives described in this subchapter correspond with the marketing initiatives that we have chosen to work with in our thesis. As we argued for in our problem statement, we have chosen exactly these types of initiatives as we have found that it is especially in those aspects that Ganni does a lot. Choosing these initiatives is thereby based on the assumption that they are part of the reason for the strong brand that Ganni has built in the Danish market. At the same time, this subchapter contributes to a theoretical knowledge about what the different types can offer a brand, and what their strengths and weaknesses are. This theoretical knowledge will form a great foundation for our analysis of how the interview participants perceive the different types of marketing initiatives.

4.3 Consumer Perception

As established in the first two subchapters of our theoretical framework, brands spend a lot of time and money on building their brand image, for the purpose of ensuring that they are perceived in the desired way by consumers. This perception is directly linked to their brand image, as the consumer's perception of the brand will impact the image they perceive them of having.

The term perception refers to "*the process by which we select, organise and interpret information inputs to create a meaningful picture of the world*" (Kotler et al. 2019, 206). A consumer's perception affects the person's actual behaviour, which means that the individual person's perception is more important to the marketer than what is generally perceived as "real" (Kotler et al. 2019, 206). How we perceive things depends not only on the external physical stimuli that we are exposed to, but also on that stimuli's relationship to the surrounding field and on our own personal conditions (Kotler et al. 2019, 206).

4.3.1 Perceptual Processes

In this subchapter we will discuss three different perceptual processes: selective attention, selective distortion and selective retention. Common to all three processes is that they can be

experienced by anyone at any given time, based on the stimuli the person is exposed to and the context in which it occurs.

Selective attention refers to the process of screening out stimuli by only giving attention to a small fragment of what we encounter in our daily lives (Kotler et al. 2019, 206). We are all exposed to hundreds of different ads each day, which is way more than the human mind has mental resources for interpreting (Andersen 2011, 32-33). Therefore, we overlook most of the stimuli we are exposed to as we (sometimes unknowingly) deem it redundant (Kotler et al. 2019, 206). Research have found that we are most likely to notice three types of stimuli: 1) stimuli that relate to one of our current needs, 2) stimuli that we expect to encounter and 3) stimuli that has large deviations from the norm of that particular stimuli (Kotler et al. 2019, 207).

Selective distortion is the process that occurs when stimuli are interpreted in a way that matches one's preconceptions (Kotler et al. 2019, 207). Not only can it occur when a brand we know produces stimuli. It also happens when we do not know the brand behind a given stimuli beforehand: Stimuli that were originally perceived negatively, can suddenly be perceived positively (or negatively, if they were perceived positively in the first place) when finding out a specific brand is behind the stimuli (Kotler et al. 2019, 207). This perceptive process can work in the favour of a brand if a consumer that supports and is loyal to the brand is exposed to negative information about the brand. Thus, the consumer in question is most likely to distort the information and make it more positive (Kotler et al. 2019, 207).

Selective retention refers to the act of remembering selected stimuli. More specifically, it is when you retain information that supports your existing attitudes and beliefs and reject information that is not congruent with existing perceptions (Kotler et al. 2019, 207; Andersen 2011, 36). Brands can seek to get around this perceptual process by repeating their message, thereby minimising the risk of the message being overlooked should it not match the consumers existing attitudes and beliefs (Kotler et al. 2019, 207).

4.3.2 Implications for Our Thesis

The purpose of including theories about perception and different selective perception processes is so we can attempt to decode or explain how and why our participants perceive the marketing efforts they are exposed to. Naturally, it can be hard to determine when these perceptual processes come into play, since we do not have excessive knowledge about our participants or their cognitive processes. That is, however, why we asked them to fill out a short questionnaire before the interviews (we will discuss this matter further in section 6.2.4), so we would have at least some knowledge about their consumption habits, occupation and social media use. Having this theoretical foundation about the selective perceptual processes will thereby allow us to make well-founded interpretations of the interview participants' reactions to the shown marketing stimuli.

4.4 Correspondence Between Theories

In this final subchapter of chapter 4, Theoretical Framework, we will discuss how our theories correspond with one another and how the entirety of the theories will impact our thesis. As our theories are not coined theories with given names, it is difficult to talk about the entirety of the three isolated subchapters. Therefore, we will refer to them as *brand theory*, *initiative theory* and *perception theory*, respectively, when discussing each of them as a whole in this subchapter and from here on out through our thesis.

As we have already argued for in the final section of each subchapter, all three theories have a greater purpose in our research. Brand theory functions as a foundation for discussing how Ganni has built their brand image, while also allowing us to assess whether or not the interview participants' reactions are in line with what the theory claims that consumers are looking for from brands. Initiative theory functions as a foundation for discussing Ganni's efforts in each of the six categories of marketing initiatives, while perception theory functions as a foundation for interpreting how and why the interview participants perceive Ganni's marketing efforts the way they do.

In conclusion, we thereby deem that all three theories correlate quite well with each other, as they all share the same ideology: that a brand's image is dependent on the eyes of the beholder

and that there is only so much a brand can do when it comes to marketing and branding, as it will ultimately depend on the person being exposed to the stimuli. This is thereby in line with our scientific theoretical stance as social constructivists.

CHAPTER 5:
CASE DESCRIPTION

5.1 Who and What is Ganni?

5.2 Discussion of Ganni's Marketing Initiatives

5. Case Description

This chapter concerns our case description and consists of two subchapters, namely a subchapter consisting of a description of Ganni as a brand and a subchapter consisting of an account of the specific marketing initiatives that Ganni conducts. We have chosen to structure the chapter with the description of the brand first and the account of the marketing initiatives second, because we think it is necessary to understand the brand's history and DNA before introducing the specific initiatives it conducts. This structure is also reflected in the way we conduct the interviews, which will be elaborated on in sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.3.

5.1 Who and What is Ganni?

Ganni is a Danish fashion brand which was founded in 2000 by gallerist Frans Truelsen and in 2009, the husband and wife duo Nikolaj Reffstrup and Ditte Reffstrup took over as CEO and Creative Director, respectively (Ellen Macarthur Foundation 2021). In 2017, Ditte and Nikolaj Reffstrup, and their third owner, sold 51 percent of the company to an American private equity firm (Simonsen 2019). Despite this, the Reffstrup-couple continued to own 49 percent of Ganni while being members of the staff, where Ditte Refstrup continued to be the Creative Director (Simonsen 2019). Ganni is based in Copenhagen, Denmark, but has grown into a global phenomenon over the last years, as Ganni has, as of ultimo 2021, 27 stores in Europe and the U.S. and 400 resellers worldwide (Ellen Macarthur Foundation 2021). The prices of the clothes from Ganni vary from €55 to €1295, which results in Ganni differentiating itself with the prices in the mid to high-end segments, according to an analysis of Ganni and its competitors in the fashion industry (Lemaire 2021). This is seen in relation to the three brands that Retviews, a competitive intelligence platform, has used when analysing Ganni, namely Acne Studios, Isabel Marent and The Kooples (Lemaire 2021). In this comparison, it is evident that Ganni's most frequent product price is €145, compared to Acne Studios' €290, Isabel Marent's €390 and The Kooples' €195 (Lemaire 2021). Consequently, medias argue that Ganni has positioned itself as a luxury designer label but without the appertaining prices (Klerk 2018).

The clothing from Ganni is described as "*(...) clothing with a playful and unapologetic edge*" (Tindle 2021). This said edge is also seen in the amount of collaborations between Ganni and other brands, such as Levi's, Juicy Couture, New Balance and Ahluwalia (Ellen Macarthur

Foundation 2021; Ganni n.d.). Furthermore, as of March 2022, Ganni has a webshop for 33 individual countries (appendix 1.1.1.1). In 2021, as mentioned in our introduction, Ganni was the 29th most profitable fashion brand in Denmark, with a revenue of US$27.6 million on its own webshop, ganni.com (ecommerceDB n.d.). Thus, Ganni can be considered as being a well-known brand in Denmark.

The knowledge of Ganni is further increased by social media, where Ganni uses the previously mentioned #GanniGirls on Instagram. The hashtag started by a coincidence when two famous women, the Danish model Helena Christensen and American actress Kate Bosworth, met for a night out while wearing the same coat from Ganni (Tindle 2021). Hereafter, Helena Christensen posted a picture of the two wearing the coat with the #GanniGirls, to which Nikolaj Reffstrup states that Ganni *"(...) picked up on it and ran with it"* (Tindle 2021). Since the first post with the #GanniGirls, more than 85,000 posts have been posted with the hashtag and more than one million people follow along on Ganni's Instagram page (appendix 1.2.4.1; appendix 1.1.4). Ganni has expanded beyond its initial webshop and social media, as it has among other things written and published a book, created two podcasts and started a re-selling platform (appendix 1.2.6). Lastly, Ganni is featured prominently in the media, as media outlets such as Vogue UK, The Culture Trip, Glamour, Vogue Scandinavia, Harper's Bazaar, Finans.dk and Los Angeles Times have all published articles between 2018 and 2021 that all have Ganni as the sole topic of the article (Vogue 2021; Bannerman 2018; Ilyashov 2018; Forsberg 2021; Klerk 2018; Simonsen 2019; Berlinger 2020).

5.2 Discussion of Ganni's Marketing Initiatives

Ganni is a commercial fashion brand, for which reason its marketing effort is an essential part of the structure and the maintenance of the brand and the brand's image. Ganni's marketing effort is composed of a number of initiatives, which we will now examine and discuss. To create a clear overview of Ganni's initiatives, we will begin with an account for the overall structure of the platforms and marketing activity, before continuing on to divide the efforts into the selected categories for the marketing initiatives. The categories will allow us to gather and group the related marketing efforts under one initiative. We deem this necessary for a brand such as Ganni in particular, as the brand has an excessive amount of marketing efforts to

account for. Consequently, it will also allow us to create a foundation of knowledge concerning Ganni's initiatives, which we will use to identify which initiatives we will present to the participants in the interviews.

When researching Ganni, it is evident that the brand is mainly present on the four following social media platforms: Youtube, TikTok, Instagram and Facebook (appendix 1.1). Moreover, Ganni has an account on the social network LinkedIn (appendix 1.1.3). Ganni has its website, Ganni.com, where clothes and other fashion items can be purchased by consumers. From the website, Ganni links directly to its four previously mentioned social media platforms in the footer of the website (appendix 1.1.1). Moreover, Ganni has included a 'call-to-action' button in the footer, which is a term used in marketing when the sender wants the receiver to take the next step or action, which says "sign up" for the newsletter (Kenton 2020; appendix 1.1.1). Knowing the overall structure of the channels Ganni uses, it is possible to look closer at what these channels contain in terms of content. As we have previously established, Ganni is one of the major brands in its niche, which its attention to and prioritising of marketing and communication also reflects. Ganni prioritises being active on several social media platforms, which requires it to dedicate time to create content for the different platforms and their intended purpose. It is this very content we will now account for, which we will do in order to establish and clarify the categories of marketing initiatives and the content within the categories. Consequently, we will do this in order to present the initiatives to the participants in the semi-structured interviews. However, before accounting for the content, we wish to note that we are aware that it can be rather difficult to establish rules or boxes for marketing content to fit into, as we are social constructivists and thus, believe that marketing is a social construction. Therefore, marketing content can be interpreted in several ways depending on the viewer's bias. To accommodate this difficulty of placing content in predetermined boxes, we will not limit the categories to specific platforms, as we do not wish to force content into a category just because it occurs on a specific platform, but rather highlight content from across multiple platforms if we deem it relevant for the category in question. Thus, we can allow the content to be interpreted in several ways, and thereby allow the content of Ganni's different platforms and media to interplay with each other and create the most accurate view on the category as a whole.

As mentioned at the beginning of this subchapter, we have decided to create six categories, which are *direct marketing*, *website*, *brand stories*, *brand community*, *physical advertising* and *content marketing*. We have created the six categories for the marketing initiatives based on the actual marketing Ganni does, which the categories need to reflect to ensure a high level of accuracy in our research. Moreover, the six categories which we have divided Ganni's marketing initiatives into are the same six categories that we will present to the interview participants. Thus, it is these six categories that we will focus on for this case study and differentiate between to answer our problem statement.

In order to create a better understanding of the categories and the intermix of the content within them, we have created the visual table below:

Platform / Category	Email	Website	Instagram	Online media/blogs	Analogue
Direct Marketing	×				
Website		×			
Brand Community		×	×		
Brand Stories		×	×	×	
Physical Advertising			×		×
Content Marketing		×			

Figure 2: Matrix of categories and platforms

The figure above shows a matrix of the platforms and categories we use in the examination of Ganni's marketing initiatives. The vertical column in the left side contains the different

categories we will include in the discussion of Ganni's marketing initiatives and in the examination of our research question, while the horizontal row in the top of the table, depicts the different platforms where the content is collected from. As it is evident from the matrix, half of the categories overlap across more than one platform.

It should be noted that we are aware that the six categories are different in terms of the type of content they include. However, it was also not our intention for them to be identical in terms of content, as we wish to examine what type of marketing that contributes the most to a positive brand image perception. We thereby chose this composition of categories as we wish to allow the different categories of content to speak for itself, rather than limiting our defined categories to be based solely on the platform.

5.2.2 Direct Marketing

It is evident that Ganni uses email marketing as part of their marketing strategy. This is both seen on their website where the call-to-action button is placed, as mentioned previously, and in combination with social media content. The last-mentioned is for instance seen in an Instagram story concerning the launch of a new collaboration, where there is a direct link from Instagram to a landing page with a sign-up form for the newsletter, where the consumer is encouraged to "*Sign up to our newsletter to hear about exclusives, future collections and get first access to SALE...*" (Appendix 1.2.1.1). When signing up for Ganni's newsletter, one will receive a number of emails, each with its own and slightly different focus than the others. The emails contain content such as new products, the release of the sustainability report from the previous year and a sneak peek of a collaboration between Ganni and another brand (Appendix 1.2.1.2; 1.2.1.3; 1.2.1.4; 1.2.1.5). The newsletters vary in terms of the content being centred around one topic or several, as seen in one newsletter, with the title "Our 2021 Responsibility Report is here!", solely focusing on the sustainability report and another, with the title "The first day of Spring 🌸 🌼", including both dresses, bags and an edit of different clothing items (Appendix 1.2.1.4; 1.2.1.5). Ganni's email marketing is also characterised by the brand being a retailer and especially by having a webshop where the customers can purchase the clothes directly. This is evident in the type of emails that can be classified as an automation, namely the reminder of an item being left unpurchased in the basket on the webshop, when one does not check out within the 15 minutes that the item is reserved for (1.2.1.6). Therefore, it can be

said that Ganni employs email marketing to a great extent and that there is a variety in the emails. Thus, Ganni uses email marketing as a means for promoting the launch of new collections and products, as a way to inform about initiatives concerning for instance sustainability and in a more automated way as seen in the reminder to check out.

5.2.3 Website

Ganni's website carries a substantial role in the brand's marketing, as it is the one place where everyone who wishes to purchase a product from Ganni can place an online order. Ganni has numerous physical stores, which will be elaborated in *physical advertising*, but the webshop is the one online site where every product is Ganni, as opposed to the list of resellers, as previously mentioned. Because Ganni's website is only centred around fashion items from the brand itself and the universe that Ganni has created, it is relevant to examine the visual identity of the website and discuss how it can be seen as a marketing initiative.

When visiting Ganni's website one is met with the front page and eight separate menus in the header of the website. The menus are labelled *New in*, *Clothing*, *Dresses*, *Denim*, *Accessories*, *Shoes*, *GANNI Collections* and *GANNI World* (Appendix 1.2.2.1). The front page changes within relatively few days, which is evident in the shift from 28 March to 31 March (Appendix 1.2.2.1; 1.2.2.3).

If one wishes to browse Ganni's website without choosing one of the more specific categories such as *Dresses* or *Shoes*, the category named *Clothing* is an option. When entering the menu *Clothing*, one can see a wide selection of clothes. When focusing on the aesthetic aspect of the website, it is evident that the front page displays three items of clothing, which are all dresses. In the Western world, dresses are a type of clothing that is typically associated with the female gender and classified as being a feminine item. Knowing this, the website gets a more feminine look when using dresses on the front page, causing it to be the first thing the consumer is met with when entering the website. This feminine and soft visual design is also supported in the chosen colours for the clothing, both on the front page and when entering the menu *Clothing*. The three dresses on the front page are light pink, blue and white with black dots, respectively, which are all rather soft and light colours as opposed to neon or dark colours. This colour scheme continues onto the menu *Clothing*, where the soft and light colours are constituting the

majority of the clothes (Appendix 1.2.2.2). Thus, the webshop contains colourful clothes with silhouettes that can be classified as playful, given their voluminous width in skirts and dresses and the happy smiley symbol that is so common in the clothes that it has become the flagship product and design for Ganni, as seen in the symbol being referred to as "an icon" by the media (Laia 2021).

Another thing that is consistent for the website is the use of labels on the clothes, as seen below the title of each item of clothing, where the label either says *responsible* or *news* (Appendix 1.2.2.2). Here, it is important to note that Ganni uses the word 'responsible' rather than 'sustainable' when talking about the production of the items, which is in line with how Ganni talks about themselves: namely that "*we don't identify as a sustainable brand*" (Appendix 1.2.1.3). When looking at the clothing featured in the menu *Clothing*, the vast majority of the clothes have a label. More specifically, 13 of the 15 first items featured on the page have either *responsible* or *news* written under the clothing, where 11 of the 13 are *responsible* and two are *news* (Appendix 1.2.2.2). The heavy use of labels creates a sense of exclusivity as the labels act as an extra layer to the product compared to if there were no labels. Thus, the labels add more character to the item of clothing, which can result in the consumer feeling more positive towards it. However, the label 'responsible' implies that the production of the item has been more environmental-friendly, which Ganni naturally would need to live up to, in order to avoid greenwashing, which is when a brand is making people believe that they are doing more to protect the environment than what the reality is (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.b).

5.2.4 Brand Community

Ganni has managed to create a large brand community, as it has a large number of customers and a large following on its different social media platforms. This is especially seen on Instagram, where the brand has 1 million followers and in April 2022, 85,000 people had used the hashtag #GanniGirls (Appendix 1.2.3.1). Because of this extensive community on Instagram, we have chosen to focus on the hashtag for this category.

The posts tagged #GanniGirls vary in terms of motives, as there are both women posing for pictures (while wearing Ganni), pictures where the clothes appear to be the main focus and what seems to be a picture showing the atmosphere of the place, where the person wears Ganni

(Appendix 1.2.3.1). The girls and women who post these pictures seem to be everyone from Danish women and Danish fashion stores to foreign women, such as British, American and French women (Appendix 1.2.3.2). This diversity is also seen in the amount of followers on the accounts for these women and fashion stores, as their number of followers range between 800 and 20,000 followers in our sample (Appendix 1.2.3.2). This indicates that it is not only major influencers or celebrities that use #GanniGirls, but also people who can be classified as "micro-influencers" and women using Instagram for entertainment purposes. Thus, #GanniGirls appear to be used by anyone who wishes to show off their item from Ganni, whether it is as a post dedicated to showing the item or a more subtle dedication that is only visible by the hashtag in the appertaining caption.

5.2.5 Brand Stories

When examining Ganni's marketing initiatives, we find it imperative to include how the brand is presented by Ganni itself and others. Therefore, we will now examine how Ganni presents the brand on its own channels and how other channels present the brand. When looking at Ganni's Instagram page, the bio reads "*Confidence, Community, Responsibility, #GANNIGirls*" followed by a link that leads the visitor to Ganni's own website (Appendix 1.1.4). Seeing that Ganni itself has included the #GANNIGirls in the biography at the top of its Instagram page, with 1 million followers to see it, indicates that the brand supports and encourages the use of the hashtag. This is also seen on its regular posts on Instagram, where a majority of the posts has the same hashtag included in the appertaining caption, as seen in a sample with six posts in continuation of each other. Here, five of the six posts included #GanniGirls and only one did not (Appendix 1.2.4.2). Furthermore, one of the posts included the hashtag in the caption to the post; "*We're inspired and driven by our community. Our diverse network of creatives and the people who wear us are what makes GANNI what it is. We want to make sure everyone feels included in what we do, that's the whole point. From the people we collaborate with to the customers that inspire us, #GANNIGirls is more than a hashtag, it's a community*" (Appendix 1.2.4.2). This quote demonstrates that Ganni prioritises the hashtag, while stating that the community on Instagram goes beyond the platform.

The notion of #GanniGirls being more than a hashtag on Instagram, is also seen when examining how other media present the brand. In 2021, Vogue UK published the article titled

"What London's Ganni Girls Wore To Celebrate Copenhagen Fashion Week On Home Turf" (Vogue 2021; Appendix 1.2.4.3). Here, the title includes "Ganni Girls" without the hashtag, which indicates that the hashtag is in fact more than a hashtag. Moreover, this is also supported in the actual content of the article, namely that Ganni "*(...) gathered its London-based #GanniGirls for a chic evening soirée.*" (Vogue 2021). Thus, through the fashion brand, a community of #GanniGirls has been created, which would not have been created without Ganni. Consequently, it appears that Ganni's previous statement is correct, namely that #GanniGirls is more than a hashtag, while still being a hashtag with more than 85,000 posts on Instagram and being included in media such as Vogue UK. This is also seen in other articles, such as "This is Why Everyone Wants to Be One of the #GanniGirls" by The Culture Trip (Bannerman 2018; Appendix 1.2.4.4). This article is from 2018 and is dedicated to Ganni as seen in the beginning of the article; "*Always the talk of Copenhagen Fashion Week, Ganni is the brand that everyone wants a piece of. This is what makes Denmark's coolest fashion label so inclusive and what it means to be one of the #GanniGirls*" (Bannerman 2018).

5.2.6 Physical Advertising

We have now established that Ganni is present when it comes to online marketing, but Ganni also exists outside the online universe that it has created, as seen in the physical stores and in billboard advertisements. As described in chapter 4, Theoretical Framework, physical advertising has been proven to leave a bigger impression than online advertising, which is why we find it important to include as it inevitably makes up an important aspect of Ganni's branding. We have named this category 'physical advertising' as it focuses on the advertisement in physical settings, such as Ganni's physical stores and in the townscape of larger cities. Because we are not able to travel to the different locations where the advertisement occurs, we will focus on the advertisement that is shown on Ganni's Instagram and in the media. Because of this, the content of this category uses online sources, as seen in the previous categories, despite the content revolving around marketing content in the physical world.

On 24 March this year, Ganni posted a line of stories on its own Instagram with the focus being the opening of a Ganni store in Paris (Appendix 1.2.5.1). The first story has the location of the store tagged on the story (RUE DU VINGT-NEUF-JUILLET) and states "*GANNI ST HONORE is open! We are so excited to welcome you into our second GANNI flagship location*

in Paris ꜰʀ *#GANNI*" (Appendix 1.2.5.1). The next five stories are pictures of the interior of the store, which shows colourful walls, shelves with the products, pedestals with a bouquet of flowers and a large neon-sign Ganni logo in what appears to be the storefront (Appendix 1.2.5.1). One story shows two people sitting at a table embroidering fashion items, while the text reads "*@lundi_paris are in the house customising all GANNI purchases with the cutest embroidery* 🧵" (Appendix 1.2.5.1). We believe that offering this service to the customers can be an encouragement to purchase a product, because they receive an additional experience when purchasing a product, namely the embroidering. Moreover, the service also creates a feeling of the store being more than just a commercial place where profit is the most important thing. Thus, the embroidery service seems to create a feeling that going to the store is more of an event, as we must assume that the customer chooses to stay and spend time at the store while her purchase is being embroidered. This would make it necessary for the costumer to hang out at the store, and thus, the sense of community as seen in #GanniGirls is being created in the store as well. In terms of the design of the stores and the interior, Ganni seems to stick to the theme that it has established. This is seen in the highlight on Ganni's Instagram called "Paris", where the different corners inside the flagship store is shown (Appendix 1.2.5.2). Here, the bright colours from the collection, as mentioned previously, are seen on the colour of the floor, walls and interior pieces in the store (Appendix 1.2.5.2). Moreover, it is seen how the ceiling is filled with rice-paper lanterns, which creates a soft ambience in terms of lightning. This, together with the products in the store being displayed as if they were pieces of art and offering champagne on the opening day, creates a feeling of visiting a museum rather than a fashion store. Thus, the attention to details adds to the sense of community as mentioned previously, as it seems to be an experience in itself to visit a Ganni store, where some might perceive making a purchase as the secondary thing for the visit.

Besides the stores, Ganni also makes use of physical advertisements of other kinds, namely billboards and stickers, the last of which are placed around the city of Paris in this example, as it is done in connection to the opening of the flagship store in Paris (Appendix 1.2.5.3). When looking at Ganni's profile on Instagram, one will see a handful of posts showing advertisements from Paris, New York and Times Square, New York (Appendix 1.2.5.4). Moreover, in its stories on Instagram, a video shows a large banner with "GANNI" written across, while the text says "BONJOUR PARIS!!!!!!" (Appendix 1.2.5.4). This presentation of advertisement on Ganni's own social media is also seen on TikTok, where a video shows the headquarter in

Copenhagen with a large banner where a picture of the book Ganni published, titled "Gimme More", is seen (Appendix 1.2.5.4). Lastly, this is also seen on Ganni's profile on LinkedIn, where there is a post with a picture of a large billboard, on a building that appears to be the town hall square in Copenhagen (Appendix 1.2.5.4). Here, the advertisement reads "*9 OUT OF 10 STYLES ON SS22 ARE RESPONSIBLE. We classify styles as responsible if at least 50% of the composition is certified organic, lower-impact or recycled. GANNIGANNIGANNI*" (Appendix 1.2.5.4). The physical advertisements can be interpreted as Ganni showing how successful a company it is, by having and choosing to spend money on large advertisements around the world. Furthermore, the aforementioned highlight on Instagram titled "Paris" also includes several pictures of stickers with the text "Ganni Girls" surrounding a picture of a globe (Appendix 1.2.5.5). One of the stories has the text *"We're all over Paris! Catch us if you can* 🌀 *#GANNI"* written on it (Appendix 1.2.5.5). The stories both show pictures where the stickers are seen on different objects in the city, such as boxes for electricity cables and parking metres, but also a picture of what appears to be a hand putting the sticker on one of these items (Appendix 1.2.5.5). This makes it seem as if it is Ganni that has placed these stickers around the city, in order to create awareness, as part of the branding of the new store and the brand in general. We argue that the stickers add to the feeling of Ganni being a large brand that prioritises advertisement and storytelling. Together with the physical advertisement, the flagship stores can be interpreted as Ganni creating a feeling of being more than "just a fashion brand". We argue that the flagship stores create a feeling of it being an experience in itself as if one was to visit a museum. At the same time, the billboards create connotations to movie or event posters (contributing to the perception of going to a Ganni store as being an event) while the stickers create publicity and awareness about the brand. Thus, the physical advertisements can be seen as a way for Ganni to stage the brand as being more than a fashion brand, as seen on Instagram where the hashtag is more than a hashtag but rather a community.

5.2.7 Content Marketing

In addition to Ganni's efforts in the previously discussed categories, Ganni also creates content that seems to be created for something besides merely selling clothes. This is the two podcasts series called "Ganni Talks" proof of. One of the podcasts, "Ganni Talks: How Are You?", is a podcast created by the two founders of Ganni and revolves around them calling friends of Ganni where they talk about what they are currently doing (Ganni n.d.d). Ganni itself describes

the podcast in the following way: "*Listen in as Ditte and Nikolaj call friends around the world and ask - how are you?*" (Ganni n.d.d) The second podcast, "Ganni Talks: Culture Club", revolves around journalist and creative consultant Marjon Carlos speaks to inspiring creatives on what they like at the moment (Ganni n.d.d). The fact that Ganni refers to the founders by their first names creates an informal tone. Moreover, this informal tone is also evident in the title of the first series, as "how are you" is a question that can be interpreted as very personal and friendly. This fits well with the description of the series, where Ganni refers to the guests in the podcast as 'friends' rather than 'participants' or 'guests'. Consequently, this personifies the brand and thereby creates the connotation of Ganni having opinions and a soul, as if it is a person and not a brand. Despite the fact that Ditte and Nikolaj are the voices of the podcast, Ganni is the direct sender as the podcast is named after the brand and published on the brand's website. Therefore, Ganni becomes intertwined with both the hosts and the guests in the two podcast series and the people become some of the many faces of Ganni. Thus, the podcast personifies Ganni as a brand which contributes to the receiver's perception of Ganni being a 'friend' rather than "just a fashion brand".

Ganni has also published a book, titled "Gimme More" (Ganni n.d.b). Ganni does not provide a lot of information about the book, other than that the book is *"240 PAGES of crazy energy, bikes, Copenhagen, dresses, recycled coffee grinds, mad positivity, dancing on tables, t-shirts, smiles, #GANNIgirls and joy!"* (Ganni n.d.b). The website's page about the book contains very little information about the book, with the only text being two quotes from the Creative Director, Ditte Reffstrup, which state:

> *"UNEXPECTED, OFFBEAT AND HONEST—THAT'S HOW WE WORK. GANNI IS SPONTANEOUS AND CONFIDENT. WE WANT TO OPEN UP AND INVITE EVERYONE INTO THE CONVERSATION. WE BELIEVE IN BEING HONEST, NOT PERFECT"* (Ganni n.d.b)

and

> *"GANNI GIRLS MARCH TO THE BEAT OF THEIR OWN DRUM. IT'S NOT ABOUT ONE UNIFORM, IDENTITY OR GENDER. IT'S ABOUT ALL THE PEOPLE WE MEET WHO INSPIRE US, THEIR KICK-ASS ENERGY AND WAY OF BEING. 'GANNI GIRLS' IS A STATE OF MIND, AN ATTITUDE*

*MORE THAN A WAY OF BEING. IT'S PLURAL FOR A REASON, EVERYONE IS WELCOME" (*Ganni n.d.b.).

Besides the text, there are some pictures and small video clips from the book and a cake with the text "Ganni Gimme More" written across (Appendix 1.2.6.3). The fact that Ganni does not provide more information than this, creates the signal that the book is a 'coffee table book', which is a book that is intended to be looked at rather than read, as it consists of a lot of pictures (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.a). Thus, we view the book as somewhat of a contrast to the number of initiatives Ganni does, as discussed above. Consequently, the book seems to not be in line with Ganni's focus on being responsible as we perceive that the sole purpose of the book is to be looked at. However, the book is in line with the brand's high level of inclusivity as well as the trending and contemporary content that Ganni creates across channels.

Moreover, the last type of content marketing that Ganni does is its rental and re-selling platform, namely "Ganni Repeat" (Ganni n.d.c). Ganni Repeat was created in 2019 as *"(...) a rental platform with the ambition to extend the life of Ganni pieces and to encourage our community to embrace new and re-loved Ganni."* (Ganni n.d.c). Today, in 2022, Ganni has added another dimension to the rental service, as it also includes a peer-to-peer marketplace where people can sell their own Ganni items and purchase new preloved items from other Ganni customers (Ganni n.d.c). Thus, the platform consists of three parts: 1) a part where customers can visit the physical re-selling store in Copenhagen and *"(...) trade in past purchases and shop previously loves by our community"*, 2) a part where the consumer can rent items from previous collections from Ganni and send them back to Ganni after using them for a short period and 3) a part where consumers can upload pictures of their Ganni-clothes and re-sell them. When using the re-selling function, consumers can choose between getting their payment in cash or in a Ganni gift card, where Ganni offers an extra 20% earning if they choose the gift card (Ganni n.d.c).

CHAPTER 6: METHODOLOGY

6.1 Methodological Approach

6.2 Data Collection

6.3 Description of Data

6.4 Method Analysis

6. Methodology

We now embark on the journey that is our methodology chapter. This sixth chapter of our thesis is made up of four subchapters: Methodological Approach, Data Collection, Description of Data and Method of Analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to account and argue for our methodological considerations so that you, the reader of this thesis, will learn what thoughts and reasonings that form the basis of our approach to conducting our research.

The first subchapter includes an account of the basic methodological approach to our research. This includes a brief account of the concept of case studies and how conducting one will impact our research. The second subchapter concerns our data collection and also contains four underlying subchapters, where we will discuss our approach to data collection, the concept of research interviews, how we have designed our interview as well as how we have found the participants for our interviews.

In the third subchapter, we will describe our data foundation which is made up of our interviews. The final subchapter, 6.4, concerns our method of analysis. Here we will describe and discuss our method of transcribing the interviews and the method for analysing them. In addition, we will discuss and argue for the structure that we have chosen for our analysis.

6.1 Methodological Approach

The first steps of what has ended up being our thesis and the end result of four months of hard work, were taken back in January 2022 when we began brainstorming ideas for our thesis. Throughout our Bachelor's Degree and the first semesters of our Master's Degree we have had to choose topics and problem statements that fitted into a sharply defined frame for what that specific semester's project had to revolve around. Therefore, there was no doubt that we wanted to do research that originated from a genuine curiosity and wondering. Around that time, we had both seen posts on social media about how the consumption and pollution in the Western world - especially when it comes to the aftermath of the textile industry - continues to grow. This, in combination with the increased focus on responsibility and conscious living that we

described in the introduction, made us wonder what it is that fashion brands do to make consumers keep on buying their items.

