



SCHOOL OF
ECONOMICS AND
MANAGEMENT

Not All Heros Wear Capes

A Qualitative Study Exploring the Development of Nike's Brand

Archetype

by

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Abstract

Purpose: The main purpose of this study is to enhance our understanding of branding communication with mass audiences using ordinary people in myth treatment.

Methodology: This qualitative study explores the phenomenon of ordinary people portrayed as heroes in advertisements in an abductive manner. The research has been designed as a case study and the method for coding and analysing has been qualitative content analysis to get as many relevant angles and findings as possible.

Findings: Our key findings include new aspects of how the creation of emotions affects consumers through associations in our subconsciousness, how charismatic aesthetics are used in two different ways to credibly portray ordinary people leading to authenticity in the story, and a new discussion of what the essentials of the model Hero's journey are. This last part is additionally resulting in an shortened Hero's Journey model which can be a valuable tool for marketers when portraying ordinary people in short advertisement videos. Using this adapted version of the model makes the myth-telling more concentrated and efficient than including the whole 12-step journey.

Keywords: Emotion Creation, Brand Archetype, Myth-telling, System 1, Hero, Ordinary People, Hero's Journey

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1 Introduction

In this chapter, the introduction of this research is presented. First, the background is given to the subject of brand communication in the fast-changing digital era. Subsequently, the phenomenon of the unconventional use of ordinary people in marketing in the sports sector leads the way for problematisation. Further, the research purpose and intended contributions are defined to fill the existing research gap and bring practical implications. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a structural outline of the thesis.

1.1 Background

Advertising, the techniques, and practices used to bring products, services, opinions, or causes to public notice for the purpose of persuading the public to purchase, has grown hand in hand with the evolution of brands. To reach the maximum public notice and favour an advertisement can get, celebrities are constantly seen in it, from packaging, posters, and commercials.

The importance and advantage of celebrity usage of brands were figuratively illustrated by Phil Knight, the co-founder of Nike, with a simplified description in a Harvard Business Review interview (Willigan, 1992). According to him, “We understood our core consumers, the athletes who were performing at the highest level of the sport. We saw them as being at the top of a pyramid, with weekend jocks in the middle of the pyramid and everybody else who wore athletic shoes at the bottom. Even though about 60% of our product is bought by people who

don't use it for the actual sport, everything we did was aimed at the top. We said, if we get the people at the top, we'll get the others because they'll know that the shoe can perform.”

This seems especially true in the digital era as celebrities are getting more popular and have a stronger influence than ever, transforming the traditional concept of celebrity endorsement into a more effective and accessible way (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2010; Muntinga, Moorman & Smit, 2011).

Apart from the celebrities themselves, the scope of an advertisement has also been expanded with new ways to reach the audiences created with new technologies, compared to a plain showcase of the product in the past. For instance, the formats of flash ads, interactive ads, short movies, etc., enable the brands to include richer information and are especially suitable for telling a story, with a celebrity featured as the main character.

On the other hand, audiences of the advertisement, the “everybody else at the bottom” according to Phil Knight, have also been empowered by the internet and social media, taking over brands' and their ambassadors' narrative, making brands become increasingly democratised (Asmussen, Harridge-March, Occhiocupo & Farquhar, 2013; Baxendale, Macdonald & Wilson, 2015). Not only their attention are distracted by various content, but their beliefs and preferences are also constantly being reshaped. The rise of self-acceptance, self-care, inclusivity, equality, and freedom is both a cause and a result of the phenomenon. This is especially true with the whole world experiencing the pandemic and heightened geopolitical risks.

These changes have reshaped the relationship between the brand ambassador and the consumers, leading to adaptations in practices. One way of democratisation we observed is that some brands have been featuring non-celebrity ordinary people as endorsers in advertisements unconventionally. It is worth noting that these people are portrayed as who they are for their

ordinariness, rather than a fabricated role. For instance, Dove featured "real" women in various sizes rather than supermodels in the 2004 "For Real Beauty" campaign. Calvin Klein made its first notable use of a plus-size model in the 2014 "Perfectly Fit" underwear campaign, and featured another big-sized model who is not traditionally thin in 2019 again. Besides, Dove's "DetoxYourFeed" campaign for its Self-Esteem Project in 2004 and Microsoft's "Beyond Xbox: A Player Like Me" campaign in 2022 starred real people in a docu-inspired filmic way.

With the world rapidly changing, brands need to address these social changes and understand how to communicate with nowadays consumers accordingly. Although the use of ordinary people as endorsers remains a relatively rare occurrence in advertising history compared to that of celebrities, many received significant attention, sparked discussions, and gained superb performances. The "everybody else" can help brands raise their voice in advertisements directly beside their own social platforms. Thus, it is important for brands to interact and cooperate with ordinary people on a deeper level while maintaining relatively stable messages and images to better build the brands in consumers' minds.

1.2 Problematisation

"Sports are one of the world's favourite pastimes" (Henry, 2022, n.p.). For instance, the partnerships of LeBron James with Nike, Lionel Messi with Adidas, Neymar with Puma, and Roger Federer with Uniqlo are known world-wide. These renowned athletes are naturally considered sports heroes for their outstanding performances and achievements. Sports brands get instant visibility when endorsed by them. Not only can they captivate fans with interest in sports, but also those who do not know much about or overlook such brands. The audiences tend to share advertisements featuring famous athletes on social media platforms, creating buzz,

and leaving longer-lasting impressions. With the trust of superstars serving as a vehicle, stronger emotional connections are created between the brands and the target audiences, leading to more likelihood of considering and purchasing products they endorse.

In short, using athlete celebrities elevates sports brands in every step of the classical customers' journey model, which will be discussed later in the literature review, including creating awareness, improving interest and desire, and making the actual purchase. Accordingly, brands have developed methods over the decades of the digital era to measure the impact of celebrities, with indicators such as reach, engagement, conversion rate, etc.

While much attention has been given to the effects of athlete and celebrity endorsement, great advertising campaigns with ordinary people should not be neglected. They, too, have a long-lasting appeal to audiences and marketers. One that has been constantly brought up is the For Real Beauty campaign mentioned previously, which raised several topics opposing common stereotypes in the fashion industry, including age, weight, size, etc., as a theme that has continued ever since. In the sportswear industry, we observed something similar also happened around that time.

Achieving somewhat equivalent, or even better outcomes, compared to those using celebrity athletes conventionally, the "Find Your Greatness" campaign by Nike debuted in July 2012 during the London Olympics. It is a typical one of this kind in which more than 20 ordinary individuals were portrayed respectively through various sports activities in several cities around the world as the "ambassadors". Meanwhile, the competing brand Adidas still took the way featuring top British athletes in the campaign "Take the Stage". Broadcasted on television in 25 countries and social media, digital channels, and billboards, Nike's campaign was the most talked-about campaign during the Olympic games, driving \$506m in revenue growth and increasing membership by 55% (Effie Awards, 2013, n.p.). According to Bruzzone, Ciobanu,

Chummun, and Fabbroni (2013), and Sameer Jha (2021), Nike marketed itself better than Adidas, as shown in *Table 1* below.

Table 1 The performances of Nike and Adidas in 2012 London Olympics

Brand	Online mentions	Tweets Associating the Brand with the Olympics	Facebook followers growth	Views on Youtube	% of Americans identifying the brands as a sponsor
Nike	59,000	16,000	57,000 (11%)	5 million	37%
Adidas	26,000	9,000	12,000 (4%)	3.2 million	27%

An essential background of this comparison is that Adidas was the only sports brand among the sponsorships in that year’s Olympics. The London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOGIC) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) agreed on sponsorship deals on four different levels: worldwide, official partners (Tier 1), official supporters (Tier 2), and official suppliers and providers (Tier 3). Nike was none of them and therefore faced regulations for their marketing during the Olympics.

Another thing to bear in mind is that Nike was well known for its work with world-leading athletes to demonstrate aggressive warriors who achieved victory in battles, starting from its famous collaboration with Michael Jordan beginning in the 1980s. As Willigan (1992) put it in his interview with Phil Knight, “Today many people know the company by its flashy ads and sports celebrities”. This makes the successful use of ordinary people even more outstanding and interesting to study.

However, unlike an athlete celebrity who can create “a magnetic pull for consumers” (Sports Media Digest, 2023), the ordinary nobody does not have such direct influence in raising

awareness among the mass audiences, especially with a brand like Nike. Still, to accomplish the goal of purchase action, interest and desire shall get evoked successfully. Or to put it other words, decision-making, to a large extent, is based on emotions that are powerful and cannot be overlooked (Lerner, Li, Valdesolo & Kassam, 2015), particularly in business and marketing. Researchers also supports it by claiming that consumers are much less rational than previously believed (Tasgal, 2015), which means further away from understanding consumers as homo economicus, the hypothetical idea of a person who does all decision-making in rational self-interest to maximise their utility. Thus, Tasgal (2015) suggested that marketers today should put more effort into understanding the creation of emotions rather than measuring them, which previously has been overestimated.

Following this motivation, the researchers, also potential brand marketers in the future, coin the necessity of using branding theories from the brand's perspective. It is worth noting that there were ads featuring ordinary people that faced controversy and even backlash in recent years. For example, the "real people" campaign by Chevy aired in 2016 is "pretty much universally disliked" (Turner, 2020). People argue that the ordinary participants are actually actors and criticise the ad for being misleading and staged. Without the existing halo of the sports stars and their well-known fighting stories relying on word of mouth, the brand must strive to perform a great story in the right manner delicately with ordinary people.

This reminds us of what Hollywood movies like Harry Potter and Spiderman would do to portray an ordinary yet heroic character and resonate with viewers with strong emotional connections. According to McGuire (2023), almost every movie in Hollywood follows the Hero's Journey, an archetypal plot structure developed by Christopher Vogler while working in Disney, which is a contemporary version of Joseph Campbell's Monomyth.

Similarly, a brand can implement an archetypal myth in an advertisement. Holt (2004) concluded that the extraordinary appeal of the most successful cultural products has been due to their mythic qualities. Consumers perceive that the myth resides in the brand's markers in the long run, such as name, logo, and other elements, making the brand "a symbol, a material embodiment of the myth" (Holt, 2004, p. 19). In terms of Nike, the brand is believed to "compete in myth markets rather than product markets" (Holt, 2004, p.77) and has been categorised as a hero archetype time and time again (Holt, 2004; Haddad, Hamza & Xara-Brasil, 2015; Hwang, 2017; Sciarrino & Roberts, 2023), especially with its consistent use of athlete celebrities.

Researchers also argued that brands should be consistent and stable with the chosen archetype (Hwang, 2017), and evoke only one in order to be easily recognised (Mark & Pearson, 2001), maintaining the possibility and flexibility to grow the archetype with time (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010). However, some researchers held the view that a brand could blend several archetypes at the same time (Wertime, 2002; Haddad et al., 2015), which seems plausible with the empowerment of the internet and social media. In cases using ordinary people as endorsers, do brands carry out campaigns in the same fashion as with "heroes"? What's more, how and why do strong emotions get created by archetypal myth-telling without celebrities to get the adrenaline going, and without an extensive movie duration to well-rounded the story?

As a result, we aim to perform a critical inquiry into the successful "Find Your Greatness" campaign dating back to 11 years ago. This thesis investigates and intends to find an answer to the following research question from a qualitative nature:

How did the campaign with ordinary people in an all-eyes-fixed Olympics make Nike the winner of all the sportswear sponsors?

In line with this main research question, we will address the following sub-research questions:

RQ 1 - Has Nike maintained its archetype in the campaign?

RQ 2 - Why does the campaign arouse consumers' emotions successfully?

RQ 3 - How can a new shorter approach to telling a Hero's Journey be used in commercials?

1.3 Research Purpose and Intended Contributions

Given that most of the existing studies focus more on celebrity endorsement, and marketing practices mainly adopt a quantitative approach to developing a testable model for advertising performances, this study strives to enhance our understanding of branding communication with mass audiences using ordinary people by answering the research questions through a qualitative lens.

With the main aim of exploring the creation of emotions from the brand's perspective through myth-telling, the researchers excluded the "awareness" and "action" stages in the customer's journey. Instead of fitting into boxes from existing models and discussion, this thesis assimilates relevant theories to form its own theoretical framework, opening up for flexibility to discover insights and interactive skills embedded in the selected case of Nike.

Although "athletes (celebrities) are branding goldmines" (Henry, 2022), the high costs and potential risks of using them remain a problem for sports brands. Besides adding theoretical contributions to the existing discussion of branding communication, this thesis also seeks to provide practical insights and implications for marketers who want to develop cost-efficient and effective strategic efforts through ordinary people in advertising with its brand archetype.

1.4 Thesis Outline

The thesis consists of seven chapters. Following the introduction, the thesis begins with a literature review chapter containing an in-depth analysis of the existing research concerning the phenomenon of interest, which is the use of ordinary people in sports commercials. Next, the researchers developed a theoretical framework to fill the gaps identified in the literature review and guide the empirical research through a qualitative lens. Next, the methodology chapter describes how the data is collected and analysed, followed by two chapters presenting the findings and discussing them in relation to existing knowledge respectively. On the heels of that, the thesis finishes by concluding the answer to the research question, quickly discusses some research limitations and finally suggestions for future research.

2 Literature Review

In this chapter, previous research regarding the usage of ordinary people in sports advertisements will be presented. The first section focuses on celebrity and influencer endorsement in general and in sports marketing. Next, studies on the rise of ordinary people in media, together with the gap, are presented. In addition, concepts of archetype, myth and System 1, which ground our research problem from a theoretical perspective, are explained.

Mccracken (1989) defined celebrity as “any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement” (p. 310). The use of celebrity endorsers in advertising has long been prevalent, as the commercials are “the province of beautiful actors and actresses” (Steinberg, 2005), “whose function is to sell products” (Shuart, 2007, p.128). This phenomenon has sparked a significant amount of research on the role of celebrity endorsements, exploring factors that affect the effectiveness of endorsements. Liang and Shen (2016) examine the brand-consumer relationship between celebrities and their fans by reviewing celebrities as brands. Lunardo, Gergaud and Livat (2015) perceive celebrities as human brands and investigate the importance of managing brand personality across cultural fields to enhance emotional linkage with their customers. When the celebrity’s built-up image and the advertisement match, corporations have found that celebrity endorsement leads to increased credibility and liking of the advertisement, as well as enhanced purchase behaviour and brand image (Ford, 2018). Chan and Zhang (2019) even refer to Kumar and Pushpendra’s findings which indicate that advertisements that

involved celebrity endorsement were perceived as more attractive than advertisements that did not involve any celebrities.

Still, one can not tar all celebrities with the same brush. Since celebrities have different sorts of connections and relations to their followers, for example, depending on their profession, the effect of the followers' reactions to the endorsement may vary (Ford, 2018). Roy and Mishra referred to in Ford (2018), discovered that the perception of celebrities with glamorous professions, for example, actors, differs greatly from celebrities in performance-oriented professions. The latter category, for example, including sports celebrities, is more suitable for aspirational motives, where their performance-related profession is a relevant factor. One such example is Michael Jordan's contract with Nike from the 1980s, one of the most successful cases of celebrity endorsement in sports advertisements (Stone, Joseph & Jones, 2003). Such performance-related celebrity is referred to as a sports hero by Shuart (2007), which is a "status given to one who succeeds in sport and reaffirms the American value structure".

Especially in the realm of sports marketing, when combined with the popularity of sports, the utilisation of celebrity endorsers is a powerful strategy. The emotional connection between fans and athletes through endorsement helps to foster brand loyalty and consumer engagement (Taniyev & Gordon, 2021). It also promotes consumer perceptions, brand recalls, and purchase intentions, according to the content analysis of characteristics of athlete celebrity endorsements by Stone, Joseph and Jones (2003). While not directly focusing on celebrity endorsement, another research conducted by Yağiz (2021) investigates media consumption behaviours of sports team consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing a broader understanding of the mediating effect of overall brand equity, relevant in the context of athlete celebrity endorsements. By examining the impact of high-profile sports figures on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, Shuart (2007) shed light on the intricate relationship between celebrity

endorsers and their influence on consumer behaviour, bridging the gap between classic hero worship literature and modern consumer perceptions of heroes and celebrities in sports marketing, stating that “worship of athletic heroes is here to stay” (p.138).

With the development of the digital era, the concept of influencer marketing and the role of social media influencers have also gained attention in research. The term “influencer” entails that the person has influences as the celebrity endorser does, even though he or she may not be as famous. Schouten, Janssen, and Verspaget (2020) examine the differences between celebrity and influencer endorsements in advertising, pointing out that while both celebrities and influencers can positively impact consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions, influencers have a stronger effect on identification and credibility. The discussion has even been broadened to AI (artificial intelligence) influencers (Dwivedi, Ismagilova, Hughes, Carlson, Filieri, Jacobson, Jain, Karjaluoto, Kefi, Krishen, Kumar, Rahman, Raman, Rauschnabel, Rowley, Salo, Tran & Wang, 2021), also as an alternative to traditional celebrities, who they believe can provide a more authentic and relatable connection with consumers, leading to higher engagement and purchase intentions.

Despite the rise of influencers, there are not only positive aspects of celebrity endorsement, however, with debate regarding its risk and effectiveness. To create specific associations, brands can involve celebrities and influencers that align with the desired image and take advantage of the followers and reputation the celebrities have built up (Ford, 2018), but put the endorsed brand at risk with celebrities' “rash of negative publicity prompted by uncivil, and often illegal, behaviour” (Stone, Joseph & Jones, 2003, p.97). Additionally, Kazmi (2020) argues that celebrity endorsement has represented women in an untruthful way, even exploitative, which has resulted in unrealistic ideals, a drastic rise in eating disorders, and other self-destructive outcomes. Kazmi (2020) states that “When a woman gazes at a celebrity in an

advertisement, she unintentionally wishes to become just like the celebrity and fails to understand the fact that the advertisement in front of her is not real” (p. 85).

