

Vara och märkas

– Unga konsumenters relationer till klädindustrins varumärken

Marcus Gianneschi

Akademisk Avhandling

För avläggande av ekonomie doktorsexamen i företagsekonomi som med tillstånd av Handelshögskolans fakultetsnämnd vid Göteborgs universitet framlägges för offentlig granskning onsdagen den 19 december 2012, klockan 10.00 i sal B 22, Handelshögskolan, Vasagatan 1, Göteborg.

University of Gothenburg
School of Business Economics and Law
Dept. of Business Administration and
Centre for Consumer Science
P.O. Box 606,
SE-405 30 Göteborg, Sweden

Author: Marcus Gianneschi
Language: Swedish with
summary in English
310 pages
ISBN: 978-91-7246-314-1
Doctoral thesis 2012

To brand and to be branded – Young consumers' relations to clothing brands

Brands – the logos of the global economy – have received attention both inside and outside marketing research as key symbols of our time and as powerful devices in contemporary marketing practice. Branding – an increasingly sophisticated enterprise – has taken a central role in marketers' ambitions to become market or customer oriented. Commendable or not, trying to establish close relationships with consumers, is fundamental to marketing practice and brands are often described as the medium. Given that relationships between consumption and production emerge in markets, understood as culturally embedded, and are mediated by objects and interfaces; the aim of this study is to contribute with knowledge about young consumers' brand relationships placed within the context of mass consumption, fashion and shopping products. Through young people's experiences, conceptions and images of dress and style such relationships are described as embedded in processes of emerging adulthood, situated bodily practice and material culture. Discussions, regarding young consumers, have often been polarized, either looking at young people as victims in need of protection from commercial influence or viewing them as competent consumers at an early stage of age. Through qualitative field work and recurrent ethnographic interviews with twenty-three persons 14 to 25 years of age; this story from a young cultural landscape of dress and style, situated in Gothenburg the first decade of the 21st century, offers a nuanced picture of young consumers as neither heroes or fools.

The results of the study permit a description of "the consumer" as not just an ascription or political figure, but under contemporary reflexive circumstances an identification and possible identity category. As identification the consumer has been surprisingly absent in marketing research of consumer culture. This study contends that "the consumer" as identity category and possible identification should be taken into more careful consideration in future studies of consumption. Examples of great variety in young consumers' brand-dress-relations are offered in this study and it concludes that possible and often contested meaningfulness in branded dimensions of dress should be considered in a relational manner. What a logo or a brand means in terms of an adorned body, moving through a cultural landscape, is not pure surface. It is always a meaningfulness saturated with predicament of disjunction between what one is and what one means, both for oneself and for others. Never the less, the study shows several examples of clothing brands that were successfully and actively integrated, by producers and consumers, in stylistic formation around specific and often place related activities. When brands works as medium for linking materials with meaningful images within social practice and helping people to imagine desirable identifications – they are power full tools for marketing.

Key words: brands, consumption, dress, style, youth, brand relations, consumer culture, identifications, identity, shopping products.

Printed in Sweden
By Ineko
Göteborg, 2012

© Marcus Gianneschi
& BAS Publisher