6.1.1 Research Through Case Studies

As we are social constructivists, we are interested in uncovering a deeper knowledge about the phenomenon we study through the use of qualitative methods (Presskorn-Thygesen 2012, 29). As we still wish to come to a result that can create larger knowledge about the use of different types of marketing to create a positive brand image perception, we conduct our research as an inductive instrumental case study, meaning that we use Ganni as a case for the purpose of ultimately being able to identify a general tendency (Stake 1995, 3-4).

When conducting a case study, the aim is to analyse the context and processes that illuminates the phenomena being studied, with the context being especially important as we are interested in the behaviour in that particular situation (Hartley 2004, 323). For our study, even though our participants are exposed to Ganni's marketing efforts through our slideshow and not in a "natural setting", this still applies as we are interested in how our participants view the efforts when knowing what circumstances it occurs under. According to the American educational science scholar Robert E. Stake, choosing an unusual case for one's case study can be a favourable idea, as it helps illustrate matters we are more likely to overlook in typical cases (Stake 1995, 4). We deem Ganni an ideal case as its efforts within the different marketing categories share many similarities when it comes to wordings, visuals and overall message. It is thereby the format of the marketing initiatives that is the main difference across our categories. At the same time, Ganni is unusual in the sense that the brand makes a large effort across marketing formats and channels, while having succeeded in building quite the name for itself on the Danish market (Appendix 1; ecommerceDB n.d.). When conducting a case study with only one case, as we are doing in our research, the challenge can be to disentangle what is unique to this specific brand/situation from what is generally common to other brands/situations (Hartley 2004, 326). We will strive to accommodate this by attempting to uncover whether the interview participants' perception of Ganni's marketing initiatives are unique to the brand or if it is an indication of a general perception across brands.

Despite the fact that we are conducting qualitative research interviews in order to uncover what a small group of women find to be true about the different categories of marketing, we have also created a short (quantitative) questionnaire that our participants were asked to fill out prior to the interview. Exactly what questions the questionnaire contained, will be described in section 6.2.4, Finding Participants. The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain some fundamental knowledge about the participants, with hopes that this knowledge can be used to explicate some of their attitudes towards and perceptions of those of Ganni's marketing initiatives they are exposed to. The results from the questionnaire does thereby not take part in our data foundation as such, but rather functions as supportive knowledge about our participants. This is, however, in line with the concept of case studies, as it is usually conducted through the use of mixed methods (Hartley 2004, 324).

6.2 Data Collection

We will now move on to one of the pillars of our thesis: our data collection. We have divided this subchapter into four underlying subchapters, in hopes that it will allow for a structured and thorough account, argumentation and assessment of the methodic choices and deductions that we have made throughout the process of creating and conducting our field research.

The first of the four underlying subchapters concerns our overall approach to data collection. Here we will describe what we have done and why, in a general sense, to provide a fundamental argumentation for our choices. Next, in 6.2.2, we will describe the concept of using interviews for research including how one can design a research interview as well as account for some of the methodological and ethical issues one should be aware of. This is done for the purpose of discussing the theoretical incentive for doing what we have done in our data collection. In continuation thereof, we will move on to present our interview guide in which we will describe what, how and why we have designed our study in that particular way. As the last underlying subchapter in this subchapter, 6.2.4, we will address our method for finding and selecting participants for our interviews. It should be noted that we use the terms 'interview' and 'research interview' interchangeably with it referring to the latter. When and if we talk about interviews in a general sense, it will be specified in the given situation.

6.2.1 Our Approach to Data Collection

As described several times so far, this thesis seeks to uncover what type of marketing stimuli that contributes the most to creating a positive brand image perception. We study this through a case study, using the Danish fashion brand Ganni as the case, where we conduct research interviews with eight participants as we described and discussed in subchapter 6.1. This section will therefore revolve around the methodological and practical considerations concerning the actual collection of the data and not the arguments for the overall build of our research.

When we started working on our thesis and decided that we wished to identify where a person's perception of a brand improves the most, we quickly landed on interviews as they offer a more nuanced description of how and why the participants perceive the marketing initiatives the way they do, than e.g. a questionnaire would (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 221). In a questionnaire the participants would either be asked to choose their answers on predefined scales or options or to write their thoughts in text fields. Another reason for choosing an interview is that the participants do not have the possibility of modifying their answers as they could potentially do in a written dialogue or questionnaire. Simultaneously, interviews allow for longer and more in-depth answers, while we - as interviewers - have the opportunity to ask elaborating questions.

The interviews are built up in six "sequences" that reflect the six categories that Ganni's marketing initiatives are divided into. Each sequence consists of a presentation of the selected stimuli that we wish to show the participants, followed by a scale that we ask the participants to place themselves on. Thereafter, we begin asking questions based on the ones created in our interview designing process and featured in our interview guide, both of which will be discussed in 6.2.3. When the participant has answered the questions deemed fitting to the situation, the sequence is finished and another begins. The presentations are to be found in appendix 2.

As qualitative data are not measurable in the same sense as quantitative, a challenge presents itself when it comes to the measurement of their positive perception and in the comparison of how it improves or deteriorates. To make our data a bit more tangible we have utilised a Likert scale type of visual representation that the participants can use to point out what their current

perception of Ganni's brand image is. A Likert scale is a point scale typically consisting of five or seven possible answers, allowing a person to rate how much they agree with or how they feel about a statement (McLeod 2019). For our scale we included nine different points, ranging from very negative to very positive. Our scale can be seen here:
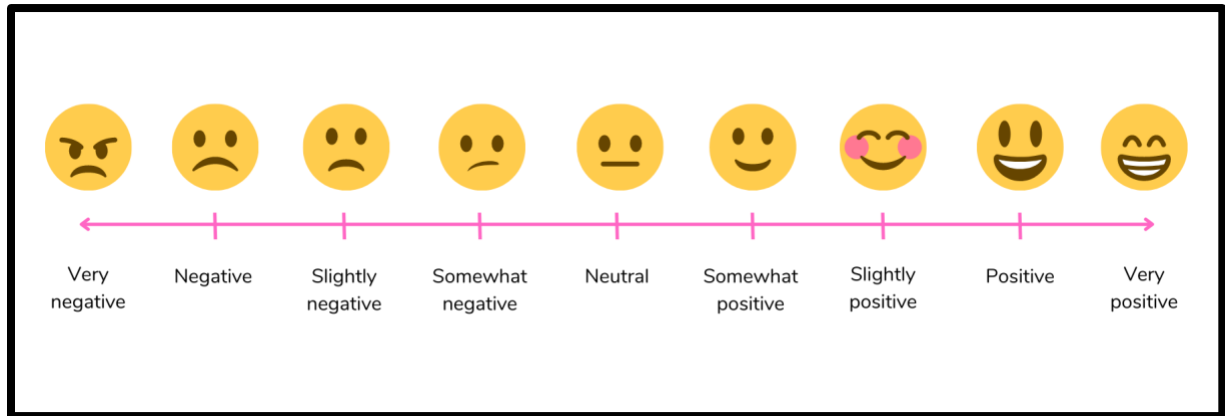

Figure 3: Our Likert scale

The reason why our Likert scale contains nine points is to offer our participants a larger selection of potential labels for their perceptions, thereby providing them with more options to identify their current perception relative to their perception in the previous categories. This makes it easier for the participants to differentiate between their current perception from their perception in the other categories. At the same time, we chose an uneven number of points as we wanted there to be a neutral point that was truly neutral and in the middle. We chose this solution of incorporating a Likert scale into our qualitative research interviews as we found it necessary to have a tool to compare how the perception of the participants evolve and how they perceive Ganni compared to each other. At the same time, the scale makes it easier for the participants to evaluate how the stimuli they have just seen make them perceive Ganni. The purpose of the scale is also to get the conversation started, before asking the questions that we have prepared in our interview guide.

A factor in our research that should be addressed is the fact that the participants' perception of Ganni's marketing initiatives are always seen in relation to the stimuli they have already been exposed to in the previous categories. The perception is thereby never "resat" as it is simply not possible for them to view the marketing initiatives in an isolated way, where the initiatives

shown previously are forgotten. That is also another reason for utilising the Likert scale as it will help us identify where there is largest deviation in the perception of Ganni's brand image.

Although physical face-to-face interviews allow for the creation of a more relaxed atmosphere and offer the extra dimension of being able to see the interviewee's nonverbal communication, we have chosen to conduct all our interviews online (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009; Daymon & Holloway 2011). All our interviews have taken place online using the video conference program Zoom. A major reason for conducting the interviews online is the large physical distance between us and the participants, who are living in the UK. All interviews were recorded live and subsequently transcribed. The transcription process will be discussed in section 6.4.1. Prior to conducting the interviews, all participants have received and signed statements of consent in which we declare that their data have been handled in accordance with GDPR.

6.2.2 Conducting Interviews

Throughout time, one of the best ways of getting to know people and their inner thoughts, attitudes and motivations has always been through conversation. Even though there is always a possibility for people to lie or withhold information, the insights in their mind that can be collected through conversation are much larger than what can be deduced through observations. That is why we perceive qualitative research interviews as being an excellent method for gaining an understanding of human behaviour.

In the process of designing and conducting our interviews, we take our starting point in the work of Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann. Kvale and Brinkmann differ themselves from other scholars in the field of interview research by stating that they perceive interviews as a social practice, while emphasising the ethical aspects of interviews and the embedment of interview research in a sociopolitical context (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 16). This means that focus is not only on what is being said by the interviewer or interviewee, but also on the interplay happening between them. The duo defines research interviews as a professional conversation - or a literal "inter view" - where the interviewer and the interviewee share viewpoints and subsequently in unison produce knowledge through this interaction (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 18). This is in accordance with our epistemological stance, which is that

knowledge is subjective and socially constructed, as described in section 2.1.3. Qualitative research interviews are thereby used to decode the world based on the interviewees' perception of reality, which is also what we wish to do in our quest of determining what type of marketing that contributes the most to creating a positive brand image perception.

The interviews we conduct in our research are of the semi-structured type. Semi-structured interviews are interviews that are conducted on the basis of an *interview guide* which contains sets of questions that are asked in an order that fits the given situation in each individual interview (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 225-226). This means that no interviewee is asked the exact same questions in the same order, but rather that each question is picked for the situation at hand. Using semi-structured interviews and an interview guide results in interviews that contain similar types of data, but still allow for us to adapt the interview to the individual participant, ultimately letting us conduct a thorough interview that uncovers the perception of the participant in question (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 225-226). Our interview design will be accounted for in section 6.2.3.

6.2.2.1 Methodological and Ethical Issues in Interviews

Although conducting a research interview may seem easy and like something anyone can do, conducting a great and useful research interview requires skill and preparation. Conducting interviews without the necessary preparation can result in conversations that do not contain the right questions, asked in the right way, leaving the researcher with data that can only help reproduce existing knowledge and opinions (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 31). For that reason, a research interview should always be the result of careful methodological considerations. When thoroughly prepared, interviews can be used to create new and groundbreaking research as the new insights can inspire new interpretations of well-known phenomena (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 31).

As with case studies, which we discussed in subchapter 6.1, there are not really any standard rules or conventions for qualitative research interviews. Since interviews are based on human interaction and thereby cannot be meticulously planned out prior to the actual interview, much of the methodic choices must be made during the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 32). We as researchers must therefore be aware of the methodic choices available to us, in any given

situation (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 32). We will discuss the methodological options further in section 6.2.2.3.

The ethical issues when basing your research on interviews are also something to consider. One of the main ethical issues is creating a situation where there is a fine balance between the interviewer's quest for knowledge and her ethical respect for the interviewee's integrity, thereby creating a scene where the interviewee feels safe and free to talk about her inner thoughts (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 32). The interviewer's ability to create a good social relation with the interviewee is fundamental for the knowledge that can be derived from the research.

6.2.2.2 The Role of the Interviewer

When conducting a research interview, there will always be an interviewer and at least one interviewee. Despite interviews having the character of a conversation, interviews contain a different power dynamic than most conversations, as the power structure is more asymmetrical since the researcher controls and defines the situation (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 19). Being aware of this asymmetrical power structure is crucial for the outcome of our interviews. Should we not be able to appear neutral and avoid asking leading questions, it will - knowingly or not - be likely to affect the participants' answers. We thereby have the ability to guide the conversation in the wanted direction, based on the questions we ask and the way we ask them.

During a research interview, you never know beforehand what your interviewee is going to say in response to your questions and what direction the conversation might go in. For that reason, you can never prepare a complete manuscript for the interview (at least when it is of the semi-structured kind) prior to it taking place, since the questions one asks should be adapted to the given situation. As it is our role as interviewers to ask the questions and guide the conversation, it is important to have predefined ideas for questions, so we are prepared for whatever situation the last answer puts us in. This type of structured ideas for questions are referred to as an interview guide (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 151). The questions in the interview guide should be created for the purpose of ultimately being able to answer one's research question(s).

6.2.2.3 Creating Research Through Interviews

When qualitative research interviews are used as a tool to research and create new knowledge, there are very few fixed boundaries when it comes to the methodic options. As accounted for in 6.2.2.1, there is no one right way of conducting a research interview - at least not a semi-structured one - as the questions should always be adapted to the situation at hand. Generally speaking, regardless of the type of question being asked in the situation, the questions asked by the interviewer should be kept short and precise (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 154).

Kvale and Brinkmann differ between nine different types of interview questions; introductory questions, follow-up questions, probing questions, specifying questions, direct questions, indirect questions, structuring questions, interpreting questions and silence (2009, 155-157). *Introductory questions* are the questions we ask as opening questions, when trying to start a conversation or introduce a new topic. An example of an introductory question could be "do you recall a situation where an advertisement convinced you to make a purchase?". *Follow-up questions* are questions that are asked in order to make the interviewee elaborate their answer. However, follow-up questions can also be a nod, "hmm" or a short pause, that might incite the person to continue their flow of speech. *Probing questions* are a type of investigative questions that can be used to get the interviewee to say more, whereafter the interviewer probes the answers they get in turn. An example of a probing question could be: "can you tell me more about that?". *Specifying questions* are questions asked when a deeper response is wanted, and an example could be: "what do you think it was that made such an impact on you?". *Direct questions* are questions in which the interviewer directly introduces topics and new dimensions. Such questions are most suitable for the last part of an interview as it might impact interviewee's perceptions and attitudes. *Indirect questions* can be used to identify if the interviewee might have attitudes they might not want to admit to having, by allowing them to project their feelings onto someone else. An example could be: "why do you think some people buy clothes that are out of their budget?". Such questions will, however, require further questions to be able to interpret the answer. *Structuring questions* are questions or statements meant to change the focus of the conversation, e.g. if it gets off topic. *Interpretive questions* are questions in which the interviewer interprets the interviewees response by rephrasing it into a question, e.g: "so what you mean is that [...]?" or "is it correct that you care a lot about how others perceive you because you were bullied growing up?". The last type, *Silence*, is naturally

not a type of question, but rather a strategy that can be used to further the interview. By allowing pauses in the conversation, the interviewee gets time to think about what they have just said and potentially elaborate on their own answer (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 155-157).

According to Kvale and Brinkmann, the better prepared one is for conducting the interview, the higher will the quality of the produced data be (2009, 119). Simultaneously, the subsequent processing of the data will become easier. The duo therefore argue that a well-conducted research interview is constituted by seven phases, ranging from the introductory stages *thematising* and *designing*, over the middle stages *interview* and *transcription*, to the final stages *analysis*, *verification* and *reporting* (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 122-123). This tripartition of the seven stages is the same subdivision we have used when addressing the different stages in this thesis.

The introductory stages, thematising and designing, are the stages we are working at in this subchapter, 6.2. These stages are where the research interview is conceptualised and designed. The most important task here is to consider the methodological choices and decisions that must be decided on before carrying out the interviews, including what to ask in what order and how to ask it (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 122). The middle stages, interview and transcribing, are described in subchapter 6.3 and 6.4. It is in these two stages that the gathering and structuring of data happens. In other words, this is where the planning and preparation happening in the introductory stages are carried out in practice, before ultimately being able to continue to the final stages (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 122). The final stages are analysis, verification and reporting. It is in these stages that phenomena are identified and knowledge created. Our methods in creating this knowledge have already been addressed in 6.1 and will be described further in 6.4. Exactly what this knowledge is will be determined through analysis, discussions and evaluations that will ultimately lead to a conclusion that will answer our problem statement (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 122-123).

6.2.3 Our Interview Design

We now move on to the presentation of our interview design and our interview guide, the last of which is the set of questions forming the basis of our interviews. As described in section 6.2.1, our interviews are made up of six sequences which all include a presentation of Ganni's

marketing initiatives in the given category, followed by the participants placing themselves on a Likert scale, before ultimately answering the questions that we have prepared beforehand. Within each sequence, the first question is always the following introductory question: "How is your perception of Ganni?".

The order of the sequences is not the same for all participants, as we strive to make sure that the order that the categories are presented in will not be a determiner as to how our results of the research will turn out. By this we mean that if we were to only have one order of presenting the sequences, our data would be subject to much uncertainty as we would not be able to determine if it was the exact order of categories that made the participants' perception change a noticeable amount or the actual marketing initiatives. Our hypothesis is that some factors, e.g. the price of the garments which is visible on the images featured under the category *website*, will have a larger impact on the participants' perceptions than others. To test this hypothesis, we use two different orders in the presentation that our participants are exposed to, both of which can be found in appendix 2. What order what participant has been exposed to, will be described in subchapter 6.3.

Our interview guide consists of five primary questions and eleven potential follow-up questions. The full table of questions can be found in appendix 3. As accounted for in section 6.2.2.3, we are working with nine different types of questions, all of which (except silence, for obvious reasons) are represented in our interview guide. As our interview guide was created prior to conducting the interviews, our interviews contain questions that are not included in the interview guide. That is the case as the interview situation often calls for questions that are not possible to plan ahead of the interview taking place, as the question arises in the situation based on what the interviewee says (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 32). When those situations and the need for questions created on spot occured, we strived to ask questions that were not leading in any way, in the attempt to avoid influencing the participant's answer.

6.2.4 Finding Participants

As we mentioned in subchapter 1.1, we have chosen to focus on the group of people we consider to be within Ganni's target group, namely women aged 25 to 40. As our study revolves around the British market, the last criteria is naturally that they must be British. In the attempt

to find participants for our interviews, we began by writing a text, and later on created a flyer, in which we wrote that we were searching for interview participants to contribute to the latest research within the field of marketing. We were cautious not to reveal too much about the interviews and our research as we did not want to allow the participant to create a preconceived idea of what the interview entailed. This included not disclosing that we utilise Ganni as a case. We began our search by posting the aforementioned text on our personal LinkedIn and Facebook accounts.

Finding participants did, however, turn out to be more difficult than we had anticipated. After spending weeks trying to find participants through our personal networks on LinkedIn and Facebook, we eventually joined several groups on Facebook (such as "Jobs UK" and "Gals who graduate") and contacted our former lecturers to find out whether they had some contacts in the UK, whom they would put us in contact with. Finally, we found our eight participants through a combination of personal network, posts in Facebook groups and through one of our former lecturers. Due to the difficulty of finding participants, we ended up being less critical about the diversity within the groups of participants. That is to say that we are aware that all our participants are under 30 and many of them have a limited monthly spending on clothing. We do, however, still believe that their answers will help create new knowledge about what the younger consumers (and the younger end of Ganni's target audience) are looking for in terms of branding.

After finding the participants, we created and sent out the questionnaire which we also addressed in section 6.1. As we described then, the purpose of sending out the questionnaire was to obtain a little knowledge about the participants that could potentially be used to explicate some of their attitudes and perceptions that they reveal in the interviews. The questions in the questionnaire included name, age, city of residence, occupation, industry/field of work, monthly income, monthly spending on fashion items, which social media they use as well as what factors that are most important when buying fashion items. For the first three questions as well as question number five, the participant was to write the answer herself. For the remaining questions, there were several predefined answers of the multiple-choice type. All questions were mandatory to answer, but for monthly income and monthly spending there was an option to answer "I do not wish to respond".

When creating the questionnaire, we were very cautious of avoiding biases, both our own and those of the participants. By this we mean that we were aware not to create questions that gave too strong an indication of what the interview would entail, which could potentially mean that the participant would form a preconceived idea about what the purpose of the interview was, causing them to (unknowingly) manipulate their answers in the actual interview. In the same way, we made sure that we did not ask questions that would allow us to create a detailed idea of who the individual participant is as a person, in order to avoid us attributing them characteristics that could potentially affect the questions we were to ask them.

6.3 Description of Data

In this subchapter we will provide brief descriptions of the data we have collected through our interviews. The description of our data will be on a quite explanatory level as the interviews make up the data foundation for our analysis in chapter 7.

All of our eight interviews were conducted on the basis of our interview guide which we described in 6.2.3. They all took place on the video conference service called Zoom, at a time and date that suited the individual participant. Prior to the interviews taking place, all participants had filled out the questionnaire we described in section 6.1 and 6.2.4, and signed a statement of consent allowing us to handle their personal data and record the interview. When we conducted each interview, we always started off by presenting ourselves with a bit of personal information (such as our ages, occupation and hobbies) in order to establish an informal setting. This was done for the purpose of getting the interview participant to be at ease and feel comfortable about telling us what she thought of a given category. After describing ourselves and the premise of the interview, the recording began and we began screen-sharing to show our presentation. For all eight interviews, we had the same distribution of roles, where Mathilde acted as the interviewer and Ellen was in charge of the technical aspects, such as controlling the slideshow and recording the Zoom meeting. We recorded the interviews in order to be able to transcribe them, for the ultimate purpose of analysing them. Additionally, recording the interviews allowed us to be more present in the conversation, as we did not need to take notes during the interviews.

6.3.1 Interview 1 With Participant NH

Our initial interview was conducted on Wednesday 13 April 2022 at 12:30 UK time. The interview with NH lasted for approximately 25 minutes and she was exposed to slideshow version 1, meaning that she was exposed to *website* as the first category. The transcript of the interview with NH can be found in appendix 4.1.

NH is 28 years old and lives in London. She is working as an architect and has a monthly income of £2500-£3000. According to NH, she spends less than £100 a month on fashion items and as far as social media platforms go she is active on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. When it comes to buying fashion items, the most important factors are price, quality, design of the item and sustainability/ethical production.

6.3.2 Interview 2 With Participant PL

The second interview we did was conducted on Wednesday 13 April at 14:00 UK time. Participant PL was exposed to the first version of the slideshow and the interview lasted for 21 minutes. The transcript of the interview with PL can be found in appendix 4.2.

PL is 27 years of age and lives in Manchester. She is a wage-earner, working in the field of education. Her monthly income is somewhere in the interval £1000-£1500. Her monthly spending on fashion items vary between £100 and £200, and she uses Instagram and TikTok. When buying fashion items, she highlights price and design of the items as being the most important factors.

6.3.3 Interview 3 With Participant HN

The interview with HN was also conducted on Wednesday 13 April at 15:30 UK time. Due to a bad reception, we had a technical glitch which resulted in HN finding a better spot at the local library where she joined the call from. She was also exposed to version 1 of the slideshow and the duration of the interview was about 26 minutes. The transcript of the interview with HN can be found in appendix 4.3.

HN is 26 years old and lives in London. She studies to be a lawyer, while also working part-time. Her monthly income is below £1000, with a monthly spending on fashion items being below £100. When it comes to social media platforms, she uses Instagram, Facebook, Youtube and LinkedIn. The most important factors when buying fashion items are price and design of the item.

6.3.4 Interview 4 With Participant JL

On Thursday 14 April at 16:00 UK time, we spoke with JL. The interview lasted for 26 minutes and she was the last of our eight participants, who was exposed to the first version of the slideshow, i.e. the one where the *website* category was placed first. The transcript of the interview with JL can be found in appendix 4.4.

JL is aged 25 and living in Cheshire County, UK. She is a wage-earner working within health and social care. Her monthly income is £1000-£1500 and she assesses that she spends less than £100 on fashion items per month. The most important factors for her when buying fashion items are price, comfort and design of the item. When it comes to social media platforms, she uses Instagram, Facebook, Youtube, Snapchat, TikTok and Tumblr.

6.3.5 Interview 5 With Participant JW

The interview with JW took place on Tuesday 26 April at 18:00 UK time. She was the first of our participants to be exposed to slideshow version 2, where the *website* category was placed last in the slideshow. The interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The transcript of the interview with JW can be found in appendix 4.5.

JW is 26 years old and lives in London. She studies law while also working part-time. Her monthly income is £1500-£2000 and she spends less than £100 a month on fashion items. Regarding social media platforms, she uses Instagram, LinkedIn and BeReal. When buying fashion items, the most important factors for her are price, quality, design of the item and sustainability/ethical production.

6.3.6 Interview 6 With Participant EH

We interviewed EH on Wednesday 27 April at 18:00 UK time. She was exposed to the second version of the slideshow and the interview lasted for about 21 minutes. The transcript of the interview with EH can be found in appendix 4.6.

EH is 27 and living in London. She is full-time employed in a charity organisation, where her monthly income is £1500-£2000. When it comes to spending on fashion items, she claims to spend less than £100 a month. She uses the social media platforms Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn, and when she is buying fashion items she considers price, comfort, quality and design of the item to be the most important factors.

6.3.7 Interview 7 With Participant IS

The interview with participant IS was conducted on Wednesday 27 April 19:00 UK time. We talked to IS for around 22 minutes and showed her the second version of our slideshow. The transcript of the interview with IS can be found in appendix 4.7.

IS is 26 years old and lives in London. She is studying to be a teacher and has a monthly income below £1000. She spends less than £100 a month on fashion items, and she considers the design of the item to be the most important factor when purchasing fashion items. She is active on several social media platforms including Instagram, Facebook, Youtube, TikTok and BeReal.

6.3.8 Interview 8 With Participant GA

Our last interview, which was with participant GA, took place on Friday 29 April at 14:00 UK time. GA was exposed to slideshow version 2 and the interview lasted for approximately 20 minutes. The transcript of the interview with GA can be found in appendix 4.8.

GA is 27 years old and lives in London. She is a wage earner, working in the charity sector. Her monthly income is £1500-£2000 and her monthly spending on fashion items is less than £100. With regards to social media platforms, she is active on Instagram, Youtube and

LinkedIn. When buying fashion items, she emphasises price and quality as being the most important factors.

6.4 Method of Analysis

This final subchapter of chapter 6 concerns our method of analysis and contains three underlying subchapters. First, we have Method of Transcription where we will describe the transcription method we have used to transcribe our eight interviews. Second, you will find an account of thematic analysis, which is the method we are using in our analysis. Lastly, we will discuss the structure of our analysis and argue why we have chosen the specific structure that we have.

6.4.1 Method of Transcription

For the transcribing of the interviews that make up our data foundation, we have chosen the transcription style *verbatim*. Verbatim is a transcription style in which you write out the interview word-for-word, thereby including everything that is being said, including filler words, pauses, repetitions and grammatical errors (Loubere 2017; IndianScribes 2018). All our transcriptions can be found in appendix 4.

Our reason for choosing verbatim over other styles of transcription is that we believe that how things are said and the circumstances they are said in, matters at least as much as what words are used. As we are trying to uncover the perception of the participants through the combination of what they state their perception is based on a Likert scale and what their in-depth answers indicate that they think, things such as pauses, stutters and false starts can be critical when interpreting their statements.

6.4.2 Thematic Analysis

We have chosen to use the method *thematic analysis* as our analysis method for our qualitative data. According to Virginia Braun, a professor in New Zealand who specialises in the thematic analysis and gender studies, and Victoria Clarke, an associate professor in qualitative methods

and critical psychology in the UK, thematic analysis is a *"(...) method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set."* (Braun & Clarke 2012, 57). Moreover, Braun and Clarke state that thematic analysis *"(...) allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences."* (Braun & Clarke 2012, 57). Thus, the method enables us to identify what is common within the answers from the participants in the interviews. Moreover, using this specific method allows us to focus on what is relevant and important within our empirical material for our research question specifically. The major reason for choosing thematic analysis is that it is *"(...) a flexible method that allows the researcher to focus on the data in numerous different ways"* and because we as researchers can *"(...) legitimately focus on analyzing meaning across the entire data set, or (...) examine one particular aspect of a phenomenon in-depth"* (Braun & Clarke 2012, 58). The thematic analysis focuses on discovering the relevant themes within one's empirical data by coding and creating themes to analyse and consequently discuss the themes in relation to each other.

There are six steps within the thematic analysis, which Braun and Clarke have titled phases. Braun and Clarke (2012, 60-69) present the six following phases:

> *Phase 1: Familiarize Yourself With the Data*
> *Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes*
> *Phase 3: Searching for Themes*
> *Phase 4: Reviewing Potential Themes*
> *Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes*
> *Phase 6: Producing the Report*

While emphasising the flexibility within the thematic analysis, we will now elaborate on the six phases and discuss to what degree they apply to our analysis. The first phase within the thematic analysis is "Familiarize Yourself With the Data", as listed above, which is where we will immerse ourselves in our data (Braun & Clarke 2012, 60). We will do this by reading and re-reading our transcripts of the interviews thoroughly as well as viewing the video recordings of the interviews, where the last-mentioned will help us to recall the underlying emotions and the emotional setting for each interview. While doing this, we will focus on reading the answers from the interviews as data. Thus, reading data as data rather than merely as the meaning of the

words within the sentences on the paper, will allow us to notice aspects that are relevant to our research question (Braun & Clarke 2012, 60-61).

The second phase of the analytical method is "Generating Initial Codes" which is where the coding process begins. This phase focuses on creating the initial codes of the empirical data, which should include all the things that are potentially relevant to the research question (Braun & Clarke 2012, 62). Braun and Clarke emphasise the level of introduction of this stage of the analysis, which is why we will code a piece of data, even if we are unsure of its relevance at that given moment (Braun & Clarke 2012, 62). The goal for this phase is to code while also creating the right amount of codes, which there is no correct number of. However, with regards to Braun and Clarke, we will ensure that we have *"(...) enough codes to capture both the diversity, and the patterns, within the data, and codes should appear across more than one data item"* (Braun & Clarke 2012, 63). Because we are coding real-life data, we will make sure to revisit the material we coded in the beginning, both for the coding of the individual interviews but also for each interview in relation to the rest (Braun & Clarke 2012, 63).

The third phase of thematic analysis is called "Searching for Themes", and is where we move from codes to themes in our analysis (Braun & Clarke 2012, 63). In the field of thematic analysis, a theme is defined as something that *"(...) captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set"* (Braun & Clarke 2006, 82). To find the themes, we have to actively generate and create themes, which require that we make choices about turning the empirical data into the actual analysis (Braun & Clarke 2012, 63). Believing that the empirical data is a product of human interactions as well as the set of beliefs within the interview participants is in line with us being social constructivists. Therefore, we wish to set forth some criteria which we will use as a guideline rather than using them as rules we have to follow no matter what the data says. Thus, the themes will be created based on the broad topics and issues identified through the codes (Braun & Clarke 2012, 63). For this, it is important to include that Braun and Clarke state that we might have codes that do not fit within any of the themes, which could result in them being disregarded (Braun & Clarke 2012, 65). Here, it is important to remember that for qualitative research, our job is to analyse the data and consequently, only present the portion of the data that answers our research question (Braun & Clarke 2012, 65).

Thus, we will focus on the overall meaning rather than attempting to present everything that was said in the interviews.

Phase four is called "Reviewing Potential Themes" and includes reviewing the themes in relation to the coded data and the data set repeatedly (Braun & Clarke 2012, 65). The main focus in this phase is quality checking, done by deciding whether the theme fits in relation to the data, which we do by reviewing the themes based on questions such as *"is this a theme (it could be just a code)?"*, *"If it is a theme, what is the quality of this theme (does it tell me something useful about the data set and my research question)?"* and *"Are the data too diverse and wide ranging (does the theme lack coherence?"* (Braun & Clarke 2012, 65). Consequently, evaluating the themes with these questions will result in us having a coherent set of themes that capture the most important and relevant elements of our data, as well as the overall tone of the interviews (Braun & Clarke 2012, 65-66).

Phase five of the thematic analysis is titled "Defining and Naming Themes", and starts by stating that a good thematic analysis should ideally have themes with a clear and singular focus, should be related to the other themes without them repeating or overlapping and directly address our research question (Braun & Clarke 2012, 66). Braun and Clarke state that this phase and the following are often blurry, as they both focus on the actual writing of the analysis, which can be difficult to differentiate between (Braun & Clarke 2012, 67). Nonetheless, the next task within the fifth phase is choosing which extracts from our interviews to include in the analysis and hereby which theme and story the extract contributes to (Braun & Clarke 2012, 67). To do this, we need to articulate both what is interesting about the extracts and why that is, as the data will not speak for itself (Braun & Clarke 2012, 67). In thematic analysis, there are two ways to ensure this interpretation of data; either by including a separate section with the discussion of literature and relation to our research question or by incorporating this discussion into our actual analysis (Braun & Clarke 2012, 67). Braun and Clarke present two broad styles of thematic analysis: *"(..) (a) descriptive, in which data tend to be used in illustrative ways, and (b) conceptual and interpretive, in which extracts tend to be analysed in more detail, often for the latent meanings on which they draw."* (Braun & Clarke 2012, 67). It is possible to use each style of thematic analysis on its own but also in combination with each other, which is the case for our analysis, as we wish to interpret the extracts from our data rather than just reproducing the words (Braun & Clarke 2012, 67). The second and last aspect of the

fifth phase concerns the naming of the themes in our analysis (Braun & Clarke 2012, 67). In our thematic analysis, the names of the themes should be concise, informative and catchy, while indicating the focus of the theme, in order to be deemed a good name (Braun & Clarke 2012, 69). Consequently, we will include direct quotes from the data when naming the themes, where it fits well, as it will increase the vivid and immediate sense of the content of the theme while keeping the tone and language of our participants (Braun & Clarke 2012, 69).