Amid questions about the effectiveness of using celebrities, there are some changes observed by researchers. As early as 2003, Stone et al. identified a significant decline in celebrity athlete usage in the late 1990s compared to the 1980s. Steinberg (2005) observed “increasingly opting for plain folks or clips of real events in advertising strategies” (n.p.) and delved into the reasons behind the shift. Turner (2010) explores the concept of the demotic turn in media, arguing that the rise of social media and user-generated content has given ordinary people a platform to challenge traditional media representations that used to be portrayed by celebrities and create their own narratives. This is supported by Koçyiğit (2018) in an investigation of viral advertising narrative structure. In recent years, “the plain folks appeal has grown in popularity because of its effectiveness” (Armstead, 2022, n.p.).

While celebrities and influencers generally provide credibility and identification, ordinary people can offer relatability and trust. Olmedo, Milner-Gulland, Challender, Cugnière, Dao, Nguyen, Nuno, Potier, Ribadeneira, Thomas-Walters, Wan, Wang and Veríssimo (2020) focus on the roles of ordinary people in conservation advertising, arguing that featuring ordinary people can enhance their effectiveness by promoting relatability and personal connection. Panol and McBride (2001) examine the portrayal of ordinary people with disabilities in print advertising, suggesting this challenges stereotypes and enhances inclusivity. Similarly, studies regarding the famous “Dove: For Real Beauty” campaign, which includes women of all sizes and colours as the representation of body ideals (Unilever, 2017), also emphasise feminism (Johnston & Taylor, 2008; Millard, 2009; Danthinne, Giorgianni, Ando & Rodgers, 2022), discussed the plurality and diversity of using ordinary people. They believe this creates more positive and empowering representations that resonate with a wider audience.

Still, with less use of ordinary people in advertising compared to that of celebrities, research on this unconventional approach is not as explorative and sufficient. As shown above, extant literature mainly focuses on the power of authenticity that ordinary people bring to capture consumers' attention, and none of them lies in the field of sports marketing. However, as all brands strive to take and keep a unique place in consumers' minds with marketing and branding efforts, the problem of how the transition from celebrity endorsers to ordinary people affects the brands remains relatively unresolved and interesting to investigate.

By linking a particular character to the brand, whether portrayed by celebrities or ordinary people, people can feel an emotional attachment, where emotional branding and the associated concept of brand personality are very common (Kammerer, Dilger & Ploder, 2021). Self-image encompasses the feeling a consumer wants to receive after interacting with a brand. According to Kapferer (2012), it helps consumers with identity conduction and projections while emotional attachment is accomplished (Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer & Nyffenegger, 2011). Park and MacInnis (2014) found that brands that projected stronger personalities were more likely to be perceived as authentic and trustworthy.

In the book "How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Marketing", Holt (2004) reviewed renowned brands' successful branding campaigns with their craftsmanship of original new myths fitting into the changing economic and cultural backgrounds, such as Volkswagen's portrayal of the hippie and bohemians in the 1960s, Harley-Davidson's identity change through outlaw bikers, rough-and-tumble gunfighters, to older and wealthier middle-class man, etc. Although such changes are not discussed concerning celebrities and ordinary people, they inspire the researchers to look into the shift of archetype and concept of myth from a branding strategy perspective.

Archetypal characters and themes are drawn from myths. The terminology of myth and archetype in English literature are seen with little difference. Myths, one of the main expressions of brand archetypes, provide a framework for understanding human experiences and emotions (Campbell, 1949). Myths serve as vehicles of coded meaning (Zehnder & Calvert, 2004) because they recount the models already present in human minds and provide valid, emotionally realistic stories, even if portrayed through fantastic or impossible events (Vogler, 2007). People wish to believe in myths and stories, while brands trigger people's minds to piece together the brand's narrative, activating the stored myth (Ganassali & Matysiewicz, 2021). Impactful commercial stories also are narratives, and their characters may be archetypal (Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016).

As strong as the archetype is, it is the collective unconscious where the archetype is imprinted, that makes the magic happen. This type of fast, automatic process of information based on intuition, known as System 1, together with the opposite, System 2, will be elaborated in the theoretical framework. The emergence of System-1-friendly branding has been given more attention in recent years. According to Genco (2015, n.p.), "Market research before the emergence of neuromarketing was based on a System 2 view of the brain". Markey (2015) describes this type of branding as a reduced amount of information, simplified communication, low effort, and in general fewer aspects to decode. Tasgal (2015) argues that marketers must understand that System 1 should be addressed since emotions, even playfulness, can be more persuasive than scientific, rational messaging. This is due to the fact that the brain does everything it can to operate under conditions of cognitive ease and to minimise conflict (Tasgal, 2015). However, relatively little empirical research was conducted regarding how brands are designed and marketed in a System-1-friendly way in order to guide the consumers. Three workhorses of market research, interviews, focus groups, and surveys, are all based on the assumption that consumers are aware of their own mental states and can describe why they

choose certain brands accurately (Genco, 2015). Barker (2019) examines the distinctive code/logo used by Tropicana, Mastercard, etc., claiming these brands embed themselves in the System 1 brain of the public. Insights provided by the processes of System 1 need further investigation.

In terms of Nike, based on the identification of the 12 primary brand archetypes which will be elaborated in the theoretical framework, the brand has generally been seen as, or centred around, the Hero archetype (Mark & Pearson, 2001; Wertime, 2022; Hartwell & Chen, 2012) with the famous Nike slogan “Just Do It” demonstrates it the most. Although a combination of different archetypes may be evoked by Nike (Haddad et al., 2015), the Hero archetype is the first and most associated (Merlo, Eisingerich, Gillingwater & Cao, 2022). Merlo and his fellow researchers coded visual elements of more than 2,400 brands with industry and academic experts, with Nike gaining the most Hero one of the most valuable brands.

Besides, a recent study has shown that brands deliberately evoke archetypes in a clear pattern and often look for harmony within the archetypes they use (Merlo et al., 2022). This strengthens our interest in examining the case of ordinary people with Nike, whose archetype used to be a Hero with consistent collaboration with athlete celebrities, through a sceptical lens.

3 Theoretical Framework

The third chapter of the thesis delves into previous research on topics that are useful in the inquiry of the research question. First, research on emotions in branding from both the consumer's and the brand's side are examined followed by a presentation of research made on how emotions are processed. Next, studies on the humanisation of the brand are presented, leading to the fundamental building stones, and telling of the brand archetype. The chapter will then be summarised in an illustration of the theoretical framework that will act as a guide for the research throughout the following chapters.

3.1 Branding as the Creation of Emotions

3.1.1 From the consumer side: the customer's journey

Explanation of the consumer journey and marketing effects has been examined for decades. One of the tools for this analysis is the Hierarchy of Effects model, and other similar versions that have been used for more than a century. It was already in 1898 that Lewis presented the first version of the Hierarchy of Effects model, which at that time contained three steps: awareness, interest, and desire (Rehman, Javed, Nawaz, Ahmed & Hyder, 2014). Since then, the model has been further developed, and steps of the process have been added and removed. For example, Lewis later added a fourth step to his model, action, which is to actually close the

deal and get the consumer to purchase the product. The addition of this fourth step led to the term the AIDA model (Rehman et al., 2014), which is an abbreviation for attention, interest, desire, and action. Lavidge and Steiner (1961) further developed the model by connecting it to human psychology aspects. They added a couple of steps to the AIDA model that Lewis made and categorised them in psychological terms: 1) cognition, which includes awareness and learning, 2) affect, including feeling, interest, or desire, and 3) behavior, which is action. Barry (1987) stated that it was with the introduction of these new terms that this categorisation was first applied to consumers' responses to advertising. When combined with the psychological field, the cognition category touches upon our rational or mental states, affect refers to feelings or our emotional states, and conation touches upon behaviours and striving states (Rehner et al., 2014).

The DAGMAR model, a shortening for Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results, is a third version of the Hierarchy of Effects model, created by Coney in the 1960s, and commonly described as the think-feel-do model. It was initially invented to demonstrate measurements of advertisement campaigns (Coney, 1961). The process in this model is somewhat expanded from the AIDA model and the steps are as follows: awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase. In this model, awareness and knowledge are related to what the consumer thinks, thereafter, liking and preference relate to convincing the consumer's feelings, that this is the right brand for them, and finally, the two last steps are about creating action. Just like in previous versions of the model, the effects of advertising occur in a hierarchical order, all intending to ultimately lead to buying, only this time it is described in terms of conviction and purchase (Rehman et al., 2014). An important point of differentiation in this model is that advertising does not necessarily lead to immediate buying behaviour.

As different as the models drawn by the researchers, it all follows a series of psychological phenomena that create a judgemental and affective response, a kind of emotion, at the end before purchase. Roberts (2004) also argued that brands needed to go further than price and reason because action has its source in emotions, not in reason. As synthesised by different models, the effects of advertising occur in a hierarchical order. The steps or stages can be grouped into three general processes as illustrated in *Table 2* below: 1) gaining awareness and knowledge, 2) developing an attitude towards the product or brand, and 3) making a purchase decision ultimately. Or, to put it simply: think, feel, and do.

Table 2 Different Components of Hierarchy of Effects Model

Stages	AIDA	Behavioural	Psychological
The First Stage	Attention	Cognition	Awareness and Knowledge
The Middle Stage	Interest, Desire	Affect	Liking and Preference
The Last Stage	Action	Conation	Conviction and Purchase

Although each stage of the model must be fulfilled before the consumer can move to the next stage, all the stages may not be fulfilled simultaneously with a single advertisement. Marketing communication can aim to reach a certain stage with their advertising campaign. For example, in the first year of the campaign, the objective can focus on reaching brand awareness, while the next campaign focuses on increasing brand image, followed by actual buying behaviour. For a globally well-known brand like Nike, we believe awareness is relatively achieved less prioritised compared to interest and desire, especially when appearing at an event, like the Olympics, with a sports-fan population and not featuring any newly launched product.

3.1.2 From the brand side: emotional branding to cultural branding

It is widely argued that humans are mainly emotional beings (Hill, 2010). The importance of emotion creation has been emphasised by researchers and marketers. Research has shown that emotional associations with the brand are more important than functional associations (Chernatony & Riley, 1998), and more effective than rational appeals (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012) in driving consumer behaviour. According to Gobé (2001), “The business of business is to be found in a very simple question: How does it make you feel?”.

This is supported by a significant growth in yearly scholarly papers on emotion and decision-making in the field of psychology, as shown in *Figure 1* (Lerner et al., 2015, p.801). It is generally believed that emotions are the dominant driver of most meaningful decisions in life. A study (Lerner et al., 2015) derived from the past 35 years of studies revealed that emotions constitute drivers of decision-making, whether it is potent, pervasive, predictable, harmful, or beneficial. As Lerner et al. (2015, p.799) put it, “emotion and decision-making go hand in hand”.

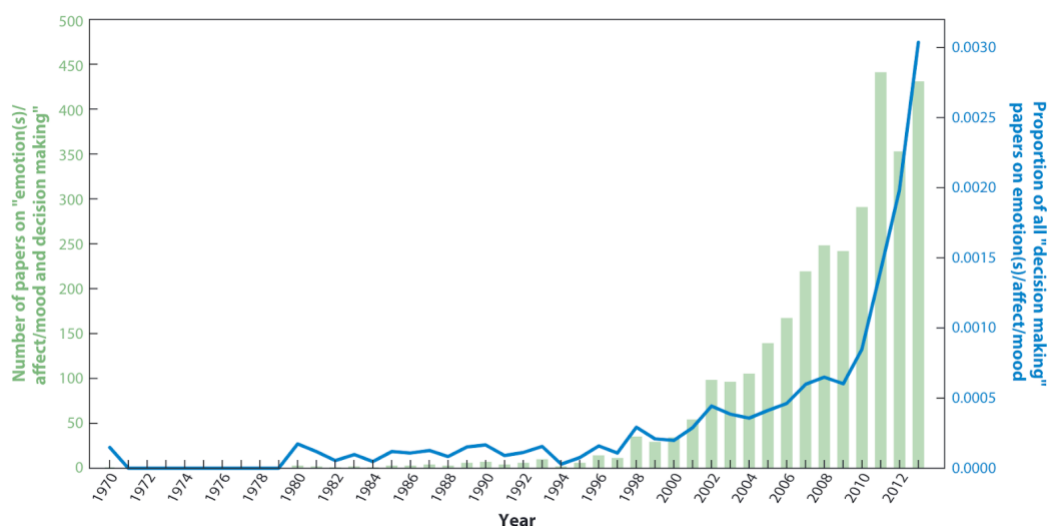


Figure 1 Number of scholarly publications from 1970 to 2013 that refer to “emotion(s)/affect/mood and decision making” (green bars) and proportion of all scholarly publications referring to “decision making” that this number represents (blue line)

In light of this, a specific marketing strategy, emotional branding, emerged based on the belief that branding is a tool to create a strong emotional connection between a brand and its consumers, or a positive association attached to its brand value as suggested by Bertilsson and Rennstam (2018). One of the earliest and most influential works on emotional branding was conducted by Roberts, who established his company with the name Emotional Branding. Lovemarks, as he refers to the brands that have a deep emotional connection with consumers, can inspire loyalty and passion beyond what traditional brands can achieve, which consist of three key elements, namely mystery, sensuality, and intimacy (Robert, 2004). Mystery adds an element of surprise and curiosity that captures consumers' attention, while intimacy relates to deep emotional connections and trust, achieved by understanding and fulfilling the consumers' needs.

The sensual part on its own is elaborated into five senses by Lindstrom (2005), which provides an insightful perspective on how brands can connect with consumers on a deeper level. The concept of brand sense, consisting of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell, has gained attention in the marketing literature respectively. Visual cues such as logos and packaging (Krishna, 2012), and colours (Labrecque & Milne, 2012) influence perceptions of a brand and purchase decisions. Sound cues such as music and jingles can influence consumer behaviour by creating a positive emotional response, increasing brand recognition and recall (North, Hargreaves & McKendrick, 1999). Tactile cues such as texture, weight, and shape are also important in creating the brand experience of quality and luxury (Spence, 2012). The sensory cue of taste affects consumer preferences and purchase decisions, especially with food and beverage (Schifferstein & Oudshoorn, 2011).

Around the same time when Roberts proposed the idea of Lovemarks, Holt (2004) shifted to a more anthropology view that emphasises the increasing importance of culture in shaping

consumers' beliefs, values, behaviours, and understanding of the world and brought up the concept of cultural branding. He believed that conventional approaches, including emotional marketing as an extension of mind-share branding, did not build iconic brands, such as Nike, and pushed emotional branding one step further. Cultural symbols and myths are important in creating a brand identity that resonates with consumers (Holt, 2004) and is more likely to be perceived as authentic and meaningful (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Cultural branding can enhance consumer engagement and loyalty, particularly when consumers identify strongly with the cultural group being represented (Kipnis, Broderick & Demangeot, 2015). However, when misappropriating cultural symbols and traditions, cultural branding can lead to backlash from consumers and damage their reputations (Kim & Kim, 2018).

Noteworthy, Holt (2004) pointed out that emotions are consequences of cultural branding through a great myth, rather than delivery of emotional branding through generic emotional communications. This is in line with the previous discussion based on the idea that branding is a creation of emotion and will be further discussed later in this chapter.

3.2 Procession of Branding Communication

3.2.1 Dual Process Theory

The creation and procession of emotions have been investigated mainly in neuroscience and psychology, where many existing studies discussed below provide an account of how thoughts can arise in different ways. Two prominent paradigms are the elaboration likelihood model and the dual process theory.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) developed by Petty and Cacioppo in 1986 is widely recognised in the field of persuasion and communication, which explains how individuals process persuasive messages and make decisions. It posits that there are two routes to persuasion. The central route involves a high level of cognitive effort where people carefully scrutinise the message and make decisions, while the peripheral route involves a low level of cognitive effort where people rely on the source and the emotional appeal of the message or speaker.

Notably, it is the Dual Process theory that gained most of the attention, especially in the past decade. One of the earliest studies in the area was conducted by Kahneman and Tversky in 1979. They suggested that people can lead to errors and cognitive biases when making decisions with heuristics or mental shortcuts. Based on this, Stanovich and West (2000) originated the Dual Process model of reasoning with terminologies of System 1 and System 2, which Evans (2008) referred to as Type 1 and Type 2. Later in the famous book *Thinking: Fast and Slow*, Kahneman (2011), who received the 2002 Nobel Prize in economics, brought these concepts from cognitive psychology to behavioural economics, which is defined as “the art and science behind decision-making” (Tasgal, 2015, p. 225). In more recent literature, Stanovich (2009) and his fellow researchers tend to use Type 1 and Type 2 rather than System 1 and System 2, in an effort to clarify the mistaken impression people might have that there are two different physiological areas in the brain. Instead, they are different ways of process.

To conclude, whichever pair of terminologies are being used, the ELM and the Dual Process theory both suggest that individuals can process in two different ways, as a result of two different processes, or with different functions, strengths, and weaknesses (Stanovich, 2009), including a fast, automatic process based on intuition, and a slow, deliberate process based on

logic and analysis. Definitions and features identified in existing literature have been combined and illustrated in the following *Table 3*.

Table 3 The basics of the dual process theory

In ELM	Peripheral route	Central Route
In DPT	System 1 / Type 1 / Fast System	System 2 / Type 2 / Slow System
Features	Default response unless intervened by Type 2	Load heavily on working memory
	The autonomous mind	The algorithmic mind
Characteristics	Rapid, autonomous procession	Slow, cognitive effort

We refer to the processes as System 1 and System 2 in dual process theory hereinafter, since it is more well-known among the public, especially in the field of business and marketing.

3.2.2 Use in Practice

The ELM and Dual Process theory have been applied in various fields to explain how decisions are made. For instance, in health communication, the central route is more effective when the message is personally relevant to the individual (Witte & Allen, 2000). In political communication, the effectiveness of the messages depends on the route used by people based on their level of motivation and processability, with messages strong on both central and peripheral cues being the most effective in making voting decisions (Chmielewski, 2012). In criminal law convictions, judges and juries tend to rely on intuitive thinking when evaluating evidence which leads to risks of bias and errors (Gigerenzer & Hoffrage, 1995). Likewise, the

tendency of intuitive thinking usage has also been observed in financial decision-making (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008).

Although emotions are intertwined with both System 1 and System 2 thinking, they have been generally discussed in a more System-1-associated context. Particularly in marketing, Zaltman (2003) believed that the exact extent of the role of emotion is 95%, as purchase decisions are made subconsciously.

To have a broader and more thorough understanding of System 1 and the interaction between the two systems, as well as how they affect human thinking and behaviour, we reviewed the typical mechanisms, phenomena, and examples identified, with the aim to better discover the mechanisms behind the stimulus and cues Nike used in the campaign to guide the consumers and evoke their emotions in the intended way. Priming, the “psychological mechanism by which System 1 influences what we think and do as human beings” (Genco, 2015, n.p.), is the process by which exposure to a stimulus influences subsequent behaviour or perception, which has been explored by Kahneman (2011) regarding its effects on cognitive processes and decision-making. Heuristics are mental shortcuts that System 1 uses to make quick judgments and decisions. However, these heuristics can lead to cognitive biases, such as confirmation bias, availability bias, and anchoring bias, causing systematic errors in judgment and decision-making. People are generally overconfident in their abilities and believe they have more control over events than they actually do. People are loss averse, namely, more sensitive to losses than gains, while they make decisions based on potential gains and losses rather than on the final outcome as introduced in prospect theory. Besides, people often use an initial anchor point as a reference and adjust judgment accordingly. The framing effects show how the same problem presented or framed in different ways can lead to different choices.

3.3 Building Archetypes through Myths

3.3.1 Brand Image

In research papers, there are considerable studies that base the essence of the brand on the form of equity (Aaker, 1992) and relation (Dyson, Farr & Hollis, 1996). Apart from viewing brands as equity and relation, another group of researchers approached brands as images. Image, an intricate generalisation or symbol of rules and structures, is the key to understanding society and human behaviour (Boulding, 1956).

The concept of the brand image was first introduced by Gardner and Levy in 1955 as the comprehensive reaction of brand elements in psychology and brought to the advertising industry by the legendary adman David Ogilvy in the mid-1950s. Since then, scholars defined brand image from various perspectives as psychological elements, brand strategy factors, influencing factors, personality factors, etc.

Related terminologies, such as brand personality (Bettinger, Dawson & Wales, 1979; Hendon & Williams, 1985), and brand association (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Ross, James & Vargas, 2006), were developed but could be categorised under the umbrella term of brand image. However, consensus on clear delimitations between different terminologies was not achieved among scholars. Ogilvy and Atherton argued that brand image and brand personality are the same (Lee & Ko, 2015), whereas Patterson (1999) perceived brand personality as a part of the brand image. It is also acknowledged by Aaker (1991) that brand image denotes consumers' perception of a brand, while brand identity denotes the perception that management intends it to have.

Lee, James & Kim (2014) believed the concept of brand image tends to be ill-defined due to the lack of a commonly understood definition, thus later proposed a revised and unified definition of brand image as “the sum of a customer’s perceptions about a brand generated by the interaction of the cognitive, affective, and evaluative processes in a customer’s mind” (p.8), which is in line with the consumer response model discussed above, without the process of action. Wang and Zhou argued, as Zhang and Luo (2019) translated, that “the current disagreement is not that brand image is composed of social and psychological elements unrelated to products, or psychological elements unrelated to products, but is in the specific elements contained in different theoretical models” (p.79). Some of the composing dimensions are illustrated in *Table 4*.

Table 4 Different composing dimensions of brand image

Scholar	Brand image composing dimensions
Aaker (1991)	Products, organisation, individual, symbol
Biel (1992)	Corporate image, user image, product/service image
Keller (1993)	Attributes, interests, attitudes
Kaphere (1994)	Physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection, self-image

As listed above, the three sub-images of corporate image, user image, and product/service image proposed by Biel (1992) are intuitive and relatively recognised in the academic world regarding the composition of brand image (Zhang & Luo, 2019). The importance is different among brands. User image refers to the demographic characteristics of brand users, which are the hard characteristics. Yet it also includes soft characteristics such as the user’s personality, values, and lifestyle, communicated and strengthened through the vivid representation of brand ambassadors and endorsers, typically celebrities. However, ordinary people do not act as social

proof for a brand as they do, which encourages us to go further and deeper in the exploration of brand images.

3.3.2 Brand Archetypes

Continuing from the preceding session, besides the composing dimensions of brand image investigated by some researchers, the brand personality dimension scale by Aaker is also built on the brand image system, as inferred by Zhang and Luo (2019). Aaker's (1997) model is extracted from hundreds of elements and factors, into five dimensions including sincerity, stimulation, competence, delicacy, and firmness, each containing several characteristics. However, using mere descriptive nouns and adjectives in personalities to understand a brand image is rather vague and abstract, yet this thesis aims to investigate from the brand's perspective. This led us to the intrinsic and fundamental part of the brand identity, behind the brand image.

The concept of archetypes was pioneered by Carl Jung in the 1930s, who believed there is a universal layer of consciousness, the collective unconscious, inherited and accessed, rather than developed from personal experience, where archetypes are stored, imprinted, and hardwired. The experience of archetypes is an innate projection (Butler-Bowdon, 2017) that is instantly familiar to us as primal and instinctive consciousness (Hwang, 2017). Everyone is born with the same library of thought forms or mental images stored in the unconscious that influence feelings and actions (Hobson, 1973). Influenced by Jung, Campbell (1949) discovered that myths and hero stories from different cultures share common patterns and themes which he called the hero's journey. Much has been investigated in psychology and mythology until Mark and Pearson (2001) introduced archetypal theories into brand management.

Based on the primary archetypes suggested by Jung, Mark and Pearson (2001) introduced archetypes into brand management, providing a framework of 12 distinctive brand archetypes based on different motivations that are commonly discussed in the marketing world. They believed archetypes solidify brand identity and increase engagement at a deeper emotional level across the world. Chinese researchers used the method of text mining or search engines to re-explore the categories and characteristics of brand archetypes from the perspective of the internet, who also acknowledged that the Western myth archetype was used in most cases (Chen, Yue, Yang & Ge, 2014). The classical 12 brand archetypes include the Sage, the Innocent, the Explorer, the Ruler, the Creator, the Caregiver, the Magician, the Hero, the Outlaw, the Lover, the Jester, and the Regular Guy as illustrated in *Table 5*. According to Woodside and Sood (2006), these archetypal characters recur as they represent the fundamental, universal needs and psyche human seeks to fulfil. Facing with core desire, the characters also carry the obstacles in core fears. For example, Apple embodies the Outlaw by disrupting and revolutionising the tech industry with groundbreaking products, thus fearing conformity, and becoming ordinary in the competition.

Table 5 Mark and Pearson's 12 main Jungian archetypes

Archetype	Core Desire	Core Fears	Brand Examples
Innocent	Experience paradise by doing things right	Doing something wrong that will provoke punishment	Coca-Cola, McDonald's
Explorer	Possess the freedom to discover oneself by exploring the world	Becoming trapped, conforming or having inner emptiness	Starbucks, Patagonia
Sage	Discovery of the truth to understand the world	Being misled or ignorant	Procter & Gamble, Barnes & Noble
Hero	Prove one's worth through courageous acts and triumph over	Weakness and vulnerability	Nike, FedEx

	adversity, as well as improve the world		
Outlaw	Revenge or revolution	Being powerless or inconsequential, and losing personal freedom	Harley-Davidson, Apple
Magician	Gain knowledge of the fundamental laws of how the universe works	Unanticipated negative consequences	MasterCard, Lucent Technologies
Regular guy/gal	Connect with others	Standing out from others and being exiled or rejected as a result	Saturn
Lover	Attain intimacy and experience sexual pleasure	Being alone, unwanted and unloved	Chanel, Hallmark Cards
Jester	Live in the moment with full enjoyment	Boredom and being boring	Pepsi
Caregiver	Protect others from harm and help others	Selfishness and ingratitude	Nordstrom, Marriott
Creator	Create something of enduring value by giving form to their visions	Having a mediocre vision or execution	Serta, Biltmore Estate

3.3.3 Myth-telling of Brand Archetypes

Based on previous academic research, Holt (2004) concluded that the extraordinary appeal of the most successful cultural products has been due to their mythic qualities. He proposed the concept of identity myth, in which “icons come to represent a particular kind of story” (p. 19) “that their consumers use to address identity desires and anxieties” (p. 19). According to him, the consumers perceive that the myth resides in the brand’s markers in the long run, such as name, logo, and other elements, making the brand “a symbol, a material embodiment of the

myth” (p. 19). Thus, iconic brands like Nike, compete in myth markets rather than product markets.

Holt (2004) also introduced the concept of culture brief, which is a cultural analogue of brand positioning, at the heart of brand strategy for advertising purposes. The cultural brief includes the following three parts: 1) Myth Treatment, a briefing document that sets up the plot, characters, and setting that embodies the brand’s proposed role, 2) Populist Authenticity, which is secured by source materials audiences perceive as credible, and 3) Charismatic Aesthetic, a distinctive and compelling style that epitomises the populist world from which they speak.

While branding at its core is developing a story that consumers feel emotionally attached to (Hwang, 2017), the constructs of the story or storytelling should also be taken into consideration. Ganassali and Matysiewicz (2021) expanded on the five identifiable items of stories proposed by Brown (2016), which are character, location, action, message, and plot, stating that the single most important component is the character, with the plot arguably second only to the character. In the laboratory model of developing the company’s core story, Fog, Budtz, Munch & Blanchette (2010) categorised the four fundamental storytelling elements as the message, conflict, character, and plot, with the messages getting across through conflict and its resolution (Fog et al., 20010) which Hwang (2017) believed can be adopted in branding storytelling, as “a core story places brand value into human context” (p.18). Considering the concept of cultural brief introduced by Holt (2004) is grounded in the building of brand archetype, and the storytelling elements such as plot and characters are also included in the myth treatment, thus it is believed to be a more suitable choice for this research.

In terms of the plot, another classical storytelling route that needs to be mentioned is the three-act structure that most screenplays follow, consisting of setup, confrontation, and determination (Field, 1997). As previously mentioned in problematisation, the hero's journey identified in

myth by Campbell (1949) is developed by Vogler (1992), who worked in Hollywood and broke it into twelve stages. Similarly, the twelve stages are sectioned into three main acts, as illustrated below in *Table 6*, which are the Ordinary World, going into the Special World, and returning to the Ordinary World again.

Table 6 The 12-stage hero's journey is categorised into three acts

No.	Act	Stage No.	Stage
1	Ordinary World	1	Ordinary World
		2	Call to adventure
		3	Refusal
		4	Meeting with the Mentor
		5	Crossing the Threshold
2	Special World	6	Tests, allies, enemies
		7	Approach to inmost cave
		8	Ordeal
		9	Reward (seizing the sword)
3	Ordinary World	10	The road back
		11	Resurrection
		12	Return with Elixir

3.4 Chapter Summary

Overall speaking, this chapter provides a toolbox that guides the researchers through. In order to perform critical inquiry with the successful campaign, the literature review starts with the penultimate stage of the customer’s journey, emotional attitude, second to the very last purchase action, finding out that emotion evocation is also emphasised from the brand’s perspective leads to the evolvement of cultural marketing. Next, to understand how emotions are created and processed, we look into the dual process theory and its usage in practice, especially the application of the famous System 1 processing in communications. Following that is the personification of the bran, as the use of ordinary people is at the centre of this study. In light of the autonomous, unconscious mind and brand image discussed earlier, the concept of archetype was brought to our attention. Tracking down the road, the establishment of a brand archetype with myth will facilitate the actual critical inquiry work.

To answer the proposed research questions with an open-up perspective, we intend to use a theoretical framework, as shown below in *Figure 2*, to summarise the main points brought up in previous literature presented and generate interesting and relevant discussion.

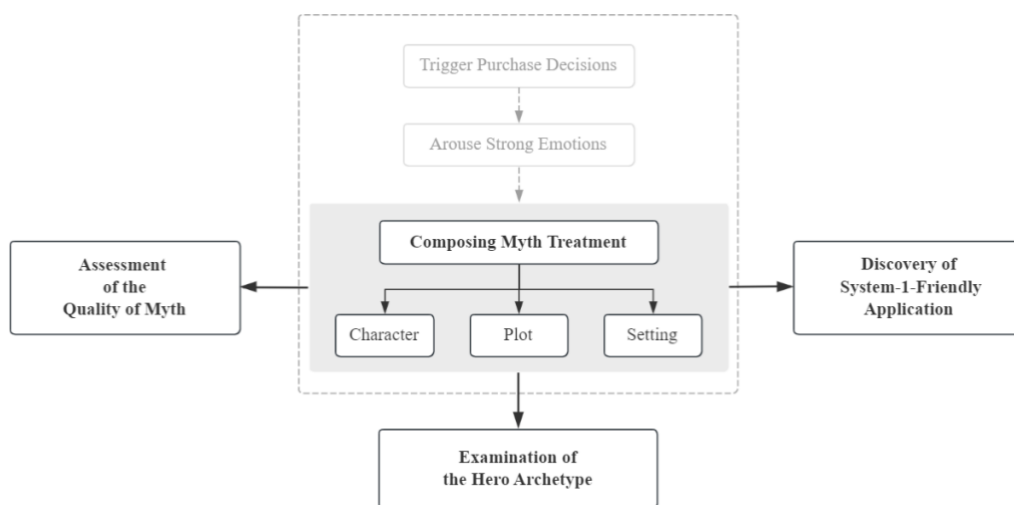


Figure 2 Theoretical Framework

The part framed in grey dotted lines illustrates the theoretical trace leading the researchers down to the cornerstones of myth treatment. As discussed previously, emotional attachment is the consequence of a great myth. To sustain a myth, brands must apply storytelling to the commercial format of advertising, relying mainly on the development of characters. Thus, the main analysis is based on the composing of myth treatment with character, plot, and setting.

In order to understand why this campaign arouses consumers' emotions so successfully, it is only rational to assess the quality aspects. The researchers adopt concepts of charismatic aesthetics and populist authenticity proposed by Holt (2004) in the cultural brief. In addition, the meaningful constructs of myth treatment are triggered as soon as they are recognised in persons and certain situations to arouse strong feelings (Jansen, 2006). We believe the skilful use of System-1-Friendly procession is worth careful examination.

Apart from that, this thesis intends to find out whether Nike has maintained the Hero archetype, and how it can be applicable to other practices. Although advertisements are usually not as extensive as novels or films in terms of length and depth, ad men still work similarly to screenwriters and storytellers. Therefore, previous studies can be referenced with the aim of exploring a simplified version of the hero story under the abduction setting of this study.

4 Methodology

This chapter aims to elaborate on how researchers strive to answer each of the research questions with the methodology chosen and used in order to achieve that. In the first section, the research design, including research philosophy, research approach, and research method. The reasons for choosing qualitative content analysis on top of the case study method will be explained in detail. Next, data collection alongside its analysis procedures are presented. To conclude, this chapter ends with discussions of research quality, as well as limitations.

4.1 Research Philosophy

Our assumptions about reality make this a critical inquiry with historical realism as a starting point for ontological considerations. Research based on critical theory often focuses on the underlying factors that affect what we experience as reality (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Also, a historical perspective is common, including analyses of societal structures. This aligns with the view of reality as objective and independent, however, facts are social constructions (Saunders et al., 2019). With this in mind, our intentions are to be as objective as possible, and the methods for achieving that will be further explained in this section.

First, the ontological assumptions of an inquiry are about the phenomena that are being examined, and how the researchers see and approach it. The differences in view of, for example,

if the nature of reality is independent of our understanding of it and if there is a universal truth or not are factors that identify these philosophies. The ontological assumptions mainly affecting this research are the view on reality as external and independent with objective structures. Therefore, philosophies stating that reality depends on others or that there are several interpretations, realities, and meanings within the realms of possibility are not relevant. For us, historical realism, as a part of critical inquiry, is applicable. Historical realism also explains how political, social, gender, cultural, ethnic, and economic factors are underlying components that shape our understanding of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For our research, it means that since the campaign was launched, the reality that was then adaptable has been set in structures that are no longer adjustable, but considered real, due to the factors mentioned above. The surprising factor we have noticed is that a hero can be an ordinary person today, but in 2012 when the campaign was launched, it might not have been the reality. The structures of society, and the factors mentioned above, have now been set in stone and are considered real, in a way that was not real a decade ago. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) describe this step as reasoning backwards since the events we experience right now are one part and then a mental process that continues to happen after the event is finished.