The last phase within the thematic analysis, phase six, is titled "Producing the Report", and focuses on the production of our thesis. However, it is not just the actual writing in itself, as our writing process for the analysis began before the thematic analysis, with writing memos and sketches to the more formal process with writing the analysis and the report (Braun & Clarke 2012, 69). However, in terms of writing the analysis and this phase of thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke state the importance of the order we present our themes, as *"(...) themes should connect logically and meaningfully and, if relevant, should build on previous themes to tell a coherent story about the data."* (Braun & Clarke 2012, 69). Thus, we have created a natural starting point in terms of our first theme within each of the analyses which is then followed by the next logical step in terms of how the themes connect.

6.4.3 Structure of Analysis

In this final subchapter of our methodology chapter, we account and argue for the structure of our analysis. As described previously, our data foundation is made up of eight interviews which we analyse using the method described above, thematic analysis.

Our analysis is divided into eight subchapters corresponding to each of the interviews, arranged in the order that the interviews were conducted. Each of the analyses is divided into underlying subchapters based on the themes we have identified in each of the interviews. Therefore, the number of underlying subchapters vary depending on the number of themes found in the individual interview. Following the analysis of each of the themes in an interview, we summarise our findings in a recap of the analysis of the interview, which takes place in the final underlying subchapter in each of the subchapters.

For each of the interviews we began by coding the answers of the participant (after transcribing, naturally), thereby capturing the essence of the statements uttered by the participants. Subsequently, the codes have been grouped in themes whose names have been found based on either direct quotes from the participant or found through it functioning as a common denominator for the codes within the theme. It is through this identification of the themes and the underlying codes that the actual analytical work happens, and the analysis chapter is thereby more about explicating and arguing for how the individual codes manifest themselves and how they in unison make up the different themes. When talking about the codes and themes they will be accentuated in *italic* and **bold**, respectively. In addition, we should mention that the colours we have used to highlight where the codes occur on the screenshots featured in our analysis, have no other function than clarifying that it is that particular fragment of text we are discussing. Therefore, you will encounter situations where numerous colours are used on the same screenshot. This is thereby done for the purpose of user-friendliness, as it makes it easier to distinguish between the codes.

CHAPTER 7: ANALYSIS

7.1 Participant NH

7.2 Participant PL

7.3 Participant HN

7.4 Participant JL

7.5 Participant JW

7.6 Participant EH

7.7 Participant IS

7.8 Participant GA

7. Analysis

In this chapter, our analysis takes place. As described in the previous subchapter, 6.4 Structure of Analysis, our analysis is divided into eight subchapters: one for each participant and interview. In each of the eight subchapters, we separate the analysis of that particular interview into underlying subchapters based on the number of themes identified from that interview. This means that each subchapter consists of a different number of underlying subchapters, as it is based on the number of themes found in the individual interviews.

In each underlying subchapter, which are all named after the themes they revolve around, we describe and argue for the codes we have identified through analysis of the textual elements that form the basis of the codes. Ultimately, each subchapter is concluded with a recap of the findings from the analysis of that interview. The findings will be discussed in the subsequent discussion chapter in chapter 8.

7.1 Participant NH

Based on our initial coding of the interview with NH, we have identified five themes: **not worth the price**, **how do you actually make sneakers from grapes?**, **impressed by sustainability efforts**, **lack of interest** and **it didn't really feel to be in line with the brand**, which will be analysed in that order.

7.1.1 Not Worth the Price

The first theme we have identified in the interview with NH is **not worth the price**. This theme is found through the identification of three codes: *higher prices than she is used to*, *items appear similar to those from other brands* and *price does not outweigh design of the items*. This theme only appears in the first category that NH is exposed to, namely *website*.

The first code, *higher prices than she is used to*, is found in the initial reply to our very first question in the interview with NH. After being exposed to screen dumps from Ganni's website (Appendix 2.1), she is asked about her perception of Ganni, to which she replies: *"The website*

looks good, but the items are a bit pricey… for what I would usually buy, so I'd say it's a… [Looking at scale] slightly positive" (Appendix 5.1.1). As she states in the quote, the items displayed on the product page are at a higher price level than what she would normally purchase, as indicated in the underlined sentence fragments. However, this attitude does not seem to have an initial negative impact on her perception of Ganni, as she states that her perception is slightly positive which translates to a 7 out of 9 on our Likert scale (see figure 3 in section 6.2.1). This indicates that the high prices, although making it less likely for her to purchase an item from Ganni, contributes to a positive perception of the brand as many consumers perceive a high price point to insinuate high product quality and value (Lee & Chen-Yu 2018).

The second code, *items appear similar to those from other brands*, is based on NH's answer to our follow-up question to her initial reply. The code is derived from the sentence highlighted in pink:

> M: Yeah. And, eh, why do you think that is - is it only the price or the, the item… how they look?
>
> NH: Yeah, I think, I'm in the positive side because I do like how some of the items look and it does look playful as, as you were saying, and I could imagine myself in some of the clothing. Eh, when I first saw it, the way the items are displayed, it reminded me a bit of the ASOS brand, eh, and even some of the styles, I feel I've seen some of them on ASOS as well, obviously from different brands, but the same, uhm, overall look. So yeah, I feel like I could, I could use some of the clothes, I could see myself in them, but the price tag makes me go slightly to the.. not 10, but slightly less, yeah.

Figure 4: Screenshot from appendix 5.1.1

NH perceives Ganni's website to be similar to that of the British online multi-brand fashion store ASOS, which carries a wide variety of clothing and lifestyle items from numerous brands (ASOS 2022). Being one of the largest online fashion retailers in the UK, ASOS must be expected to be top of mind for consumers when thinking about a fashion webshop (Peters 2022). This could indicate that she names the first fashion webshop she could think of, as many

webshops list products in a somewhat similar way, due to the genre conventions of a webshop, as described in section 4.2.2. This is supported by the use of 'eh' and 'uhm', which indicates that she is unsure of how to articulate her perception of Ganni's products and website. However, as ASOS contains all types of brands - both when it comes to price and style of the clothing - it could also be that she has simply seen many similar styles on there, as fashion brands tend to create items that match the current trends.

The last of the three codes in this theme, *price does not outweigh design of the items*, appears in the same context as the code above and is highlighted in green in figure 4. Here, NH states that the price tag makes her perception "slightly less than 10", meaning that the price of the items contributes to her perception in a negative way. This might be the case as she has just compared the items to those that can be found on ASOS at a lower price. Having the items from ASOS on her mind, Ganni's products seem to be the unfavourable choice as she believes that the same design can be bought for a fraction of the price on ASOS. She does thereby not consider the design of the items as outweighing the price.

In sum, this theme consists of three codes all of which contribute to the notion that NH does not (at this point in time) perceive Ganni's products to be worth the price. However, as she starts off by saying that her perception of Ganni is slightly positive, it could mean that she becomes subject to the perceptual process *selective distortion*, which is - as accounted for in section 4.3.1 - when stimuli are perceived in a manner that fits one's preconceptions. We believe this to be the case, as NH seems to change course during her answer and focus more on the price of the items than on the design of the items and the website. We know from the questionnaire that NH spends less than £100 a month on fashion items, which is less than what one of the shown items from Ganni costs. This could indicate that she considers the price to have a pivotal impact on her perception, as she does not perceive the items as being worth the price, while her negative perception of the price could also be a result of a potential financial inability to purchase such items.

7.1.2 How Do You Actually Make Sneakers From Grapes?

The second theme is **how do you actually make sneakers from grapes?**, which consists of four codes: *intrigued by production method*, *wants to learn more about production method*,

still focused on innovative production method and *prefers educational podcasts over entertaining podcasts*. The name of the theme is found based on a question asked by NH during the interview.

The first of the codes we encounter in this theme is *intrigued by production method*. This code is evident in two statements, both of which are uttered in connection to the second category NH is exposed to, *direct marketing*. The first time it occurs is in the statement "*OK, it sounds interesting [laughter]*" which is a spontaneous response to a newsletter we showed her, in which Ganni wrote that the pair of sneakers in the picture is made from grapes (Appendix 2.1). The second place the code is evident is when NH is asked what stands out to her the most, after having said that she now has a positive perception of Ganni, and she answers: "*Ehm, I'm curious to hear that they're trying to innovate the way that their, uh, products are made and, eh, searching out new avenues (...)*" (Appendix 5.1.2). It is evident in her statements that NH is surprised that it is possible to create a pair of sneakers using grapes. At the same time, as she has a positive perception of Ganni after having seen the newsletters, it must be said to be perceived positively by her that Ganni is, as she describes it herself, searching out new avenues in terms of production methods.

The second code in this theme is found in the same category as the previous one, namely direct marketing, and is called *wants to learn about production method*. How this code appears is evident in the highlighted fragments of the statement below:

> NH: Uhm…Yeah, and I'd be curious to click into the newsletters and read more, I assume you could, eh, access articles or a further story to, to read more about these different, eh, newspieces. So I'd be curious to do that and learn more about what they're doing.

Figure 5: Screenshot from appendix 5.1.2

As NH directly states, she wishes to learn more about how you actually, in practice, transform grapes into material that can be used to make sneakers. It is also clear that if given the opportunity to click the newsletter herself, she would do so in the hopes of learning more about the production method.

Another code in this theme is *still focused on innovative production method*. This code occurs three times in the interview, in two different categories. The first two times it occurs is in the fourth category, *brand stories*, where we ask her to give an example of a brand that has made an impact on her after she has stated that Ganni's efforts with regards to brand stories has not:

M: OK, uhm, so can you think of an example of a, something online, a brand that made an impact on you, now that Ganni maybe doesn't?

NH: Uhm, I think, I-I really like the, the newsletters of Ganni, like when they were speaking about, uhm, like the, the grape, eh, sneakers and trousers and, and the other innovations and I would love that, that uhm those innovations would take up a bigger part of their social media story as well. And especially when you're showing me like the, the Vogue, eh, screenshot and the other article as well. I feel like they are starting to look more like the rest of the, the fashion crowd, which is great, but I feel like they're missing out on, on that other aspect of them, which I would love to see more of and I'd love to see like how do you actually make sneakers from grapes, I'd love to see a video of that, or a more detailed description or… yeah, just more about that… That would be, eh yeah, really interesting from my perspective.

Figure 6: Screenshot from appendix 5.1.4

As the name of this code insinuates and as it is evident from the first highlighted fragment of her answer in the figure above, NH continues to bring up the newsletter throughout the interview and not just in the category where she was exposed to it. This is a clear indicator that the content of the second newsletter, revolving around how Ganni has produced a pair of sneakers made from grapes, has made a large impact on her. Even in the situation above, when she has just stated that she does not find Ganni's efforts in brand stories to be persuasive, she highlights the production method again, despite the fact that our question proposes that she could name another brand. In the second highlight in figure 6, she also utters a desire to learn more about the production method, this time arguing for her request by stating that she believes that Ganni is "missing out on that other aspect". Based on her previous answers in the interview, this means that she considers much of the content to be like most other fashion brands in the sense that it is focusing on the visual aspects and that she is looking for more depth in the message that is communicated. The third and last time this code manifests itself is in the sixth

category, *content marketing*. Here the code is seen in relation to NH's reaction to Ganni's podcast series:

> own employees and collaborators it would be amazing, I think.
> Uhm, and I'm just getting stuck on the newsletter because I liked
> the newsletter most, but if they were to do a podcast about that
> content, that would be great, because I love podcasts, uhm, I think
> that's very interesting. Uhm, the coffee table book, I'm not so sure
> about because, eh, it feels like a fun book to have a look through

Figure 7: Screenshot from appendix 5.1.6

As the sentence fragment that is highlighted in pink says, NH continues to be impressed by and focus on the production method mentioned in the newsletter - so much so that she continues to talk about it, even after being exposed to all of the content we had prepared for the six categories.

In correlation to the last occurrence of the aforementioned code, another code also occurs, namely *prefers educational podcasts over entertaining podcasts*. When looking at the green highlight in figure 7, you will see that NH suggests that she would listen to podcasts about Ganni's responsibility efforts, such as the production method. As the last part of the green highlight reads, she thinks that it would be interesting whereby she suggests that she prefers podcasts that she perceives to be interesting and educational over those made for entertainment purposes.

As it is evident from the above analysis of this theme, NH is quite interested in how grapes can be used to make a pair of sneakers and wishes to learn more about that rather than simply being exposed to the images of the clothing. She believes that by incorporating this aspect of Ganni's business into the marketing efforts, it will add an extra dimension to the brand and improve her perception of the brand.

7.1.3 Impressed by Sustainability Efforts

In line with the previous theme, in which NH was infatuated by the production method of the sneakers, the next theme has to do with sustainability and is called **impressed by sustainability**

efforts. The theme is identified through four codes: *appreciates environmental awareness*, *values honesty*, *likes Ganni Repeat* and *Ganni Repeat indicates high product quality*.

The first code, *appreciates environmental awareness*, is seen in relation to when she was first exposed to the production method discussed in the previous theme. When asked what her perception is after seeing the second category, *direct marketing*, she answers the sentence highlighted in pink in figure 8. While she does not directly state that she appreciates when a brand is environmentally aware, it can be found between the lines as she states that she finds it interesting that Ganni is concerned with the environment. In addition, she describes her perception as positive, causing us to conclude that she appreciates environmental awareness from a brand.
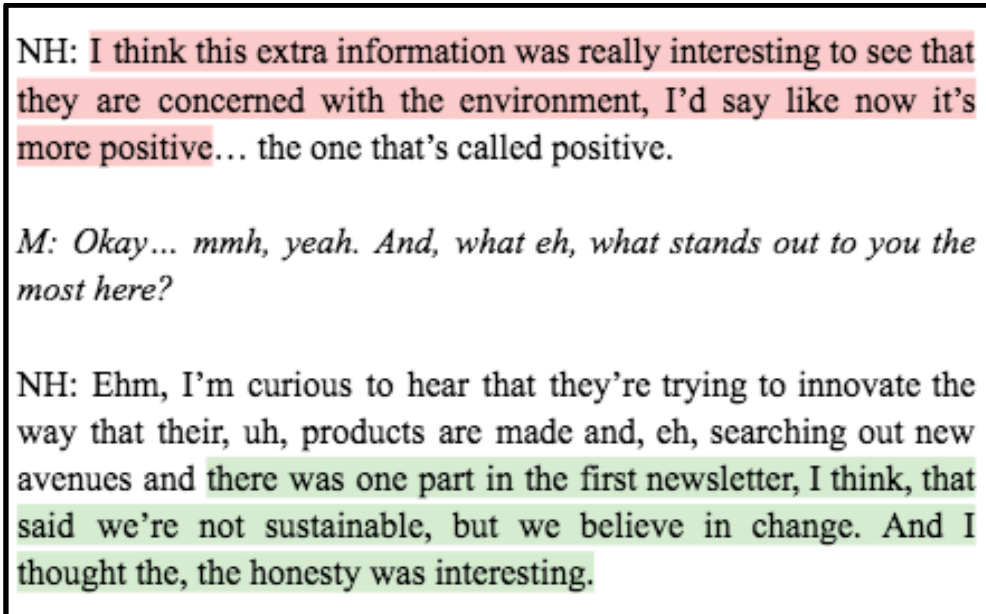

NH: I think this extra information was really interesting to see that they are concerned with the environment, I'd say like now it's more positive… the one that's called positive.

M: Okay… mmh, yeah. And, what eh, what stands out to you the most here?

NH: Ehm, I'm curious to hear that they're trying to innovate the way that their, uh, products are made and, eh, searching out new avenues and there was one part in the first newsletter, I think, that said we're not sustainable, but we believe in change. And I thought the, the honesty was interesting.

Figure 8: Screenshot from appendix 5.1.2

The second code, *values honesty*, is evident in the same category as the first one and is highlighted in green above. Once again, she does not directly state that she values honesty. She does, however, highlight how Ganni refers to itself as "not sustainable" but believers of change and describes this honesty as 'interesting'. Given that she has just stated (as described in the section above) that her perception is positive, 'interesting' must be perceived as having a positive meaning in this context.

Likes Ganni Repeat is the third code in this theme and occurs in the last category where NH is exposed to Ganni's *content marketing* efforts, to which NH responds: "*Uhm, I really like the, eh, sell back and rent function on the website, I think that's great. More brands should have that, definitely*" (Appendix 5.1.6). As it is evident in that sentence, NH thinks that Ganni's reselling and rental service Ganni Repeat is a great function, which more brands should make use of.

Speaking of Ganni Repeat, the last code in this theme is *Ganni Repeat indicates high product quality*, which is also evident in the last category where NH rounds off the interview by stating:

> NH: Ehm, I mean, like there is lots of podcasts out there that are similar, so, it's not really a need that they're fulfilling, like I could go elsewhere for my podcasts and I already do, so I'm good. But I think the rental service, it's really interesting and that you can sell your clothes back and also it's sort of communicates that they trust their own products to be long-lasting enough for them to retain their value and, eh, their quality so you can sell them back. I mean, if you buy from like really, uhm, like fast fashion, cheaper brands you can... They'll wear out before you can sell them anywhere, so... so I felt like that was the, the most, yeah, impactful service for me.

Figure 9: Screenshot from appendix 5.1.6

She once again uses the word 'interesting' to describe her attitude when she likes Ganni's marketing efforts, as seen from the first line of the green highlight in figure 9. It is, however, in the underlined sentence that the code is especially evident, as NH states that Ganni Repeat communicates that Ganni perceives its own products as being so long-lasting that they can retain their value long enough to both be worn and subsequently resold to someone else, who can also make use of the items.

Through this theme, it becomes evident that NH reacts positively to content that she perceives as reflecting sustainability. Thereby, we are able to conclude that responsible production and consumption are important topics for her.

7.1.4 Lack of Interest

The fourth theme we have found in the interview is **lack of interest**. This theme is derived from the following four codes: *not active in brand communities*, *not convinced a brand community exists*, *not looking for new podcasts* and *doesn't differentiate from other brands*. How this theme name was identified will be discussed at the end of the analysis of the theme.

The first two codes in this theme, *not active in brand communities* and *not convinced a brand community exists*, have been identified in the same answer:
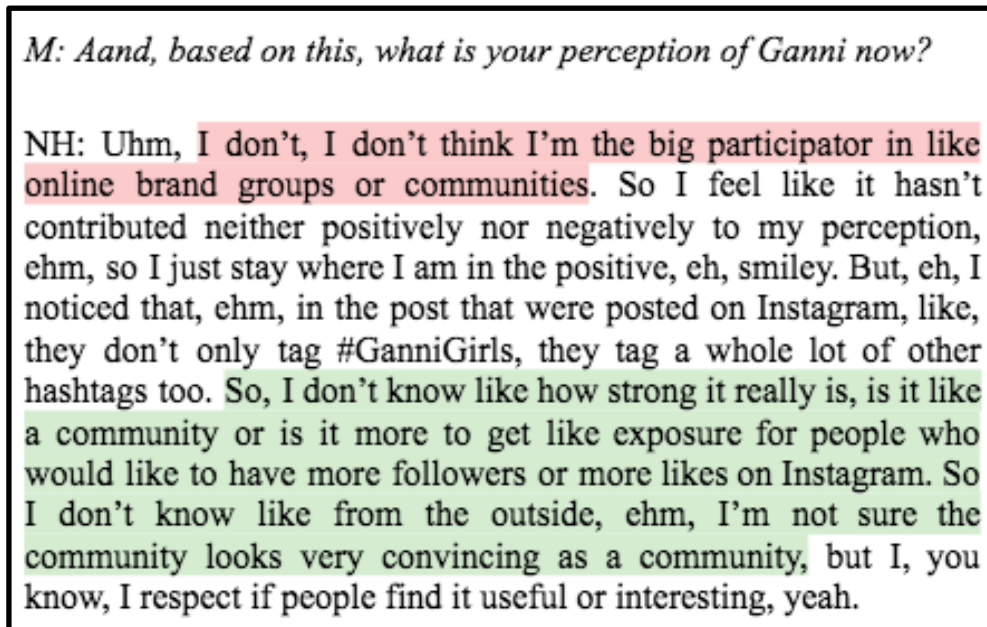
> *M: Aand, based on this, what is your perception of Ganni now?*
>
> NH: Uhm, I don't, I don't think I'm the big participator in like online brand groups or communities. So I feel like it hasn't contributed neither positively nor negatively to my perception, ehm, so I just stay where I am in the positive, eh, smiley. But, eh, I noticed that, ehm, in the post that were posted on Instagram, like, they don't only tag #GanniGirls, they tag a whole lot of other hashtags too. So, I don't know like how strong it really is, is it like a community or is it more to get like exposure for people who would like to have more followers or more likes on Instagram. So I don't know like from the outside, ehm, I'm not sure the community looks very convincing as a community, but I, you know, I respect if people find it useful or interesting, yeah.

Figure 10: Screenshot from appendix 5.1.3

The sentence highlighted in pink is where the first of the two codes is evident, as NH states that she is not active in online brand communities. Part of the reason for this could be that she perceives brand communities as something consumers partake in for exposure, as evident from the green highlight which is where the second code occurs. In the sentences highlighted in green, NH proposes that many of the people engaging in Ganni's brand community only do so for the purpose of getting likes or followers on Instagram. She substantiates this claim with the argument that the two posts we showed her, included several other hashtags than just #GanniGirls. This causes her to sow doubt about whether or not a brand community actually exists.

The third code is *doesn't differentiate from other brands*, which is found in the fourth category, *brand stories*, which we also discussed in the theme **how do you actually make sneakers from grapes?**. In the same situation where NH kept focusing on the innovative production method where Ganni uses grapes to make sneakers, NH also said: "*I feel like they are starting to look more like the rest of the, the fashion crowd*". This was said while referring to the article from Vogue. Based on what we have learnt about NH in the analysis of the other themes, being generic and "like the rest of the fashion crowd" is not a positive thing as she values uniqueness. This belief is supported by the fact that her perception of Ganni takes a dive from positive to somewhat positive on our Likert scale (see figure 3 in section 6.2.1).

The last code of this theme is *not looking for new podcasts*. The code appears in the last category that NH is exposed to, *content marketing*, where she after having learnt about the two podcasts that Ganni produces states the following:

> M: Yeah... And, eh, why do you think that is?
>
> NH: Ehm, I mean, like there is lots of podcasts out there that are similar, so, it's not really a need that they're fulfilling, like I could go elsewhere for my podcasts and I already do, so I'm good. But I think the rental service, it's really interesting and that you can sell

Figure 11: Screenshot from appendix 5.1.6

From this statement, it is clear that NH does not perceive Ganni's podcasts to be unique or interesting enough to fulfil a need that she is not already getting fulfilled by other podcasts.

As the analysis above has shown, when NH is exposed to marketing content that differs a lot from what she is used to or what she perceives as the right way to do things, she expresses a somewhat indifferent attitude towards the initiatives. This is what has caused us to name the theme **lack of interest**.

7.1.5 It Didn't Really Feel to Be in Line With the Brand

The last theme we have identified in the interview with NH is **it didn't really feel to be in line with the brand**, which is found on the basis of four codes: *critical about the hashtag*, *critical*

about the link between values and brand name, *no alignment between brand and marketing efforts* and *book is not aligned with sustainable thinking*. The theme is named after a direct quote from NH.

The first two codes, *critical about the hashtag* and *critical about the link between values and brand name*, occur in the same answer in the *brand stories* category:

> *M: Yeah, and based on this, what is your perception of Ganni now?*
>
> NH: Ehm [laughing] I think… I don't know, I didn't really like the hashtag and like the description of the hashtag, it sounds… it sounds positive when you were reading it out like the words and everything, but when I'm thinking about it, if it's so inclusive it's strange to focus so much on the brand, I would prefer if, if they focused on the values that they're promoting, but without so tightly linked it to just wearing Ganni. Like what if I'm a Ganni Girl, but I don't wear Ganni, can I still be a Ganni Girl and support the environment and be myself and be inclusive, or is it so much linked to the brand? And I know that they're promoting their clothing, because obviously and yet it's business but, yeah I don't know, I felt like maybe the hashtag could be slightly different, uhm, less linked. So I'll say that, I'll like to go down to the somewhat positive smiley now. So, sorry Ganni [laughing].

Figure 12: Screenshot from appendix 5.1.4

The code *critical about the hashtag* can be found from the pink highlight and throughout the answer, including in the green highlight, as she continues to be critical about the hashtag throughout her answer. The green highlight corresponds to the second code as NH is very critical about the link between what Ganni describes the hashtag as representing and the brand itself. In other words, NH does not believe that there should be a link between the values that Ganni tries to communicate through the hashtag and the Ganni name. This should be seen in light of the fact that NH does not believe that a Ganni community exists either, as discussed previously.

The third code, *no alignment between brand and marketing efforts*, occurs continuously throughout the fifth category, *physical advertising*. The first time it occurs is in relation to Ganni's placement of the #GanniGirls stickers in Paris, whose placement in what NH describes as rough surroundings does not match NH's perception of Ganni's brand image and clothing, as it is evident from figure 13 below.

> *M: Yeah. So what is your perception of Ganni now?*
>
> NH: Uhm, I was a bit confused to be honest, with the, the.. the types of, uhm, like the stickers for example, placed on random places with, next to the graffiti and like, the roughness of those materials, it didn't really feel to be in line with the brand and the clothing. And, also like, the type of, uhm, the types of styles I saw

Figure 13: Screenshot from appendix 5.1.5

NH also believes that there is a lack of alignment between Ganni's clothing and the placements of the billboards in grand places around the world:

> it didn't really feel to be in line with the brand and the clothing. And, also like, the type of, uhm, the types of styles I saw on the website, they seemed more, like uh, sort of casual, comfortable, still beautiful but, more on the comfortable, less uhm, less formal side of things, uhm, and I feel like the placements next to the iconic locations, I felt like it didn't really represent that, eh, sort of more informal vibe to me, so I was slightly confused about like why is, why is it presented in like the town hall square and next to the Eiffel Tower like, I felt it should be somewhere more, eh, more relaxed uhm yeah maybe next to a leisure center or maybe, eh, close to a park or something like that, where you feel the clothes are more, uhm I don't know, maybe more appropriate for the setting. So, it didn't really make a great impact on me, not

Figure 14: Screenshot from appendix 5.1.5

Since NH perceived Ganni's clothing as being of the leisurewear type, she thinks the billboards should be placed in more informal places such as near a park or outside a leisure centre. This notion is enforced in her answer to our follow-up question where she states that the clothing

and the type of personality described in the description of #GanniGirls do not match the locations of the billboards, as the locations are too impersonal for a brand that values staying true to yourself. She also states that she does not consider the placement to match "*the individualistic personal experience of the clothes*", as seen in figure 15:

Figure 15: Screenshot from appendix 5.1.5

However, as the green highlight shows, NH is very impacted by where she would wear the clothes and seems to believe that the placement of the billboards should match these places.

The last code, *book is not aligned with sustainable thinking*, is evident in the following quote: "*it doesn't feel like a book you're going to use a lot or read multiple times, so somehow it feels slightly wasteful, and not very in line with the sustainable thinking*" (Appendix 5.1.6). As it is evident from the quote, NH believes that the book is wasteful and not in line with Ganni's sustainable thinking. However, as she has pointed out early on as discussed in 7.1.3, Ganni actually does not describe itself as sustainable but rather responsible.

As the name of the theme indicates and the analysis of the codes within it has shown, NH does not perceive much of Ganni's content to be in line with how she perceives the brand to be. This indicates that her perceptual processes are generally much characterised by *selective retention*,

as she chooses to only "store" stimuli that match her existing values and beliefs and reject the stimuli that do not.

7.1.6 Recap of Analysis

During the course of the interview with NH, her perception of Ganni has varied between somewhat positive and positive on our Likert scale, corresponding to a six and eight out of nine, respectively. This means that she has remained on the positive side of neutral throughout the interview. The development in her perception can be seen in the graph below:
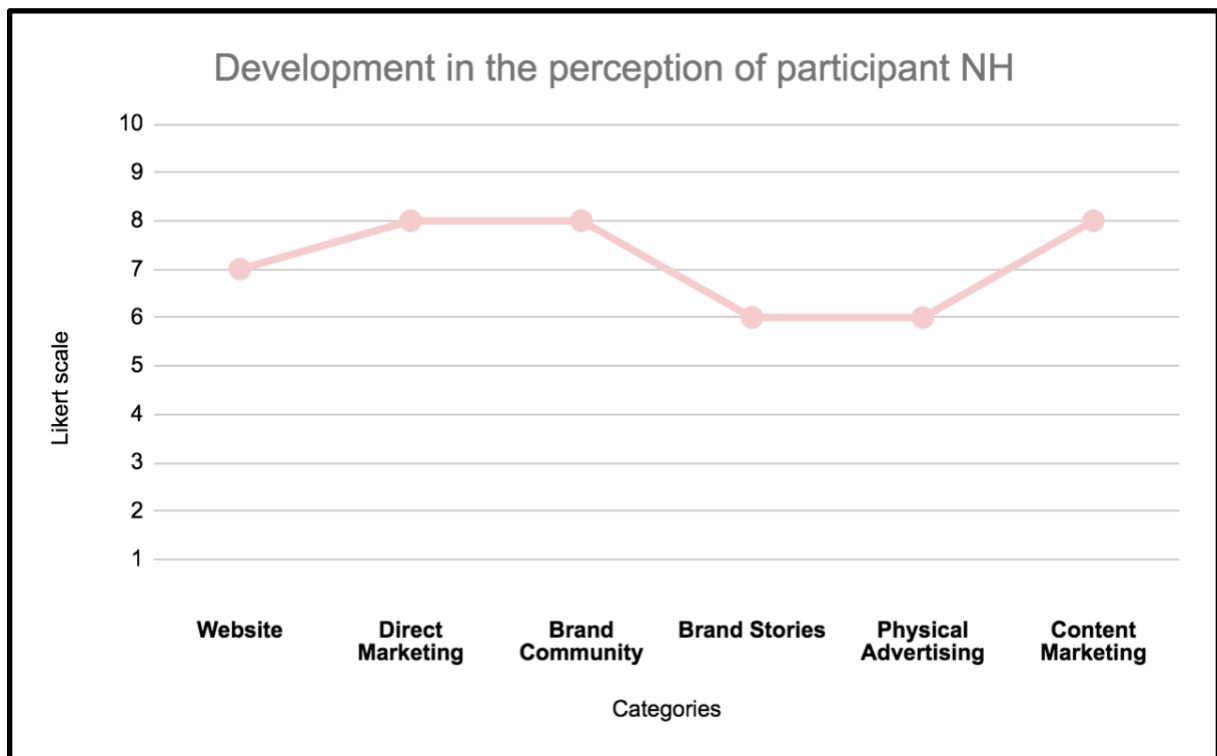
Graph 1

As seen from the graph, NH's perception of Ganni took a dive in brand stories and experienced the largest growth in content marketing. Therefore, Ganni's content marketing must be said to be the category of marketing initiatives that made the largest impact on her, relative to what her existing perception was. NH's perception of Ganni is characterised by an interest in how Ganni produces its items, especially when it comes to responsible production methods. At the same time, she shows little interest when exposed to marketing initiatives that do not match her existing interests and likings. She does not believe that Ganni's physical advertising or pricing is in line with what she perceives the brand of representing or the items of being worth.

In summation, we have found a clear indication that NH's perception of Ganni does not quite match the brand image that Ganni itself is trying to convey.

7.2 Participant PL

In the interview with participant PL, we identified six themes based on the underlying codes. The themes are **the prices are quite expensive**, **nice visual identity**, **impressed by sustainability efforts**, **values diversity**, **reluctant about Instagram** and **persuasive marketing contents**.

7.2.1 The Prices are Quite Expensive

The first theme we encounter in the interview with participant P is **the prices are quite expensive**. The theme is based on the following codes: *shocked by the price*, *still focused on the price*, *higher price point than usual*, *interested despite the price*, *positive perception but price impacts negatively*, *design does not outweigh the price* and *design shares similarities with labels at lower price points*. The name of the theme is derived from a direct quote from PL where she states: "*But I feel like the prices are quite expensive*" (appendix 5.2.1). The codes for this theme are all within the same category, namely website.

The code, *shocked by the price*, is the very first code from the entire interview and is present in her comment "*it's expensive!*" (Appendix 5.2.1). This reaction comes rather promptly from PL as she is informed of the prices of the clothing, which we interpret as her being shocked by the price. Moreover, her reaction seems rather negative, as using the word 'expensive' creates a more negative connotation in terms of how she perceives the pricing of the items compared to if she had said the price was 'low', 'great', 'okay' or simply had said nothing about the price.