Further on, there are the epistemological aspects to take into consideration, which are our assumptions about knowledge, and how we can tell what knowledge is valid and legitimate. There are philosophies that believe only measurable and observable facts are acceptable knowledge, much like natural science with law-like generalisations, while others rely more on interpretations, narratives, and even oppressed meanings or silences. For critical theory, Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that the view on acceptable knowledge is transactional and subjectivist. That is connected to what our research contributions aim to be. Subjectivism describes our own subjective understanding as the only unquestionable part of our experience, hence reality. If the perception is always the reality, there cannot be an independent, underlying reality existing.

Knowledge is therefore value-mediated and value-dependent, with its source in insights about this period of history (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this case, that implies that the findings we make, and perceive as meaningful, are taken for reality even though the value is based on the researchers' subjective reality. As stated above, facts are social constructions (Saunders et al., 2019). Because of this subjectivism, it is of even greater importance that we as researchers present every step along the way and make it transparent for the readers how insights have come to our minds and how conclusions have been drawn. This question is also addressed in terms of validity and reliability, which will be further argued in research quality.

The third level within critical reality is the methodological considerations, which Guba and Lincoln (1994) point out as dialogic and dialectical. This aspect concerns how we as researchers view the role of our own values and those of our contemporary society. Historical reality and the structures that have made it crystallised in our eyes today, have to be seen through the lens of previously held constructions. In our research, the dialogic and dialectical connections will be expressed through the use of qualitative content analysis for this step, the coding, which will be described below in research method. In our theoretical framework, populist authenticity is one aspect that is described, which focuses on how the phenomenon examined has to be understood in its context, through the eyes of that time. Therefore, the underlying factors mentioned in historical realism above play an important role, and the understanding that our perception of reality today is not necessarily the perception of reality in 2012 since they change regularly and thence the way we perceive reality.

These choices matter for our interpretation of the case, and combined with a hermeneutic approach that deems knowledge to spring from the interpretation of cultural artefacts, for example, stories, symbols, and images (Saunders et al., 2019), our research has a stable ground to build on.

4.2 Research Approach

This thesis analyses Nike's changed approach to the hero concept, from only using professional athletes in advertisements to portraying ordinary people as their main characters in the campaign Find Your Greatness. From our point of view, that is not an examination that can be measured in numbers, rather we find interest in meaning and purpose connected to human behaviour, which Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue quantitative research can miss out on. In the attempt to find answers to these issues, we have, therefore, chosen "how" and "why" questions and built this inquiry of qualitative character, which Yin (2003) argues are appropriate research questions for qualitative studies, especially in terms of case studies. Although looking at both qualitative and quantitative research in the literature review, our approach is entirely qualitative.

The aim of this research is to explore a phenomenon and thereafter identify themes that can be connected to and understood through patterns. The idea for this research came from an interest in the experienced change in the patterns of how heroes are used and characterised in advertising, moving from professional athletes to ordinary people, which has not been studied from this point of view before. The research will be drawn on a combination of data from the Nike campaign 'Find Your Greatness' and the theoretical framework presented earlier; hence an abductive approach will be used. Within the abductive approach, the answer to this experienced observation aims to apply existing theory where it is suitable, adapt existing models where that is needed, and then explore why or how this change has occurred. This is the foremost opportunity with an abductive approach, to develop existing theories further. In that way, knowledge can be widened and, in combination with adapted models, gain new insights and understandings. To explore this observed happening of ordinary people being portrayed as

heroes, which is the central phenomenon of this inquiry, the data that has been collected has been the video content from the campaign. This has then been coded according to the three components of myth treatment, one of the parts within Holt's theory of culture brief. Thereafter it has been analysed and discussed in the light of the theory on a hero's journey and the two other components of culture brief which are populist authenticity and charismatic aesthetics.

An alternative concept for the abductive approach is the retroductive approach, which some researchers mean is the original label (Saunders et al., 2019). This concept is argued to be important when critical theory is the chosen research philosophy of an inquiry and puts extra weight on trying to explain some of the underlying historical aspects of the phenomenon examined.

If an inductive approach was chosen, the process would have been to come up with a new theory that can explain the chosen event or phenomena, in our case the campaign Find Your Greatness. If the inquiry had been made with a deductive approach, the same campaign could have been used but the process would then be to find an existing theory that could explain the research object. Instead, we have chosen to apply an abductive approach which means gathering the available data from the campaign and then working alongside the theoretical framework, back and forth, throughout the whole process (Saunders et al., 2019). This approach allows us to explore the phenomena further through recurring themes and patterns regarding Nike's way of using the hero character in advertisements. Thereafter, these explanations will be integrated into the theoretical framework and build up an adapted model, based on both the campaign and the conceptual framework. In that sense, the abductive approach is more flexible but also useful in our situation where much research has been done and information exists on the topic of celebrity endorsement but not on ordinary people as heroes.

4.3 Research Method

4.3.1 Case Study

According to Yin (2003), case studies are suitable when “how” or “why” questions are investigated, when the researchers are not in control over the events that are examined, and when the research object has real-life context. We find all three of these criteria to be true in our case. Therefore, this design is deemed well-applicable and aims to contribute to new knowledge within this area and about this specific case. Yin (2003) also describes case studies as holistic and with meaningful characters of real-life events, which connects to the criteria mentioned above.

One of the critiques that case studies can get is the issue of analytical generalisability, which will be further described below in the paragraph on research quality. One way to face this criticism is to put great care already in the early stages of the research, in the designing process, and of course, continue all the way through the performance. The analytic generalisability in qualitative social studies will never try to assimilate that of experiments in natural science nor the statistical generalisability quantitative social studies can offer. However, Yin (2003) argues that with the criteria for validity and reliability combined with the theoretical framework chosen for a study, analytic generalisability can be reached, which is simply another form of generalisability. This will be elaborated further in research quality.

Another issue that case studies in qualitative research can face is that the case might be too massive. Due to this issue, we only analyse the campaign videos and choose to exclude other parts of the campaign, which will be further described in the delimitations of collected data.

In this paragraph, we try to think through the decisions that have been taken, the implementation and the result of it. The first decision was what questions to study, and for us, it started with an interest in this shift in the use of hero characters we had experienced in advertisements. When looking into campaigns of that sort, we decided that “Find Your Greatness” would be suitable for a case study on the topic. As presented in previous chapters, Nike is a huge brand and has been categorised as a hero archetype. Also, it is in the sports sector where heroes naturally are pointed out among the athletes. This successful case happened more than a decade ago, but it still has lasting appeal, with lots of new comments regarding the advertisement on YouTube in recent years observed by us. These factors made the case an interesting subject to investigate. More decisions from the process are, for example, what data are relevant, what data to collect, and how to analyse the results. This decision-making will be explained below in data collection and data analysis as well.

Also, after deciding on this case, the choice of questions had to be decided. Our main interest was to find out how Nike could turn out to be the winner of the best campaign during the Olympics so in the end, the main research question turned out to be “How did the campaign with ordinary people in an all-eyes-fixed Olympics make Nike the winner of all the sportswear sponsors?”. To be able to answer this question we needed sub research-questions to guide our research in the right direction. We decided to have the main research question as a “how” question since we wanted to both explore and explain what happened. The first sub-research question therefore became a “yes” or “no” question, simply to be able to ascertain our theory surmise that so is the case. The other two are “why” and “how” questions, just like the main research question. They are closely linked to the main research question and we wanted to continue the explorative and descriptive style by continuing to ask “why” and “how”. The last one also connects to the theoretical framework we aim to adapt for future work with the hero character in advertisements.

4.3.2 Content Analysis

As early as in 1952, content analysis was defined by Berelson as a “technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication”. Since then, with the development of newspapers, radio and television, content analysis has been used widely in mass communication with quantitative approaches by counting words or extracting objective content from texts.

Undeniably, content analysis has mainly been used as a quantitative research method, especially in library science (ILS), until recent decades (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Weber (1990) criticised it for lacking embedded syntactical and semantic information, suggesting continuous best to use both qualitative and quantitative operations. Later, other researchers such as Downe-Wambolt (1992), Krippendorff (2004), and Hsieh & Shannon (2005) put more emphasis on the latent and qualitative perspective of content analysis. They define qualitative content analysis as a “subjective interpretation of the context of the data”, “controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication”, and “replicable and valid inferences from texts to the context of their use”. These have paved the way for understanding social reality with content analysis in a subjective yet scientific manner. Nevertheless, Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) pointed out that in real research work, the two approaches of qualitative and quantitative content analysis “are not mutually exclusive and can be used in combination” (p.2).

As elaborated above in Research Approach, this thesis follows a qualitative nature. Babbie (2020) believed that content analysis in essence is to answer questions of who says what, to whom, why, how, and with what effect. Research questions proposed before falling into this scope in respect to how and why Nike said to its audiences as it did. Further, visual contents such as videos, like texts, contain and convey matter that we can make meaning from. Content analysis can “break a picture into several attributes (or categories) guided by what is depicted

on a photo and takes these presentations at face value” (Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013, p.592). Advertising, as a form of brand communication, can be read as texts (O'Reilly, 2005). Therefore, qualitative content analysis is believed to be the suitable method for analysing the Nike campaign, in an effort to go beyond the duration and frequency of form.

It is worth mentioning that compared to other qualitative methods, such as grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography and hermeneutics, qualitative content analysis has fewer rules to follow as it is not linked to any particular science, leading to a risk of confusion and reduction concerning philosophical matters (Bengtsson, 2016). The process of qualitative content analysis, involving condensing raw data into categories and themes, seems inductive in nature but does not exclude deductive reasoning (Patton, 2002). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) identified three approaches to qualitative content analysis according to the degree of involvement of inductive reasoning, including 1) conventional qualitative analysis which is inductive, 2) directed content analysis which starts with a theory, and 3) summative content analysis which starts with counting of words. As this thesis adopts an abductive approach based on existing theories and aims to extend a conceptual framework, the directed content analysis is chosen.

4.4 Data Collection Method

At the beginning of the process, the decision had to be made about what to study, what data was relevant, and what data to collect. Since our interest had been woken by this campaign, it was an obvious choice to stick to it. Due to the campaign's size and range, we limited ourselves from looking into more campaigns or examples to make it manageable, therefore a multiple case study was never an option. The campaign contained several parts and used several channels

during the Olympics. It had short videos with ordinary, but great, athletes used for example in social media. Beyond the videos, other channels that were used were posters with content and images from the videos, other social media content, and other out-of-home advertising, etc.

To make sure all videos in the campaign were found, several sources were used. Nike's official YouTube channel started 4 years ago and does not contain the videos from the campaign. Therefore, other YouTube channels and users had to be explored. Mainly the user @nikeesports (<https://www.youtube.com/@nikeesports>) was thereafter used. This is an unofficial channel with no real connections to the brand Nike as far as we can tell but it has all of the campaign videos uploaded. For this campaign, Nike has worked with the American-based, multiple award-winning agency Wieden+Kennedy. They have collaborated since the agency was founded in 1982 and is also the agency behind the entire "Just Do It" tagline (Peters, 2004). We also had a look at their website (<https://wklondon.com/2012/07/finding-greatness/>) and did some research on them to ensure all data was covered on YouTube.

After collecting all data about the chosen field to study, the question at issue got a bit more specified when three sub-research questions were made to frame the area and help set a clearer direction. Since not everything from the campaign can be covered, with all the content and all possible views, this eased the process of setting feasible limits.

With all the data from the campaign collected, we soon came to realise including everything would be too massive. Therefore, the decision was made to only use the campaign videos found on YouTube, since they contain the most information. Also, the researchers believe they are most suitable for an analysis of the hero archetype and the hero's journey. The decision to base the research on the short YouTube videos was made on the basis of their content since all told a hero's story about one or multiple athletes and their greatness. For example, the posters contained images and quotes from the videos, therefore, the video itself was more useful and

compact, as the main body of the work of the campaign, than the image with several aspects of the story in one place.

There are a total of 20 videos of athletes doing different sports which are named as follows on each YouTube video: *Jogger, Marathon, Wushu, Skate, Rugby, Diver, Sepak Takraw, Weightlifting, Ultrarunner, Baseball, Basketball, Soccer, Boxing, Waterpolo, Handstand, Gymnastics, BMX, Wheelchair Racing, Pogo, and Double Dutch Dance*. The Jogger video is one minute long, the rest are about 17 seconds. Moreover, there are 2 introducing videos for the campaign containing London references to set the Olympic association in peoples' minds. The names of these two are Nike Find Your Greatness (1 minute long) and Nike Find Your Greatness UK 30 (30 seconds long) on nikesport's account. Since these set the tone for the campaign rather than show a specific athlete, they have been excluded from the study. The same goes for local versions, for example, the video Double Dutch Quick Feet has the same arrangement as the other 20 videos but was only used for Nike NYC. One thing that caused some confusion was YouTube videos that seemed to belong to the campaign but were so-called Spec Ads. They are not official material in other words but created by YouTubers and athletes as a personal contribution to, or version of, the campaign. Hence, they are not included in this inquiry.

4.5 Data Analysis

A series of steps were adopted throughout the analysis process as illustrated in *Table 7*. The 8-step process is based and adapted on the guidance from Zhang and Wildemuth (2009).

Table 7 Steps of data analysis

No.	Steps
Step 1	Scanning the video content
Step 2	Transcribing what we see and hear
Step 3	Define the unit of analysis
Step 4	Develop categories and a coding scheme
Step 5	Test the coding scheme on a sample of text
Step 6	Code all the text
Step 7	Assess the coding consistency
Step 8	Interpreting and draw conclusions

Initially, we have begun collecting and scanning the videos one by one repetitively, in order to get us familiar with the content and context. Following that, the transcribing starts with writing down the voice-over.

More decisions had to be made in the next step, however, in the transcription. Then the videos were carefully watched multiple times and during each cut everything seen and heard was described in detail. The categories we were looking for to transcribe were based on the theories and resulted in three main categories: character, plot, and setting. For the character, we looked for descriptions of the main character as well as supporting characters. Within the category settings descriptions of the image and sound were searched for. And for the plot we aimed to describe the action in the video as detailed as possible. In this step, the transcription interconnected the parts just described with the voice-over, since they all contribute to telling the story.

Although we appreciated any input from our detailed and thorough observation during transcribing, it was necessary to keep the empirical material in a narrower scope to draw a clear focus on our research topic, with high value and relevance for our thesis.

Unit of analysis refers to the basic unit of text to be classified during content analysis, which affects coding decisions and the comparability of outcomes with similar studies (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). As this thesis adopts an abductive approach based on existing theories and aims to extend a conceptual framework, the directed content analysis is chosen. We use individual themes as the unit for analysis, rather than the physical linguistic units, such as words, sentences, or paragraphs, that are most often used in quantitative content analysis. We primarily look for the expressions of an idea.

The coding scheme is inspired by the concept of Codebook by Bengtsson (2016). A codebook allows us to classify and organise the most relevant empirical materials while drawing linkage toward our theoretical framework.

As Weston et al. (2001) described, designing a codebook is a highly suitable method for qualitative research as it aids in filtering the most relevant insights from the data collected. Initially, it is necessary to ‘conceptualise the coding’ to capture the most pertinent aspects of the study focus. This is usually followed by the ‘codes generating’, which we named Themes, as that helped us categorise the data so that it makes more theoretical sense. The next step is to develop the coding system as a way to guide the research analysis. Nevertheless, generating the codebook is not the last step of the process. It is usually necessary to have a “continuous cycle of tryouts and revision” as the research advances (Weston et al., 2001). Changes have been made regarding the themes and coding rules accordingly. For instance, descriptions of the main characters of the videos are coded in various aspects initially such as gender, age, and ethnicity. Later, roles with more latent meanings are used as the coding theme as the researchers strive for interpretation. For more details, the codebook of this research can be found in Appendix A.

After the sample is coded, the coding consistency needs to be checked, and revised until sufficient coding consistency is achieved. Then, the coding of the entire transcription of videos can be performed.

4.6 Research Quality

There are different criteria to assess the quality of research. In general, the quality depends on validity, reliability, and generalisability (Long & Johnson, 2000). Some researchers believe that these criteria should apply to both quantitative research and qualitative research (Downe-Wambolt, 1992), while some argue that different sets of criteria and concepts should be applied (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). For instance, Lincoln and Guba (1985) created the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Yin (2003) categorised the criteria into four dimensions, including construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability, for case study research.

Especially on content analysis, concluded by Bengtsson (2016), no consensus has been reached by the scientists regarding which concepts should be used, and how to best judge the quality of research. According to him, “in general, one can say that credibility corresponds to validity, dependability to reliability and transferability to generalization” (p.13). Additionally, Long and Johnson (2000) stated that although using the same concepts as in quantitative studies is not accepted while performing other qualitative methods, it is possible for qualitative content analysis. The following examination of research quality is basically based on the concepts brought by Lincoln and Guba (1985), together with perspectives from Yin (2003).

First, credibility requires the researchers to ensure that no relevant data have been excluded throughout the analysis procedures. In this research conducted by two researchers from different backgrounds, the analysis process was performed respectively and discussed afterwards to obtain consensus and increase validity. Thus, we believe the credibility of this study is sufficient, with primary data transcribed and interpreted with a high level of transparency. Similarly, validity means that the results truthfully reflect the phenomena studied. According to the three types of validity dimensions Yin (2003) created, research questions of this study have been raised with clarity and appropriateness discussed in previous chapters to provide construct validity, logical and coherent linking of evidence to support the proposed causal relationships is strengthened through the formulation of theoretical framework, and the chosen case of Nike introduced in problematisation is representative and typical, which enhance the level of external validity.

Next, transferability is assessed in the name of generalisation. Yin (2003) is one of the researchers who state that generalization is one of the challenging aspects of case studies in qualitative research. However, he states that the goal is to generalise theoretical arguments and ideas, never to whole populations or to the entire universe. Nor are the results of this study meant to be any other measurable values that a quantitative study could have provided. Bengtsson (2016) argues that generalisability is problematic when a small sample is used, which is a term mainly used in quantitative studies. However, for the discussion of generalisability, a single case study like this can make that problem seem even more relevant. Since the aim is not statistical inference, the words of Saunders et al. (2019) are excellent: an abductive study is rather about “generalizing from the interactions between the specific and the general” (p. 153). Generalisability refers to how well the results can be applied to other contexts. Although the collected data arise from a specific context making it difficult to replicate (Richards & Morse, 2012), the researchers still believe that the analytical generalisability level of this study is

considerably high, as we aim to come up with a modified version of the hero's journey model that can be applied to other advertisements production.

Then comes dependability, or reliability, which asks for dependable proof documenting the performed research, and the same results should the study be replicated (Richards & Morse, 2012). Similarly, reliability in case studies can be assessed by examining the use of standardised data collection procedures, the use of multiple investigators, and the provision of detailed and transparent descriptions of the research process (Yin, 2003). As previously discussed in data collection, the original video content, together with the transcribed texts, have been kept and are easily accessible through YouTube, Google Drive, and local analytical tools for both of the researchers. The data analysis process presented above can also be referenced for future study and replication.

In addition, confirmability refers to the objectivity and neutrality of the data and its presentation (Polit & Beck, 2006). We pledge that confirmability is met as the sole purpose is to understand and explore the data without subjective interference. Since the researchers have witnessed and taken part in the reality of this last decade that is written about, we are biased from our cultural and social experiences. With that being said, Bengtsson (2016) holds the view that the key to quality assessment is trustworthiness. The researchers see facts as social constructions, which have been discussed previously in research philosophy and are aware that qualitative research in general lacks a definite truth. However, the same goes for quantitative studies in social sciences, so it is not only this research approach that faces that difficulty. This is an incentive for future research opportunities as trustworthiness may not be completely met in this study.

5 Empirical Findings

This chapter introduces our main findings with three sections, which are the cornerstones of a cultural brief. The researchers expound the cornerstones in identified categories with a detailed examination of the data collected.

Although qualitative content analysis opens up the possibility to assign a unit of text to two or more categories at the same time (Tesch, 2013), it is highly recommended to assign a unit of text to just one single category as in quantitative content analysis. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the researchers should strive to define the categories in the coding scheme as internally homogeneous and externally heterogeneous as possible.

To achieve that, categories under each element are depicted in a ternary manner in the course of analysis. The unit of text is assigned to the category that reflects its characteristic the most among the three, should ambiguousness occur.

5.1 Character Analysis

5.1.1 The Main Characters

This campaign stands out by portraying ordinary people as athletes, which is likely the first thing to notice when watching it. But being an ordinary person, in the sense that you are not a professional superstar, includes a wide range of people. Being ordinary is not a very specific personal trait at all, rather it is more the rule than the exception, both in this campaign and in the real world. The most significant character trait in this video, however, is the ordinary people who are not as often portrayed in commercials of this kind. We refer to this group as *Less Represented Exercisers*. Less represented indicates that the group they belong to is in some way norm-breaking in this situation. We found that nine out of twenty main characters from the videos belong to this category. The character traits that we found can be classified as norm-breaking are connected to ethnicity, size, impairments, age, and living conditions. For example, the boy in the *Jogger* video has severe obesity. The jogger starts off far away from the camera but “*the heavy footsteps are heard as they continue forward*” and a bit into the video the viewer can tell that “*it is a boy, he is overweight and a bit struggling, but continues jogging*”. Being overweight and still being portrayed as an athlete in a sports brand’s campaign is norm breaking. The main character in the *Skate* video is only “*a few years old, struggling to keep standing on the skateboard*”. His age makes him part of a less-represented group. In the *Soccer* video, “*a team of women wearing a hijab stand in a circle, talk, cheer, and then enter the field*”. That is also a less represented group in sports advertisements. Finally, there are two videos with athletes with impairments. One of them is the pitcher in the *Baseball* video. As the pitcher “*stretches out to catch the ball, it becomes visible that his other arm ends by the elbow*” and the man in *Wheelchair Racing* works hard, “*his whole upper body is pushing him forward*” and “*the viewer can now see that his legs end right above his knees*”.

We perceive the inclusion of a wide range of *Less Represented Exercisers* as the very foundation of the campaign. Not only does Nike want to include non-superstars but they want to show they are serious about their brand mission: “To bring innovation and inspiration to

every athlete in the world. If you have a body, you are an athlete.” (Nike, online, n.p.). It is clear Nike aims to broaden the inclusivity in sports and in sports ads, going for a prominent role in the discussion, clearly leading by example.

On the other hand, some videos portray a more classic heroic character. They are not necessarily superstars but more like a character, you would assume feature a sports advertisement. We name this category *Hero-Like Enthusiast*. Some athletes also have a professional appearance, they are also part of this category, and simply appear to be the person you expect in a commercial for this sport or might even compete in it. Someone who according to the norms would be portrayed as a hero. However, this category was much less represented in this campaign, and we could only see four of twenty that fit into this description. The attributes that make them appear hero-like are professional clothing or sports gear, their body shape, or their overall athletic appearance. The *Marathon* runner is “*a man in his thirties and looks very fit*” and looks like one of the persons you would believe runs a marathon race. Although he is “*dressed in a full-body daisy flower suit*”, it is not unusual to see marathon runners dressed up in costumes and his athletic appearance still makes him a *Hero-Like Enthusiast*. The *Water Polo* player is “*in the middle of an intense game, dressed in professional swimming clothes, just like all the other players around her. She also wears a water polo cap*” that is specific to the sport, which adds to the professional impression. In the *Wushu* video, there is “*a guy in a gym exercising his martial skills*”. “*More than his uniform, he also has a sword to practice with and his movements are equally intensive and controlled*”, which indicates he is far from being a novice. As stated above, there are cases where characters can fit into more than one group, but we decided to categorise them into the most significant one, meaning the category is most visible or striking to the eye. This is, for example, applicable to the *Wheelchair Racer*, who seems to have professional gear and would fit into the *Hero-Like Enthusiast* category, but also has an impairment and therefore was categorised as a *Less Represented Exerciser*.

There is also a category in between the two previously mentioned. The athletes in this category do not look like they are practising on a professional level but are also not beginners, more exercising on a lower level, like a leisure activity. Some were also categorised here due to their clothing, for example, if they were wearing ordinary sports clothes or lacked some parts of the gear expected in that sport. For this category, we use the term *Mediocre Amateur*. This category is represented in six of twenty videos, for example, *Boxing*, *Weightlifting*, and *Double Dutch Dance*. In the *Boxing* video, the girl fighting “wears a sports bra, boxing gloves, and a mouthguard”. In that sense, it looks like a boxer usually does but it is not a game situation, “she only hits toward the camera”. The feeling is more a show than a fight, the professional appearance is toned down and she fits better into the *Mediocre Amateur* category. Then there is “a man lifting weights in a typical gym, dressed in an ordinary sport tank top, very fit but looks like most people going to the gym, struggling with his reps” in *Weightlifting*. The *Double Dutch Dance* video is another good example of this category. There are “three women, two cranking the two jump ropes, one jumps into the middle, but all three dance and are part of the choreography”. They are on a squash court and nothing speaks of an official competition. Therefore, they fit into this category too.

Until now, the main character has been easy to spot, being the one in focus, sometimes even the only one in the video. The *Double Dutch Dance* is arguable, some could say it is the girl in the middle but we find it more suitable to call the whole group the main character, as a united person. They are portrayed as a whole in this video, and so is the case in the *Soccer* video where the camera shows “a team of female soccer players standing in a circle right before they are about to enter the field” and in the *Sepak Takraw* video where “two teams with three young men in each are playing Sepak Takraw over a net set up on a rooftop”. We perceive this as an important detail, that being a hero does not necessarily indicate doing a task on your own. In

videos with one clear main character, there are often other persons around them. This will be discussed in the next part on supporting characters.

5.1.2 The Supporting Characters

Among the transcribed video content, it is easy to notice that some ads only portrayed the main character him/herself with no existence of supporting characters. This includes cases that are more on an individual basis such as the *Jogger*, *Ultrarunner*, *Handstand*, *Wheelchair Racing*, and *Pogo*, as well as those that usually featured together with a rival counterparty such as *Boxing*.

In occasions where supporting characters exist, three different roles are identified based on the level of supportiveness. First, in accordance with the focus on the main characters, especially those doing individual sports, in most cases, supporting characters are merely what we identified as *Silent Passersby*. They tend to be unimportant, unnoticed, or quiet witnesses in the background. This includes “two adults and a dozen kids on the edge of the pool” in the *Diver* video, “boys playing on a basketball court by a busy road” in the *Basketball*, “a few other people in the gym, also weightlifting” with one “done with his reps and walks away from his weights” right next to the main character in the *Weightlifting*. Typically, there is little interaction between the main and the supporting characters, even if the latter is noticeable. For example, there is “a crowd standing along the street, cheering with screams, applauses, signs, and greetings” as well as “a few runners running alongside” the runner in *Marathon*. Similarly in *Gymnastics*, a woman “walks by ... looking at the girl until she enters the house” and did not stop nor comment on anything. Their existence is relatively conspicuous yet does not serve as a foil to the main character.

Second, we observed *Accompanying Allie* in quite a few videos. This is an integrated type of role including friend, teammate, student, and mentor, who may be a companion, a helper, or a cheerer. They train with the main character, “*doing the same jump*” in *Skate*. They anxiously wait for the main character to succeed, “*sitting still around the mat on the floor, looking up and staring*” at the *Wushu* exerciser. They congratulate on what the main character achieved: “*cheer from behind*”, “*give a hug*”, “*do a high five*”, and “*share a ‘yeah’*” in the *BMX* case. Throughout the ads, emotional support or physical guidance is provided to the main character with the doings and interactions of the supporting characters, which makes them more “supporting” than the passersby.

Surprisingly, contrary to what one may expect when thinking of an ad in sports with a competitive nature, only two of all the videos featured the supporting characters as *Major Competitors*. It demonstrates the highest involvement of the supporting roles, meaning that they not only take part in an athletic contest but also create obstacles as opponents, rivals, and adversaries for the main characters. This is clear in the *Water Polo* case as it shows the counterpart “*pushes the woman (main character) with the ball down underwater and holds her there for a couple of seconds*”. However, the other case is not as clear but also interesting. *Baseball* mainly features a young boy playing the pitcher, with the supporting character basically staying outside the screen playing as the batter. Notably, the batter got the ball thrown from and hit the ball against the pitcher, serving as the bridge to reveal the story of the young boy, contributing to the well-rounded portrayal of the latter. The bat, a representation of the batter, “*appeared in the foreground of the frame*” is a vivid obstacle in front of the pitcher.

5.2 Actions of the Main Character

Considering the fact that all of the selected videos are roughly 17 seconds long each and relatively simple with the plot, we narrow down the unit of analysis into different *Actions* of the main characters, namely *Continue*, *Try* and *Fight*.

When observing the actions solely, we notice that in most cases of the videos, the main characters keep doing one kind of sport on their own, typically doing that as something natural and normal without any incident happening from the beginning to the end. This includes *Jogger* and *Marathon*, *Ultra Runner*, *Wheelchair Racing*, and *Rugby* with the main characters running still; *Wushu*, *Basketball*, *Gymnastics* and *Double Dutch Dance* with the main characters continue pulling out the tricks; and *Boxing* with the boxer “*punching towards the camera throughout the video*”.

Next, the category of *Try* entails that the main characters make an attempt or effort to do the sports or overcome a difficulty. A sign to differentiate it from the *Continue* is that the main character stops, hesitates, prepares, and waits before actually doing the sport or a trick. It appears in cases such as the *Skate* where the little boy “*stands next to his skateboard on the driveway ... watching the older boys skate and jump onto the car with the aid of a take-off ramp*” before he “*goes slowly and shaky towards the ramp and fell to the ground*”, and the *Pogo* where the man “*walks to the edge, looks down ... measures the distance over to the next container, looks up again*” before he “*turns around with a few more jumps, successful landing on the container*”. The actual attempts happened both in the second half of the videos, which makes the “Try signal” rather clear in these cases.

Furthermore, a few cases put a great amount of time featuring the main character who seems to be doing nothing, which exists both in the *Continue* and *Try* categories. For instance, 12 seconds in the 16-second-long *Diver* case purely exhibit a young boy standing still although the filming angle shifts from below, above to beside: he “*peeks over ... look down from the edge of a platform*”. Another case of the *Handstand* is even more specific as the girl didn’t move at all throughout the entire video, except for breathing, eye blinking, and “*slight wobble of her legs*”. This, along with cases of *Continue*, may not fit into stereotypes of a sports ad, which leads us to further discussion regarding how stories are told.

Last but not least, *Fight* is brought up as well. With sports ads especially aired during the Summer Olympics, the form of confrontation or struggle in an athletic contest is often seen, even involving an exchange of physical blows. However, only a few in this campaign give attention to this type. The girl in water polo starts with “*crawling over a pool*” in an intense match and ends up “*diving up next to the edge of the pool with a nosebleed*”. The *Sepak Takraw* (a sport that originated in Southeast Asia, similar to volleyball but played with feet) also shows two teams competing in a fast-paced game with “*the ball bouncing speedily back and forth over the net*”. In particular, this is generally in line with the *Major Competitor* role of the supporting characters, as they contribute to the portrayal of the main characters in circumstances of a *Fight*.

5.3 Setting Analysis

5.3.1 Surroundings

A big part of the setting is the surroundings around the athlete. In this step, we have been looking at the landscape, what kind of location it is, the conditions of the place and so on. Some are more traditional sports venues and some are not. When transcribing the videos, we have more specifically described the surroundings in terms of whether the location is equipped for the sport taking place there, if it is indoors or outdoors, if it has a professional appearance, if the nature around is more in focus or can help tell the story, etc. In an ordinary sports advertisement, a natural place to shoot would probably be a sporting venue of some kind. Depending on the sport, it might be indoors or outdoors, at a gym, a stadium, or a field. These settings are made for athletic events or exercising of some kind we name *Athletic Facility* and define it as a venue where people go to exercise sports and are equipped thereafter. About half of the videos in the campaign are shot at a location like that, for example, the *Baseball* video, which takes place on “*a traditional baseball diamond with a scoreboard in the background*”. It is far from a National League field and it is children who play but the location is proper for this type of commercial. Another example is the *Diver*. The video portrays “*a young child standing on the edge of the highest platform of a diving tower, looking down at the pool far below him*”. Even though the young boy is not one to be expected in a commercial, the pool area is suitable for the video. The same goes for *Weightlifting*, it is a proper “*gym with several weights and machines around the room*”. Seeing these videos made us think that having a location that suits sports events makes the athletic association stronger.

Other videos take place in less professional or sport-adapted venues. Since the theme of ordinary people is following like a red thread throughout the campaign, it is not unexpected that some films are shot at places that are more ordinary. It might be places where these ordinary athletes usually work out, such as at home or around the neighbourhood, both indoors and outdoors but always familiar places to the character. In this study, they go by the name *Familiar Area*. This is the case in about a third of the videos, for example, *Handstand*, *Gymnastics*, and

Rugby. The girl in the *Handstand* video is “doing a handstand on the armrests of an armchair watching TV from the opposite side of the slightly old-fashioned living room”. In the *Gymnastics* video, a young girl is seen “doing back handsprings and other vaults on the lawn in front of her house” and “the house seems to be located in an ordinary residential area, a few more houses and driveways are seen behind her”. The *Rugby* video shows how “the sun is setting and a bunch of kids play rugby out on a gravel field at the outskirts of their town”. In the *Sepak Takraw* video, “the two teams play over a net that is set up on the rooftop of a high building in the middle of a city. The voice-over begins “You don’t need an official court or an official net” and the camera zooms out to show a big city around them, apartment buildings and skyscrapers in the background”. The camera zooms back in on the rooftop court and the voice-over ends by saying “to be officially great”. This is a great example of how the surroundings and the voice-over help tell the story together.

Lastly, there are three videos that are neither shot in a professional place like the *Athletic Facilities* nor in someone’s *Familiar Area*. In these videos, the nature around the character has been in focus. We refer to this category as ***Peaceful Nature*** since it aims to describe just that. The choice of the word *Peaceful* came from the feeling we got watching the videos. Not much happens around the character compared to the other videos’ surroundings which were filled with movement and impressions. The most striking example is the *Ultrarunner* video which shows “a beautiful scenery: snowy mountains on the horizon, water in front of them and a beach in front of the water”. This video is shot as an extreme long shot which adds a mighty feeling to the story and to the character. Secondly, there is the *Jogger* video which takes place on “an endless road with grass fields on the sides, clearly on the countryside”. The long road that seems to continue without an end adds to the struggle the boy expresses, there is no start or finish line in sight but he has also come a long way from where he began. Thirdly, there is the man in *Wheelchair Racing*, going “down a road under an early evening sky, the road lined by

dark grass-covered hills". This video is more zoomed in than the previous two, making it harder to identify more of the surroundings. But there is nothing else to be seen around him either, therefore what is seen of the surroundings frames the video and keeps the focus on the man racing.