This emphasis on the price being high is also seen in the next code, *still focused on the price level*. This code is evident in the section of the interview where we have just asked "*yeah?*" to entice her to elaborate on her answer to the Likert scale, where she says her perception is somewhat positive. Here, she replies "*But I feel like the prices are quite expensive.*" (Appendix 5.2.1). This statement is the first thing she comments on when being asked to elaborate on her perception. Because we did not ask her about anything, in particular, the fact that her answer

includes the price as the very first thing, makes it clear that she is still focused on the price level. We interpret the fact that her comment begins with the conjunction 'but' as if she means that the following clause is contrary to her prior belief concerning her perception being somewhat positive. Thus, she seems to still focus on the price to such an extent that it is the first thing she comments on, despite the category including other things, which we must assume that she finds positive, as her perception on the Likert scale indicates.

The third code, *higher price point than usual*, is identified in the first sentence below, which is marked green:

> PL: Yeah, definitely more expensive than what I would normally spend. When I looked at the pictures, they looked more like Zara clothes which is obviously like much cheaper uhm but i like how it is laid out and things. And it is clear uhm and pictures are like enticing but it is quite expensive for what I would normally pay.

Figure 16: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.1

From this sentence, it is clear that PL perceives the prices of the clothes as higher than what she is used to spending. Therefore, we believe that the prices could both deter and attract PL in terms of her perception of Ganni, as the prices could make Ganni seem as far from within her reach but also make it seem more attractive if she was to draw parallels between the price and high quality of the brand (Lee & Chen-yu 2018). However, in the next sentence, highlighted with yellow above, PL says that "*When I looked at the pictures, they looked more like Zara clothes which is obviously like much cheaper*" (Appendix 5.2.1). Here, it is clear that PL seems to draw parallels from the designs of the clothes to other labels at a lower price point, which is why the fourth code within this theme is *design shares similarities with labels at lower price points*. The next code, *the design does not outweigh the price*, is derived from the last sentence marked green above. Here, PL has just said that she finds the website appealing, but once again uses the conjunction 'but' to show that despite the other elements within the website, she still believes that the price level is high and that the design does not outweigh the price.

When we asked PL how she would position herself, after she seemed to focus on the price point as something far more negative than positive, she continued to say that her perception was

somewhat positive. PL explains this in the sentence marked green below, namely that she is still *interested despite the high price,* which is the next code:

PL: I would probably position myself in like somewhat positive. Because I do think like I would be enticed to go and look maybe see the clothes and stuff but I feel like it is still kinda expensive. So like it is positive because it looks nice but the price puts me off a little bit.

Figure 17: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.1

Lastly, the final code within this theme, *positive perception but price impacts negatively*, is seen in the last sentence fragment, marked with yellow, above. Here, it is clear that PL values the aesthetical parts of the website, as she says it looks nice, but the prices discourage her from being completely positive.

We know that PL spends between £100 and £200 a month on fashion items, which is likely a factor in her reacting strongly towards the price, as the cheapest item from Ganni, in the presentation, is £115 (Appendix 2.1) Moreover, she has informed us that price and design of the items are the two most important factors for her when buying fashion items. Therefore, she is used to focusing on and evaluating the price of an item, which she seems to do even when she talks about something other than the price, as seen in the phrase "*but the price…*".

7.2.2 Nice Visual Identity

The second theme is **nice visual identity**. This theme is derived from the following codes: *appealing website, impressed by the design of the store, store is worth a visit, cool-looking billboards* and *store looks bright and inviting*.

The first of the codes we encounter from this theme is *appealing website*, which is seen in correlation to the first category, *website*. The code is present in "*(...) uhm but I like how it is laid out and things. And it is clear uhm and pictures are like enticing (...)*" (Appendix 5.2.1). PL appears to like how the website looks, despite being a bit hesitant as indicated by the two times 'uhm' that has been underlined.

The second code, *impressed by the design of the store*, is seen in the fifth category that PL was exposed to, *physical advertising*. Here, she was presented with pictures of a Parisian Ganni store, which made her declare: "*Yeah the store looks so cool*" (Appendix 5.2.5). This indicates that she likes and is impressed by the store, as the word 'cool' creates positive connotations to something hip and worthy of one's interest.

In relation to her liking the store, she also stated that "*It looks good. Yeah [laughter]. I like it was really bright. I would definitely like to go there.*" which translates to the third code, *store is worth a visit* (Appendix 5.2.5). This is also seen in the code *cool-looking billboards*, where PL says that "*(...) I thought the billboards just <u>looked like the store</u> <u>like really bright like yeah looks cool</u> but definitely positive.*" (Appendix 5.2.5). From this, we interpret that she likes the look of the store to such an extent that she sees the other types of physical advertising, such as the billboards, in a more positive way when the initiative fits well with the visual look of the store, as seen in the first underlining in the quote above. Moreover, she also seems to 'just' really like the look of the store, as she again describes the store as bright and cool-looking, as seen in the last underlining of the quote above.

The fact that PL likes the way that the store looks, is also seen in the very last code, *store looks bright and inviting*. This code is present in PL's answer to our question concerning which type of the initiatives within the category of physical advertising stood out to her the most. Here, she says "*(...) probably the store (...)*" and used "*(...) because like you can actually see what it looks like and it was like I just likes how it looked like really bright and stuff.*" as her reasoning (Appendix 5.2.5). Consequently, PL seems to perceive Ganni's visual identity positively as she describes it as 'cool', 'good', 'enticing' and 'bright', while favouring the store and making it the highlight of the physical advertising.

7.2.3 Impressed by Sustainability Efforts

The third theme is **impressed by sustainability efforts** and is generated based on the following codes: *impressed by production method, positive perception of responsibility initiatives, trying to do better despite being part of a polluting industry, responsibility justifies the high price*

point, *fashion brands are rarely responsible*, *believes that Ganni cares about sustainability*, *Ganni Repeat made the largest impression* and *appreciates the concept of Ganni Repeat*.

The first code, *impressed by production method*, is seen in PL's reaction to the newsletter concerning trainers made from grapes and trousers made from organic cotton. Here, PL exclaims *"oh wow"* as soon as we finish our sentence, which makes her seem impressed by the production method (Appendix 5.2.2).

Her being impressed and positive towards the responsibility within Ganni is also seen in the three next codes, which are all evident in the same paragraph from the transcript, as seen in the screenshot below, where the first code is marked green, the second is yellow and the third is the last green:

PL: Probably quite positive because it shows they're focusing on sustainability like trying to make a better impact for like the environment and stuff. Obviously the fashion industry is not great like for the environment and everything. So it does show that they are trying to make a difference and also not just them doing things but they're like trying to tell their target market is that the word like what they are trying to do. So yea quite positive. And it also makes me think that is why the clothes is more expensive.

Figure 18: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.2

The next code is *positive perception of responsibility initiatives*, which is an answer to our question of her position on the Likert scale, where she uses the fact that Ganni focuses on responsibility as the first-mentioned reason for her perception being quite positive, which we interpret as her being positive on the scale. Through the next code, *trying to do better despite being part of a polluting industry*, it is evident that PL is aware that Ganni is part of an industry that is polluting, which is marked yellow in figure 18. However, because she is aware, she seems to appreciate that Ganni tries to do better and she sees its responsibility efforts as the brand trying to make a difference and inform the customers of the difference. The code that is present in the last sentence marked green in figure 18 is *responsibility justifies the high price point*. This code adds to PL's positive perception of Ganni and understanding of how large an impact and change responsibility can result in, in the fashion industry. As PL herself uses the

responsibility efforts as a reason for the first theme, *the prices are quite expensive*, shows that she is impressed by sustainability efforts enough to begin using them as reasoning for the high price points. Consequently, we believe that this connects to her subsequent statement concerning that "*(...) it's quite rare that a fashion brand is trying to show what they're doing*" and "*(...) I don't know any ethically sustainable brands*" (Appendix 5.2.2). This shows that PL believes that *fashion brands are rarely responsible*, which is the next code.

The last three codes are all within the last category of the presentation we showed PL, *content marketing*. The first code is *believes that Ganni cares about sustainability*, which is evident in the green passage below:

> PL: It's good. It shows like at first they were when you first started showing me. It was like they are trying to build this community but I obviously didn't know much about them. But the more you show the more like you can see that they are really trying to build the community so like all different things like podcasts, books uhm all those other things. And then the Ganni Repeat is like cool because it means that you can like borrow clothes or resell your old clothes so it's shows that they do actually care about sustainability like you know some fast fashion brands just write a thing like oh we really care and we are doing this but there is no evidence that they are. But this shows like they actually do care and are trying to do something with their clothes to help.

Figure 19: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.6

In this passage, you can see that PL actually believes that Ganni cares about sustainability, as she says that Ganni Repeat is actual proof that Ganni cares, as indicated in the underlined sentence fragments in figure 19. Thus, PL seems to be very positive towards Ganni Repeat. This is also seen in the next code, *Ganni Repeat made the largest impression*, which is evident in her answering "*yeah I think s*o" when we asked her if Ganni Repeat was the content within *content marketing* that made the biggest impact on her (Appendix 5.2.6). Lastly, this is also supported in PL arguing for Ganni Repeat, which constitutes the last code for the theme. The code is *appreciates the concept of Ganni Repeat* and is seen in PL saying "*it's such a good*

idea" twice before consequently stating that Ganni Repeat is what made the biggest impact on her (Appendix 5.2.6).

7.2.4 Values Diversity

The fourth theme is **values diversity** and consists of the six following codes: *diversity in #GanniGirls*, *statements not supported by actions*, *lack of diversity*, *lack of representation in the fashion industry*, *people value seeing people that look like themselves* and *representation matters*.

The first code within this theme is *diversity in #GanniGirls* in the category concerning *brand community*, where PL states that she notices "*(...) different people wearing it*" (Appendix 5.2.3). She distinguishes between the british women and the danish fashion store, which she is shown in the presentation, despite saying "danish lady" rather than the correct "danish fashion store". However, we interpret her answer as her noticing the diversity in the #GanniGirls, despite this minor confusion.

The next code is *statements not supported by actions*, which is present in her saying that she was disappointed by Ganni only showing slim women when having just said that #GanniGirls is for all genders, as seen in the green fragment below:

> PL: Okay so I feel like when you show me the first one… this is
> going to be quite long I think.. but I felt like they were saying like
> is for all genders it's for all like different people but they only
> showed like slim women. There was no like diversity in their
> pictures and stuff so it's like they kind of saying it's for everyone
> but you're only showing like one type of woman and they also
> didn't show like any people who like might present as women but
> look like different like I.. do you know what i mean? Like they
> just look like typical feminine women so I felt like I didn't really

Figure 20: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.4

From the sentence, you can see that PL believes that Ganni's statement is not supported by actions. This is also seen in connection to the sentence marked yellow above, namely the code *lack of diversity*. This code stems from three specific parts, which are the three underlined sentence fragments in figure 20. From these, it is clear that PL both believes that there is a lack

of diversity in terms of only showing one type of woman, rather than showing people who identify as women or look less similar.

The next code, *lack of representation in the fashion industry*, makes it clear that PL values diversity and thinks that representation matters, as seen in the first sentence marked green below:

Figure 21: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.4

Here, PL argues that only using white slim women is not representative of how the world actually looks. Moreover, she seems to believe that people will be inclined to purchase clothes that are seen on people that look like themselves, as representation of oneself's body type is a positive thing. This is seen in the sentence marked yellow above, which constitutes the next code, *people value seeing people that look like themselves*. Lastly, PL states once again that only using white women is not representative, as seen in the last sentence marked green which translates to the last code *representation matters*. Consequently, PL believes that representation matters in the case of Ganni specifically and that she values diversity highly, as seen throughout this theme.

7.2.5 Reluctant about Instagram

The fifth theme is **reluctant about instagram** and is constituted based on the following codes: *Not impacted by fashion brands on Instagram, premise of Instagram*, *does not use Instagram for fashion, no shopping on Instagram* and *believes that there is a community*.

The first code, *not impacted by fashion brands on Instagram,* is present in PL's answer to her perception of the category *brand community*. Here, she states that "*(...) Instagram just makes me like quite neutral*", indicating that she is not impacted by fashion brands on Instagram (Appendix 5.2.3). However, we do know that she uses Instagram, but she seems to perceive the #GanniGirls on instagram as merely an attempt by Ganni to sell products. This is also seen in the next code, *premise of Instagram*, where she describes how she feels like #GanniGirl is just people wearing the clothes and want the hashtag to be seen. Because of this, PL does not believe that the brand community has influenced her perception either way.

The next code, *does not use Instagram for fashion,* is present in two places. The first occurrence is after PL has just stated that her perception neither improved or worsened. Here, she uses the fact that she does not use instagram for shopping as reasoning for her not being influenced by the brand community, as seen in the green sentence below:

> PL: I dunno. maybe i just don't.. like, I do use Instagram but not really like for fashion so...

Figure 22: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.3

The second occurrence is seen in her answer to us asking if she can remember a fashion brand that made an impact on her:

> PL: *[pause]* Hmmmmm. not really to be honest *[pause]* I think for me like I'm more just using Instagram for like social like with my friends and stuff I don't really use it for like fashion. I wouldn't

Figure 23: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.3

From both these occurrences, it is clear that PL does not use Instagram for fashion and thus, she seems to focus more on the use of the platform rather than the actual contents of the category. This focus on the platform is also seen in the next code, *no shopping on Instagram*, which is present in two places as well. In the first she states that she prefers shopping on brand's webshops:

> PL: *[pause]* Hmmmmm. not really to be honest *[pause]* I think for me like I'm more just using Instagram for like social like with my friends and stuff I don't really use it for like fashion. I wouldn't really like look for clothes on there or I don't like shop on there or anything I'd more like use their website so I don't really think I use Instagram in that way.
>
> M: *Mmh. Okay.*
>
> PL: Maybe if I did use it in that way I would be more influenced by their Instagram.

Figure 24: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.3

The second place the code is present is when she adds the suggestion that she would perhaps feel differently, if she did shop on Instagram, as seen in the last sentence marked green above.

It is clear that PL does not use Instagram to shop of partake in online communities herself, but it seems as if she sees #GanniGirls as a means for branding rather than creating a community. However, when we showed her the part of the brand stories with the articles, she reacted positively towards the community, which is evident in the code *believes that there is a community*. This code is present in two places, in continuation of each other. The first is seen in PL saying that she believed more in the community when seeing the slides with more different people in Ganni clothing, as seen in the green text below:

> really sure if I buy into that message. But then when I saw the other pictures it was kind of like oh okay it is more of a community and there are more different people wearing it so I feel like if I had only seen the first one I would have just been a bit neutral. But then I feel like seeing the other two it was quite like a positive message because it did show that it was more of a community.

Figure 25: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.4

This is supported in the second place that the code occurs, where she states that her perception is more positive after seeing the articles and because she saw these, she saw that there was more of a community, as seen in the text marked yellow above.

Therefore, we interpret that PL feels disassociated from the community in #GanniGirls on Instagram which is created and encouraged highly by Ganni. However, when seeing external sources with diverse women, she believes that there is a community. Consequently, we believe that this connects closely with the theme **values diversity**, as she seems to value diversity and be affected by the lack of diversity. Thus, PL seems to not be able to seperate the two themes, which results in her being **reluctant about Instagram** when she cannot see a clear and authentic community due to a lack of diversity.

7.2.6 Persuasive Marketing Contents

The sixth and last theme is **persuasive marketing contents** and consists of the codes *marketing efforts make up for the price point*, *engaging services*, *surprised by how much she likes it* and *content marketing efforts have made a large impact*.

The first code, *marketing efforts make up for the price point,* is evident as PL uses her new knowledge of the contents of the marketing initiatives as a way to justify the price, as seen in the sentence marked green below:

> PL: It looks good. Yeah *[laughter]*. I like it was really bright. I would definitely like to go there. I think at the beginning I was like oh it is so expensive and stuff but the more like I've learned about it.. the store definitely looks quite cool uhm. And like they obviously trying to offer like services to maybe like entice people [pause] uhm the stickers are cool everyone like loves a sticker don't they? so that's quite nice and it shows like everyone wants to kind of be like involved uhm [pause] and I thought the billboards

Figure 26: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.5

Here, PL states that she thought that the price point was high in the beginning of the interview, but now that she has learned about the marketing efforts, they seem to have changed her beliefs.

In contrast, she now sees the content of the categories as positive, which translates to the next code being *engaging services*, as seen in the yellow text above. Here, she states that the physical advertising shows that everyone wants to be involved, which once again ties with her seeming to value engaging and organic community highly.

In the category *content marketing*, PL states that her perception is the highest on the Likert scale, very positive (Appendix 5.2.6). The first thing she says when elaborating on her perception is "*I feel like the more you show me the more like I like it*" while laughing (Appendix 5.2.6). We interpret her positive tone as if she herself is *surprised by how much she likes it*, which is the next code.

Her very positive perception is further seen in the next code, *content marketing efforts have made a large impact*, as PL states that she previously perceived Ganni as attempting to build a community, but she did not know enough to trust this at the time, as seen in the green text below:

PL: It's good. It shows like at first they were when you first started showing me. It was like they are trying to build this community but I obviously didn't know much about them. But the more you show the more like you can see that they are really trying to build the community so like all different things like podcasts, books uhm all those other things. And then the Ganni Repeat is like cool

Figure 27: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.6

Here, she also states that seeing the contents in *content marketing* she now believes in the community. We interpret that it is exactly this content marketing efforts that have made her feel like she knows Ganni and thereby believes that there is a community.

7.2.7 Recap of Analysis

Through the analysis of PL, it is clear that her perception develops throughout the interview, both negatively and positively. We have created a visual summary of her perception for each category in the interview below:
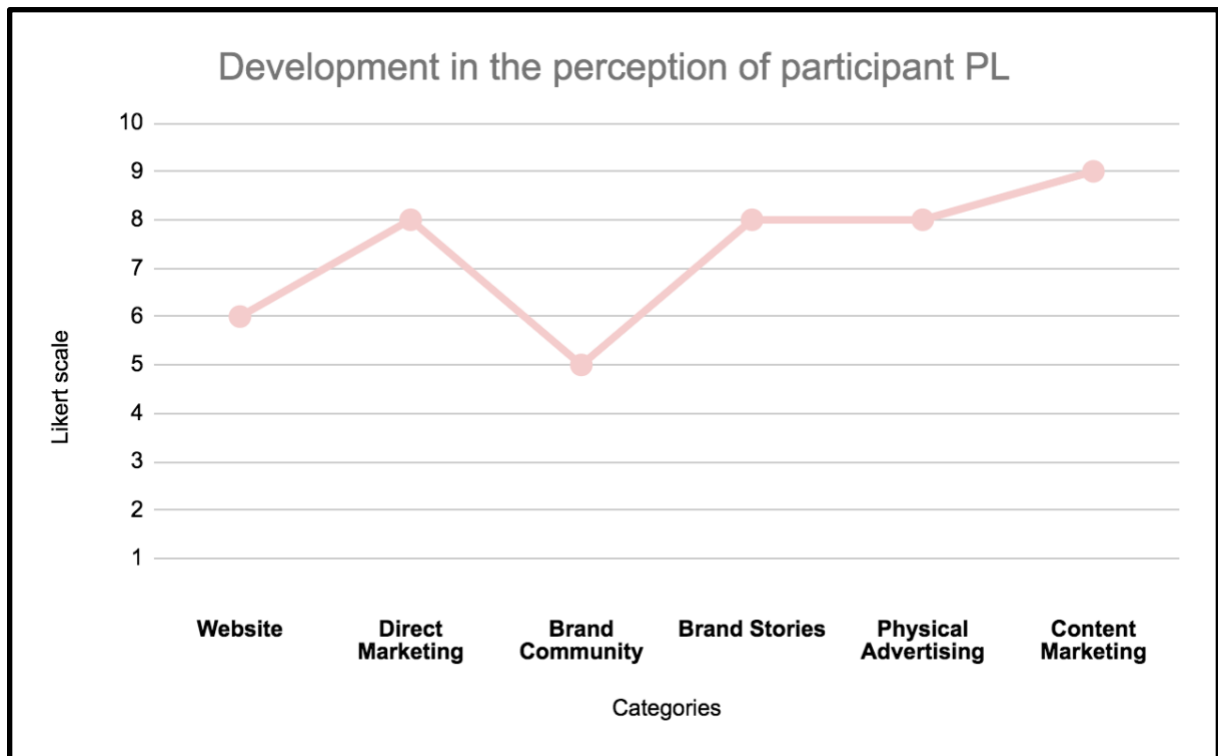
Graph 2

From the graph, it is evident that PL's perception of Ganni's brand image is on the positive side throughout the interview. However, her perception of Ganni's brand image is the most negative for the brand community category and the most positive in the very end, at content marketing. The most characteristic thing for PL is that she appreciates that Ganni does more than "just sell fashion items" as she is very impressed by Ganni Repeat, the stores and the stickers, which makes her feel like Ganni cares about its customers and responsibility. This makes her ascribe the clothes more meaning and importance, than before she knew of the marketing initiatives. However, she is very reluctant about Instagram, which seems to be the reason why she has the least positive perception of Ganni's brand image in brand community. Instagram as a media seems to influence her negatively to such a degree that it is only when other media show the community within #GanniGirls that she begins to believe in it. Moreover, she seems to understand the community when it is diverse and seems true, which is also the case for physical advertising and content marketing, which she perceived as engaging and for the community rather than 'just' as a branding strategy.

7.3 Participant HN

In the interview with participant HN, we have identified the following four themes: **not convincing website**, **impressed by branding efforts**, **well-conducted marketing efforts** and **lack of social responsibility**. The themes are based on the underlying codes, which we will now analyse.

7.3.1 Not Convincing Website

The first theme in the interview with participant HN is **not convincing website**, which is based on the following codes: *website does not match existing perception of Ganni's marketing*, *entirety of website is not appealing*, *resembles multibrand webshops* and *expected more of the website*. The name of the theme is found across the codes, which are only present in the first category, *website*.

The first code, *website does not match existing perception of Ganni's marketing*, occurs twice. The first place is seen in HN's initial explanation for her perception being neutral, after we have shown her the presentation concerning the website. Here, she states that she does not believe that the website stands out in connection to Ganni's other marketing, as seen in the green text below:

HN: Oh so I was saying that I think that it's.. the clothes are colourful but they haven't made the page that colourful actually is quite simple uhm and it's nice to look at but I'd say that it is not particularly uhm [pause] it doesn't particularly stand out to me as an individual style based on their actual marketing they want the clothes to stand out and uhm and I'd also say it's definitely easy to look at and take the information in uhm but I didn't think [pause] I mean maybe it's because I didn't love the clothes… uhm but it didn't really appeal to me a lot.

Figure 28: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.1

The second place is where HN states that she does not believe that Ganni has succeeded in creating a website that matches the brand's identity and other marketing, as seen in the green text below:

> the style of the clothes. Whereas this.. I'm not sure that they necessarily replicated [pause] that.

Figure 29: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.1

Based on the two occurrences, it is clear that HN does not believe that the website matches her existing perception of Ganni's marketing. It is possible for her to compare the presentation to something else, because HN knew about Ganni before the interview, as she stated that she knew Ganni for its bags, bold and contrasting colours and for using colours that she would not normally match but Ganni does it and makes a statement when doing so (Appendix 4.3). However, in the sentence above, she said that her perception was neutral as it did not stand out to her. We interpret this as her being disappointed by the website because it did not match her existing perception of Ganni's marketing, which she perceives as bold and with contrasting colours.

Her not perceiving the website as convincing is also seen in the second code, *entirety of website is not appealing*, which is evident in sentence that follows the green text in figure 28, where she says "*uhm but it didn't really appeal to me a lot.*". Here, she states that she is both disappointed by the clothes and by the website not being more colourful and matching her existing perception of Ganni, thus the entirety of the website is not appealing to her.

The next code, *resembles multi-brand webshops*, is evident as HN says she thinks of the multi-brand fashion retailer ASOS, when looking at Ganni's website, as seen in the sentence marked green below:

Figure 30: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.2

In connection to the resemblance to ASOS, HN seems to expect more of Ganni's website, since it is "*just one brand*" and thus, she would expect it to feel more in line with the identity of the brand.

However, she believes that Ganni has not succeeded with creating a website that is signature to the brand, thus, the second code is *expected more of the website*, which is present in the text marked yellow in figure 30. Here, it is clear that HN knows of other brands that have succeeded in creating a webshop that makes it clear that it belongs to said brand, which seems to result in her expecting Ganni to have done this as well.

7.3.2 Impressed by Branding Efforts

The second theme for HN is **impressed by branding efforts**, which is based on the following codes: *informed about sustainability efforts*, *brands utilise Instagram to create brand communities and market themselves*, *alignment between store and billboards*, *representative podcasts*, *impressed by Ganni Repeat* and *never seen a brand have it's own rental service*.

The first code, *informed about sustainability efforts*, is present in HN's reasoning for her perception of Ganni's brand image being slightly positive on the Likert scale (Appendix 5.2.2). Here, she has a more positive perception of *direct marketing* than of *website*, as she feels more informed about sustainability efforts, which is something she finds important, as seen below:

HN: Uhm so I'd say my reason for that is I think well because now I know more about their sustainability uhm and that's definitely something I find important uhm in a company and in a business that is having a big impact that they are considering.

Figure 31: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.2

Based on this, we believe that despite knowing of Ganni before the interview, HN has no in-depth knowledge of the brand and its efforts regarding sustainability, as she seems more impressed by Ganni after receiving this information.

She is also acknowledging Ganni's branding efforts in her response to the presentation concerning *brand community*. In the paragraph marked green below, the code *brands utilise Instagram to create brand communities and market themselves* is seen, as she sees the brand community on Instagram as a good idea while it also being current and the place where brands are marketing themselves:

HN: I think uhmm I think it is a good idea. I think it's very uhm current and right now and Instagram is definitely how.. where I feel like most bands make their money at the moment because it's always when you see an ad on Instagram or someone you know has tagged something uhm the way that it uhm kinda suggests certain things to you. It's usually where you shop the most these days so I think it's very current. I would say that maybe from a

Figure 32: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.2

The next code, *alignment between store and billboards*, is present in HN's comment to the category *physical advertising*. Here, she states, immediately after talking about the specifics about the stores, that Ganni is good at creating a connection between the vibe of the stores and the billboards (Appendix 5.3.5).

The three last codes for this theme are all placed in the part of the interview that concerns *content marketing*. The next code is *representative podcasts* which is the first thing that HN says after stating that her perception of Ganni's brand image is one step more towards positive

than negative, neutral, compared to the previous category. Here, she says that the part concerning the podcasts seemed more representative, as seen in the fragment marked green:

HN: I'd say it's probably moved back to neutral. Uhm my reason for that is I did think that the first slide at least for their uhm podcast was more representative and I still think they need to

Figure 33: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.6

From this, it is clear that it is not only the scope of the branding efforts that impresses HN, it is also issues such as representation and inclusivity that are important to her. This will be further analysed in the last theme in this analysis, **lack of social responsibility**.

She is also impressed by content that appears as innovative, as seen in the next code, *impressed by Ganni Repeat*, which occurs two times in content marketing. The first is seen in her very clearly stating that she is impressed by Ganni Repeat, as seen below:

in that area they.. they weren't.. people didn't look as similar uhm and I'd say I'm quite impressed by their Repeat section on that final slide. Probably because uhm there are some.. I think it is

Figure 34: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.6

Moreover, the second occurrence is in the very last thing that she says in the entire interview, which is when we ask her if it was Ganni Repeat that made her feel differently in this category than previously. To this, she states that it was in fact Ganni Repeat that made the biggest impact:

M: Mmh. So would you say is the rental service that makes you think uh differently about Ganni than previously?

HN: I think so. Yeah that made the biggest impact yeah.

Figure 35: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.6

We argue, that this code is connected closely to the last code, *never seen a brand have it's own rental service*, which is evident right after the first occurrence of *impressed by Ganni Repeat*, as seen in the following statement:

Figure 36: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.6

Here, she states that she is impressed by Ganni Repeat, *because* she has only ever seen a place that rents out clothes from different brands, but not a brand with its own rental service. For this code, HN does not seem to have a frame of reference for either Ganni's initiative concerning Ganni Repeat nor other brands that have done the same, which we believe is the major reason for her being impressed.

7.3.3 Well-Conducted Marketing Efforts

The next theme is **well-conducted marketing efforts** and is made up of the following codes: *inviting newsletter*, *visuals stand out more than textual content*, *impressed by the embroidering* and *inviting store*.

The first code, *inviting newsletter*, is evident after HN has been exposed to the newsletter where she reacts by stating that the layout and the fact that Ganni included the sustainability report is positive:

Figure 37: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.2

Moreover, she thinks that the newsletters feel more 'signature' to Ganni, which was one of the main critique points from her in the category before this, *website*. We therefore believe that HN is concerned with Ganni's visual identity and cohesion between the different parts of the

brand. This is further supported when we ask her about whether the look or the content of the newsletter stands out to her the most, to which she responds that it is the look:

> HN: I would say actually the look because most brands are doing a similar sustainable uhm approach maybe not from the same materials but a lot of brands are making a point of doing that so I'd say the look was more standout.

Figure 38: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.2

Here she believes that because many brands are incorporating a similar sustainability approach in terms of e.g. materials, she is not impressed by this part as much as she is by the look. We believe that because she focused heavily on the theme **not convincing website** in the category just before this in the presentation, she is in particular focusing on how the visuals stand out throughout the rest of the interview. Thus, this perception corresponds to the code *visuals stand out more than textual content*.

In the category *physical advertising*, HN also seems to believe that Ganni is doing some well-conducted marketing efforts. The next code, *impressed by the embroidering*, is present in two places. The first place is seen in her exclamation "*oh wow*" when we inform her about the embroidering, which we interpret as her being impressed by the embroidering (Appendix 5.3.5). The code is also present in the sentence marked green below, as she states that she really likes the custom-made embroidering. In fact, she likes it to such a degree, that she believes that it would attract people, even if they did not know about the brand previously:

> they were very vibrant, inviting, and [pause] I think it was an attractive backside and what they did with the custommade embroidering that would be enough for if you were walking down the street you'd definitely walk in if you didn't know the brand or you'd recognise the brand from the bright colours. Uhm and id say

Figure 39: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.5

This code is closely connected to the last code for this theme, *inviting store*, as the embroidering happens inside a store and as she states that she likes the store and the colours in it:

> HN: Yeah so in general my feelings about uhm using the word 'girls' for a brand aimed at women are still the same and [pause] not being represented of different body shapes. But i'd say that the actual uhm store and the colours were really really lovely. I think they were very vibrant, inviting, and [pause] I think it was an

Figure 40: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.5

Based on the codes for this theme, it is clear that HN thinks that Ganni does a number of well-conducted marketing efforts, as she likes the specific things that Ganni does in terms of the newsletters being inviting, the visuals standing out, her being impressed by the embroidering and perceiving the store as inviting.

7.3.4 Lack of Social Responsibility

The last theme is **lack of social responsibility** and is based on the following codes: *problematic community name*, *belittling to refer to women as girls*, *toxic tendency to refer to women as girls*, *youth-fixation*, *actions do not match message*, *lack of diversity* and *still focused on the lack of inclusivity elsewhere*.

The first code within this theme is *problematic community name*, which is present in two different places in the interview. The first occurrence is seen as HN looks at the brand community with a feminist perspective and brings a larger societal discussion of how to refer to women into her review of Ganni's marketing initiatives:

> days so I think it's very current. I would say that maybe from a feminist perspective uhm [pause] I know that they've used 'girls' because it uhm it is the same letter as Ganni uhm but I also think that that can be quite a uhm [pause] a lot of the time we call

Figure 41: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.3

Here, she again mentions the community name, #GanniGirls, and the fact that she believes that the high prices of the clothing makes it clear that the clothes are in fact for women rather than

girls, as seen in figure 42. Consequently, HN's own answer ends with her once again stating that using 'girls' is not necessary nor healthy:

aspire to and I think Ganni and a brand like Ganni making it #GanniGirls is like I get that they are trying to look like a younger brand but they are also a women's brand and the clothes are way too expensive for girls to buy. It's for women and I think in some

Figure 42: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.3

We argue that this code is closely connected to the next, *belittling to refer to women as girls*, both in terms of the content, tone and context it is seen in. This code is seen right after the first occurrence of the previous code, depicted in figure 41, where HN continues with the notion that it is a common thing to make things feel child-like or younger in society:

that that can be quite a uhm [pause] a lot of the time we call women girls whereas we don't call men boys and it can be kind of imp.. turning women into children and trying.. [pause caused by the Zoom-connection]

Figure 43: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.3

Here, she states that this tendency of referring to women as girls is something that happens a lot, whereas it does not happen to men.

We find it clear that HN is passionate about this subject, as she continues to talk about this toxic tendency. This is seen in the next code, *toxic tendency to refer to women as girls*, which is evident in three individual places. The first place is seen as she states that it is a common thing to turn women into girls, which is evident in the first section that is marked green below:

HN: Yeah. So uhm I was saying is I think that sometimes uhm or quite often in society we uhm.. or it's a common thing that when we turn women into girls we want things to feel child-like or younger rather than.. age and that being part of something uhm to aspire to and I think Ganni and a brand like Ganni making it #GanniGirls is like I get that they are trying to look like a younger brand but they are also a women's brand and the clothes are way too expensive for girls to buy. It's for women and I think in some ways that's not really healthy or I don't approve of.. of that necessarily because I think it's important to embrace ageing and the.. the good you know women should not be made to constantly feel like they need to be younger than they are.