5.3.2 Visual Effects

The colour and the lighting have an impact on the feeling in the videos. We have defined three different categories: *cold*, *neutral*, and *warm*. The lighting does not have to correspond with the colour, for example, in the Wushu video, "*cold daylight comes in through the windows in the back of the gym, no sunshine, and no lights are turned on inside*". In the Ultrarunner video "*It is either dark because of the clouds or it is dusk or dawn so the sun is not fully up but there is a white light from the horizon*". With the combination of the snowy mountains, the reflective water, and the dark beach, the shot could have been entirely in black and white. The sun is shining in *Water Polo* but the "*shots are from both above and below the surface, giving the video cold, blue colours*". Even though the sun makes the water glitter when the camera is above the surface, the most significant part is the cold blue colour down in the water.

Some videos have neither a *warm* nor *cold* light and were therefore defined as *neutral*. The gym in *Weightlifting* is lit up by "*casual, bright indoors light*", the field in *Soccer* has "*bright floodlights around it even though the sky is pitch black*" and behind the man on the containers in *Pogo*, "*the sky has a discrete warm light, for one second the sunset is seen in the corner of the frame*" but in general it is only a neutral evening light without any particular warm colours. In *Jogger*, there is "*a soft light by the horizon although the clouds right above are heavy*".

The category of videos with *warm* light was mostly shot in sunset and backlight so the yellow rays of sun shone straight into the camera. The yellowish tones are best describing this category and in a couple of videos, you can see it is a sunny, warm day, which indicates this even stronger. The *Gymnastics* video is one such example, “*It is a beautiful summer day, the sky is clear blue, the sun is shining, the trees are green, and the bushes are blooming*”. The warm tones “*under a cloudy sky just as the sun has set and the last of the light pink tones hang on to the horizon*” are here described from the *Jogger*. This can be interpreted as a way of creating the feeling of hope, there will be a new day and it will be brighter, a metaphor that says keep up the hard work, continue forward, the “you can do it!” spirit. The *Sepak Takraw*, *Rugby*, and *BMX* videos all have versions of “*a yellow sky*”, “*warm but dusty air*”, and a “*hazy sky, smog covering the horizon*”. When the camera zooms out to show the big city surrounding the rooftop court in *Sepak Takraw*, the air seems thick as if filled with smog. That would not be unthinkable since the video looks like it is shot in Southeast Asia, where the sport originates from, and where many places, including bigger cities, have problems with air quality. Even bigger is the problem with air pollution in Nigeria, where the *BMX* video is shot. Nigeria is on the list of the top 20 countries with the worst air quality globally. Making this issue a visible part of the settings and visual effects enhances the trustworthiness of the stories, as well as the credibility of their mission of inclusivity by choosing many different locations all around the world.

When discussing cinematography, meaning the art and technology behind how to tell a story, the decision on what to put within the frame is one of the parts including how far away the camera is placed. The videos often change the camera from one cut to the next. Doing so changes the narrative, makes the viewer focus on different parts of the story or the character, and increases or decreases the intensity of the video. Since the focus can change due to these camera changes, one video can fit into more than one category. However, like in previous parts of the empirical findings, we have picked out the most meaningful category to describe the

sequence. When the surroundings matter a great deal, it is important not to zoom in too much on the character but rather do a **long shot**. A *long shot* is when the frame includes a bit of the surroundings to fit the whole character, in some cases even from a distance. The *Ultrarunner* is the most visible example of this category. “*The frame is still throughout the video, placed on a long distance, showing the stunning views and making the runner just a small part, as they run from the left to the right edge of the screen*”. The *Jogger* is filmed as “*a backwards dolly shot, the camera starting down on the street, far from the boy, and moving upwards, and backwards, as the jogger comes closer*”. As the boy in *Rugby* comes close to the end of the field, “*the camera zooms back out to a long shot, tracking the boy as he does a touchdown and a goal celebration while running back to his teammates*”. The girls in the *Double Dutch Dance* video are also filmed with a *long shot*, “*the camera stands still, showing the team in the middle of the frame with a bit of the squash court wall on each side of them*”. *Water Polo* is one of the videos that change perspectives a couple of times but the most intense part of the video is the fighting scene under the surface: “*now a long shot from the bottom of the pool up towards the surface where the two players fight for the ball, one pushing the other one down underneath her*”.

When the camera only shows about half of the character, for example only the upper body, it is a **medium shot**. “*The man comes closer to the camera, now only half of him and his daisy flower costume is visible*” in *Marathon*. Also, the boxer is only shown from her waist, “*She continues hitting towards the camera and moves around in the boxing ring even though you can not see her steps since the frame cuts below her arms*”. The man in *Basketball* is portrayed in a similar way, “*showing only his upper body which puts focus on the basketballs he is juggling with*”.

A couple of videos are shot entirely with **close-up shots**, which is when the camera is zoomed in more than in a *medium shot*, now focusing on only one part of the body, like the face or the

hands. *Wheelchair Racing* uses this technique: “*Then the camera moves over his legs and follows his arms when he stretches them to the front of the wheelchair and grips the handle with his hands*”. There is also the *Wushu* exerciser: “*Now he is filmed with a close-up shot, showing only his chest and head, increasing the tension and intensity in his movements. As he stops in his final pose, the camera shows only his hands holding the sword for a second and then ends the video by moving up to his face and the focused look in his eyes*”. The close-up shot puts focus on his upper body and the sword moments but in a few shots the image appears out of focus and shaky. Doing so points to his quickness and agility but tones down the heroic element in his character, making him more human and his greatness within reach for other people too.

In a couple of cases, the significance of the change of camera distance between the shots is necessary to tell the full story. The two examples most worthy of attention are *Handstand* and *Diver*. First, “*the only thing seen in this close-up is the girl’s face, upside down*” at the beginning of the *Handstand* video. After a bit more than half of the video “*there is a cut and the camera is now in the corner of a living room, long shot, showing her doing a handstand on the armrests of an armchair, watching the TV on the other side of the room*”. Without the cut and the new camera angle, it would not be easy to understand what she was doing. But if the first cut had been removed, only showing her with a long shot, there would not be the same interest and excitement about her action. The same goes for *Diver*, which has several different camera angles and distances. A long shot where “*the whole boy is pictured from behind on the edge of a platform... looking down on the pool below*”. Then a “*close up on his face as he takes a deep breath*”, a new cut and the camera is “*down by the pool, filming him as he jumps at last*”.

Another aspect of cinematography is the quality of the videos depending on the kind of camera used. This is especially noticeable in *Rugby* where the camera follows the boy who runs with the ball over the gravel field. The impression from watching this video is that the camera operator runs along the boy, using a handheld camera, also called a Camcorder, resulting in a shaky image with mediocre sharpness. Handheld cameras are often used in movies or documentaries to create a sense of 'being in the real world', making the texture of the video more ordinary, less Hollywood.

5.3.3 Sound Effects

A third part of the setting is sound effects. There is a voice-over in every video, a male voice when the athlete is a man and a female voice when the athlete is a woman. Their voices are the main sounds in the video, sometimes describing the character "*Greatness speaks for itself. Once it learns to talk*" about the boy's young age in *Skate* and "*Some measure greatness in precious metals. Like I am*" in *Weightlifting*. In other cases, it describes the action the character is doing "*Greatness needs a lot of things but it doesn't need an audience*" as the runner is far out in nature in *Ultrarunner* and "*It's easy to think greatness is only something you see on TV. Unless of course, greatness is watching TV*" in *Handstand*.

We categorised the other sounds in the videos, apart from the voice-over, into **Ambient Environment**, **Loud Cheering**, and **Sport-related Sounds**. The *Ambient Environment* sounds come from other natural sources within the frame such as "*the sound of the four basketballs hitting his hands while juggling and then from when he bounces them around him on the ground*" in *Basketball* and "*a buzzing sound from the fan standing next to her and cheers and a whistle from the TV*" in *Handstand*.

The *Loud Cheering* is a common element in the videos but is rarely the main sound source. However, in *Rugby* “*the other players, both teammates and opponents, cheer and shout around him*”, and in *Marathon*, “*A crowd is standing along the barriers of a city street, cheering with applause and signs... The cheering continues and he does high-fives with some of the people in the crowd*”.

The *Sport-related Sound* also has its natural source in the character or the sport itself. However, the sound has had some kind of amplification, and would not have been noticed to this extent if the volume had not been turned up. It would naturally have been a detail rather than the only sound apart from the voice-over. “*Her hits towards the camera is heard loudly as if the sound was added on afterwards*” in *Boxing*, “*the video is in slow motion as the pitcher throws the ball, the sound turned up to match the intensity of the image, the sound from when the ball leaves his hand is heard in a way it would not have been normally*” in *Baseball*. A third example of the *Sport-related Sound* is in *Water polo*. There, the sound from when the players hit the surface while swimming is louder and sounds more like a tone than a splash. Also, when filming underneath the surface, bubble sounds coming from the same splashes as previously mentioned are exaggerated from what it would sound like being down in the water. “*Underwater sounds are usually somewhat distorted but now they are louder, generally less muffled than they should be. This adds more intensity and stress to the fight since it indicates she is running out of oxygen, making an underwater fight more risky*”. We discovered that these amplifications made the scenes more intense and were used in combination with other details that highlighted new aspects of the story and how was told, for example, slow motion and amplified sound of the throw as well as the hit in *Baseball*.

6 Discussion

In this chapter, we aim to draw the link between the empirical findings and the related theories presented in Chapter 3. The researchers interpret and discuss the findings in light of the theoretical framework to develop our understanding of the research topic. Key findings, together with theoretical and practical contributions are highlighted, based on a discussion consisting of the quality aspects and skillset used, together with simplified versions of “Hero’s Journey”.

6.1 Earning Authenticity through Charismatic

Aesthetics

Our empirical findings show that earning authenticity goes in line with charismatic aesthetics, which Holt writes about. The expressions of it in the findings are however presented rather subtly, which was not entirely in line with what we expected of charismatic aesthetics. Remarkably, the two ways we discovered the aesthetics used in the campaign, two directions in which it changed the telling of the stories, were upgrading and downgrading from our perception of the character’s reality. How this was used and why it is important will be discussed in the following parts.

6.1.1 Amplify to be Surreal

A parable to explain this way of putting emphasis on some parts and turning down others is the method used in traditional Chinese paintings. The technique used was the way blank spaces were left within the frame, also called the enlightenment of white space. The paintings never fully covered the whole paper but made sure to leave intended parts blank for the imagination of the viewer. In that way, the subject could be described in more detail without being disturbed by its surroundings. It is not necessarily done in any dramatic ways but enhances the charisma of the overall story.

The first thing noticed was in line with what we imagined charismatic aesthetics to be, effects that added dramatic and illustrative aspects to the story. In the empirical findings, we describe how sport-related sounds are changed compared to what they would be if the viewer was there when the video was shot. With the effects added to the sport-related sounds, its amplification results in something we name intensified noise. Examples of intensified noise, where the sound is portrayed louder than it should be, are the *Jogger's* breaths, the throw and hit in *Baseball*, and the underwater sounds in *Water polo*. The upgrading of these and similar details enhanced more intense focus on those selected moments. It subtly and delicately pinpoints components of the performance, such as the pressure a person would experience during a fight underwater. We perceive that this way to utilise the sound is a way to maximise the emotions, even though it may not resemble reality, it accentuates the way the character would experience the situation. By intensifying these sport-related sounds, it also creates awe in the audience, increasing respect for the athlete and their performance. One of the core desires of the hero character, according to Jung's archetypes, is to prove one's worth through courageous acts. We found that intensifying noise was a means to highlight the character's courage in the storytelling.

Not only the sound was amplified and upgraded from reality throughout the videos. For example, in *Baseball*, the cinematography changes by using slow-motion in the first part of the

video along with intensified noise. When effects are used in more than one area, the feeling and intensity get even more striking. Another way sounds can be combined with cinematographically effects is intensified quietness, which means the video in whole or parts of the video are quieter than they normally are. For example, in *Pogo*, *Ultrarunner*, and *Diver*, the sound of the surroundings is basically non-existent. This could either be because the location happens to be in a quiet place or because the sound of the ambient environment has been turned down. Regardless, it enhances the tension and triumph that comes from the action. Arguing about this could imply the charismatic aesthetics make the video less realistic, but authenticity is still gained from creating an atmosphere where the viewer more easily can place themselves in the character's position and feel what they feel. In that sense, the amplified or surreal reality is the most realistic it can get.

6.1.2 Curtail to be Retouch-Free

The other way charismatic aesthetics led the storytelling was in the very opposite direction, which surprised us at first. The aesthetics expressed in this way were rather toned down from the reality we expected to see in a Nike commercial. Even more surprising was that it was used much more often than the intensifying amplification. However, a campaign portraying ordinary people reasonably makes the videos feel ordinary as well, otherwise, it would not be realistic. In that sense, it becomes an all-covering guidance throughout the stories that create ordinary heroes in everyday life situations.

Mainly it is the myth treatment of how the characters' reality is portrayed, so palpable and authentic. There were many aspects or parts of, for example, the image, surroundings, and sounds that were downgraded from the expected studio quality of a professional commercial like this one. This brought about the impression of being on set, seeing the sequence from a

first-person point of view. In the age of digital advertising and constant online access, polished and perfected images dominate our screens making these realistic, retouch-free appearing videos stand out. The campaign does not send signals of a professional high-end design but rather a campaign from real life. A big part of that feeling traces back to the quality of the picture. The videos are not made to look like many other advertisements where extra light sources make the surroundings more like a studio with shining clear colours and the quality of the picture is top-notch. It feels real in the sense that an ordinary person, not an entire professional team, could have made this video.

In the videos *BMX*, *Sepak Takraw*, and *Rugby*, the air is in a warm yellow colour but the sunshine is hazy and the air dusty, creating a real-life experience rather than a retouched studio feeling. In a similar way is the only visible light source the windows in the back of the gym in *Wushu*. There are no lights in the ceiling, the windows are dirty so no sunshine is seen and only cold, dim daylight fills the room. If a more professional appearance had been aimed for, the room would have had more lights, making the guy more visible, more outstanding, and eminent. We interpret the combination of the lighting choice, the shaky image, and the use of close-up shots that his hero-likeness is turned down to show that even the greatest athletes are still realistic, still human. When the individual effort is highlighted, the Nike spirit, “Just Do It”, appears even stronger.

The curtains work similarly to reinforce realistic authenticity in *Double Dutch Dance*, where the surroundings only contain a squash court and a creamy white wall with cracked paint. It does not look the least fancy or photoshopped. There are also no clear colours except for one pair of neon green socks, which results in an everyday life atmosphere that feels like home in the neighbourhood or in a schoolyard, nothing more special than that. There is a playful and joyful vibe that a more professional venue and photoshopped image could have taken away.

Achieving charismatic aesthetics works to fulfil the myth the brand creates. Having the aesthetics in line with the characters created and mediated in the myth automatically generates authenticity. These examples of lighting, locations, and atmosphere mentioned above are aspects where Nike has managed to create authenticity. Since the use of charismatic aesthetics as a downgrading to reality was more unexpected than the first sort of amplification, the following paragraphs will further look into how charismatic aesthetics generates authenticity.

When discussing the quality and texture of the video, *Rugby* is a great example. The shakiness and the impression of a Camcorder create the 'real world' experience, not so much advanced Hollywood technology. In more professional-looking sports advertisements a Steadicam or some other stabilising camera effect would be used to create a smoother motion. However, the smoothness is not the goal here. Just as the atmosphere created in *Double Dutch Dance* is more playful than competitive due to the simple lighting and setup, the vibe in *Rugby* is warm and friendly, although admittedly more competitive since it is in the middle of a game, but still not in a strictly performance-oriented way. A live game sequence is good to get the audience's adrenaline goes, again, an example of the first-person point of view mentioned above.

In a few of the videos, the surroundings tell the viewer something extra about the character. One of the categories describing surroundings previously in the text is *Familiar Area*, which identifies places around the main character's home or neighbourhood. This category includes very different environments and living conditions. In *Sepak Takraw*, when the camera zooms out to show the surroundings, a big city is seen around their building. There are older apartment houses built very tightly around them, but along the horizon, high, modern facilities and even skyscrapers are seen as from a different district. The *Marathon* race is in the city of London, Ontario, in Canada, and the sequence is from a city street, very different from the *Sepak Takraw* city view. They run in the middle of a city street, much less crowded from buildings and more space and greenery instead. An even more distinct difference between the characters' home

environments is the houses represented in each of their neighbourhoods. In *Gymnastics*, the little girl vaulting on the lawn in front of her house lives in an ordinary American middle-class residential area on a street with more houses and driveways around her house. The lush gardens and the cars are well-maintained and the calmness is tangible. That atmosphere describes a different kind of neighbourhood than the one in *BMX*, which also takes place in a residential area but in a much poorer city, named Small London in Nigeria. The houses they bike pass are more shed-like, and the entire street resembles a shanty town. This image suits the voice-over in *Sepak Takraw*, saying that an official court is not a necessity for achieving greatness. People in every part of the world and with all different living conditions are able to achieve the same greatness. We find this to be an important way for Nike to create emotional connections with the customers and build trust. If Nike already believes in you, that you can do it, and portrays people the viewer can recognise themselves in, the step for the viewer to trust Nike in return is not that big when they can see these people succeeding, being told they are great. This is another implication of Nike's message. It is never "get yourself the fancy sports gear or join the coolest gym", it is about using what you already have, both in supplies and individual ability.

To continue on the argument of clothing, Nike creates interest and desire for the brand, to widen their consumer base, rather than get their existing customers to desire more products. Therefore, not in one single video does Nike place their product in the spotlight. The focus is always on the message they want to deliver, and the importance of the individual effort, never on what kind of clothes you have to wear. *Double Dutch Dance* is one of the very few videos where characters are seen wearing Nike's logo at all, and even here it is very discreet. You do not have to be dressed in a professional or heroic way to be an athlete, to be great. This is a campaign that mainly sells a feeling, not their products.

The exceptions of specific clothing needed or portrayed in the videos are some kneepads and helmets in *Skate*, the *Water Polo* cap, and the mouthguards in *Boxing*. Even then it is to ensure

the athletes' safety and not to market any Nike products. However, there are a couple of videos where the clothing stands out a bit. In *Wushu*, the guy practising wears a traditional martial arts uniform. This is not a requirement for the sport but adds to the aesthetics and therefore also the authenticity. Another example of inclusivity and aesthetics is the *Soccer* team where all the women in the team wear hijabs. Since the 2004 Olympics, not even a decade earlier, headscarves had been allowed for the athletes but were still a less represented group in athletic commercials.

6.1.3 From Authenticity to Populist Authenticity

Credibility is as argued an important aspect of myth telling. Customers want relevant, authentic brands that are seen as having nothing to hide (Liu, Eisingerich, Auh, Merlo & Chun, 2015). Sciarrino and Roberts (2018) state that millennials yearn for more authenticity from brands but feel unease because that quality is rare to find among brands today. They also observed that millennials were more drawn to retouch-free advertising and that messages sent in realistic and meaningful ways were preferred compared to retouched advertising (Scarrino & Roberts, 2018). However, Holt does not only write about authenticity in general but highlights the importance of populist authenticity.

The significance of knowledge of the populist aspect is crucial since it evolves around who is included in the targeted group and what populist world Nike is targeting in the campaign. For the audience to perceive the content as credible, the decision has to be made in whose eyes this perception will be made. There are two factors within this question, namely literacy and fidelity. Holt (2004) describes this as understanding the cultural codes and revealing that in the produced material. Fidelity also implies that broad-based understanding and popularity can be sacrificed for the credibility of this group. This campaign aims to reach ordinary people, like the characters

in the videos and does that by portraying athletes, heroes even, as “one of us”. The people with an existing sports interest are already on the hook in the AIDA model. In this case, Nike wants to widen the group they are associated with, to become associated with more than “the chosen few”, the top athletes. Instead, the brand aims to be affiliated with greatness and people who perform great things on all levels. Viewing the campaign, the echo “Every person has greatness within them. What’s yours?” is told between the lines, time and time again.

The campaign is a step in communicating the brand’s mission, which is to “Bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete* in the world. *If you have a body, you are an athlete” (Nike, online, n.p.). There is a clear contradiction in that statement compared to what usually is told in sports advertisements. Traditionally, superstars are used as endorsements since they are aspirational, the message has been more in line with “aim to become like one of the greatest”. However, this campaign does not tell the viewer to aspire to be Michall Jordan. No, it aspires to each and every person to find their own greatness. There is a standard in each industry which is what brands tells you who or what to look up to. The change from superstars to everyday heroes does not say “find your own greatness compared to Olympic greatness”. It promotes progress, saying that this and that is greatness too, greatness that is worth just as much and is just as heroic. Not being an Olympic winner is not a flaw. Portraying normal features as what it is, normal parts of human beings, and not as flaws is the same thing as what Dove did in the campaign Real Beauty. Portraying different bodies, not measuring them everyone against the same ideal, shows that beauty is all of this. That campaign from 2004 is part of a trend in social change where characteristics previously looked at as flaws become important and appreciated when lifting the discussion of inclusivity and diversity.

The populist group targeted is consequently the ordinary people, not the top athletes. Nike wants to earn populist authenticity and the clues of real life described in the above are a strategy to

get there. The ordinary people who traditionally have not felt part of the “chosen few” that are mentioned in *Jogger*, is a group that has been neglected for a long time. This is not in line with the collective idea of sportsmanship and fellowship that is otherwise often returned to in sports. During the inaugural ceremony of the Laureus World Sports Awards in 2000, a UN project to reach the Sustainable Development Goal number 3: Good Health and Well-being, its Founding Patron Nelson Mandela spoke. He proclaimed: “Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sports can create hope where once there was only despair. It’s more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination.” (Global Goals, 2021, n.p.). When talking about sports, fellowship, and the Olympics, we agree with his statement and see that sports hold a great deal of power, also to bring about change. In previous sports advertisements, however, this is not the case. Sports advertisement has not always brought hope and showed inclusivity to those who are minor, the less represented exercisers discussed in the empirical findings.

Some positive aspects of inclusivity and ordinary people are mentioned in the literature review already, although it has not yet been researched in terms of myth, archetype, and cultural marketing, however. Not all attempts are appreciated, for example, in the Real People campaign by Chevy as mentioned in the problematisation, viewers argued the ad was misleading and that the alleged ordinary participants were staged actors. Nor in Find Your Greatness were the attempts at inclusivity solely met with ovations. The critique against the campaign has discussed whether this content, mainly the *Jogger*, is inspiration or exploitation. However, the campaign faces many of these social contradictions in the sports advertising sector, fulfilling the consumer’s needs by inviting them into the group of athletes.

An eye-opener to us was Holt's argumentation on cultural branding and societal contradictions. He argues that "cultural branding requires abandoning typical mindshare directives—sell this benefit, express that emotion, show the product in use in this way, cast these actors because our customers aspire to be like them, and so on. Instead, strategies should move toward prescribing what kind of story the brand should tell to address a particular cultural contradiction of the day." (Holt, 2004, p. 117). To achieve this, social contradictions have been identified and faced. For example, athletes in hijab was very unusual in 2012. Five years after this campaign, Nike started selling made-for-athletes hijabs to get more women and girls in the Middle East to play sports (Handley, 2017), but portraying the contradiction in the campaign was a way to bring the question to the table, create awareness, interest, and desire and that targeted group. By facing these social contradictions and many others, such as obesity, age, ethnicity, and impairments, Nike shows consumers that they can fulfil their needs. It is worth repeating, this campaign sells a feeling, not a product first hand. Another social contradiction is the way they portray competitors. In some of the videos, *Diver*, *Jogger*, *Handstand*, etc., you are your own biggest opponent. It is not about someone else standing in your way but how each and every one can achieve greatness by simply starting, give it a try, just do it! In our own experience, being your own worst opponent is a common feeling, although not usually the case in competitions, sports campaigns, or the Olympics. When choosing to portray the enemy in the main character themselves, the campaign therefore, gains authenticity. Although the cultural brief is not designed primarily for ordinary people, we have found that the content of the campaign supports the theory and that populist authenticity is achieved throughout in the same way as for iconic brands and heroes.

We believe inclusivity as a topic in sports and the Olympics is worth mentioning as well. Inclusivity is one of the main themes in this campaign, showing that everyone possesses greatness regardless of who they are. This campaign is highly suitable for the Olympics,

especially since the official slogan for the London 2012 Olympics was “Inspire a generation” (IOC, 2021, n.p.). In other sport contexts around in society, a trend of inclusivity and anti-discrimination has been seen over mainly the last decade, including the Say No To Racism campaign from Union of European Football Association (UEFA) beginning in 2013 and the ongoing anti-discrimination campaigns by Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) since 2014. These are both connected to football but regarding more sports, the European Union presented a situation report on discriminatory incidents in sports within the EU. There, the impact sports and sport contexts have on the possibility of bringing about change due to its wide reach to and connections of millions of people was highlighted. The report also stated “Sport events could be an ideal platform to foster inclusion, acceptance of diversity and mutual respect while combating racism, discrimination and exclusion” (European Commission, 2010, p. 3). The campaign Nike presented is in this context most suitable with a message that speaks of inclusivity in sports, targeting the broader masses, not only the elite. By having these kinds of campaigns, the association between sports and anti-discrimination is created in new generations and has the power to continue this trend towards inclusivity and equal value.

6.2 Telling More to System 1 with Less

As introduced in the literature review, recalling our research questions regarding the arousing of emotions, System 1 is the subconscious, faster decision-making part of the brain’s processing, relying on intuition and heuristics, while System 2 is conscious, slower, and requires more mental effort. On the one hand, consumers regularly use System 1 processes, even though they’re not aware of it (Genco, 2015). On the other hand, System 1 thinking of

consumers is preferably utilised by marketers (Barker, 2019). Given the fact that all of the campaign videos are considerably short and contain relatively fewer messages, to perform a critical inquiry of the production of the campaign, it is suitable and practically inspiring to look into the use of System-1-friendly marketing skills rather than that of System 2.

Reviewing the analysis of character, action and setting, we believe it is fair to say that, in general, the stories in these advertisements get crossed with relatively less content. The information presented is not difficult or effort-requiring for the audience to understand. Instead, it is processed easily and comprehensively with associative thinking getting triggered and filling the haven't-been-said blanks. This automatic mental process of associative activation is where priming, one of the primary mechanisms by which marketing operates, is based. As Genco (2015) puts it, "Advertising is a prime" (n.p.). In light of this, the following discussion examines the explicit use of different elements against the three features of associative memory introduced by Morewedge and Kahneman (2010), including associative coherence, associative substitution, and processing fluency.

6.2.1 Associative Coherence

The associative coherence feature shows that the activation tends to produce a comprehensive and internally consistent understanding of the giving situation. Being at the centre of the video content, the presentation of the main character immediately activates associative ideas or so-called stereotypes. This is prominent with the showcase of less-represented characters identified previously.

Such activation is causally embedded in the context of sports games and traditional sports marketing with celebrities. In the Olympics and other sports events, athletes are seen as the vivid presentation of the Olympic motto - faster, higher, stronger. Through media coverage and

athlete-celebrity-endorsed advertisements, the typical sportsman image as a sports hero has been stored in peoples' minds and incorporated with suitable emotions and preparedness for associative future events. When exposed to fit, masculine, vigorous body figures, people tend to believe they are good at sports with admiration and respect. Accordingly, people automatically assume somebody is weak or incompetent in sports when the opposite characteristics are shown.

In *Jogger*, for example, the overweight boy featured in the advertisement fits into the stereotype. According to a news outlet (Paris, 2019) interviewing behind the scenes, the actor himself in real life hates running, although he likes watching sports games, and vomits into a ditch after the second take of the advertisement showing him running along a rural road. However, the weak side of the character has not been shown. Rather, his effort in doing the sports is the main focus. Associative ideas of the sporting effort are also activated, such as long training sessions as an athlete, injuries made in competition, and bottlenecks in the way of growth. This is in accordance with other aspects featured in the video, including the fact he is jogging alone, the cinematography of the camera slowly moving backwards, showing him running from far to near, the outfit he wears that seems daily and brandless, leading to reciprocal activation of compatible ideas that reinforce each other. By doing so, the idea of weakness that was initially activated by the figure is not reinforced and soon drops out in audiences' minds, leaving the impression of persistence and bravery, which is commonly seen in praise for renowned athletes. Otherwise, should weakness be portrayed in detail, incongruities may be detected and not be reconciled or ignored.

6.2.2 Attribute Substitution

Attribute substitution refers to the phenomenon that “an intention to judge a specified trait produces a composite judgement of that trait and its associative neighbours” (Morewedge & Kahneman, 2010, n.p.). It is known as the halo effect when favourable traits elicit favourable judgments on other aspects. Although information regarding the characters remains relatively few to help judge the character alone, we discover other minor elements, and associative neighbours that reinforce the action and contribute to the development of the plot which we identified as evidence for attribute substitution.

For instance, in *Handstand*, the close-up shot in the beginning only shows the girl up and down with her arms and face inside the frame. It is noticeable that flickering light with a bluish tone shed on her face. When the camera zooms out and shows the view of the whole room, audiences know what the little girl is doing with her face towards a television in front of her. The voiceover makes it straightforward with “*greatness is watching TV*”. Unlike the voiceover serving as guidance or explanation to the imagery content of the video for the audience, the change in the lighting alludes to greatness. After careful examination of the ad, we found that the dome light in the crowded room illuminates the girl from above just like a halo in the end. The warm, orange colour contrasts with earlier, suggesting that she is achieving something remarkable with a handstand on the armrest of a chair.

With the analogy of traditional Chinese painting mentioned earlier, such evidence is hidden in the background with subtlety rather than in the foreground, immersing the audiences in the atmosphere with traits endorsed without directly relevant or prominent evidence and evoking them unconsciously. It is also argued by Morewedge and Kahneman (2010) that attribute Substitution typically occurs without awareness as the associative system does not keep track of the source of impressions.

6.2.3 Processing Fluency

According to Morewedge and Kahneman (2010), there are several aspects that serve as determinants of fluency, including the quality of font, the complexity of language, the mood, and the contextual support, that affect the judgments regarding familiarity, truth and goodness. In the digital era, with videos taking up space on the internet, we consider aspects such as music, voice tone, camera language, cinematography, and lighting as determinants of fluency as well.

Our empirical findings support the argument addressed by Morewedge and Kahneman (2010) that countering to intuition, these thin yet redundant evidence appear to have high level of consistency and is processed fluently. As presented in the analysis, the elements shown in the videos are relatively manifest. With stimuli based on what people see during their day-to-day lives, audiences get the sense of familiar, authentic, thus easy to comprehend.

This argument provides us more reasons to believe Nike did what we discussed earlier on purpose. The two directions identified for achieving charismatic aesthetics illustrate how thin and redundant achieved. While this minor evidence lacks meaningful contents, their existence in the advertisement is reinforced to be redundant. With the coherence of the associative pattern promoted by fluency, brands are more likely to guide or mislead the consumers' judgements.

6.3 The Hero's Journey Ad Essentials

6.3.1 The Core of Being a Hero

Before developing the hero's journey essentials, it is vital to identify the archetype evoked in this campaign, recalling the very first sub-research question in problematisation. The twelve

main archetypes are driven and distinguished by their unique characteristics, motivations, and behaviours, as presented in the theoretical framework, providing the ground for the following discussion.

The hero, at its core, represents bravery and boldness. By getting strong, competent, and powerful, a hero proves worthiness in meetings with difficulties and challenges, outdoing herself or himself, and triumphing over adversity. The core desire is shown with the main characters performing some acrobatics, as well as doing sports that are rather normal, but should not be seen as easy-peasy with their age, body conditions or backgrounds. This induces the back side of the hero with its core fears. As discussed in populist authenticity and associative coherence, the ordinariness and inclusivity of the main characters address the issue of being weak and vulnerable. Thus, the researchers understand the archetype embedded in this campaign to be the hero, in line with what the brand used to have in previous campaigns with celebrity endorsers.

Noteworthy, with the use of ordinary people, the fear side of the hero is presented more effectively and prominent than that with athlete celebrities. Athletes in advertisements are featured with top-notch performances, just like the media traditionally puts most focus on gold medals and breaking records. Although the mark that professional athletes and gold medallists leave on earth is strong, it intimidates the ordinary audience because of the fear of failure and backlashes their interest in “just do it” in order to achieve something similar, or even just to try.

6.3.2 The Adapted Hero’s Journey

With that being assured, it is important in both theoretical and practical terms to bring storytelling techniques into commercials through myth-telling. In our empirical findings, it is interesting to discover that the main characters portrayed in this campaign are going through

difficulties, without actually showing the typical process of overcoming. Despite the previous discussion within the scope of System 1, in regard to the plot that follows the Aristotelian three-act structure consisting of twelve stages, the researchers proposed shortened and minimised versions as opposed to the classical one.

Table 8 The Hero’s Journey adaptation for advertisement with ordinary people

Act No.	Act	Stage No.	Classical	Shortened	Minimised
1	Ordinary World	1	Ordinary World	Activated without depiction	N/A(Ordinary world Activated without depiction)
		2	Call to adventure	Call to adventure (Combined)	N/A (Rooted in heart)
		3	Refusal		N/A
		4	Meeting with the Mentor		N/A
		5	Crossing the Threshold		N/A
2	Special World	6	Tests, allies, enemies	Tests, allies, enemies	N/A
		7	Approach to inmost cave	Ordeal (Combined)	N/A
		8	Ordeal		Ordeal
		9	Reward (seizing the sword)		N/A
3	Ordinary World	10	The road back	N/A	N/A
		11	Resurrection		
		12	Return with Elixir	Return with Elixir	

Interestingly, the introduction of the hero to the first stage of the ordinary world is accomplished in the first appearance of the main character. Not only are they unrecognisable without fame,

but the association is activated by external settings as well as internal settings, especially the stereotype, which helps to build the ordinary world instantly. Thus, this step in the advertisement, if executed successfully, should not require depiction.

Proceeding from that, the rest of the stages in the first ordinary world serve together as the turning point, with the *Call To Adventure* being the start. This alert, in essence, rises from the bottom of one's heart, driven by the universal human desire of heroes to take risks and have mastery. That is a must-have for every hero's journey. In movies, the steps are shown explicitly. For example, Peter Parker in Spider-Man receives his *Call To Adventure* by getting bitten by a genetically engineered spider, and gets the *Refusal* as his power is wrongly used in wrestling, but soon receives advice from his uncle, *the Mentor*, to take responsibility for saving the world with the commitment of no return (*Crossing The Threshold*). However, in a 30-second commercial, the marketers can only stick to the most important. In a shortened version, such as *Skate*, the older boys performed successful jumps in front of the little boy. By showing and challenging the little boy, we interpret this as his *Call To Action*, which may involve *Meeting The Mentor*, etc. In a minimised version, the call to action is deeply rooted in the characters themselves and does not require the actual showcase of the step. Particularly, this is identified with cases where the main character continues to do the sports.