Figure 44: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.3

The second occurrence is seen in the last section of the text marked green above, as she believes that it is not healthy nor something she approves of. She seems to really believe that there is a toxic tendency, as she mentions it for the third time. Here, she begins her reasoning for having her perception be somewhat negative, when she has seen the presentation concerning physical advertising. As seen below in the text marked green, her opinion about using 'girls' has not changed:

HN: Yeah so in general my feelings about uhm using the word 'girls' for a brand aimed at women are still the same and [pause]

Figure 45: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.5

When we asked HN about why she thought that the issue of calling women girls was important to her, she mentioned that she has felt this pressure herself. We have named this code *youth-fixation*, as she mentions that she experiences "*(...) how much everyone is constantly striving to look younger rather than embracing uhm the amazing things that come with becoming a woman and ageing (...)*" (Appendix 5.3.3). Thus, it is not only something HN believes is a problem, she experiences it in the real world all the time.

The next code, *actions do not match message*, is created based on her stating that she believes that Ganni has emphasised that it is inclusive but has not delivered that in terms of the women that are chosen to represent the brand, as seen in the statement marked green below:

> HN: Uhm I would actually say now probably slightly negative rather than somewhat negative. So I have moved down. I think that they've kinda put an emphasis on being inclusive but they haven't delivered that in the women that they've chosen to represent them. So although in their images they pick women who are not only uhm white women they haven't picked women who are any different uhm body shapes or sizes uhm which I mean the women all looked quite similar sized and I think that's something really really important in branding now is that all women don't look the same and you do exclude a lot of people if that's the way you market yourself. [pause] So it becomes exclusive.

Figure 46: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.4

In continuation of this code, HN emphasises that it is not only important to her that Ganni uses women of different races but also with different body shapes and sizes. This is seen in the next code, *lack of diversity*, which is present in two places, the first being in the text marked pink above. Here, HN states that Ganni has chosen women with different skin colours but not with different body types. Because of this, she believes that the women all look very similar and thus, the branding lacks diversity. This is also strengthened in the second occurrence of the code, namely in continuation of the previous code, *toxic tendency to refer to women as girls*, where she now states that her feelings towards the lack of diversity in body shapes remain the same also, as seen in the highlighted fragment:

> HN: Yeah so in general my feelings about uhm using the word 'girls' for a brand aimed at women are still the same and [pause] not being represented of different body shapes. But i'd say that the

Figure 47: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.5

The last code within this theme does also connect to this, as it is *still focused on the lack of inclusivity elsewhere*. This code is evident in continuation of her initial answer towards content

marketing, where she states that she still believes that Ganni needs to reflect the brand's claim of being representative and inclusive in the models used on the website:

> HN: I'd say it's probably moved back to neutral. Uhm my reason for that is I did think that the first slide at least for their uhm podcast was more representative and I still think they need to reflect that in their models on their website uhm and other marketing but at least in that area they.. they weren't.. people didn't look as similar uhm and I'd say I'm quite impressed by their

Figure 48: Screenshot from appendix 5.3.6

Thus, HN seems to strongly feel that Ganni lacks social responsibility across the marketing initiatives, as she feels that the community name is problematic, that it is belittling and a toxic tendency to refer to women as girls, that Ganni does not live up to its message about the brand image being diverse and inclusive, and consequently, that Ganni lacks diversity in the models used across the various platforms.

7.3.5 Recap of Analysis

The analysis of HN showed us that her perception is the most positive at direct marketing, where it is slightly positive (corresponding to 7 out of 9), and most negative when being exposed to physical advertising, where it is somewhat negative (corresponding to 3 out of 9). Her change in perception is seen in the graph below:
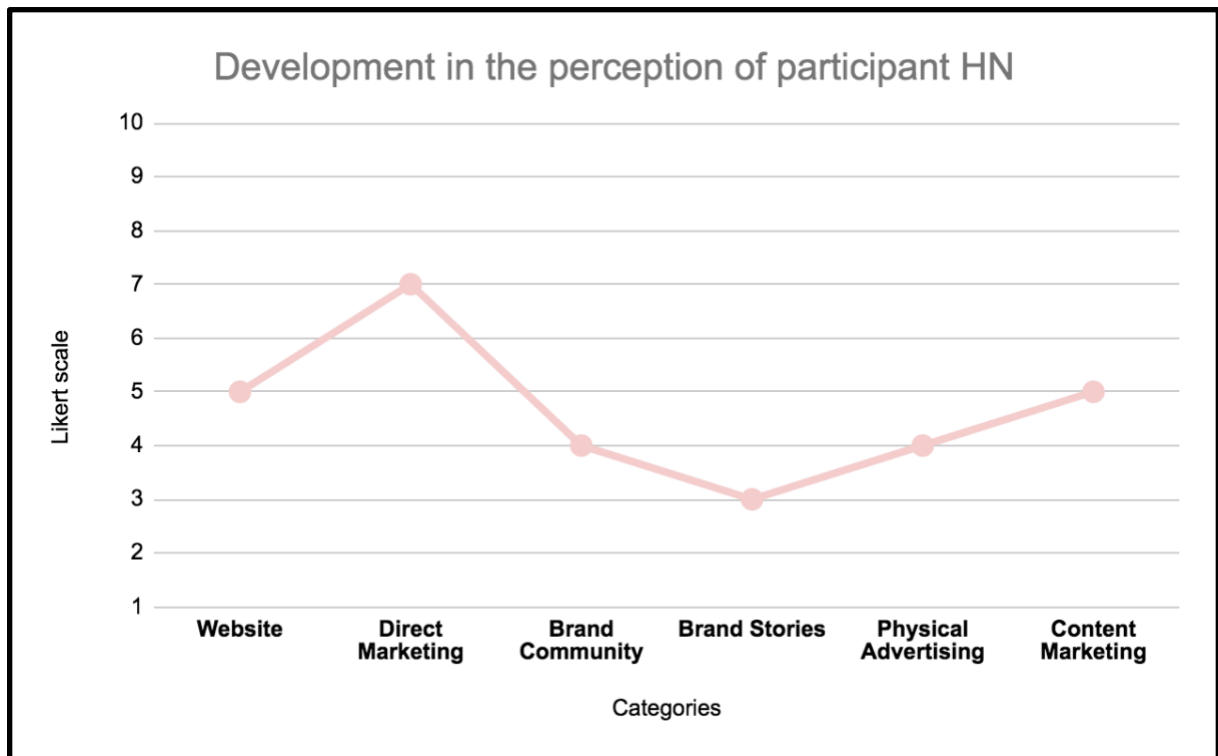
Graph 3

From the analysis, it is clear that HN values alignment between brand identity and marketing efforts highly. However, she knew a little about Ganni before the interview which seems to have influenced her perception, as she compares the content of the presentation to her existing knowledge. Because she knows about Ganni, she also seems to know the price point of the items, as she does not mention the price a single time in the interview. However, we assume that the price still influences her perception and expectations to some degree, as the marketing initiatives need to "live up to" the existing perception of the brand's image. Consequently, this does not seem to happen and she seems to thoroughly remember the content of the different categories and refer back to them several times in the following categories.

7.4 Participant JL

We now move on to the analysis of the interview with participant JL, in which we identified six themes: **values visuals**, **value for money**, **responsibility and self-awareness**, **social media**, **Ganni's reliability** and **approval of efforts**.

7.4.1 Values Visuals

The first theme, **values visuals**, is composed of six codes: *nice-looking website*, *user-friendly website*, *alignment between website and brand*, *inviting colours on the clothes*, *aesthetically pleasing stores* and *likes alternation in the visuals*.

The first three codes are evident in the same answer, which is uttered in relation to the first category JL is exposed to, namely *website*:

> JL: They had a very easy nice looking website for the first page uhm the types of things that are offered on there in terms of uhm help but then also making an appointment and so uhm and it's got uh lots of different information that you can click on its very well laid uhm very simplified for anybody.. and I like from the product page how simplistic it.. it just seems as a very simplistic and playful sort of uhm feel to them and the clothing goes that way as well.

Figure 49: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.1

The pink highlight corresponds to the first code, *nice-looking website*, which can be found in JL's description of how she perceives the visual design of the website, namely as 'nice-looking' while she also states that she likes the simplicity of the product page. The second code, *user-friendly website*, is evident in the green highlight above. Here JL highlights how the website contains menu points for Ganni's help section and for making an appointment as well as how easy it is to navigate for the user, due to the simplistic design. The simplicity of the design is also linked to the third code, *alignment between website and brand*, as JL describes the clothing as being in line with the simplicity and playfulness of the website. In addition to being present two times in the answer depicted in figure 49, *nice-looking website* does also occur in the final answer to the first category, where JL says: "*(...) But in terms of the site it looks really good [laughter]*" (Appendix 5.4.1). The statement is uttered in relation to a comment on the price point, which is discussed in the coming theme.

The fourth code is *inviting colours on the clothes* which is evident in the JL's response to our question regarding what stands out to her the most: "*Just the clothes. Very bright colours*" (Appendix 5.4.1). As she states that her perception of Ganni is somewhat positive, we must

assume that this statement is supposed to be understood in a positive way.

The last code in this theme, *likes alternation in the visuals*, is found in the fifth category, *physical advertising*, where JL states:

Figure 50: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.5

In this scenario, JL has just been exposed to Ganni's efforts regarding physical advertising. In this context, she is talking about how it is nice to see something that is quite simplistic by which she refers to Ganni's billboards that are made using bold colours but otherwise quite simple in their designs. By stating that she likes alternation in the visuals, we mean that while she likes the simplistic design - both when it comes to Ganni's billboards and the website - she also likes bold colours and attention-seeking stickers, which are not really 'simplistic' marketing initiatives.

From this theme, it is evident that JL appreciates aesthetics and values when websites and marketing content are visually appealing. She is not frightened by bold colours or large billboards, however, she likes when there is not too much going on design-wise.

7.4.2 Value for Money

The theme **value for money** is derived from five different codes: *higher price point than usual, she is a charity shopper, the price point is important, the price point is an obstacle* and *attempts to justify the price*.

The first four codes are all seen in the first category, *website*, as depicted below:

> M: Okay. Okay uhmm so do you think it is negative or positive uhh now you can see the price as well?
>
> JL: Hmm uhmm. [pause] I mean it's more than I would normally pay for a single piece of item of clothing. Uhhm, I mean I do tend to like uhm a high brand's thoughts. I am very much a charity shopper and I do like to get them uhm sort of as cheap as possible in that sense and being a uni student and then going into work has been very much.. uhm sort of cost of money has always played a factor. I'm not always a very colourful uhm [pause] type of uhm dresser I uhm if I do it's very such as block colours. Uhm I am definitely, not normally a type uh pattern bright colours patterns unless it's such as flowers or something very simplistic in that sense.
>
> M: Mmh.
>
> JL: Uhm so i'm not so sure that some of these fashion items how much I would especially with the price range to be willing to get those sort of items at the moment. [pause] But in terms of the site it looks really good [laughter]

Figure 51: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.1

The first code, *higher price point than usual*, is found in the pink highlight. As it is evident from JL's quote, she states that the prices of Ganni's garments are higher than what she would normally spend on clothing. This is accentuated by the following two codes, *she is a charity shopper* and *the price point is important*, which are highlighted in green and blue, respectively. Since JL is usually a charity shopper, meaning that she tends to buy clothing second hand from charity shops, we must assume that she spends a significantly smaller amount per item than what those from Ganni are priced at. This is in line with her monthly spending on fashion items, which she has noted as being less than £100, as described in section 6.3.4. The reason why she spends a relatively small amount on clothing items can be explained from the blue highlight where JL explains that after having been a student for many years and now having entered the workforce, with a monthly income of £1000-£1500, the cost of money has always played an important factor. Having to have this economic awareness and limitation for her own spending,

she perceives the items from Ganni as being sold at too high a price level for what she would feel comfortable spending. This is what forms the basis of the fourth code, *the price point is an obstacle*, which is highlighted in yellow in figure 51 above. Despite the price playing an important part in her perception, she still perceives Ganni's brand image as somewhat positive.

The final code in this theme is *attempts to justify the price*. This code is evident in the sixth category, *content marketing*, where JL states: "*Apart from uhm sort of maybe, in my head, cheap prices and they have done everything they can to make that price worth it*" (Appendix 5.4.6). After having just praised Ganni for the brand's efforts to fulfil the needs of the customers, she - through the sentence above - states that despite that she would like the items to be sold at lower prices, she does believe that Ganni has done everything to make the items worth the price.

Through this theme, we have found that JL values getting a lot for her money. That is why she is what she refers to as a charity shopper. She knows what she can and will pay for things, and Ganni's items are not placed within that range. However, through the use of Ganni's content marketing, she comes to the conclusion that Ganni attempts to make the prices worth it through the actual products as well as the marketing efforts.

7.4.3 Responsibility and Self-Awareness

The next theme is **responsibility and self-awareness**. This theme is deduced from three different codes: *trying to do better despite being part of a polluting industry*, *quality and sustainability justify the price* and *favours responsible brands*.

All three codes that comprise this theme is found in the same category, *direct marketing*, and can be seen in the figure below:

> *M: So based on this category what would you say your perception of Ganni is now?*
>
> JL: Yeah id's say sort of between somewhat positive and slightly positive, it's good to see that they're very uhm sort of self aware ummm of what an effect uhm the industry can do on both sides of things uhm [pause] and as long as sort of the quality is there, the price range they have for those sustainable type of clothing, then it's good that they are doing it. And yeah, definitely on the positive side. Definitely.
>
> *M: Okay. So how does it make you feel differently about Ganni than the previous category?*
>
> JL: Hmm.. I mean if that was the case it sort of makes me a bit happy because it could explain more of the price range for that. Uhm more of the cost uhm in my head it sort.. as long as I got the money for it, I would always be wanting to pay more for uhm more sustainable clothing more uhm self-aware brands that aren't sort of damaging uh the planet for that sort of thing.

Figure 52: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.2

The first code, *trying to do better despite being part of a polluting industry*, is seen in the sentence highlighted in pink. Here, JL emphasises the fact that Ganni acknowledges that the brand is part of a polluting industry and describes it as "good to see". This could mean that JL values brands that care about the environment.

The second code, *quality and sustainability justify the price*, is evident in the two sentences highlighted in green. From these fragments, it appears that JL attempts to justify the price of Ganni's items by linking them to high quality and sustainability and arguing that these efforts might be the reason for the price range. It appears that she also believes that the sustainability efforts make up for the price point. This is further substantiated by the next code.

Lastly, the third code is *favours responsible brands*. As we assessed above in the first code, JL values brands that care about the environment. This perception is enhanced in this code,

highlighted in blue in the figure above, where she states that she would always want to pay more for clothing items from brands that are sustainable or responsible in their production method. As she claims to wish to pay more for such items, we deduce that she perceives the brand image of such a brand in a very positive manner.

7.4.4 Social Media

The fourth theme identified in the interview with participant JL is **social media**, which is comprised of three codes: *positive towards the brand community*, *free publicity for Ganni and the #GanniGirls* and *frequent user of social media*. All three codes occur in the third category, *brand community*.

Figure 53: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.3

In the sentence highlighted in pink, we find the first code, *positive towards brand community*. This code is based on the fact that JL describes Ganni's efforts with building the hashtag #GanniGirls as 'nice', after having stated that she has a slightly positive perception of Ganni after having seen the stimuli in that category. She continues on to express that she can see the benefit of the hashtag, both for Ganni and for the women who use it, which leads us to the second code in this theme: *free publicity for Ganni and the #GanniGirls*. Of these aforementioned benefits, she lists free publicity as Ganni does not have to pay for online exposure of the brand. The content the brand gets in turn for urging consumers to use the hashtag generates a lot of free exposure on the Instagram profiles of private consumers, much like the content Ganni would normally have to pay influencers to create. At the same time, JL

states that the consumers using the hashtag get exposure in turn, as others can find their posts through the hashtag.

The final code in this theme is *frequent user of social media* which is evident throughout the entirety of JL's last two answers in the aforementioned third category:

recognition.. It is always nice to have a bit of boost in uhm [pause] sort of the happiness of "I've got this many likes on this photo" is always lovely. It's always good when you feel closer to the people.. especially with Covid, everybody has been feeling so isolated and just away from people and that even just as simple that brings people joy as clothing or any type of hobby, it is always good to have a community where you can express yourself and show new things and things like that.

M: Yeah. Would you say you're a part of many communities online yourself?

JL: Yeah, I mean I am on most if not all social media type sites. Uhm and I do sort of.. on Reddit and things follow uhm certain topics that I uhm I enjoy reading about or just want to keep up to date about. Uhm I'm very much a K-pop fan so uhm sort of Reddits on BTS it's always good to hear like just fan stories or uhm things that have happened or when they have been about and about sort uh there are stories from the meet and greet. It's just nice to get a better understanding uhm and being in England not in Korea it's not really easy for me to know more about it if I'm not there so it is nice to have the feel of the community where you feel that you are not alone. Especially for like a Korean boy band type thing it's not exactly a world known thing… well they are more world known now but uhm [pause] it did feel like nobody else really knew about them. But then you find a community where everyone knows about them.

Figure 54: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.3

Here she talks about how she is part of many online communities and what being part of (brand) communities can offer you. In the first highlighted fragment, she describes how being active on social media can offer a person a feeling of happiness from getting likes, while it can also help you feel connected to people you cannot spend time with physically or find people who share the same interest as you. It is evident that JL especially uses social media for the latter purpose, as she is active on most social media. One of her main purposes of being there appears to be to keep herself up to date on the latest news about Korean boy bands. In summation, JL remains positive towards Ganni after having seen the brand's efforts when it comes to creating an online brand community. A possible explanation for this could be that she is very active in many online communities herself.

7.4.5 Ganni's Reliability

The fifth and second to last theme identified in the interview with JL is **Ganni's reliability**. This theme consists of five codes: *fashion week is a quality stamp*, *is interested in the brand*, *enjoys to get to learn about Ganni*, *relates to the brand* and *ascribing Ganni attributes*.

The first four codes are found in the fourth category JL was exposed to, *brand stories*. In figure 55, the first three codes have been highlighted.
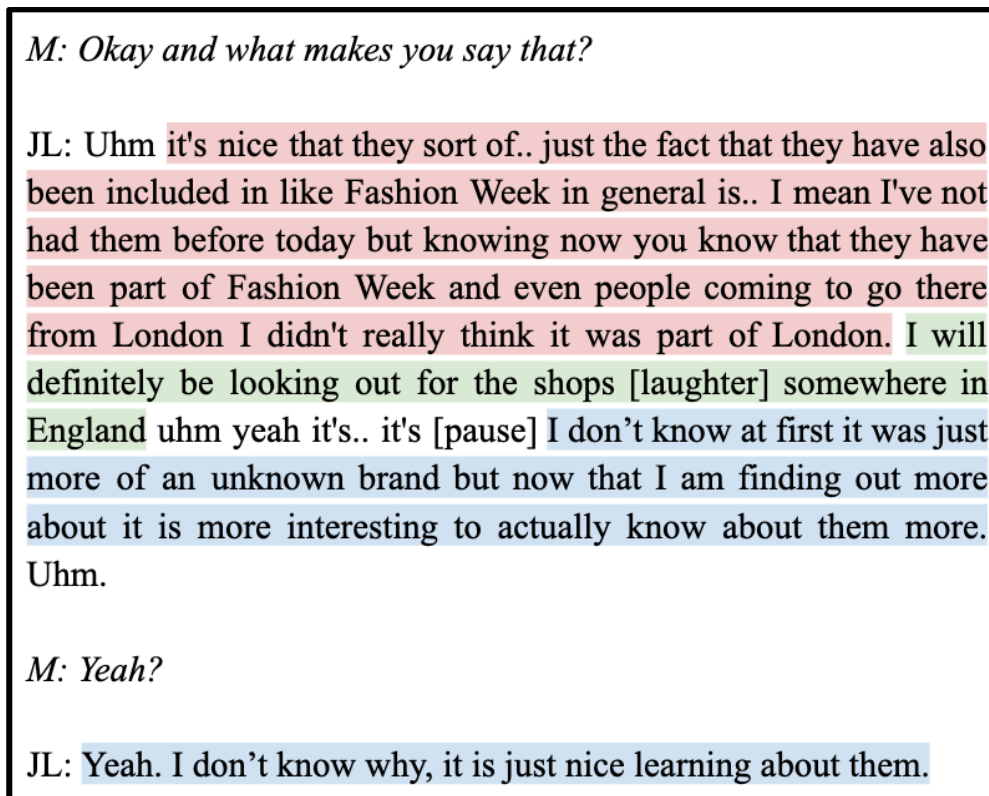
> M: *Okay and what makes you say that?*
>
> JL: Uhm it's nice that they sort of.. just the fact that they have also been included in like Fashion Week in general is.. I mean I've not had them before today but knowing now you know that they have been part of Fashion Week and even people coming to go there from London I didn't really think it was part of London. I will definitely be looking out for the shops [laughter] somewhere in England uhm yeah it's.. it's [pause] I don't know at first it was just more of an unknown brand but now that I am finding out more about it is more interesting to actually know about them more. Uhm.
>
> M: *Yeah?*
>
> JL: Yeah. I don't know why, it is just nice learning about them.

Figure 55: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.4

The first code, *fashion week is a quality stamp*, is deduced from the fragment highlighted in pink. Here JL talks about how she has never heard of Ganni before today, but that it is 'nice' that Ganni has been included in Fashion Week. Despite her not directly stating so, it becomes clear from the context that she perceives this as a positive thing, which is supported by the fact that she has just stated - previous to this answer - that she has a "slightly positive, going towards positive" perception of Ganni based on the stimuli she has just been exposed to. She also resonates her perception with the fact that Ganni has many prominent customers in London, as evident from the Vogue article. In addition, the following also contributes to this notion that fashion week is a quality stamp, as she says that she will be looking out for Ganni's stores. This has resulted in the code named *is interested in the brand*, which is marked green.

The third code, *enjoys to get to learn about Ganni*, is found in the two blue highlights in figure 55, as JL says that it is 'interesting' and 'nice' to find out more about Ganni and getting to know the brand. She continues to refer to Ganni in plural throughout the interview, referring to the brand through the pronouns 'they' and 'them', insinuating that she perceives Ganni as a living organism run by actual people and not as "just a fashion brand".

The fourth code in this theme is *relates to the brand*, which is found in continuation of the three codes we have just analysed, several times throughout her answer below:

> *M: Do you know what stands out to you the most from the brand stories and the articles?*
>
> JL: Hmm I like how.. I mean from the first uhm slides uhm from their webpage for about uhm the products they were very like I said I couldn't always relate to all of them because they seemed a bit too bold for me. But looking at the ones that are in the those article that wore it to 2021 fashion show in Denmark, uhm they seemed a lot more relatable to what I could uhm and would wear so it was nice to have a bit more of a.. or at least a feel of a feel of more personal connection and "yeah okay, I could see myself wearing that jumper" [pause] I could like.. I would actually like to wear something like that rather than sort of the website a lot of money uhm and not something I would choose to wear it was a bit hard to relate to wanting to buy those products and so seeing the ones like "yeah I would wear those".

Figure 56: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.4

As seen from the pink highlight, JL actually started off by saying that she does not quite relate to Ganni, due to the boldness of the clothing featured on the product page we showed her in the first category, *website*. This has changed, however, after seeing some of Ganni's items featured in the articles from Vogue and The Culture Trip, which has caused her to see herself actually wearing the clothes as she states three times in the last three highlighted fragments.

The last code is *ascribing Ganni attributes* which occurs three times in the last category, *content marketing*:

Figure 57: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.6

The first time this code occurs is in the highlighted fragment above. Here JL ascribes Ganni an attribute of being down to earth and there for its customers. She argues for this perception as she perceives Ganni as being open and talking to the customers about important issues, by which she probably refers to both the issues of responsible consumption and the values communicated through the description of #GanniGirls. At the same time, she highlights how Ganni Repeat even offers the customers a place for reselling or renting items.

The second and third time the code occurs is later on in the last category:

Figure 58: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.6

Here JL repeats her description from before, namely of Ganni being down to earth and catering to every possible need of the customers. She continues this train of thought by describing being a Ganni customer as a nice and friendly experience.

Based on the codes in this theme, we consider there to be a theme about how JL perceives Ganni as being reliable in the sense that it is a sturdy brand that has built a connection to its customers, causing the latter to feel a sense of trust towards Ganni and its endeavours. This notion is enhanced by her descriptions of how she likes to learn more about the brand and how she relates to the brand.

7.4.6 Approval of Efforts

In this final theme, **approval of efforts**, we find four codes: *favours the uniqueness of the embroidering and stickers*, *positive towards the entirety of the physical advertising*, *positive towards stickers* and *impressed by content*.

The first code, *favours the uniqueness of the embroidering and stickers*, is evident in the pink highlight below:

Figure 59: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.5

This code appears in the fifth category, *physical advertising*, where JL argues for her positive perception by emphasising how she loves the embroidering service Ganni offers its customers in the store in Paris, which she - in combination with the stickers - describes as having a unique touch to it. Based on her positive perception, this unique touch must be perceived as a positive

thing for her. The second code, *positive towards the entirety of the physical advertising*, is also seen in the answer above, highlighted in green, as she states that it was all of the stimuli that contributed to her positive perception of Ganni's efforts regarding physical advertising.

The third code is *positive towards stickers*. In addition to JL admiring the stickers in the answer seen in the figure above, she also describes how and why she feels this way both before and after the scenario in figure 59.

JL: Yeah, I like how simplistic it is done and still gets the message across but it's not sort of in your face it's very.. it is nice to look at. Uhm I like that they have gone around with the stickers and sort of thing. It really does bring a sense of if you're in the know then when we see them you know you get a sense of excitement and "uh someone been here for this" and yeah. Rather than just the shop is the only thing or uhm really bold in your face poster that sort of you get bored at or annoyed at everytime you see it. It is nice to just have something that is just simplistic.

Figure 60: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.5

From this quote seen above, we can derive that JL gets a feeling of excitement from the placement of stickers around Paris, as she likes the mystery of who might have done it. This excitement is enforced in her other mentionings of the stickers:

> M: Yeah. Can you think of an example of another brand that does these things that made an impact on you?
>
> JL: Uhhhm hm hm hm hm. [pause] the only thing I can think off is definitely not such a major brand but when I went to university and they had like the freshers week or the local businesses that do whatever they could to promote their business and there's a business and it was like "Dixie chicken" or something like that, it was just like take away. They had a sticker thing that you could put on things like that uhm and I do know because my boyfriend makes or has put together my computer and his computer and they sort of gave sort of a clock sticker sort of just little things [pause] like that. It just makes it feel more special when you put it on, it just reminds you of it. Even if you don't put it out and about, I mean.. I stuck my clockers one on my table and it's there every time, and when I see it it's like "the computer was made and I think back to it".

Figure 61: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.5

In the first highlight, she talks about how she has once received stickers from a restaurant. Exactly why she remembers this otherwise insignificant experience, is explicated in the second highlight as she describes how the sticker reminds her of time spent with a loved one. Thereby, she perceives stickers as excellent reminders for nice moments as the sticker can function as a catalyst for reliving the feeling you had when you experienced the aforementioned moment.

The final code in this theme and in the analysis of the interview with JL is *impressed by content*. This code occurs several times throughout the interview, with the first occurrences being when JL says "*Oh wow*" and "*That's cool*" in response to the stimuli shown in the physical advertising category (Appendix 5.4.5). These reactions show that she is impressed and perhaps a bit surprised by the material that Ganni has produced for the physical advertising. A similar reaction is seen to the slide about Ganni Repeat, where JL utters: "*Oh wow, that's cool*" (Appendix 5.4.6).

The code also occurs throughout the following answer:

> *M: So based on this what would you say your perception of Ganni is now?*
>
> JL: Positive, very positive I'd say. That's really cool. I love how it got a sort of a.. uhm reusability to it but then also uhm me being me I love photography so the fact that they just put a book that is not solely .. it is everything mixed matched and uhm sort of going.. and the podcast as well. The fact that it makes them feel so down to earth and uhm and really there for the consumer, for their community.. letting them know and talk about the issues and that.. having somewhere they can sell or even rent items.. I have never heard about that before really. I have heard of people in photography, the fashion industry sort of buying clothes and then sending them back, you know not taking the tag of and things like that. But I have never heard of something a business doing sort of uhh [pause] apart from places that are just made for that, for like prom dresses or things like that, things that are way to expensive and uhm you know one-time-use but if for just normal everyday - I say everyday - so normal clothes.. expensive clothes.. but sort of everyday clothes that are rented out is such a foreign concept for me but so cool [laughing]

Figure 62: Screenshot from appendix 5.4.6

Here JL describes how she has a very positive perception of all the three efforts in *content marketing*, which include the book Gimme More, the podcasts Ganni Talks and Ganni Repeat. She explains her enthusiasm towards the book with her own hobby of photography. When it comes to her perception of Ganni Repeat, she is very impressed with both the reusability aspect of it (as found in 7.4.3, JL cares about responsibility) and the fact that the service even exists. As she says, she knows of services that rent out clothing for special occasions, but not for what she refers to as "everyday clothes". Having analysed the codes in this theme, it is very evident that JL truly approves of Ganni's marketing efforts which has formed the basis of the theme name, **approval of efforts**.

7.4.7 Recap of Analysis

Based on the preceding analysis of the interview with JL, we have found that she values the visual expression of marketing efforts which she considers Ganni as being good at. She started off being reluctant about the price, as she knows what she is willing to pay for things which is not anywhere near what Ganni charges per item. However, JL also cares about sustainability and believes that sustainability or responsibility efforts can justify the high price point. In addition, Ganni's efforts in all six categories but especially content marketing contributes even more to her considering the price as justified, based on the effort Ganni puts into creating the content and the services offered to the customers, as she perceives Ganni as doing all the right things.

Throughout the interview, JL's perception of Ganni's brand image continues to increase in level of positivity:
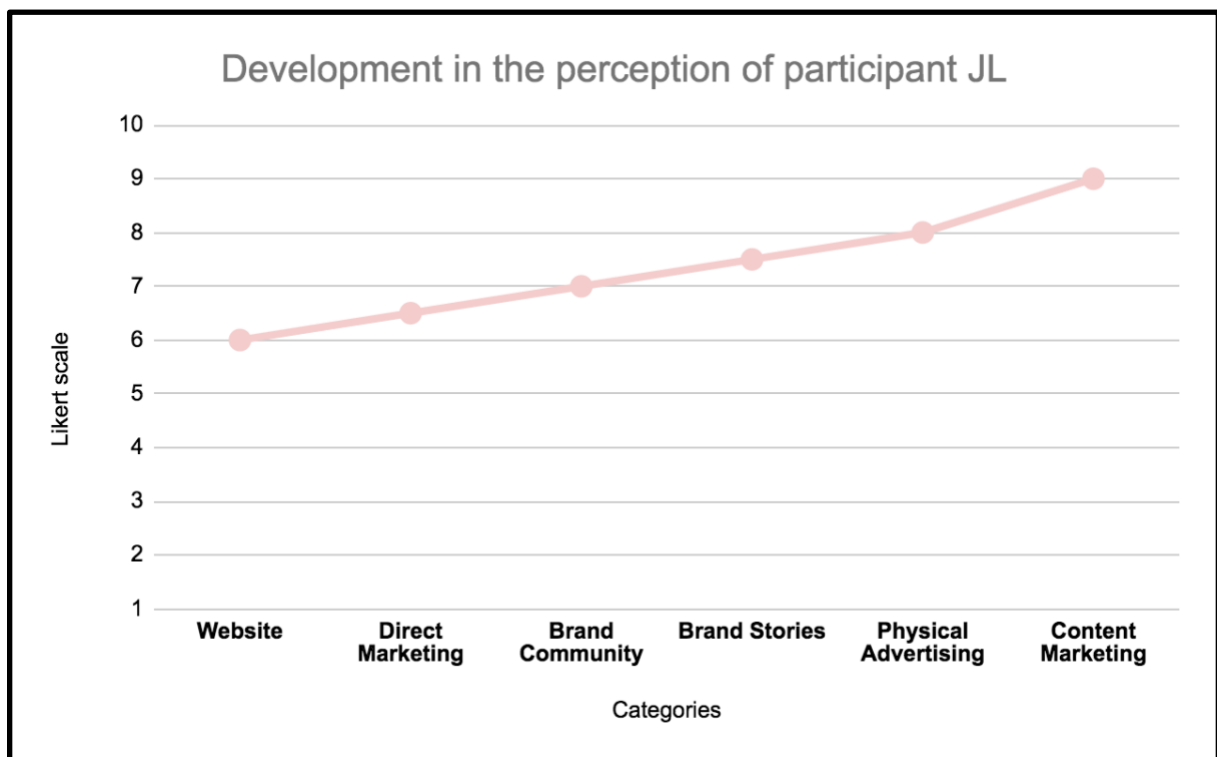
Graph 4

As evident from the graph, she never perceives stimuli in a negative way as her perception never decreases. Two times she places herself between two points on our Likert scale, causing her perception to always increase by half a point, except in the final category where her

perception improves by a whole point. This means that it is in the final category, *content marketing*, that her perception improves the most. This is in line with how JL talks about the different initiatives, as it is quite clear from the analysis that she was most positive and excited about Ganni's content marketing.

7.5 Participant JW

In the interview with participant JW, we have identified four themes based on the underlying codes. The themes are **things Ganni does well**, **reasoning through own circumstances**, **prices** and **scepticism**. JW is the first participant which was exposed to the second version of the presentation where *website* is the last category, which is also the case for the subsequent analyses (Appendix 2.2).

7.5.1 Things Ganni Does Well

The first theme we encounter in the interview with participant JW is **things Ganni does well**. The theme is based on the six following codes: *appreciates the responsibility despite not being sustainable*, *aesthetically pleasing store*, *the content within content marketing is generally positive*, *values that Ganni is more than Instagram*, *feels reassured that the owners are platforming themselves* and *impressed by Ganni Repeat*.

The very first thing that JW says when elaborating on her perception being somewhat positive, after we have exposed her to the first category, *direct marketing*, is that she respects that Ganni says that it is not sustainable but is trying, as seen below:

JW: Uhmmmmm [pause] I guess somewhat positive. I respect that they say that they are not sustainable and that they are just trying.. uhm [pause] yeah I think somewhat positive, slightly positive.

Figure 63: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.1

It is also in this argument that the first code within this theme is found, namely *appreciates the responsibility despite not being sustainable*. As this is the first thing JW chooses to say, we interpret her answer as if she is someone who values ethical and responsible production.

The second code, *aesthetically pleasing store,* is found in *physical advertising* where JW chooses to split the content from the presentation into different parts. She seems to do this in order to focus on each thing more thoroughly, where she begins with the store. Here, she states "*So I like the store [pause] I was like that's nice, very aesthetically pleasing*" (Appendix 5.5.4).

The rest of the codes are all present in the category of content marketing. Here, the first thing JW says is that she believes that the content which we have just shown her is generally positive:

> JW: Yeah. I think those things are generally positive, aren't they?

Figure 64: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.5

Based on this, we have named the code *the content within content marketing is generally positive*. This can also be seen in connection to the next code which is evident in JW saying that she values that Ganni goes beyond Instagram as seen in the text marked green:

> JW: Yeah. I think those things are generally positive, aren't they? Like, the last ones particularly, uhm it is good that they offer their service. Uhm [pause] the first page with the podcasts and interviews. And those ones I think is uhm is good because it takes the culture beyond like you just scrolling on Instagram, comparing yourself to other people uhm so like that seems like it could be interesting. Uhm I also think it is probably quite good that the owners are platforming themselves to some extent because that then requires a level of accountability and people know who they are and can challenge them if they need to. Uhm the uhm the middle one I mean, yeah, a bit odd. Uhm but that is sort of branding, isn't it? So yeah, overall slightly positive.

Figure 65: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.5

Despite JW's answer beginning with mentioning the podcast, we interpret her answer as if she focuses more on valuing that Ganni goes beyond the brand community on Instagram than the actual contents of the podcasts. Because of this, the code is *values that Ganni is more than Instagram*. This code can also be seen in close connection to the subsequent paragraph in figure 65, which is marked yellow, as JW likes that the owners of Ganni are visible on the different

platforms as part of Ganni's marketing as it results in them being held accountable. Based on this we have named the code *feels reassured that the owners are platforming themselves*.

The last code, *impressed by Ganni Repeat*, is evident in three places, all in content marketing. The first place is seen in the very beginning of her answer, where she highlights the "*last one particularly*" when having just seen the slides (Appendix 5.5.5). The last two occurrences are seen in the end of content marketing, the first being when we ask her which of the three initiatives within content marketing stood out the most to her. To this question, JW answers that it is Ganni Repeat, thus she is impressed by Ganni Repeat again, as seen in the text highlighted green:

M: Okay. yeah, and what would you say stands out to you the most? Because I know that we have three different ones in this category. So would you say it is the podcast universe, or the book or the platform, called Ganni Repeat?

JW: Yeah that Repeat and preloved.

M: Okay. Yeah?

JW: Yeah, I feel like every brand should offer a service like that. So it is good, because not everyone does for sure, even sustainable brands don't do that. I respect that [laughter]

Figure 66: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.5

The code is also evident in the part which is highlighted yellow in figure 66, as she states that she both believes that every brand should do it, that it is good that Ganni does it (because few brands do) and that she respects that Ganni does it. We interpret JW's answer as being indisputable; she is impressed by Ganni Repeat. Consequently, JW seems to really believe that Ganni does a number of things well.

7.5.2 Reasoning Through Own Circumstances

The second theme we encounter in the interview is **reasoning through own circumstances**. The theme is based on the following codes: *Likes enough information*, *profession influences opinions*, *justifying her critical opinions*, *not influenced by influencers* and *thinks she is very negative*.

The first code, *likes enough information*, is evident in two statements. The first time it occurs is in the category of *direct marketing*, when JW elaborates on the fact that she needs more information about the sneakers being made from grapes, in order to fully understand and believe this (Appendix 5.5.1). The second place the code is evident is when JW is presented with the contents of the *website*, namely the home page and the product page with the prices, where she states:

> homepage isn't really uhm really flashy and I like that their like sustainable what was.. The report was like included there and there's a lot of information as well as like them trying to sell themselves. So I think actually like moving to towards positive. So

Figure 67: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.6

After this, she says that she is moving towards positive on the Likert scale (Appendix 5.2.6). It is clear that she likes to be informed and receive enough information, and her perception of Ganni's brand image is highly connected to how much information she receives.

The second code is *profession influences opinions* which is evident in two statements both within the category of *brand community*. We know that JW studies law from the questionnaire, but she chooses to state that "*I should say I am like training to be a human rights lawyers so I'm gonna have this sort of critical view of things*" (Appendix 5.5.2). Because of the scope of her profession, namely that she knows a lot about human rights, we believe that her profession influences opinions, which she also seems to believe. This last-mentioned part is specifically seen in her using her profession as reasoning for her said critical view, as seen in the underlying phrase in the quote. The second occurrence of this code is seen in JW's statement marked green in figure 68. Here, she states that she wants to want to be a GanniGirl, but she cannot because of her aforementioned critical view of things. Consequently, we interpret this as if JW to a large

degree uses her profession as reasoning for perceiving Ganni's brand image as something negative:

JW: I really want to be GanniGirls [laughter]

M: *When you write a thesis about Ganni you learn all the things you perhaps don't know as a consumer so we are not just uhm loving Ganni. So it is okay.*

JW: You are probably approaching it critically as well [laughter]

Figure 68: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.2

The emphasis on the critical view is also seen in the next code, *justifying her critical opinions*, as seen in the sentence marked pink in figure 68. Here, we have just assured her that it is okay for her to be critical and that we are not going to be offended by her opinions, to this, she emphasises that we are "*probably approaching it critically as well*", which we interpret as her trying to ease her mind by justifying her critical opinions with the fact that she is not alone in having critical opinions, as underlined in the quote.

The next code, *not influenced by influencers*, appears when JW is informing us about her perception of the brand stories (Appendix 5.2.3). Here, she says that she did not recognise any of the influencers from the articles, as seen in the highlighted text:

it. The uhmm the article that was like "this is why everyone wants to be a GanniGirls" I guess it's annoying because not everyone wants to be a GanniGirl uhh. And then [pause] the other.. the one about the London the yeah I mean I didn't recognise any of those people so that has no effect on me and making me be like "oh that famous person I know wears it so maybe I will buy it as well" and uhm the initial statement on the first one uhm.. I mean it's positive

Figure 69: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.3

However, what we find most important in terms of the code is her saying that because she did not recognise any of them, it has no effect on her in terms of being influenced to purchase an

item. We interpret her saying that as a very self-aware and critical comment to seeing the brand stories, as the surrounding codes for the category is from the theme **criticism** which seems to almost merge with this code. However, we believe that JW's comment is not about her "just being critical" but more a result of her profession, as she seems used to search for injustice. JW seems to agree with this as seen in the last code, *thinks she is very negative*. This code occurs in the very last part of *physical advertising*, where she exclaims "*God I'm really negative*" (Appendix 5.5.4). This shows us that she is aware of her high level of criticism, but also seems a bit insecure about it, as she keeps commenting on it.

7.5.3 Prices

The third theme we encounter in the interview with JW is **prices**, which is based on the following codes: *the prices are high*, *the price stands out the most* and *the price is justified if the quality is good*.

The first code we encounter in this theme is *the prices are high*. This code is evident in two statements, both of which are uttered in connection to the last category that JW is exposed to, *website*. The code occurs the first time in the green sentence fragment:

Figure 70: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.6

This is her first response to us asking her to rate her perception, where she describes the prices as 'really expensive'. The second place the code is evident is later in the same answer, where she seems to conclude on her entire answer:

Figure 71: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.6

From these two statements, it is evident that JW believes that the prices are high to such a degree that she seems to not really understand the specific price point for the collar. The fact that she uses the adjective 'expensive', as seen in figure 70, creates connotations of something being too high a price and not worth the price point.

This focus on the prices is also seen in the second code in this theme which is also found in *website*. The second code is called *the price stands out the most*, and is evident in the text highlighted green:

> JW: Uhmmm I think the first thing that stands out is the price, isn't it? Uhm but then when you think about buying new clothing that is hopefully of good quality of like more.. It is not high fashion but more that way.. Then you kind of expect that price point.

Figure 72: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.6

As JW directly states, she thinks that the price is the first thing that stands out, when seeing the website. Moreover, she poses the rhetorical question after stating this, namely "*isn't it?*". We interpret this question as her assuming that it is the only logical answer to our question, which is supported by her continuing to speak rather than waiting for us to answer. Thus, JW seems to believe that the price stands out to such a high degree that whether the prices are high seems as a rhetorical question rather than an actual question.

The last code in this theme is *the price is justified if the quality is good*. This code occurs right after the previous code, and is marked yellow in figure 72 above. Here, JW includes the quality of clothes to her otherwise rather negative answer concerning the high price point. She states that when one is buying new clothing, it is hopefully of good quality and therefore one is more inclined to expect a higher price point. Thus, she seems to have started to believe that the price is justified if the quality is good.

7.5.4 Scepticism

The fourth and last theme we encounter in the interview is **scepticism**. The theme is based on the following codes: *does not like it, critical towards the responsibility, sees the brand community as a strategy, would not participate in the community, concerned that the #GanniGirls are being taken advantage of, negative towards #GanniGirls, not impressed by brand stories, the inclusivity feels forced, disappointed by the embroidery, does not approve of the stickers* and *disappointed by the lack of inclusivity*.

The first code, *does not like it*, occurs four times throughout four different categories. The first occurrence is seen in *direct marketing*, where JW talks about why her perception is somewhat negative for the category. Here she says:

JW: Cool. Hmmmmm. Yeah so i like that included the responsibility report as well as like promotion uhm of their clothes. Uhmm the other one I felt like uh I didn't really like the shoes [laughter] like I probably wouldn't wear them myself.

Figure 73: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.1

The second occurrence is seen in the category of *physical advertising*, where she says:

something with a bit more meaning behind it. Also something about that logo looks.. like is it… I don't know what it reminds me of.. Something like the UN or something like..do you know about.. so there is a bit like that so yeah it's kind of annoying. But I guess

Figure 74: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.4

The third occurrence of the code is seen in *content marketing*, where she talks about the book Gimme More, as she states:

are and can challenge them if they need to. Uhm the uhm the middle one I mean, yeah, a bit odd. Uhm but that is sort of branding, isn't it? So yeah, overall slightly positive.

Figure 75: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.5

The fourth and last occurrence of the code is seen in the category *website*, as JW begins by saying that the prices are high and that she does not like the clothes:

> so.. it's weird because I don't think I would.. [pause] Definitely after those pictures on the shop.. I wouldn't wear those clothes. So

Figure 76: Screenshot from appendix 5.2.6

From these four statements, it is evident that JW experiences several moments throughout the interview where she seems to directly dislike the products or services that we present to her.

The next code, *critical towards the responsibility*, is evident in the last part of the category direct marketing. Here, JW has just informed us that she likes receiving enough information, as analysed in the previous theme, **reasoning through own circumstances**, and she states the following marked with green:

> [pause] Uhm but again it is good that they are trying to think of different alternatives and then uhm.. [pause] was it.. [pause] on the next one.. was it the jeans were made of organic? Yeah so use less water but then I know that there's also recycled cotton which is even better so uhm it like could be better. Yeah.

Figure 77: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.1

From this, it is evident that JW thinks that it is positive for the fashion industry to think of different alternatives for materials, but she also knows that the organic cotton that Ganni advertises for is not the most responsible cotton there is. Thus, she possesses information before this interview, which makes her view the presentation in a more critical way.

The third code, *community as a strategy*, occurs in two places, in brand community and brand stories. The first occurs in JW's answer to her perception after having seen the presentation concerning brand community, as she states the following marked with green:

> JW: Hmpf. Uhmm. [sighs] [pause] ugh it's difficult. I feel like it's clever because this is like modern marketing right? So this is how you get to young consumers uhm and at the end of the day everyone.. uhm a lot of people just want to be featured and grow their own platforms and this is a way for them to get more uhm exposure. Uhmm it's never.. not something I would never do so for me I'm like nnnnnh somewhat negative [pause] I think.

Figure 78: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.2

The second place the code occurs in is brand stories where she she feels like the brand community is build on a fake foundation, as she says it feels like Ganni has decided to include pictures of diverse models just to be able to show the that it is diverse without actually being it, as seen in figure 79:

> everyone" [laughter]. And uhm I.. it just feels.. I mean it's good but it feel a bit tick boxes like "let's get a diverse.. a picture of diverse models to make it seem as if we're being inclusive" and let's say a statement that is saying a paragraph but not really saying much, you know? So uhm maybe somewhat negative? By the way that I have just said all of that [laughter]. But not really, like they are all just like that now aren't they? That is how marketing brands function.. so yeah, kinda neutral to be expected.

Figure 79: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.3

From this, JW seems very negative towards the brand community, but she still ends with rhetorically stating to herself that all brands are "*like that now, aren't they?*".

The next code, *would not participate in the community*, is also seen in brand community, where she states that she would never participate in an online brand community:

> exposure. Uhmm it's never.. not something I would never do so for me I'm like nnnnnh somewhat negative [pause] I think.

Figure 80: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.2

This connects to the next code, *concerned that the #GanniGirls are being taken advantage of*, which occurs twice in brand community. The first occurrence is seen here:

> JW: Because realistically they are just getting free marketing from like young potentially like vulnerable women uhm [pause] but I

Figure 81: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.2

The second occurrence is seen as we ask her why she thinks that she is negative towards #GanniGirls:

> JW: Uhmmmmmm [pause] [sighs] I think it's the use of [pause] like individual.. like I don't think I mind the Danish fashion brand that posted the #GanniGirl because at the end of the day if they're.. they're doing their own marketing if that makes sense uhm and I guess they're selling Ganni stuff so uhm like it all works together but then [pause] what benefit to that girl that's posted that picture the consumer that posted the picture is there.. [pause] I mean to her like the very small thing of getting some likes but to Ganni it is like okay yeah how many people are going to buy Ganni because that girl in her Ganni? Yeah it's like from

Figure 82: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.2

From these two occurrences, it is clear that JW feels that Ganni is getting off too easy when the community within #GanniGirls seems to be driven by the consumers rather than Ganni. Despite this being the premise of the brand community, she is very concerned that the #GanniGirls are being taken advantage of, as she believes that Ganni has much more to gain than the consumers.

Therefore, it is no surprise that JW is *negative towards #GanniGirls*, which is the next code. This occurs two times, where the first is seen in brand community where we ask her if the hashtag is positive or negative:

> M: Okay, would you say it's more negative or positive when you see the hashtag?
>
> JW: Uhhh it's like more.. kind of more negative.

Figure 83: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.2

The second occurrence is seen in *brand stories*, where she points out the name of one of the articles:

> it. The uhmm the article that was like "this is why everyone wants to be a GanniGirls" I guess it's annoying because not everyone wants to be a GanniGirl uhh. And then [pause] the other.. the one

Figure 84: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.3

Based on this, JW seems to feel negatively about #GanniGirls, as she is annoyed that the articles assume that everyone simply wishes to be a Ganni Girl.

This connects closely with the next code, *not impressed by brand stories*, as she believes that fashion brands are mentioned in articles like the one from Vogue frequently:

> JW: Uhmm.. [pause] uhhh [laughs frustratingly] I don't really know! Kinda neutral I'm sorry, it doesn't really do anything. Uhmm [pause] I feel like things like this are always going to get featured in Vogue or in any fashion brand.. And I don't really read it. The uhmm the article that was like "this is why everyone wants

Figure 85: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.3

Thus, JW feels like Ganni being featured in a fashion article is not something to be impressed by and she also does not read articles like this currently nor does she seem to want to.

The next code, *the inclusivity feels forced*, is seen in brand stories, where she does not see the statements concerning inclusivity as anything groundbreaking, as Ganni has to state these things, in order to live up to the brand image being very inclusive in terms of "Ganni being for everyone":

> uhm the initial statement on the first one uhm.. I mean it's positive so that they have to sort of increase these statement. They kinda have to in today's day and age and [pause] and particularly when their whole movement is framed on gender identity and they kinda have to be like "oh we're saying girls but we really mean everyone" [laughter]. And uhm I.. it just feels.. I mean it's good

Figure 86: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.3

The next code, *disappointed by the embroidery*, is seen as JW comments on the store after having seen the physical advertising. Here, she is disappointed by the embroidery service, as she thought it was a tailoring service:

> JW: [pause] Uhmm I think the different things changed my perception if that's okay to like to go into.. To split them up.. So I like the store [pause] I was like "that's nice, very aesthetically pleasing" [pause] uhm I thought you were gonna say that the embroidery thing was them tailoring them for people so I thought that was going to be cooler than it was [laughter]. Uhm but uhm

Figure 87: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.4

She is also sceptical of other parts of the physical advertising, as she *does not approve of the stickers*, as seen here:

embroidery thing was them tailoring them for people so I thought that was going to be cooler than it was [laughter]. Uhm but uhm yeah I like that [pause] uhm the stickering.. uh I don't like because stickering is typically like used by anti-fascist movements and like football clubs and stuff like that.. but stickering usually has something with a bit more meaning behind it. Also something about that logo looks.. like is it... I don't know what it reminds me of.. Something like the UN or something like..do you know about.. so there is a bit like that so yeah it's kind of annoying. But I guess loads of places do stickering now to be fair. I know like Stussy and like all of those places tend to do stickers when you buy stuff, but I don't know just to see it like on the drain pipes.. yeah it is a bit.. it is like taking the meaning away from the purpose of stickering in my opinion. And the billboards uhmm [pause][sighs] I mean

Figure 88: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.4

In figure 88, JW states several things about the stickers: She believes that stickers are used for other purposes than what Ganni uses them for, that the logo on the stickers reminds her of the UN (which she feels is annoying) and that she dislikes the placements of the stickers in Paris.

The last code, *disappointed by the lack of inclusivity*, is seen towards the end of the interview and JW's comments in *website*. Here, she highlights a negative thing, namely that the sizing is not inclusive enough:

themselves. So I think actually like moving to towards positive. So yeah, that.. Like somewhat positive. I think, [pause] a negative is that their sizing of all those ones are all women of similar size so it is not very representative uhm [pause] and yeah, I guess that..

Figure 89: Screenshot from appendix 5.5.6

Here, JW believes that the women all look similar and are therefore not representative, which is why she is disappointed by the lack of inclusivity.

7.5.5 Recap of Analysis

Throughout the interview, JW's perception of Ganni's brand image reached its most negative point at brand community (with 4 of 9) and its highest at content marketing (with 7 out of 9):
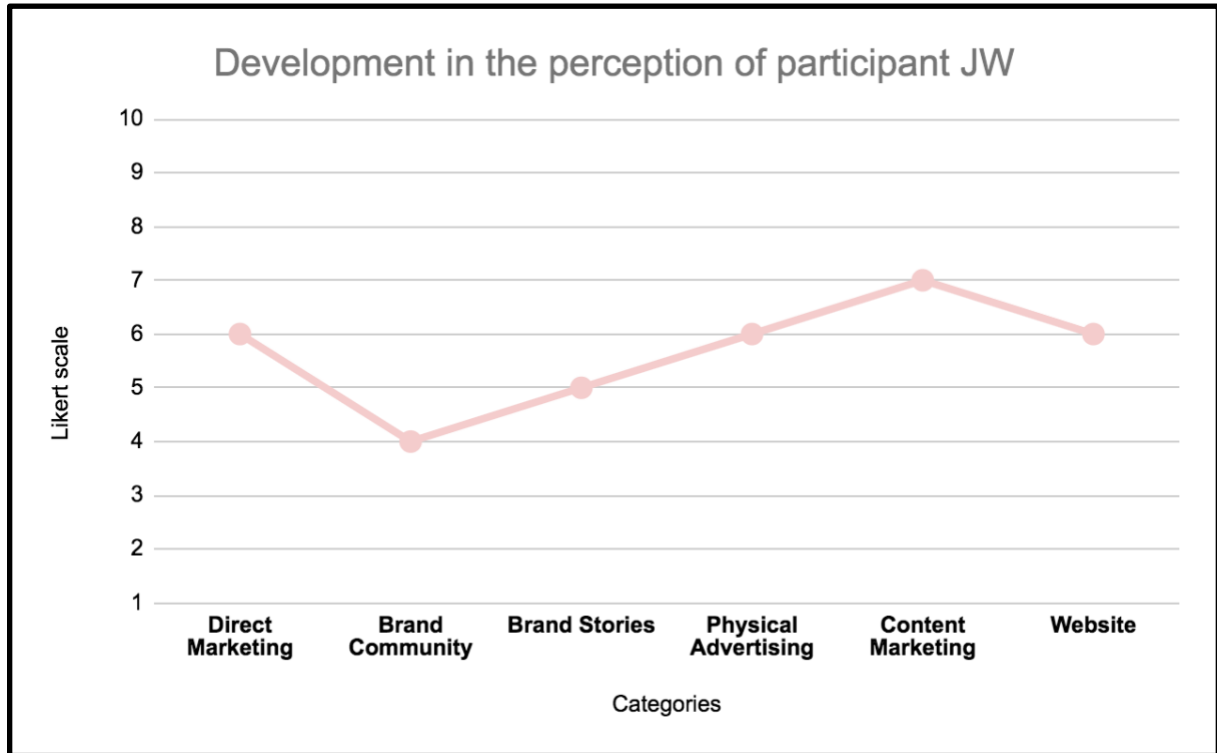
Graph 5

What is characteristic for JW is the theme of **reasoning through own circumstances** and **scepticism**. The first is evident in her being in the progress of becoming a human rights lawyer, which seems to result in her being biassed by her profession, as she appears to look for things to be sceptical about in the interview. This connects very closely to the theme **scepticism** being the theme consisting of the most codes out of all the themes for the eight analyses. Here, the codes within scepticism are present in all the six categories and she seems to be aware of the fact that she is sceptical in general (which is also a result of her profession) as well as a little ashamed of being this sceptical and critical. Consequently, scepticism and reasoning through own circumstances are what sums up the interview with JW.

7.6 Participant EH

The sixth interview we conducted was with participant EH. From this interview we have identified five themes: **ethical production**, **nice visual identity**, **using consumers feels more authentic**, **impressed by marketing efforts** and **critical towards brand**.

7.6.1 Ethical Production

The first theme we have identified is **ethical production**, which consists of three codes: *surprised by production method*, *innovative production method* and *values quality and ethical production method*. The first two codes are found in the first category that EH was exposed to, namely *direct marketing*, while the last code is evident in the last category she was exposed to, *website*.

The first code, *surprised by production method*, occurs in EH's spontaneous response to the second slide we showed her in the first category: "*Very cool. [looks at presentation] Yeah, I haven't heard about this before*" (Appendix 5.6.1). As evident from her statement, she has never heard of this production method before and therefore seems a bit surprised - and impressed - by the fact that it is possible to produce sneakers using grapes.

The second code, *innovative production method*, occurs later in that category after EH has answered that her perception of Ganni is very positive, which is the most positive perception possible on our Likert scale. When asked about what stands out to her the most from the two newsletters, she says: "*(...) and then just the overall kind of thinking outside the box and using different kinds of materials I think is really cool*" (Appendix 5.6.1). Here it is evident that it is the use of new and innovative types of materials that contributes to EH's very positive perception of Ganni.

The last code, *values quality and ethical production method*, is seen in the last category, *website*, where EH states:

> Uhm but I think the main thing was "wow the clothes are really expensive" [laughter]. That's really expensive. Uhm and in terms of like me as a consumer I do think that there's a lot of value in paying more money for something which is well made and sustainable and ethical but practically in terms of my lifestyle and my like economic means at this point it's just not something that I can really engage with. So I guess that would be [pause] somewhat negative then because of the price.. the price of those things mainly.

Figure 90: Screenshot from appendix 5.6.6

This fragment of her answer is uttered in a context where she has just been exposed to Ganni's website whereby she has learnt the prices of the items. The prices of the items have left her with a somewhat negative perception (4 out of 9 on our Likert scale), due to the high price point. She does, however, state that she considers there to be value in paying more for items that have been produced under sustainable and ethical conditions, making it evident that she values when brands attempt to produce clothing in a more ethical way. This notion is also supported by the two previous codes, as she articulates how she likes the innovative approach to responsible production.

7.6.2 Nice Visual Identity

Like in some of the other interviews we have conducted and analysed, the interview with EH was also characterised by the theme **nice visual identity** which is comprised of three codes: *nice use of colour*, *aesthetically pleasing store* and *likes billboards*.

The first code, *nice use of colour*, is found in the *direct marketing* category where EH says: "*Uhm I really like the use of colour in both of those, especially the first one. Uhm the colour behind the text and things like that (...)*" in response to our question about what stands out to her the most (Appendix 5.6.1). Based on this statement, EH likes how Ganni uses bold colours to create contrast between text and images and between the different segments in the newsletters.

The second and third codes, *aesthetically pleasing store* and *likes billboards*, are evident in the fourth category, *physical advertising*. After having been exposed to images from Ganni's flagship store in Paris, the use of stickers to promote #GanniGirls and the billboards around the world, EH states:

> M: Okay, so based on this physical advertisement what would you say your perception of Ganni is right now?
>
> EH: I think the stores was very cool, I like the layout and I like the pastel colours, uhm, it was very like aesthetically pleasing and like satisfying and I could imagine like looking through those clothes would be a very like satisfying experience. So I think that was very positive. Uhm [pause] I just don't like that logo. The stickers annoy me so I wasn't so keen on the like stickers around Paris thing. Uhm and then when it came to all the billboards and stuff I really like that, I thought that that was done really well. I especially like the one in front of the Eiffel Tower cause it kinda looked like when you have like band posters which I think is quite cool. So I would say uhm all in all with that kind of physical advertising I'd say slightly positive just cause the stickers and the logo is holding me back.

Figure 91: Screenshot from appendix 5.6.4

As EH states in the sentence highlighted in pink, she thinks the store looks cool and inviting due to the layout and the use of colours. She even refers to the store as 'aesthetically pleasing', while adding that she believes it would be a satisfying experience to visit the store and look through the clothing. In addition, she also likes Ganni's billboards as it is evident from the sentences highlighted in green, which corresponds to the aforementioned third code. Here she compares the billboard in Paris to band posters, which she appears to like since she describes them as cool.

Through the analysis of the codes in this theme, it is evident that EH perceives Ganni as having a **nice visual identity**, in terms of the visual style presented in the marketing efforts, both online and in the real world which contributes to a positive perception of the brand image.

7.6.3 Using Consumers Feels More Authentic

The third theme is **using consumers feels more authentic** which is derived from the following four codes: *appreciates content made by consumers*, *perceives brand communities to be effectful*, *using real people creates trust* and *values diversity*. The theme name is based on a rephrasing of a statement uttered by EH during the interview.

The first three codes are all seen in relation to the second category, *brand community*, where the first two codes occur before we even finish showing EH the stimuli in that category. During the second slide, she states:

> EH: [looks at presentation] Yeah I do like it when uhm when you get like content from brands which is made from people themselves. It's not something I've ever noticed as I didn't really know anything about Ganni before but uhm Dr. Martens do it and when I was looking at their shoes it is something that I've checked before when I've looked at shoes so I do think that's quite powerful.

Figure 92: Screenshot from appendix 5.6.2

The pink highlight corresponds to the code *appreciates content made by consumers*. This code is based on her statement that she likes content from brands which have been made by people themselves. Here she must mean that she likes it when consumers create content on behalf of the brand, which can be utilised by the brand to market themselves and by other consumers for e.g. inspiration for styling of the items, when talking about fashion. This is in line with the next code, *perceives brand communities to be effectful*, which has been highlighted in green, where she describes how she has previously used consumer-generated content from the footwear brand Dr. Martens when looking for a new pair of shoes, referring to it as 'powerful'.

The third code is *using real people creates trust*, which is - as mentioned above - also to be found in the brand community category:

> M: *But that is okay. So would you say it's the use of hashtags that really speaks to you here?*
>
> EH: I think it's more seeing how people.. how real people wear clothes and kind of how they wear it in a real environment uhm it gives you an idea of what how how clothes would look good with different things uhm and it also feels a bit more authentic because you kind of think even though I guess these people sometimes have uh like sponsorships and whatever it feels more like they actually appreciate the clothes that they are wearing and they like them more themselves I guess.

Figure 93: Screenshot from appendix 5.6.2

As EH states at the beginning of the answer in figure 93, she likes seeing how real people actually wear the clothes, as it can give a better idea of what the clothes look like in reality. At the same time, she perceives the depiction of the clothing as more authentic as you, when observing, get the feeling that they like the clothing and themselves. Thereby, EH perceives the message as more trustworthy when coming from a consumer (although they might have received the items for free or at a discounted price) than when simply marketed by the brand itself.

The final code in this theme is *values diversity* which is derived from the following statement: "*(...) I think the uh the celebration of diversity and everything like that I think is obviously really great (...)*" (Appendix 5.6.3). From this statement, uttered in the third category concerning *brand stories*, it is clear that EH perceives diversity and the celebration hereof as a positive aspect of Ganni's marketing efforts.

7.6.4 Impressed by Marketing Efforts

This brings us to the fourth theme identified in the interview with EH, namely **impressed by marketing efforts**, which is derived from four different codes: *very fond of brand community*

content, *likes the Vogue article*, *impressed by embroidery service* and *impressed by Ganni Repeat*.

Very fond of brand community content, which is the first code, occurs in the brand community category, where EH has just been exposed to stimuli regarding the use of #GanniGirls. Her initial reaction is seen below:

M: What would you say your perception of Ganni is now?

EH: Yeah I think [pause] I mean I kind of said very, very positive before uhm but if it was possible for me to say more positive then I would. So maybe before I should have been more conservative and said 'positive' because now it is more.

Figure 94: Screenshot from appendix 5.6.2

As evident from the highlighted answer, EH is very positive about Ganni's brand community. In fact, she is so positive that she wishes she had been more able to contain her excitement in the first category, as she now describes her perception of Ganni as even more positive than before.

EH also *likes the Vogue article*, which happens to be the name of the next code. When exposed to the Vogue article about British Ganni consumers celebrating fashion week on home turf, she states "*(...) and the Vogue article was good as well, I can see that it's like very slick and uh yeah very stylish in like a holistic kind of way*" (Appendix 5.6.3). She argues for her reasons for liking it by calling the article 'slick' and 'stylish' in a "holistic kind of way", by which we perceive that she means that the article is aesthetically pleasing as a whole.

The third code is *impressed by embroidery service* which is evident in the fourth category, *physical advertising*. The code becomes evident after EH is exposed to the information about the embroidery service that Ganni offers customers in relation to the opening of the flagship store in Paris, where she reacts by saying "*Cool. Very cool*" (Appendix 5.6.4).

In relation to the aforementioned code, we find the final code in this theme where EH is also impressed by Ganni's marketing efforts, namely *impressed by Ganni Repeat*. This code

manifests itself three times in the second to last category, *content marketing*, where EH is exposed to stimuli concerning Ganni Repeat. The first time the code occurs is through her spontaneous response to the slide concerning Ganni Repeat, where she utters the phrase "*That's really cool*" (Appendix 5.6.5). The second time it occurs is when EH is to describe her current perception of Ganni, in relation to which she says "*(...) I do think that the service to like rent and resell is a really cool idea and I don't know why more places don't do that*" (Appendix 5.6.5). In continuation hereof, she describes her perception as very positive which she ascribes to the concept of Ganni Repeat. She even states that she does not know why more brands do not do that, thereby insinuating that she considers the idea to be so good that all brands should do it. This fondness of the platform is enhanced in the last time the code occurs, which is when EH is asked if she has used a service like this before to which she answers:

> M: Yeah. Have you used a service like this before?
>
> EH: Never through uh clothes [pause] like a brand but I use like Depop a lot. Like a lot of my clothes are from Depop. Uhm and I've also had some pretty bad experiences from Depop where I've like tried to buy something and the person just like ghosts me and I never hear from them again. So at least if it was a brand uhm you have that like additional level of trust and it like deals with a lot of the waste and like.. is a lot more sustainable approach to like clothes and is like a good antidote to fast fashion so I think that's a really interesting idea.