Next, the second act of exploring the special world and the third act of returning to the ordinary world in the classical version is elaborated into seven stages. In movies, it is fully extended to highlight the dramatic shift of roles between heroes and ordinary people. After the *Reward* is obtained, the hero still faces a final trial as they may not emerge to the ordinary world where they were before. This seems adequate for superhero movies but inappropriate and redundant for advertisement, especially with ordinary people in real life.

Examples such as the *Jogger*, *Gymnastics*, and *Wheelchair Racing*, that categorised as *Continue* the action with the main character alone, demonstrate the minimised version the most. *Allies* and *Enemies* are not necessarily portrayed in these circumstances, as facing oneself as his or her own worst opponent is one of the most difficult tasks for the hero. As discussed previously, this way to present difficulties and obstacles in yourself is a way to connect with ordinary people. The message conveyed by the brand story inspires audiences who struggle with everyday routines and desire to win their internal enemy. With the showcase of these heroes undergoing the process, faced with challenges, we identify the *Ordeal* as the heart of the special world and the whole hero's journey. This is in accordance with Nike's redefinition of greatness by honouring the pursuit of all greatness beyond the medals. Calling back the fact that the first stage of the ordinary world is activated immediately, the ordinary world that the hero comes back to needs no further depiction.

For a shortened version, the remaining journey can be divided into three sections. After friends or enemies are made, the hero draws closer to the *Ordeal* and acquires the *Reward*. Lastly, since *Resurrection* is excluded for the real ordinary, the heroes can directly *Return with the Elixir*, as the same ordinary person they were before but better at this point, after achieving greatness.

7 Conclusion

This final chapter divulges the key findings in this research to conclude the answer to our research question. The contributions at both theoretical and practical levels from the key findings will be highlighted as well. Besides, the chapter ends with limitations and provides suggestions for potential future research.

7.1 Answers to Research Questions

The main focus of our research questions is to investigate how and why Nike made an outstanding performance with a campaign featuring ordinary people rather than celebrities. The sub-research questions have guided us through the empirical findings and the discussion and finally led us here. Now, by concluding the three sub-research questions, the answer will be given.

By examining the empirical findings against the cores of the Hero, the researchers discovered that Nike had maintained its hero archetype in the Find Your Greatness campaign through this changed approach to who a hero is. Typically, the core fear is strengthened with portrayal of ordinary people as the main character, whereas in athlete celebrity endorsement, the core desire is given more attention. The finding that Nike maintained the hero archetype is a necessity before being able to answer the other research questions.

Regarding the question of how to create a hero with a shorter approach, the shortened and minimised versions were developed to illustrate a Hero's Journey for commercials. As previously discussed, we believe these findings are crucial in theoretical contribution, linking storytelling in general with myth-telling in advertisements, connected with the role of ordinary people in marketing practices. In addition, we argue that these findings also provide useful models for marketers. However, as shortened as the models are, other quality aspects besides the plot, need to be dealt with delicacy.

This campaign managed to arouse consumers' emotions in a skilful way by being authentic. The videos contained stories of ordinary people; therefore, Nike chose to tell their stories in an ordinary way, creating authenticity. By portraying ordinary features in the videos, both concerning the characters and the settings, the ordinary people watching the videos can recognise themselves in the characters. When that occurs, the myth earns populist authenticity which is the most important aspect of credibility in myth-telling.

We found that there are two different directions in how to earn authenticity, which was unexpected. Charismatic aesthetics could be turned up or intensified to create a stronger emotion or guide the viewer's focus, creating something surreal. Or the aesthetics could be used to downgrade what was expected and create a retouch-free feeling. The latter was used the most, which intensified the conviction of the ordinary and reality. This is our most useful finding and has both theoretical and practical implications.

Populist authenticity, as we found, is critical concerning the portrayal of ordinary people most of all. In our adapted model, only the plot is included. People can see themselves as superheroes in movies but then it does not have to be that realistic since everyone is aware of their lack of magical powers, for example. When ordinary people are described, however, it is way more

important to get it correct, otherwise, it can create a fake or staged feeling, which results in the opposite of populist authenticity.

By mastering these aspects, Nike became the winner over all the sportswear sponsors, Adidas specifically, without even playing after the same rules as the official sponsors.

7.2 Limitations

In research philosophy, our ontological considerations are discussed, which spring from the critical inquiry with historical realism. The underlying factors that affect what we experience as reality and societal structures are for example focused on in that philosophy, meaning facts are social constructions. To fully grasp this philosophy, the political, social, gender, cultural, ethnic, and economic factors that are underlying components that shape our understanding of reality must be understood. This is important since the perception of reality changes as they change over time. However, since it has been more than a decade since the release of this campaign, there can be factors that have changed that we are unaware of, especially due to our young age and hence unawareness of societal structures at that time. Such structures, which are now considered real, had effects on the populist authenticity in 2012. In the same way, viewers today watch this campaign with 2023's eyes, finding aspects of the story that may not have been there in 2012. With this in mind, we have done our best to be objective but can have missed trends or ideas that shaped the viewers' understanding of reality during the time of the campaign.

Moreover, generalisability and transferability can be discussed in many different terms, which has been done in research quality already. These terms also connect to the trustworthiness of the research. To enhance the transferability and reliability, gathering more examples is one way to go. As this is a single case study, there are several researchers questioning the quality of the method. Since the phenomenon of ordinary people in sports advertisements is relatively new and non-researched so far, there are not many other cases that can be used. Especially not from 2012 and earlier.

Additionally, this thesis is written from a brand perspective. To gain a more thorough and broad understanding of the archetype Nike is perceived to have, the consumer perspective could have been explored. Similar to how other studies are built up, the limitations of the research also create opportunities for other studies in the future, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

7.3 Suggestions for Future Research

The limitations above lead, as mentioned, to opportunities for further research and we believe that also the findings of this study open up new research opportunities. This research area is relatively undiscovered, as stated above. There are surely many more campaigns today than a decade ago that choose to use ordinary people in their campaigns. Therefore, we suggest further research on never cases, and also multiple case studies, to broaden the research ground, creating a more stable foundation for evidence on the matter. This can result in further developed models of ordinary persons in advertisements, both as heroes and other archetypes.

In line with the suggestion above, more cases that can be researched are in other brands and industries. When referring to the Dove campaign Real Beauty, we mentioned that research often focuses on gender aspects. When searching in other industries, there will be more cases to examine, and more possible aspects to investigate.

The next suggestion also concerns brand archetypes. In this case, Nike changed its approach to what a Hero means but remained the same archetype. Therefore, we encourage research on cases where this has happened but in other brand archetypes and if that can be as successful as Nike's changed approach.

Additionally, another research suggestion is about other Olympic cases. Since there are official sponsors in the content, the brands without such a position become an underdog in comparison, such as Nike compared to Adidas in this case. This results in them having to be resourceful and innovative. For example, one of the copywriters of the Find Your Greatness campaign claimed "We couldn't use Olympic athletes in competition, we couldn't use the big stadiums, we couldn't even say London, England...so we didn't" (Kirby, 2023, n.p.). Instead, they found other places named London all around the world, changed the perception of athletes, and told the viewers that official stadiums are not a necessity. Have similar strategies been used for other underdogs to beat the official sponsors of that year too? And have those strategies worked in their cases? Or are there other strategies that can be combined with Nike's approach to gain even better results?

Finally, our interest in consumers' perception of this case has grown during the writing process. We strongly encourage future research to examine this case from their perspective. This could for example be done by surveys before and after viewing the campaign videos to find out if they believe Nike remains as a hero archetype. In such research, both quantitative and qualitative approaches could be used to explain the case in different ways.

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Appendix A: The Coding Scheme

Element	Sub-element	Categories	Description/ coding guidelines	Transcription Extracts Examples
Character	Main Characters	Less Represented Exercisers	Ordinary people who are not as often portrayed in commercials of this kind. The group they belong to is in some way norm-breaking in this situation.	<p>“It is a boy, he is overweight and a bit struggling, but continues jogging” (Jogger)</p> <p>“He’s only a few years old, struggling to keep standing on the skateboard (Skate)</p> <p>“A team of women wearing hijabs” (Soccer)</p> <p>“It becomes visible that his other arm ends by the elbow” (Baseball)</p> <p>“The viewer can now see that his legs end right above his knees” (Wheelchair Racing)</p>
		Mediocre Amateur	The athletes in this category do not look like they are practising on a professional level but are also not beginners, more exercising on a lower level, like a leisure activity.	<p>“Wears a sports bra, boxing gloves, and a mouthguard... she only hits towards the camera” (Boxing)</p> <p>“A man lifting weights in a typical gym, dressed in an ordinary sport tank top, very fit but looks like most people going to the gym, struggling with his reps” (Weightlifting)</p> <p>“Three women, two cranking the two jump ropes, one jumps into the middle, but all three dance and are part of the choreography. They are on a squash court and nothing speaks of an official competition” (Double Dutch Dance)</p>
		Hero-like Enthusiast	A more classic heroic character. They are not necessarily superstars but more like a character you would assume	<p>“A man in his thirties and looks very fit” (Marathon)</p>

		feature a sports advertisement or have a professional appearance. they appear to be the person you expect in a commercial for this sport or might even compete in it. Someone who according to the norms would be portrayed as a hero.	<p>“In the middle of an intense game, dressed in professional swimming clothes” (Water Polo)</p> <p>“More than his uniform, he also has a sword to practice with and his movements are equally intensive and controlled” (Wushu)</p>
Supporting Characters	Accompanying Allies	An integrated type of role including friend, teammate, student, and mentor, who may be a companion, a helper, or a cheerer. More “supporting” than the passersby.	<p>“They train with the main character, doing the same jump” (Skate)</p> <p>“They anxiously wait for the main character to succeed, sitting still around the mat on the floor, looking up and staring” (Wushu)</p> <p>“They congratulate on what the main character achieved: cheer from behind, give a hug, do a high five, and share a ‘yeah’” (BMX)</p>
	Silent Passersby	Unimportant, unnoticed, or quiet witnesses in the background.	<p>“Two adults and a dozen kids on the edge of the pool” (Diver)</p> <p>“Boys playing in the background on a basketball court by a busy road” (Basketball)</p> <p>a few other people in the gym, also weightlifting (Weightlifting)</p> <p>“a crowd standing along the street, cheering with screams, applauses, signs, and greetings” as well as “a few runners running alongside” (Marathon)</p> <p>a woman “walks by ... looking at the girl until she enters the house, and did not stop nor comment on anything” (Gymnastics)</p>
	Major Competitor	The highest involvement of the supporting roles, meaning that they not	“The counterparty pushes the woman (main character) with the ball down underwater and holds her there for a couple of seconds”. (Water Polo)

			only take part in an athletic contest but also create obstacles as opponents, rivals, and adversaries for the main characters.	“The supporting character basically staying outside the screen playing as the batter” (Baseball)
Action	n/a	Continue	They keep doing one kind of sport on their own, typically doing that as something natural and normal without any incident happening from the beginning to the end.	<p>“Continues running” (Jogger)</p> <p>“Runs towards the camera” (Marathon)</p> <p>“Runs from one side of the frame to the other” (Ultra Runner)</p> <p>“Continues racing down the road” (Wheelchair Racing)</p> <p>“Punching towards the camera throughout the video” (Boxer)</p>
		Try	The main characters make an attempt or effort to do the sports or overcome a difficulty. It is different from <i>continue</i> since the main character stops, hesitates, prepares, and waits before actually doing the sport or a trick.	<p>“Stands next to his skateboard on the driveway ... watching the older boys skate and jump onto the car with the aid of a take-off ramp” before he “goes slowly and shaky towards the ramp and fell to the ground” (Skate)</p> <p>“Walks to the edge, looks down ... measures the distance over to the next container, looks up again” before he “turns around with a few more jumps, successful landing on the container” (Pogo)</p> <p>“Peeks over ... look down from the edge of a platform” (Diver)</p>
		Fight	The more traditional sport ad action, some kind of competitive situation or game sequence. Goes in line with the supporting	<p>“Crawling over a pool in an intense match and ends up diving up next to the edge of the pool with a nosebleed” (Water Polo)</p> <p>“Two teams competing in a fast-paced game with the ball bouncing speedily back and forth over the net” (Sepak Taraw)</p>

			character category <i>Major Competitor.</i>	
Setting	Surroundings	Athletic Facility	A venue where people go to exercise sports and are equipped thereafter.	<p>“A traditional baseball diamond with a scoreboard in the background” (Baseball)</p> <p>“A young child standing on the edge of the highest platform of a diving tower, looking down at the pool far below him” (Diver)</p> <p>“A proper gym with several weights and machines around the room” (Weightlifting)</p>
		Familiar Area	Less professional or sport-adapted venues. Places where these ordinary athletes usually work out, such as at home or around the neighbourhood, both indoors and outdoors but always familiar places to the character.	<p>“On the armrests of an armchair watching TV from the opposite side of the slightly old-fashioned living room” (Handstand)</p> <p>“On the lawn in front of her house” (Gymnastics)</p> <p>“On a gravel field at the outskirts of their town” (Rugby)</p> <p>“On the rooftop of a high building in the middle of a city” (Sepak Takraw)</p>
		Peaceful Nature	These videos are neither shot in a professional place like the <i>Athletic Facilities</i> nor in someone’s <i>Familiar Area</i> . In these videos, the nature around the character has been in focus.	<p>“A beautiful scenery: snowy mountains on the horizon, water in front of them and a beach in front of the water” (Ultrarunner)</p> <p>“An endless road with grass fields on the sides, clearly on the countryside” (Jogger)</p> <p>“Down a road under an early evening sky, the road lined by dark grass-covered hills” (Wheelchair Racing)</p>
	Visual Effects - colour tone	Cold	A cold or blue tone in the image	“Cold daylight comes in through the windows in the back of the gym, no sunshine, and no lights are turned on inside” (Wushu)

				<p>“It is either dark because of the clouds or it is dusk or dawn so the sun is not fully up but there is a white light from the horizon” (Ultrarunner)</p> <p>“Shots are from both above and below the surface, giving the video cold, blue colours” (Water Polo)</p>
		Neutral	Neither a warm nor cold light and were therefore defined as neutral.	<p>“Casual, bright indoors light” (Weightlifting)</p> <p>“Bright floodlights around it even though the sky is pitch black” (Soccer)</p> <p>“A neutral evening light without any particular warm colours” (Pogo)</p>
		Warm	The category with warm light was mostly shot in sunset and backlight so the yellow rays of sun shone straight into the camera. The yellowish tones are best describing this category and in a couple of videos, you can see it is a sunny, warm day, which indicates this even stronger.	<p>“It is a beautiful summer day, the sky is clear blue, the sun is shining, the trees are green, and the bushes are blooming” (Gymnastics)</p> <p>“Under a cloudy sky just as the sun has set and the last of the light pink tones hang on to the horizon” (Jogger)</p> <p>“A yellow sky” (BMX)</p> <p>“Warm but dusty air” (Rugby)</p> <p>“Hazy sky, smog covering the horizon” (Sepak Takraw)</p>
	Visual Effects - cinematography	Close-up	When the camera is zoomed in more than in a medium shot, now focusing on only one	<p>“Then the camera moves over his legs and follows his arms when he stretches them to the front of the wheelchair” (Wheelchair Racing)</p> <p>“Now he is filmed with a close-up shot, showing only his chest and head” (Wushu)</p>

			part of the body, like the face or the hands.	
		Medium Shot	When the camera only shows about half of the character, for example only the upper body, it is a medium shot	<p>“The man comes closer to the camera, now only half of him and his daisy flower costume is visible” (Marathon)</p> <p>“Even though you can not see her steps since the frame cuts below her arms” (Boxing)</p> <p>“Showing only his upper body” (Basketball)</p>
		Long Shot	When the frame includes a bit of the surroundings to fit the whole character, in some cases even from a distance.	<p>“The frame is still throughout the video, placed on a long distance, showing the stunning views and making the runner just a small part, as they run from the left to the right edge of the screen” (Ultrarunner)</p> <p>“A backwards dolly shot, the camera starting down on the street, far from the boy, and moving upwards, and backwards, as the jogger comes closer” (Jogger)</p> <p>“The camera zooms back out to a long shot, tracking the boy as he does a touchdown” (Rugby)</p> <p>“The camera stands still, showing the team in the middle of the frame with a bit of the squash court wall on each side of them” (Double Dutch Dance)</p>
	Sound Effects	Sports-related Sound	These sounds have their natural source in the character or the sport itself. However, the sound has had some kind of amplification, and would not have been noticed to this extent if the volume had not been turned up.	<p>“Her hits towards the camera is heard loudly as if the sound was added on afterwards” (Boxing)</p> <p>“The video is in slow motion as the pitcher throws the ball, the sound turned up to match the intensity of the image” (Baseball)</p> <p>“Underwater sounds are usually somewhat distorted but now they are louder, generally less muffled than they should be” (Water Polo)</p>

		Ambient Environment	These sounds come from other natural sources within the frame.	<p>“The sound of the four basketballs hitting his hands while juggling and then from when he bounces them around him on the ground” (Basketball)</p> <p>“A buzzing sound from the fan standing next to her and cheers and a whistle from the TV” (Handstand)</p>
		Loud Cheering	A common element in the videos but is rarely the main sound source. It is simply when there is cheering from the audience or others inside or outside the frame.	<p>“The other players, both teammates and opponents, cheer and shout around him” (Rugby)</p> <p>“A crowd is standing along the barriers of a city street, cheering with applauses and signs... The cheering continues and he does high-fives with some of the people in the crowd” (Marathon)</p>