Figure 95: Screenshot from appendix 5.6.5

In the figure above, EH describes her experiences with the consumer reselling platform Depop which are not all positive experiences. It is her assumption that using such a service through a specific brand will increase the level of trust, and ultimately avoid situations where agreements are broken. She finishes by describing Ganni Repeat as a good antidote to fast fashion and as a really interesting idea.

It is evident from the analysis of this theme that EH is very positive towards and impressed by a wide variety of Ganni's marketing efforts. However, she is not positive towards all of it, which brings us to the last theme.

7.6.5 Critical Towards Brand

The last theme identified in the interview with EH is **critical towards brand**. This theme is found on the basis of six codes: *finds logo inappropriate*, *not engaged by Gimme More and podcasts*, *surprised by generic website*, *no alignment between brand and website*, *high price point* and *would not buy the clothes realistically*.

The first code, *finds logo inappropriate*, refers to EH's perception of the #GanniGirls logo and occurs two times in the interview. The first occurrence is in relation to the first time the logo is shown, which is in the third category, *brand stories*:

M: So what would you say your perception of Ganni is now based on this?

EH: The only negative [pause] reaction I had to any of that was the pink picture which used that globe thing because it looks too much like the logo for the UN and that just felt like too much. It was kind of like I get what they're going for but then I'm also like yeah but you're not the UN you are like a fashion brand you know? Uhm and I think it just feels like maybe a bit of overkill. I get.. I totally get like the ethos that they're trying to promote but I think that would be a little bit more.. like it kind of made me like recoil a little bit so maybe I would say somewhat positive after

Figure 96: Screenshot from appendix 5.6.3

In the highlighted sequence above, EH compares the pink #GanniGirls logo to the UN logo which she perceives as being "*too much*" as Ganni is "just a fashion brand" selling fashion items, and not an international organisation working for world peace. This similarity with the UN logo made her, in her own words, recoil a little bit. The second time the code occurs is in relation to Ganni's physical marketing, as the logo is used on the stickers placed around Paris: "*I just don't like that logo. The stickers annoy me so I wasn't so keen on the like stickers around Paris thing*" (Appendix 5.6.4). As EH states in the quote, she dislikes the logo which causes her to find the stickers, which are portraying the logo, to be annoying.

The second code is *not engaged by Gimme More and podcasts*, which is seen in the fifth category, *content marketing*.

> M: *So based on this what would you say your perception is now?*
>
> EH: Uhm I think all the additional stuff like the book and.. I think I'm not someone who.. I mean I guess if you love the brand then maybe you would like really throw yourself into all of those things. But I don't think any of that really like engage me that much. But I do think that the service to like rent and resell is a really cool idea and I don't know why more places don't do that. Uhm so I would say very positive, very positive from that. Cause I think that's quite like yeah that's very different and I appreciate what they're trying to do there.

Figure 97: Screenshot from appendix 5.6.5

As it is evident from EH's statement in the highlighted sentence, she does not perceive the book, Gimme More, and the two podcast series, Ganni Talks, to be engaging and something that she would "throw herself into".

The last four codes are all to be found in the last category EH is exposed to, namely *website*. The first three codes can be seen below:

> *M: Okay. So based on this what would you say your perception is now?*
>
> EH: Well I guess two takeaways from that. I think that considering all of the additional like stuff they do to make themselves really interesting and different from other brands and I'm quite surprised to see that their website is actually very much like Monki and uhm Weekday like it's very much like similar to those kind of websites but I guess like it's a format that works so I understand why that would be. Uhm but I guess I was expecting it to be maybe a little bit more different considering they make such a big deal about being really different. Uhm but I think the main thing was "wow the clothes are really expensive" [laughter]. That's really expensive. Uhm and in terms of like me as a consumer I do think

Figure 98: Screenshot from appendix 5.6.6

The code *surprised by generic website* is highlighted in pink and is found as she perceives Ganni's website as being very similar to that of other fashion brands, such as the high street fashion brands Monki and Weekday. This surprises her as she perceives the rest of Ganni's marketing efforts as the brand attempting to differentiate itself from other fashion brands, which is why she was expecting the website to stand out more, which corresponds to the next code: *no alignment between brand and website*.

The second to last code, *high price point*, is evident from the blue highlight in figure 98 where EH states that her reaction to the content in the website category was that it was really expensive. Her using the word 'wow' indicates that she was quite surprised with how high the price point of Ganni's items actually is. This leads us to the last code, *would not buy the clothes realistically*, which is evident from the following statement:

> *M: Yeah so would you say the price is more important to you than the actual look and how the website is built?*
>
> *EH: Ummm yeah I think so. I think if I have.. if I had like more money to then make big purchases like that maybe it wouldn't affect me so much but uhm just in terms of like will I realistically be able to buy any of those clothes probably not.*

Figure 99: Screenshot from appendix 5.6.6

Here we have just asked EH whether she would say that the price is more important to her than the look and information architecture of the website, to which she responds that it is. She also states that she might feel differently if she had the money to spend on such items, but as she does not, it is not realistic that she would be able to purchase them. This is to no surprise for us, as EH has noted in the questionnaire that she spends less than £100 a month on fashion items, which is less than what most of the clothing items from Ganni cost.

As it is evident from the analysis of this theme, the brand she is critical towards is obviously Ganni. However, we have named this theme **critical towards brand** instead of "critical towards Ganni", as she is critical towards the attributes that she ascribes to the brand and not any objective factors concerning the brand. Her main criticism of the brand is the price point which she perceives as being too high, due to her own disposable income.

7.6.6 Recap of Analysis

In summation, we have through the analysis of all the themes identified in the interview with EH found that she likes Ganni's visual identity and the marketing efforts in general. She is impressed with most of Ganni's marketing efforts and values the brand's focus on ethical production. At the same time, she likes the idea of a brand community and believes that using consumers as a tool in the marketing creates a sense of authenticity. However, there is also a quite critical element in EH's perception of Ganni's brand image as she is also critical towards several aspects of the brand, most of all the price point.

Despite also being critical towards Ganni, especially in the last category where she finishes the

interview on a rather negative note, she started off being very positive about Ganni's brand image. This development in her perception is visualised in the following graph:
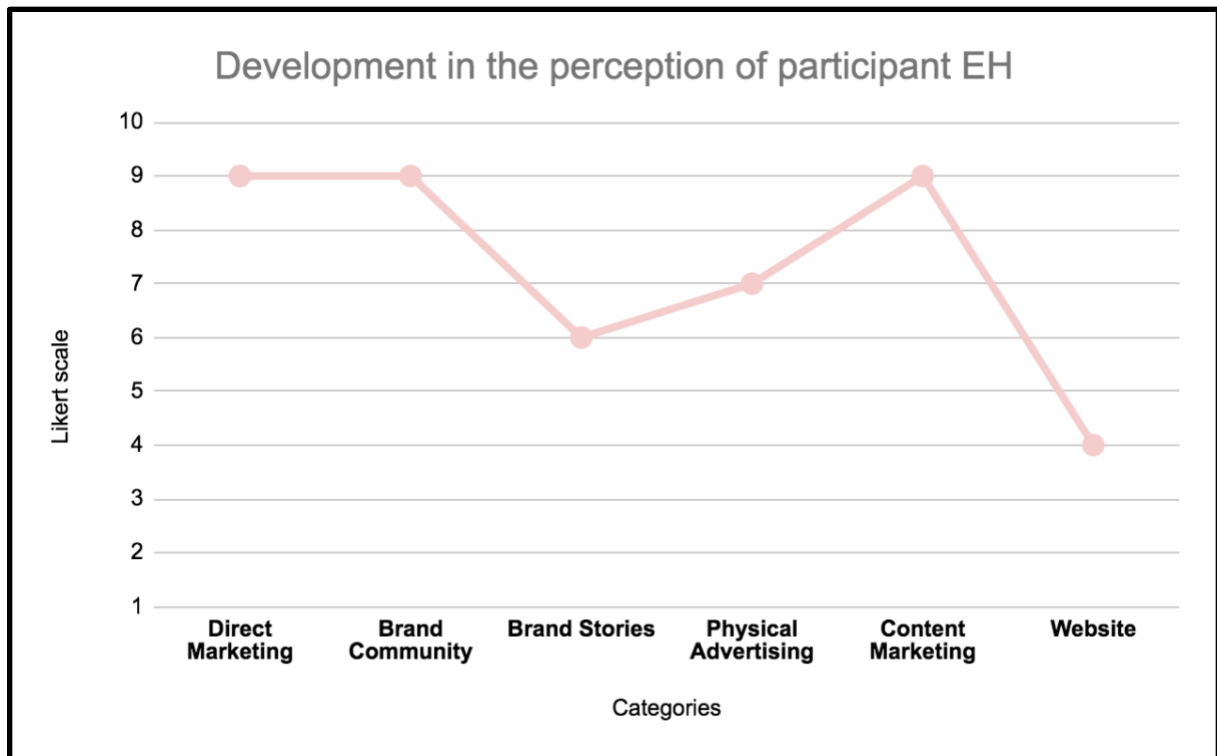
Graph 6

While EH finished the interview with the worst perception of Ganni that she experienced throughout the interview, which was somewhat negative (4), she had different varieties of a positive perception in all the first five categories. She experienced the largest positive change in the content marketing category, where her perception increased from slightly positive (7) to very positive (9), which is the most positive point possible on our Likert scale.

7.7 Participant IS

In the interview with participant IS, we have identified five themes based on the underlying codes. The themes are **nice visual identity**, **approval of efforts**, **lack of interest**, **personal characteristics** and **criticism**.

7.7.1 Nice Visual Identity

The first theme we encounter in the interview with IS is **nice visual identity**. The theme is based on the following codes: *appealing visuals*, *nice-looking newsletter*, *awe-inspiring store, nice graphics*, *distinctive type of branding, nice-looking book* and *nice-looking website*.

The first code, *appealing visuals*, is present in two places in the interview in the categories *direct marketing* and *physical advertising*. The first occurrence is in direct marketing, where IS elaborates on her perception being slightly positive after we have shown her the presentation:

> IS: I feel like, I like the way that they do their branding, like I think the images are nice and the way that it's laid out, I quite like… uhm, I like that like the leopard print stuff they have. I think

Figure 100: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.1

The second place the code is evident is in physical advertising, where IS also says the following as the first thing after her stating that her perception is somewhat positive:

> M: OK. So based on this physical advertising, what would you say your perception of Ganni is now?
>
> IS: Uhm… Like, quite like some… probably more positive, like somewhat positive. Uhm, I do, I like their branding, I think it's, I think it's like… It's, uhm, it's quite striking, they have a really nice use of colour, uhm aesthetically it's nice. Like the inside of

Figure 101: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.5

Based on the two uses of the code, it is clear that IS finds the visuals appealing, as she states that the images are nice, as seen in figure 100, and that the branding is striking, the colours are nice and that it is aesthetically pleasing, as seen in figure 101.

Her being in favour of the visual identity is also seen in the next code, *nice-looking newsletter*, which is evident in direct marketing:

Figure 102: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.1

We interpret this as her saying that she likes the graphics of the newsletter to such a high degree that she would be interested in the contents solely based on the visual identity of the newsletter.

However, IS also finds the visual identity of Ganni to be a little overwhelming, as seen when she describes a Ganni store in London that she has previously visited. This is seen in the green text below:

Figure 103: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.4

Here, we interpret her answer as her feeling that the stores look so nice that it can feel almost too fancy to enter the colourful and beautiful place as one might not feel that it is possible to live up to this, which is the definition of imposter-syndrome, which is why the code is called *awe-inspiring store*. Despite her feeling the imposter-syndrome when visiting the stores, she likes what Ganni does with the graphics in the store and she especially likes the pink colour, as seen in her statement marked pink in figure 103. Based on this, we interpret IS's feelings towards the visuals of the store as if she really likes the graphics, which is also evident in the name of the code, *nice graphics*.

The next code is *distinctive type of branding* and is evident right after the previous code, in IS's answer concerning the physical advertising. Here she says a lot, as seen in the highlighted paragraph below:

yeah you, I do like, I do like what they do with the graphics and stuff and I like the pink. When I was looking at the sticker one I was a bit uh I don't know about them trying to be radical, and like as if they're like some kind of eco-action people, when they're just selling clothes. I feel like that's a little bit problematic, but it is clever as well, uhm, I don't think that, after I saw that I'd be like uh that's interesting and then I'd see it and I'm like oh it's Ganni, like, eh, I, it's, it's clever what they've done. But I do think it's probably a little problematic and then the last one... uhm... the, yeah, I don't mind them, I think that I'd might like the shop the most, uhm, and the way that they lay out and the colours that they use. And uhm, the last one I feel like is one of those big billboard

Figure 104: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.4

As seen in figure 104, she states that she thinks that Ganni's physical advertising is clever despite her also feeling that it is a bit problematic. However, despite feeling that the stickers create a signal that does not match with the brand as Ganni is "only selling clothes" she seems to think that the branding initiatives Ganni does are distinctive.

The next code, *nice-looking book,* occurs twice in the category *content marketing*. The first time it occurs is right after IS has stated that her perception is positive, where she says that she likes the book, because it looks nice and interesting, as seen in the first part marked green:

M: Perfect, and based on this what would you say your perception of Ganni is now?

IS: Uhm, positive like I liked that. I thought it was good, I really liked the book, what they've done with the book, I feel like it looks nice, it looks interesting. Uh, what did I.. Yeah, I don't, I don't know like I find the Ganni Girls thing a bit annoying like... ehm... aiming it at Ganni Girls I feel like it just pigeon holes people into specific, my image of what a Ganni Girl is now is just like very specific to all the others that you showed me... Ehm, but I like, branding-wise like I think it's, eh, the book looks like it, it looks nice, it's something that would look nice in your house [laughing]. Uhm, and then, what was the other ones? I liked the, really liked the buy and sell, sell thing, it's, I think it's really clever and like the fact that you get 20 percent off, obviously, is just clever branding, uhm, yeah it's clever what they've done.

Figure 105: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.5

After stating this, she goes on to talk about Ganni Girls, which we will focus on in the last theme of this analysis, **criticism**. However, after this, the second occurence of the code nice-looking book is present, as seen in the second part of the text that is marked green in figure 105. Here, she again mentions the book and the fact that she thinks that it looks nice and that she would imagine that it looks nice in one's house. Thus, she not only believes that the book looks nice, she seems to think so to such a high degree that she chooses to mention it once again, despite talking about something else in between.

The last code within this theme is *nice-looking website*, which is present in two places in the interview, both in the category *website*. The first place where the code is evident is when we ask her what she values most when determining her perception of Ganni's brand image. To this, IS says that she likes the website, as seen in the first highlight:

> IS: Ehm yeah, I feel like it like, no I don't know, I do like the website. If I go on to a website and it's really hard to use and I don't like the look of it, I probably wouldn't buy something from it. Uhm, whereas that was quite nice to look at and if I, if it was in my price range and it suited me, then I would probably buy it.

Figure 106: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.6

The second place the code is present is in the second highlight in figure 106. Here, she states that Ganni's website was nice to look at after she has just said that the user-friendliness of a website is important to her, which we will focus on in the next theme, **approval of efforts**. Thus, we interpret her answer as if she both likes the visual design of the website and that this affects her perception of how easy it would be to use. Consequently, this gives the visual identity more depth, as it can ultimately result in consumers not wanting to spend their time on the website and thus, not purchase anything.

7.7.2 Approval of Efforts

The second theme is **approval of efforts**, which is based on the following codes: *appreciates honesty*, *appreciates the idea of a community, fashion as a confidence builder, likes Ganni Repeat* and *website impact likelihood to buy*.

The first code, *appreciates honesty,* is seen in the category *direct marketing*, where IS says that she likes that Ganni addresses that it is not a sustainable brand and that it is something the brand is open about. However, IS also states that she is aware that she does not possess enough knowledge concerning Ganni's sustainability, so she cannot confirm or deny the validity, as seen below:

> uhm, I like that like the leopard print stuff they have. I think I also quite like how they say they're not a sustainable brand and that their clothes, like it seems like they're being open about it. Uhm, but then I also am aware that I don't know, I don't really know enough about the sustainability of the brand, so I don't know if they actually are or not, but I like that they're being open about it.

Figure 107: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.1

The second code, *appreciates the idea of a community*, is evident in IS's elaborating answer to her perception being neutral after we have shown her the presentation concerning *brand stories*. Here, she says that she likes "(...) *the whole like "we make women feel great", I'm into that and I think that's pretty great.*" (Appendix 5.7.1). However, right before saying this, she stated that she was having trouble with Ganni stating that a community exists, which she also discusses further, in between the codes for this theme in the same long answer. We will analyse the codes for the theme **criticism** in the last sub-chapter of this analysis.

The next code, *fashion as a confidence builder*, is evident in the sentences that follow the quote referred to in the previous code, as seen in the text marked green below:

> IS: Uhm… Those, I just, I just struggle with this whole thing of like, "oh we're part of a community, we do-". And I, I like the whole like "we make women feel great", I'm into that and I think that's pretty great. And I do think clothes can make you feel great and I think I would spend money on something if I felt great in it, a hundred percent, regardless of the brand, like I would, I would definitely spend that kind of money that they have, that they do, if I really liked the item. I just struggle with this whole thing of like

Figure 108: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.3

Here, IS talks about how she believes that clothes can be used to make people feel good and that she would spend money on clothes if she felt good in it. Therefore, she believes that fashion can be used as a confidence builder.

The next code is *likes Ganni Repeat*, which is evident in IS's answer to *content marketing*, where she states that she really likes Ganni Repeat, as seen in the text marked green below:

> [laughing]. Uhm, and then, what was the other ones? I liked the, really liked the buy and sell, sell thing, it's, I think it's really clever and like the fact that you get 20 percent off, obviously, is just clever branding, uhm, yeah it's clever what they've done.

Figure 109: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.5

She uses the word 'really' in order to emphasise how much she likes Ganni Repeat. Moreover, she refers to Ganni's initiatives and branding as 'clever' three separate times, which we interpret as her approving of Ganni Repeat.

The last code, *website impacts likelihood to buy*, is evident in the last category IS is exposed to, namely website. Here, she answers our question of what influences her perception the most, the price or the look of the website, where she is not certain in her answer. However, she states that "*If I go on to a website and it's really hard to use and I don't like the look of it, I probably wouldn't buy something from it.*" (Appendix 5.7.6). Here, it is clear that she values the website of a brand highly, as she probably would not buy something from the brand if the website is hard to use or that she does not like the look of it, as seen in the underlined part of the quote above.

7.7.3 Lack of Interest

The third theme we encounter in the interview is **lack of interest**. The theme is based on the following codes: *hesitant about second newsletter*, *subscribes to many newsletters*, *receives newsletter she is not interested in*, *billboards are not memorable*, *would not listen to podcasts* and *unsure of purpose*.

The first code, *hesitant about second newsletter*, is present in *direct marketing*, where IS says that the second newsletter concerning the trainers made from grapes and the trousers made from organic cotton, did not feel as engaging to her, as seen below:

> ~~on that first one, uhm, I sort of think that I would get the email and~~ be like oh that looks interesting [laughs]. Uhm, and then the other one I didn't like it as much, just visually, I didn't think it was as engaging, uhm… that probably, I don't know, I couldn't… I'm not really sure what, yeah, I prefer the first page.

Figure 110: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.1

Thus, she seems hesitant about the second newsletter. The reasoning for this, besides her thinking that the visuals were not as engaging as in the first newsletter, could also be found in connection to the next code, *subscribes to many newsletters*. This code is also evident in her answers concerning direct marketing, where she says that she receives many newsletters from fashion brands, when we asked her if this was the case, as seen in the first highlight:

> M: *Would you say that you receive a lot of, uhm, direct marketing from fashion brands yourself?*
>
> IS: Yeah, I have so many, I just… I don't even… I can't, I mean I'm a student now at the moment, so I don't have any money, but if I had more money I would probably buy more things, but, uhm, I yeah, I always end up signing up for things just to get 10% of [laughing].

Figure 111: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.1

From the first part marked green, IS appears to receive so many newsletters that she cannot fathom the extent of the number, as she is not able to finish the sentence. The same code is also evident in the second sentence fragment marked green in figure 111. Here, IS says that she signs up to many newsletters from fashion brands, in order to receive a welcome code for a 10% discount on her purchase. Thus, she subscribes to many newsletters and we believe that she therefore has seen many newsletters in her own mailbox. Because of this, it would be likely that she is quick to judge a newsletter based on the visual identity and this could be the case for the second newsletter from Ganni which she seems to have a lack of interest in.

This is further seen in the next code, *receives newsletter she is not interested in*, as she states that she tries to "*(...) unsubscribe, but I don't have time to do them all [laughing]*". From this, it is evident from this that she is not interested in the majority of the newsletters, which connects to the previous code, *subscribes to many newsletters*, as she states that she does not have time to do them all, as seen in the underlined part of the quote.

Another code for this theme is *billboards are not memorable*, which is seen in *physical advertising*. Here she finishes her reasoning for her perception with "*(...) I feel like is one of those big billboard things I wouldn't really think twice about where I was walking past, but yeah, so, yeah.*" (Appendix 5.7.4). Based on this, she does not think that the billboards are memorable.

In the category of content marketing, the two next and last codes of this theme are evident. The first, namely *would not listen to podcasts*, is seen in IS's answer to when we ask her about the podcasts, because she has not mentioned them herself. To this, she says that they looked good but that she would probably not listen to them, as seen in the green highlight:

> IS: Ah yeah, that was the other one, the podcast, ehm… yeah, they looked good, I mean I just don't think I would probably listen to them [laughing].
>
> M: Yeah?
>
> IS: Uh, I wouldn't go to Ganni to listen to podcasts, I feel like it gets a little bit like OK, well what, what is this brand… ehm, is it a clothing brand or is it something else? That, I always get a bit confused with those kinds of things, I don't really understand them. I guess if it's like a c-, ehm, if it's a community or like a creative platform then sure, but I feel slightly like… it's OK to just sell clothes [laughing].

Figure 112: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.5

After this, we say "*yeah?*", indicating that she should elaborate further, as seen in between the two highlights in figure 112, after which the code *unsure of purpose* is present, as seen in the text marked yellow. Here, IS states that she would not listen to Ganni's podcasts as she feels like it is confusing that a clothing brand wants to do podcasts and that she always gets confused

when brands do things like this. Moreover, she states that "*it's OK to just sell clothes*", which we interpret as her stating that Ganni should focus on the clothing rather than other things, which she sees as gimmicks.

7.7.4 Personal Characteristics

The fourth theme is **personal characteristics** and is based on the following codes: *cautious about spending, limited financial latitude, feels good when buying second hand* and *clothes does not match personal preferences*.

The first code, *cautious about spending*, is present in *direct marketing*, where she states the following:

> IS: Yeah, I have so many, I just… I don't even… I can't, I mean I'm a student now at the moment, so I don't have any money, but if I had more money I would probably buy more things, but, uhm,

Figure 113: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.1

Here, she explains her being cautious about money with the fact that she is a student at the moment. This connects closely to the second code, *limited financial latitude,* which is evident in her buying fashion items on second hand platforms, as seen in the text highlighted green:

> M: *Yeah, do you use some kind of service like that right now?*
>
> IS: Yeah, I buy loads of second hand stuff, ehm, not like reselling, I just use like vintage and Depop a lot, ehm, partly because I am studying at the moment so there because of money, but also I do, I-I actually have got, I prefer… I just feel a bit better when I buy something second-hand and it's really nice and I really like it, and it means I can buy more expensive things. And, like I can buy different brands that I wouldn't be able to buy new, uhm, and then I also don't feel as guilty about it [laughing]

Figure 114: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.5

However, she also buys clothing second hand because she believes that it *feels good when buying second hand,* which is the next code. This is seen in continuation of the code above, in

the text marked pink. Here, she states that she prefers buying second hand both because it is cheap, so she can buy more, and because it does not make her feel as guilty as buying new clothing.

Lastly, the code *clothes does not match personal preferences* is evident in the last category we exposed her to, *website*:

> M: Yeah, OK. So based on this, what would you say your perception of Ganni is now?
>
> IS: Ehm, like… I feel a bit neutral about it, I didn't actually love all those clothes that, I, it's like, like I liked little things, I liked the prints that, the print on the clothes and… I do like, yu-, I do quite like some of their pieces, but I don't know if I liked those ones there as much. I think they're just very, ehm, I don't know if it's like, what the question was, but I find their, their clothes are quite hard to wear, uhm, even though I know I said that I do like them, but I can remember going, when I went to the shop I tried something on and I feel like they're quite like, the shapes are quite bold, tends to be big shoulders and stuff, but I do yeah, I don't know. Ehm, and the first image was the website, yeah, again it was

Figure 115: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.6

From the paragraph above, it is clear that IS does not like the clothes. The reasoning for this is both that the clothing in the presentation did not appeal to her in particular and that she finds it difficult to wear because of the accentuated and bold shapes.

7.7.5 Criticism

The fifth and last theme we encounter in the interview with IS is **criticism**. This theme is based on the following codes: *lacks diversity, perceives instagram as "toxic", Ganni girls is a means for self-promotion, lack of action behind statement, targeted to a specific type and annoyed by Ganni Girls.*

The three first codes within this theme are all present in the same paragraph of IS's answer, as seen below:

> *M: OK, so based on this brand community that you have seen, what would you say your perception of Ganni is now?*
>
> IS: Very neutral slash somewhat negative, I would say. Uhm, yeah, I just find the, there wasn't very much diversity in the images, I think it was very Instagram, I find Instagram quite difficult personally, I just, I can't, I just don't post very much and I find it quite like toxic place in lots of ways and i feel like those kind of accounts are the kinds of things that I would follow and probably not feel great about myself after looking at them, because I feel like everyone looks the same. They kind of have this like look of wealth about them as well, which I don't really like, I don't know, I think 'cause of Ganni's so expensive, I like, I like as a brand, I like the clothes they do, but because it looks so expensive, it's not so expensive it's, uhm, like high-fashion, but it's high, eh, it's too expensive that it's high-street, so it's like kinda like middle-bracket and I feel like you have to have a decent amount of money to buy it, and I feel like just when you put it, when you, like doing this Ganni Girls thing it's just kinda a bit like "oh well I've got loads of money and I can afford to spend on this" [laughter] without, sorry to be negative.

Figure 116: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.2

The first code, *lacks diversity,* is present in *brand community*, where the first thing IS states is the lack of diversity in the images within #GanniGirls, as seen in the first green text in figure 116. The next code, *perceives Instagram as "toxic",* is present further down in the answer, which is marked pink in figure 116. From this part of her answer, it is clear that IS does not post a lot on Instagram and that she believes that she would feel bad if she saw pictures from #GanniGirls on her own Instagram page. The third code, *Ganni Girls is a means for self-promotion*, connects well to the two previous codes, as IS believes that the girls who uses #GanniGirls on their pictures wish to show off that they can afford the clothes from Ganni, as seen in the last text marked green in figure 116.

The next code, *lack of action behind statement*, occurs twice, both in *brand stories*. The first occurs as she does not believe that Ganni lives up to what the brand claims to be:

I really liked the item. I just struggle with this whole thing of like "we are part of a community and we are inclusive" and all of that when like… they are clearly not, like they're clearly targeted at a very specific person, uhm, and… I liked the second page that was sort of a bit more diverse and had some interesting women on it as

Figure 117: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.3

The second occurs further down in her answer, where she states that if a brand is using inclusivity as a part of its branding, it needs to represent that in the actual pictures within branding as well:

quite younger demographic as well… It's great. But I think that if you, if you going about that branding and that like you're really inclusive and diverse or part of this global community, then I think you need to represent that in the p-, in the, in the women that you're, wearing your clothes as well, even in terms of age and race and gender, and I don't know, like there's so many things they could do with it I think… Very like, specific genre of people.

Figure 118: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.3

This also connects closely to the next code, *targeted to a specific type*, which is evident in between the two occurrences of the previous code:

when like… they are clearly not, like they're clearly targeted at a very specific person, uhm, and… I liked the second page that was sort of a bit more diverse and had some interesting women on it as well. Uhm, and then the last, yeah, I don't know, the last one again I felt was a bit like… I feel like it was just very, the first one was quite younger demographic as well… It's great. But I think that if you, if you going about that branding and that like you're really

Figure 119: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.3

Here, she states that despite that the first slide concerning brand stories in the interview presentation included more diverse women, she felt like the last was targeted at a very specific demographic group. IS seems very critical towards the Ganni Girls and the lack of representation, which is also seen in the last code, *annoyed by Ganni Girls*. This is seen in her reaction to content marketing, where she literally states that Ganni Girls annoy her:

> *M: Perfect, and based on this what would you say your perception of Ganni is now?*
>
> IS: Uhm, positive like I liked that. I thought it was good, I really liked the book, what they've done with the book, I feel like it looks nice, it looks interesting. Uh, what did I.. Yeah, I don't, I don't know like I find the Ganni Girls thing a bit annoying like… ehm… aiming it at Ganni Girls I feel like it just pigeon holes people into specific, my image of what a Ganni Girl is now is just like very specific to all the others that you showed me… Ehm, but

Figure 120: Screenshot from appendix 5.7.5

Based on what we have found through this analysis, it is clear that IS critical in the interview, both towards diversity and representation as well as the use of #GanniGirls.

7.7.6 Recap of Analysis

Throughout the interview with IS, her perception changed quite a lot. Her perception of Ganni's brand image was the most positive at content marketing (8 of 9) and the most negative at brand community (4 of 9):
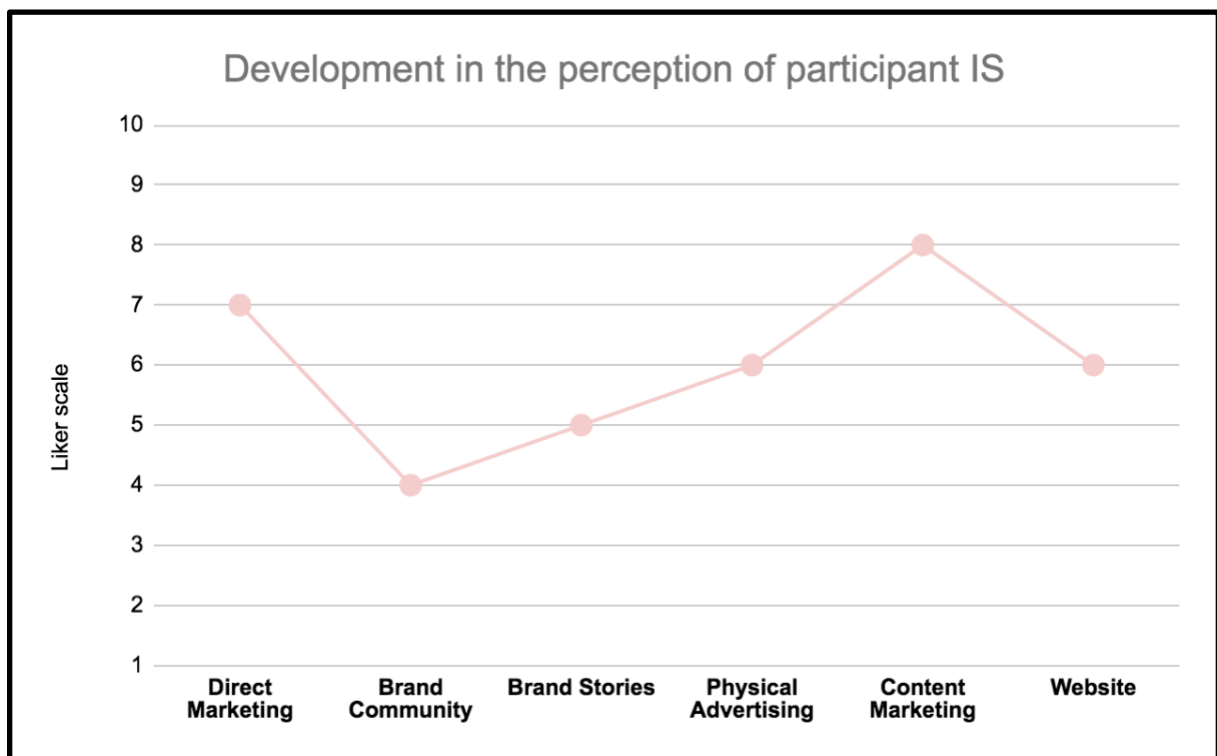
Graph 7

From the graph it is evident that IS was on the positive side in the beginning of the interview and throughout the interview she did only repeat the same perception on the Likert scale once. Thus, she had five different perceptions in the interview, which is also seen in the various themes for her. We say this, because she both thought that the visual identity was nice and approved a number of the marketing efforts, but she also experienced a lack of interest and was very critical towards a number of initiatives. Moreover, her personal situation influenced her opinion to a large degree, as her shopping habits are not possible to align with those needed to be able to purchase Ganni. This is both due to her being a student but also because she enjoys second hand shopping, which her monthly spending on fashion items being less than £100 also supports (see section 6.3.7).

7.8 Participant GA

We now move on to the final subchapter of our analysis, namely the analysis of our eighth interview. In the interview with GA, we have identified four themes: **nice visual identity**, **scepticism**, **alignment with personal values** and **reasoning through own circumstances**, which will be analysed in that given order.

7.8.1 Nice Visual Identity

The first theme identified is **nice visual identity**, which consists of five different codes: *aesthetically pleasing*, *really likes the stickers*, *impressed by the branding*, *well-made content* and *nicely presented website*.

The first code, *aesthetically pleasing*, occurs three times in the interview with GA, two of which are in the first category she is exposed to, *direct marketing*. The first occurance of the code is when she utters "*It is presented very nicely*", while looking at the first slide of the second version of our interview presentation (Appendix 2.2, appendix 5.8.1). This code is reinforced in its second occurrence, where GA is asked why she has a slightly positive perception of Ganni after being exposed to the direct marketing, to which she responds: "*Because I like the way the information is presented. I think it's clear, it's digestible chunks uhm and it's very aesthetically*

pleasing" (Appendix 5.8.1). From this quote it is evident how this code has been named, as she herself refers to the newsletters as aesthetically pleasing as well as being presented in a nice and digestible way. The final occurance of this code is seen from the pink highlight in the answer below:

> GA: Mhmm. It is a very nice logo on that sticker. It is a very very nice sticker.
>
> ---
>
> M: What would you say based on this physical advertising.. what would your perception of Ganni be now?
>
> GA: Okay so I'd stay at slightly positive. I am marking them quite harshly [laughter] Uhm I really like those stickers, I think it is a great sticker. The branding is amazing, it looks.. it looks kind of [pause] vintage I suppose and pink is one of my favourite colours so that buys my respect. Uhm I think the kind of ethical advertising thing, I think it works very well, it's all very aesthetically pleasing, the colours pop you know just very quickly.
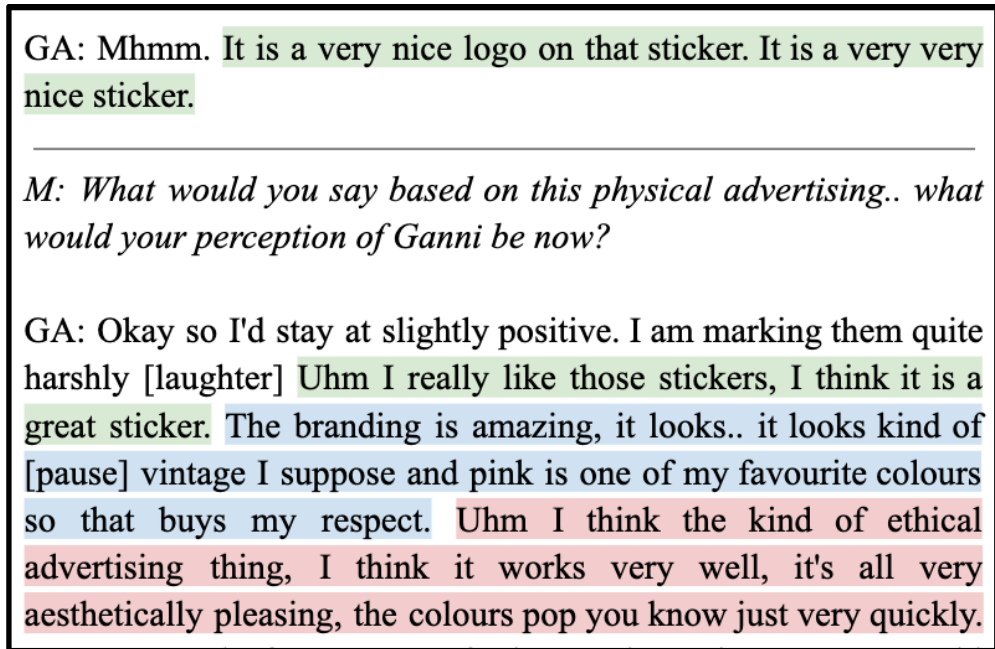
Figure 121: Screenshot from appendix 5.8.4

In this sentence highlighted in pink, GA states that she believes that she perceives Ganni's advertising as ethical advertising, which she thinks works very well, while once again describing Ganni's marketing efforts as 'aesthetically pleasing'. She argues for this perception by stating that the colours 'pop' very quickly, meaning that it catches the eyes of the beholder.

The second code, *really likes the stickers*, occurs two times and is highlighted in green in figure 121 above. The first occurrence of the code is when GA is being presented to Ganni's *physical advertising*, where she states that she likes the logo on the sticker. Hereafter, she reinforces this notion as she repeats that it is a very, very nice sticker.

In connection to GA's flow of speech concerning the stickers, she also utters that she thinks the branding is amazing, which is the foundation of the next code that has been highlighted in blue in figure 121: *impressed by the branding*. She describes the visual aspects of Ganni's branding as 'vintage looking' and elaborates on her adoration for the contents by stating that pink is her favourite colour.

The fourth code is *well-made content* and this code can be found in the fifth category GA is exposed to, *content marketing*. Here she states that her perception is positive, followed by the following elaboration: "*(...) I think it's good. Uhm I also think it.. you know I think the presentation and the information is really really nice*" (Appendix 5.8.5). She hereby describes Ganni's content as good and as being presented nicely, which must mean that she perceives it as having been made in a successful way.

The last code in this theme is *nicely presented website*. This code occurs in the last category, where GA is exposed to stimuli concerning Ganni's website and reacts with the following statement: "*So I really like the website, I like the way the information is presented, uhm not too much text cause after all you want to see the clothes, right?*" (Appendix 5.8.6). From this quote, it is clear that GA likes how Ganni has designed its website. She argues for her attitude towards the website by stating that she likes how the information is presented, as she values that the focus has been placed on the visual aspects rather than there being too much text.

In sum, we must conclude that it is evident through the analysis of this theme that GA has a very positive perception of Ganni's visual identity. She likes the graphic style a lot and even describes Ganni's efforts as 'amazing branding' as seen in figure 121.

7.8.2 Scepticism

The second theme we have identified in the interview with GA is **scepticism**, which is derived from four different codes: *needs more information to trust message*, *questioning whether community reflects the brand*, *wonders if attempted image matches the reality* and *lack of diversity*.

The first code, *needs more information to trust message*, occurs a total of five times during the course of the interview. The first occurrence is found in the first category, *direct marketing*:

GA: Because I like the way the information is presented. I think it's clear, it's digestible chunks uhm and it's very aesthetically pleasing. Uhm but if I was too I think especially with the ethical consumption side of things I think.. if I was to honestly believe that I would do more research and I wouldn't do it in a split second based on this section.

Figure 122: Screenshot from appendix 5.8.1

Here GA states that if she was to honestly believe what Ganni says, she would need to do more research and obtain more knowledge than what is offered in the newsletter. The same thing applies for the second occurrence of the code, where GA is looking for more knowledge about how inclusive Ganni actually is inside the organisation, before she is convinced that the brand actually stands for diversity and inclusivity:

GA: Okay so if I was if I was to go up to 'very positive' uhm I would also be interested to know whether there's just you know pictures of #GanniGirls or you know people from ethnic minorities or.. and I'd also like to know the structure of the brand and see how many people in you know managerial positions and things like that.. So whether the image that they are putting out or

Figure 123: Screenshot from appendix 5.8.3

The third and fourth occurrences of this code are found in the same answer, namely one given in relation to the fourth category, *physical advertising*:

> aesthetically pleasing, the colours pop you know just very quickly. But once again for me to go further up the scale [pause] I would give more research, do you know what I mean? I would want to know whether [pause] if you are talking about ethical branding, I would want to know where the clothes are produced, how much people are paid you know.. whether that is.. whether it's genuinely ethical and I suppose I want to know more about the kind of supply chain how it works, how people are paid. Once again I recognise that's a really really difficult thing to do in a poster campaign. Uhm but I suppose a good way of doing that would be, providing that everything is ethical, you know if you can get certification from a particular association or you know a body who that does that kind of thing, if you made that present on the fiscal branding, that would be something that I would find reassuring. Uhm but I am very sceptical about most things.

Figure 124: Screenshot from appendix 5.8.4

Just as with the two first occurrences of this code, GA says that she needs to do more research in order for her to be able to improve her perception of Ganni's image, as she needs to be sure that Ganni's words are substantiated with actions and not just empty words. This additional knowledge she is searching for includes information on Ganni's production method, where she is searching for numbers on where the items are produced, the wages of the production staff and more about how the supply chain works. She continues on to propose that Ganni should try to obtain certifications for its efforts from associations within the field in question, for instance concerning ethical production, which she argues that she would find reassuring. After the second pink highlight, GA refers to herself as "*very sceptical about most things*" which was an inspiration for the theme name.

The fifth and final time the code *needs more information to trust message* occurs is in the very last answer given by GA in the sixth and final category, *website*:

> GA: I would still consider Ganni as a brand but I would, A) I would do extensive research to make sure that it was it you know it was all sustainable do you know what I mean? I don't mind paying for stuff and it being more expensive if everything adds up and makes sense, that's the thing. Uhm and also I don't think I

Figure 125: Screenshot from appendix 5.8.6

Once again, GA is looking for more information about Ganni's actions in order for her to trust the message. She argues for this attitude, by saying that she does not mind paying for expensive items if they are actually worth the price in terms of the sustainability efforts incorporated in the production.

We now move on to the second code in this theme, *questioning whether community reflects the brand*, which is found in the second category GA is exposed to, *brand community*, where she states the following:

> M: And based on this what would you say your perception of Ganni is now?
>
> GA: [Pause] Uh I'm gonna say 'somewhat negative'. But I'm going to caveat that. Uhm so the reason I think is somewhat negative is that I think part two of the GanniGirls, uhm everyone was very white uhm and it doesn't seem to be incredibly diverse. But I understand that if that is just because of you know I don't know community members and people who are putting pictures on there are may not being reflected of the actual brand in itself. Uhm but then I would also argue that if that is not very reflective of the brand in itself I wonder why you only have one asian person, one person who seems to be black. I think that it's very.. very white.

Figure 126: Screenshot from appendix 5.8.2

As seen in the figure, GA is searching for more diversity in the posts tagged #GanniGirls. She does, however, state that it might not be a reflection of the brand itself as the posts are posts that have been uploaded and tagged by the consumers. Ganni does thereby not have influence

on what posts that are posted and tagged with the hashtag on Instagram, and can therefore not ensure that there is diversity in the posts in terms of ethnicity. However, Ganni does have power over which of the tagged posts that are featured on their own website as depicted in the first slide in the brand community category, which brings us to the next code in this theme.

The next code, *lack of diversity*, is seen in relation to the previous one and is highlighted in green in the figure above. As it is evident from the screenshot, the code occurs two times and functions as an elaboration of why she has a somewhat negative perception of Ganni based on the stimuli shown in the brand community category. Like we just described above, she is looking for more diversity in the posts that have been tagged #GanniGirls in terms of the ethnicity of the people portrayed in the photos. In the second green fragment in figure 125, she questions why there - given that the community does not reflect the brand, as found in the previous code - is not more diversity, as she would think that there would be more diversity in content that has been organically generated.

The final code in this theme is *wonders if attempted image matches the reality*, which is found in the third category, *brand stores*, in relation to one of the previously discussed occurrences of the first code, *needs more information to trust message*:

> GA: Okay so if I was if I was to go up to 'very positive' uhm I would also be interested to know whether there's just you know pictures of #GanniGirls or you know people from ethnic minorities or.. and I'd also like to know the structure of the brand and see how many people in you know managerial positions and things like that.. So whether the image that they are putting out or marketing actually translates to the structure of the organisation of uh the brand itself and whether it is genuinely reflective of diversity in the workforce and not just in marketing.

Figure 127: Screenshot from appendix 5.8.3

Here GA is once again looking for more knowledge about the organisational circumstances of Ganni, as she wishes to determine if the image they are attempting to put on match the actual circumstances and is not just a tool for marketing. Having analysed all the codes in this theme, it is evident that GA has a scepticism about many things which she even states herself in figure

124. She does not blindly trust the information that is given to her, just because a brand says so: she needs substantiated proof of the actions that lie behind Ganni's statements, in order for her to perceive them as true.

7.8.3 Alignment With Personal Values

We now move on to the third theme, which is **alignment with personal values**, formed of six codes: *values diversity*, *values conscious clothing purchases*, *values brands that match her values*, *strives to buy second hand*, *ideal to build a loyal customer base using sustainability* and *necessary to balance ethical consumption and financial accessibility*. The name of the theme was found as it is a common characteristic for all the codes that it is in line with GA's personal values.

The first code, *values diversity*, occurs two times in the interview. The first time is in *brand community* when GA is asked whether she normally looks for diversity on Instagram, after having requested more diversity in #GanniGirls, to which she answers: "*Yeah, it is something I do like consciously*" (Appendix 5.8.2). The second time is in relation to the Vogue article in *brand stories*, where GA says: "*(...) I tend to think more positively of brands if there's good representation (...)*" (Appendix 5.8.3). As it is evident from both these occurrences, GA appreciates it when brands are aware of diversity since it is one of her personal values.

The next three codes all occur in the same answer, given by GA in response to a follow-up question in the fourth category, *physical advertising*:

> M: Okay. So would you say it's a typical thing that you.. you're interested in more than just the storefront or online media? That you need to see more of behind the scenes?
>
> GA: Yeah, I mean definitely. I don't predominantly [pause] I buy things second hand, uhm apart from underwear and stuff obviously cause that is gross. Uhm but generally speaking I try to be really conscious with fast fashion if I.. if I am gonna.. I don't know if this is fast fashion or not, uhm but it is something I am very very conscious of. Occasionally I get things that aren't kind of ethically produced but overall I try to put my money where my mouth is.

Figure 128: Screenshot from appendix 5.8.4

The fragment highlighted in pink corresponds to the code *strives to buy second hand*, which is evident in GA's statement about buying things - except from underwear - second hand. This code is linked to the following code, *values conscious clothing purchases*, which is highlighted in green above, where she says that she is conscious about the clothing she buys and attempts to avoid buying fast fashion items. While GA occasionally purchases things that are not ethically produced, she strives to buy items that match her convictions in terms of buying from brands whose values match hers, as evident in the next code, *values brands that match her values*, marked blue in figure 128.

The following code, *ideal to build a loyal customer base using sustainability*, occurs in the fifth category, *content marketing*:

> nice. I think it is clever using the 20% extra thing on the gift card uhm but I also think it.. you know if you are thinking about a brand wanting kind of long term sustainability you know a loyal customer base. And I think it's very good to tap into sustainability genuinely early and also you know share clothes I've got loads, you know what I mean? I think it is a good initiative and I would

Figure 129: Screenshot from appendix 5.8.5

As it is evident from the highlighted sentences above, GA believes that for a brand to build a loyal customer base, it must engage in sustainability efforts quite early. This topic of

sustainability continues in the last code in this theme, *necessary to balance ethical consumption and financial accessibility*, which occurs after GA has been exposed to the last category, *website*, which includes the price of Ganni's items:

> expensive items you know what I mean? I have the financial resources to do that uhm but [pause] it is quite expensive and so I think it's really difficult but it's balancing ethical consumption and financial accessibility cause lots of people might not be able to afford that. But once again that depends on the target market with Ganni and what they're trying to kind of attract so...

Figure 130: Screenshot from appendix 5.8.6

Here, GA describes how it is necessary to balance both ethical consumption and financial accessibility, depending on the consumer market Ganni is targeted towards. She argues for this perception by stating that pricing the items too high will result in many consumers not being able to purchase the items. She thereby indirectly says that by pricing ethically produced items too high, many consumers will be forced to purchase unethically produced fast fashion items.

7.8.4 Reasoning Through Own Circumstances

In this last theme of the last analysis in our thesis, **reasoning through own circumstances**, we will discuss the following five codes: *knows woman featured in Vogue article*, *idolises woman in Vogue article*, *won over by Vogue article*, *persuaded by higher level of diversity* and *the prices are high for everyday clothes*.

The first code occurs two times in the third category, *brand stories*, the first being after GA has stated that she knows one of the women featured in the Vogue article, which she elaborates on by stating: "*Yeah, she actually did a Ted Talk for me, so I know her quite well*" (Appendix 5.8.6). The second occurrence is in another answer in the same category, where GA says:

> M: Yeah. And you said that you know of Sharmadean. How.. Can you elaborate on that?
>
> GA: Uhm I used to uhm do Ted Talks.. Like uhm set them up. And we picked Sharmadean uhm because she is amazing and she is one of the most intelligent people that I have ever met actually. She is.. She is really really clever, she's really insightful and she takes community and representation very very seriously which is just.. you know she's a really phenomenal uhm woman personally and professionally.

Figure 131: Screenshot from appendix 5.8.3

The pink highlight and the quotation before the figure both correspond to the same code, *knows woman featured in Vogue article*, as GA describes how she knows Sharmadean Reid. This is strongly linked to the second code, *idolises woman in Vogue article,* as it is evident from the appraisal given in the text marked green that she admires Sharmadean and that she looks up to her.

This admiration could be a partial explanation for the third code in this theme, *won over by Vogue article*, marked pink in the following figure, as GA describes how her perception of Ganni has changed due to the Vogue article:

> GA: Uhm it's more positive I'd say. I'd go back to slightly positive uhm I'm definitely swayed by the Vogue article. Uhm but that is partly because of the representation, do you know what I mean? Seeing black people and brown skin I think it's.. I think that is better. Uhm but it seems to be quite uhm different uhm kind from the first series of pictures uhm which is fine uhm but I tend to think more positively of brands if there's good representation but

Figure 132: Screenshot from appendix 5.8.3

According to GA, it is, however, due to the higher level of diversity in the Vogue article than what she has previously seen from Ganni, which leads us to the code, *persuaded by higher*

level of diversity, marked green in figure 132. This is in line with what we already know about GA, as she has made it very clear that she values diversity.

The fifth and final code, *the prices are high for everyday clothes*, occurs in the very last answer GA gives in the interview:

> *M: Yeah, but what about for you personally? Would the price scare you off or would you still consider Ganni as a, yeah, a brand?*
>
> GA: I would still consider Ganni as a brand but I would, A) I would do extensive research to make sure that it was it you know it was all sustainable do you know what I mean? I don't mind paying for stuff and it being more expensive if everything adds up and makes sense, that's the thing. Uhm and also I don't think I would spend that amount of money for everyday wear, but for a nice special thing.. but I liked the collar, that's really nice.

Figure 133: Screenshot from appendix 5.8.6

As the fragment marked pink shows, GA does not think she would purchase Ganni items for everyday use due to the price point. She would, however, consider it for special occasions.

Through the analysis of the codes in this theme, it is evident that the common denominator to all codes in this theme is that they are linked to GA's own perception of reality and the circumstances that characterise her life, personality and likings, thereby differing from the previous theme which concerned the codes that were linked to her values.

7.8.5 Recap of Analysis

Through the analysis of the interview with GA, we have found that she likes Ganni's visual identity a lot and even describes it as "good branding". Despite this fondness for many of Ganni's marketing efforts, she is also quite sceptical and needs substantiated evidence for the things Ganni claims to do and be, before she trusts what is said. The analysis has also taught us that GA likes it when brands do things that match her existing values and pay attention to

issues that she considers to be important. At the same time, she resonates her perceptions based on her existing circumstances.

This has caused for the following development in her perception:
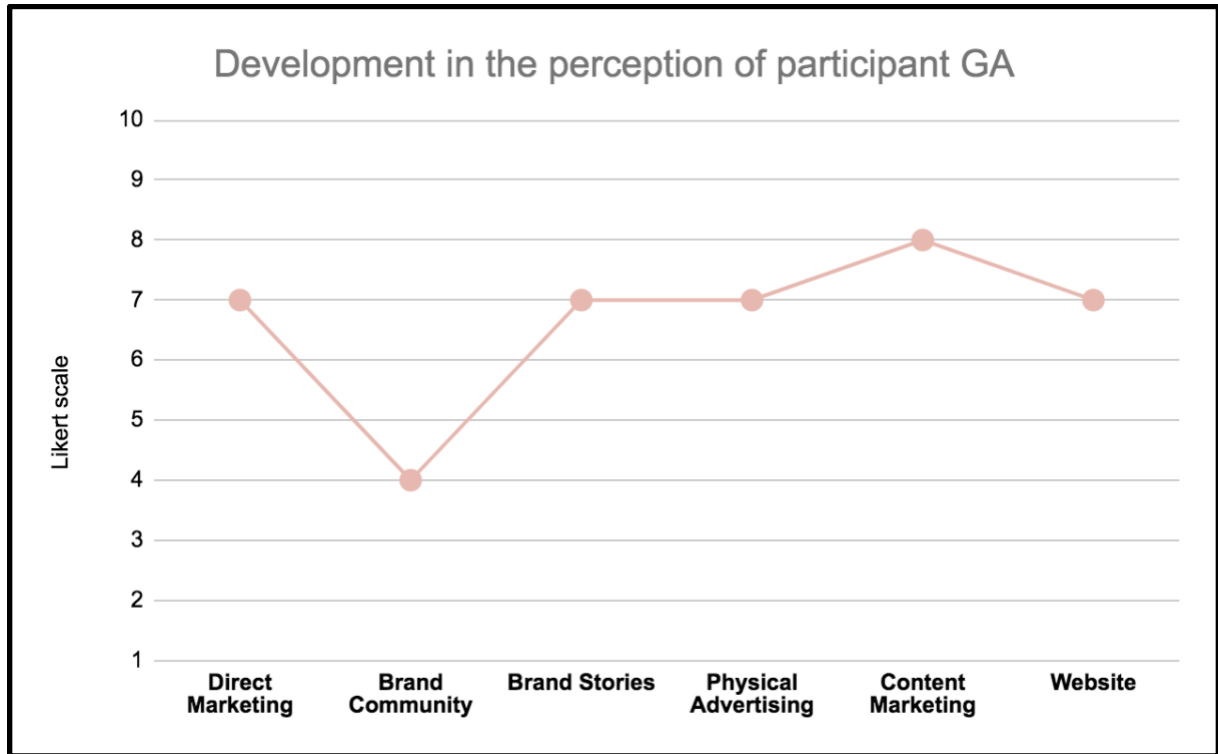
Graph 8

As it is evident from the graph, GA's perception is at slightly positive (corresponding to a 7 out of 9 possible on our Likert scale) in four out of six categories. The two categories where her perception is not on the slightly positive level is brand community, where her perception is somewhat negative, and content marketing, where it is positive.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

8. Discussion

After having analysed each of the interviews with our eight participants individually, we now move on to the eighth chapter of our thesis which encompasses our discussion. In this chapter we discuss the findings of our analyses, for the purpose of determining what the eight analyses have taught us that the participants perceive Ganni of doing well and what they perceive the brand of not doing well. Despite our research revolving around how Ganni creates the most positive brand image perception possible, we also discuss the things that the participants did not react well to, as there is also a lot to be learnt from this knowledge about what consumers desire in terms of marketing. Through these discussions we are ultimately able to conclude what it is that contributes to Ganni's success in terms of its marketing efforts as well as what Ganni should be cautious about in the future, and thereby what type of efforts other brands should engage in to improve their brand image perceptions.

In the eight analyses, we discovered that the participants had several different perceptions throughout the interviews. In order for us to be able to discuss their perceptions, we will now look at what the participants believe that Ganni does well, which must be where their perceptions are the most positive. The participants have different perceptions as their most positive one, but as it is evident from the analyses of the interviews seven out of the eight participants had their most positive perception of Ganni's brand image in the content marketing category. However, while the eight participants generally reached a quite high level in terms of their positive perception, more than half of them (HN, JW, EH, IS & GA) were also perceiving Ganni in a negative way in at least one of the categories. Out of these negative perceptions, the majority of them occur in relation to the brand community category.

The correlation between the participants' perceptions throughout the interviews are depicted in the graph below:
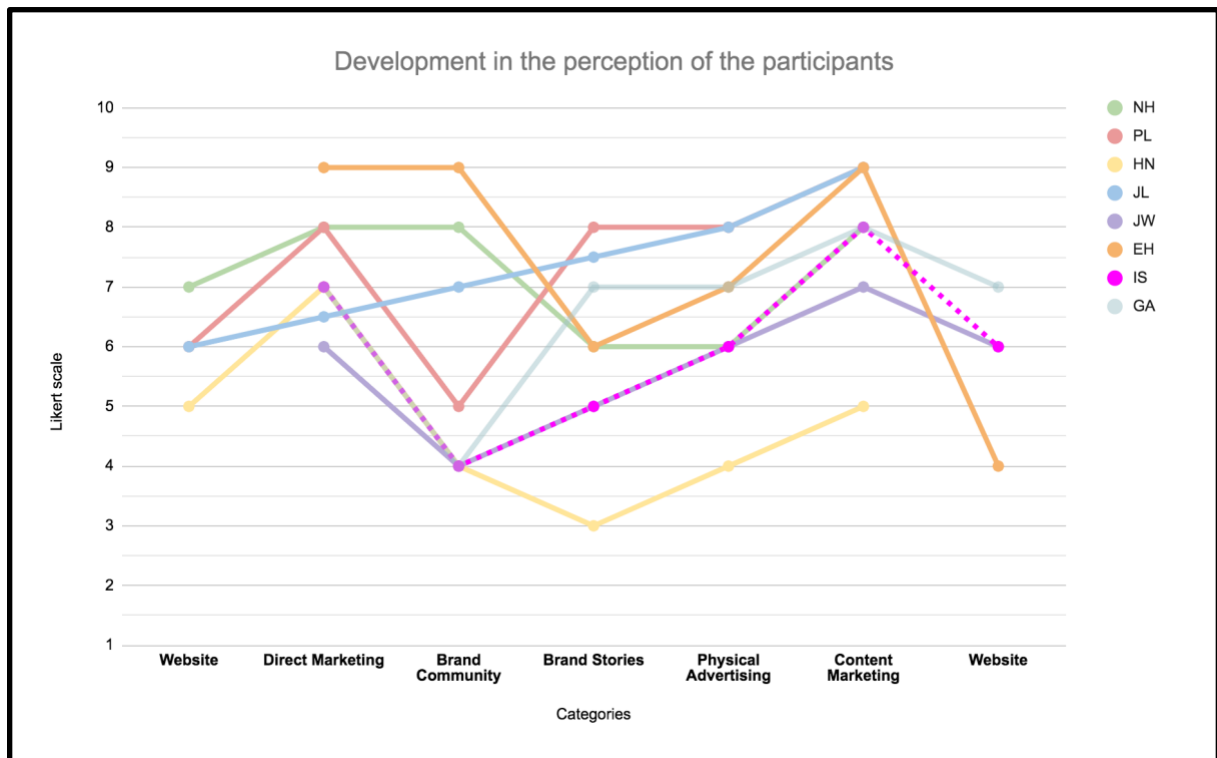
Graph 9

So how come the participants generally have such a positive perception of Ganni's content marketing category, when so many of them have a negative perception of the brand community, considering that the efforts in both categories are rooted in the same brand?

The answer to this is not easily found, mainly because the eight interviews we have conducted are with eight different women whose lives, convictions and values are quite different, despite them being around the same age and gender, while also living in the same country. This means that they perceive things quite differently, depending on their personal preferences, career paths and interests, which is very evident in how they interpreted the content and which elements they chose to highlight from the presentation. An example of this is the participants' reactions to the brand community category, where some of the participants highlight how they like that it is possible to see how Ganni's items look on other people, while others perceive this usage of consumers to be bordering to exploitation of these consumers, as Ganni gets free publicity and exposure, while the women wearing the clothes only get likes. Some of the participants state that they would like to be a Ganni Girl, while another views the content from a feminist point of view, through which she states that referring to women as 'girls' is an issue. By using the word 'girls', Ganni contributes to a structural issue in society that many others are trying

to combat, as referring to women as girls are belittling and creates a feeling that women are not adults, equal to men, which is enforced in that we do not refer to men as 'boys'. We agree that this usage of the word 'girls' is quite peculiar as Ganni contends that it is a brand whose goal is to "make women feel even more confident" and even that "everyone is welcome", regardless of gender (Appendix 2). Another critique of both the brand community category as well as the efforts in the other categories, is Ganni's lack of actions, in the content, to support the things the brand claims to stand for. More specifically, the participants say that the content lacks diversity in the posts that have been tagged as well as the posts featured on Ganni's website, despite it being described as being for everyone and about inclusivity by Ganni itself. This perception is what formed the basis of theme names such as **lack of social responsibility**, **scepticism** and **critical towards brand**.

Given that some of the participants are reluctant about trusting that Ganni acts according to its statements and claims incorporated into the marketing, as they experience the contents as being indicators of the opposite, you might wonder how the perception of Ganni's brand image ends up being positive for the vast majority of our participants. When performing the interviews, many of the participants highlighted how they appreciate how Ganni has created something that exceeds what is to be expected by a fashion brand. Thereby, Ganni succeeds in creating initiatives that actually create value for the consumer beyond just selling fashion items, which is evident in many of the participants stating that they value that Ganni is "more than just Instagram". This is the reason why the participants are most positive towards Ganni's brand image when exposed to the category content marketing, as the efforts found in this category do just that. The efforts perform so well that the participants disregard the negative perception that they had of Ganni, following the content shown in the previous categories. More specifically, some of the participants stated that they found Ganni Talks (Ganni's podcast series) to be appealing as the owners Ditte and Nikolaj "*platform themselves*" (figure 65) and that by using their own faces they create a deeper connection to the customers, where the customers feel they know the people behind Ganni. Others highlight how positive they think it is that the guests in the podcasts are so diverse, compared to the diversity and inclusivity they sought after in especially the brand community category. Even the participants who were not inclined to listen to the podcasts, stated that they like the concept and listen to podcasts themselves.

This is in line with what we know about the modern consumer, as discussed in our theoretical framework in chapter 4, namely that the modern consumer does not want to simply be marketed to, but rather be informed and feel like the marketing effort and the brand itself fulfils another need than simply physiological ones. This is most likely the explanation for why the participants reacted so positively to the last form of content shown to the participants in content marketing: Ganni Repeat. When exposed to Ganni Repeat, the participants highlighted how the service conveys the notion that Ganni's items are of such a high quality that its long lasting enough for it to be worn over and over, but also for multiple persons to have owned it. At the same time, the participants value that Ganni actually attempts to make a difference in terms of responsibility and ethical consumption, by offering a service where consumers can buy, resell and rent Ganni items. Ganni Repeat is valued to such a high degree that HN, who is 'neutral' towards the content marketing category, states that she is "*quite impressed by their Repeat section*" (figure 34). Therefore, there is no doubt that it is in fact content marketing that contributes the most to create a positive brand image of Ganni, as even the participants who are not otherwise positive about Ganni's efforts, find Ganni's content marketing efforts appealing.

Based on what we have learned from the analysis and the preceding discussion, it is evident that the participants value when Ganni acts according to what the brand claims to do and stand for. This supports the notion that the modern consumer wants brands that "walk the talk" and do more than what is to be expected. The modern consumer does not merely want to purchase a product, they want an experience and something that creates value for themselves beyond the product. This value can be created in several ways, e.g. by making them smarter or feel better about themselves, which has in common that it fulfils the consumer's self-fulfilment need. As described in our theoretical framework, the modern consumer is characterised by adhering to an 'ideology' built on an awareness of sustainability, in which recycling, purchasing responsibly produced goods and cutting down on the usage of scarce natural resources are focal issues. In addition, this ideology also includes an awareness towards social justice issues, such as discrimination and inequality in terms of gender, race and sexuality. We thereby deem the participants' perceptions of Ganni's marketing initiatives to be in line with the ideology of the modern consumer living in the contemporary society of the Western world.

Consequently, as our research has found that the participants react most positively to Ganni's content marketing, we must assume that content marketing will also be favourable in creating a positive brand image perception for other brands in the fashion industry. In addition, we believe that the findings of our research can be translated to other industries than the fashion industry, as there are many other industries that fulfil the same self-fulfilment need as fashion brands do to which having a positive brand image is also pivotal for their success.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

9. Conclusion

In this thesis, we have attempted to answer the following research question:

How does Ganni create the most positive brand image perception using its existing marketing initiatives?

Through the analysis of our eight interviews we found that the participants generally have a quite positive perception of Ganni's brand image. They all highlight how Ganni's visual identity is aesthetically pleasing and that the use of bold colours contributes in creating an inviting and distinctive brand universe. From all the six categories, content marketing stands out as being the category where the participants have the most positive perception of Ganni's brand image. The main reason for this positive attitude towards Ganni's content marketing efforts is that the participants appreciate how Ganni Repeat signalises that the items are well-produced and that Ganni cares about ethical consumption. At the same time, Ganni Repeat contributes to making Ganni's items more attainable as the price points are significantly lower than those of Ganni's items when bought from new. The participants thereby react positively to the fact that Ganni's content marketing efforts support the notion that the brand cares about responsibility and inclusivity, as they consider the content marketing initiatives as proof that Ganni "walks the talk". This notion that the participants value when Ganni "walks the talk" is also evident in the categories to which they have a negative perception of Ganni's brand image. These negative perceptions are namely a direct result of the participants perceiving Ganni's marketing efforts as lacking actions to substantiate what the brand claims to stand for.

In conclusion, it is in the field of content marketing that Ganni succeeds the most in creating a positive brand image perception, as the efforts in this category are perceived in such a positive way that the efforts the participants have perceived negatively in the other categories are disregarded. Ganni's content marketing thereby has the power to win them over and we believe this to be a major reason why Ganni has become such a successful brand, both nationally and internationally.

CHAPTER 10: REFERENCES

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