

**How Advertising Influences the Attitudes  
and Reported Behaviour of Middle-Class  
British Adolescents**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
at the University of Leicester**

By

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August 2003

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*To my husband Ashley*

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## **Acknowledgements**

This thesis would not be possible without invaluable contributions from many people for which I would like to express my sincere gratitude.

Firstly, I would like to forward my heartfelt thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Olga Linné. Without her tireless help and encouragement, her expert guidance and painstaking attention to detail, this work simply would not have been possible. I am very grateful to her for her kind hospitality, for welcoming me into her home and for spending many hours of her own time discussing my work with me.

My grateful thanks are due to the staff and students of Beauchamp College and to Mrs. Maureen Cruickshank and Mrs. Marsha Jones in particular. I am indebted to them for providing me with access to their students, who participated in my research, and assisting me in every stage of my field research.

I would like expressing my thanks to Dr. Simon Cross and Mr. Anders Hansen for their invaluable help. Mr. Hansen has contributed a great deal to my knowledge and understanding of SPSS and NUD.IST software and Dr. Cross has enlarged my knowledge of advertising and advertising industry.

I am of course very much indebted to my parents, Valentina and Sergey Shkrob, who sponsored this work. I wish to express my most grateful thanks to them.

The final acknowledgement is to my husband. I am grateful for his immeasurable patience, invaluable help and encouragement throughout my work. To Ashley this thesis is dedicated.

## **Abstract**

**How Advertising Influences the Attitudes  
and Reported Behaviour of Middle-Class  
British Adolescents.**

**By  
Marina Payton, 2003**

The interaction of adolescents with advertising is a subject area, which has received limited attention within mass communication circles - previous research having been largely directed towards young children. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate two important hypotheses relating to this subject area, namely that advertising and advertising images can influence middle-class adolescents' attitudes and reported behaviour; and another that middle-class adolescents are able to understand the persuasive effects and tactics, employed by advertisers, and on the whole are capable of making sound judgements about advertising.

A review of available literature relating to this subject was performed, which provided a theoretical framework to support the investigation of the hypotheses. Two methods were chosen to test the hypotheses, namely questionnaires and focus group interviews. The questionnaire investigated such areas as frequency of exposure to advertising, purchasing habits and ability to decode and interpret advertisements. Focus group interviews allowed participants to discuss advertisements presented to them and advertising in general.

The results of my study provided only limited support for the first hypothesis, concerning attitudes and reported behaviour and it was recognised that advertising was only one amongst a number of influencing factors such as peers, family and media. Although, in the questionnaire three-quarters of respondents did report making an advert-related purchase, later investigation did reveal that there may have been some limitations in the methodology surrounding the questions asked. Results obtained from the focus groups, did show that participants were eager to discuss advertisements they have seen and cited jokes and slogans used in them, thus making reference to their interest, but not providing sufficient evidence of having been influenced. Nevertheless, both the questionnaire and focus groups findings provided evidence that participants possessed extensive knowledge of the tactics and techniques, used by advertisers, and were also aware of some of the motives behind the use of these techniques, providing support for the second hypothesis.

# Chapter 1 Introduction

This thesis examines the relation between media messages and the formation of adolescent attitudes. As part of the thesis, two fundamental hypotheses are introduced, relating to the influence of advertising and its understanding by adolescents. In this introduction, an insight will be given into the theoretical framework driving this research, its aims, and its structure and organisation.

In the theoretical rationale for this project, consideration is given to how young people try to come to terms with, and understand, the post-modern media-saturated society, in which advertising plays a very important part. Advertisers have, in recent years, recognised that young people represent a particularly lucrative segment of the market and, therefore, their behaviour as consumers is receiving ever-increasing attention.

Therefore, this thesis focuses on the academic debate of whether children are capable viewers and critical and analytical decoders of advertising or simply victims of it. Generally, scholars, who have written on the subject of advertising and children, have concerned themselves chiefly with advertising's persuasive element, and its potentially harmful effect on children (e.g., Unnikrishnan, 1996; Jhally, 1987; Liebert, 1982; Fox, 1996). These researchers, writing in favour of the opinion that children are uncritical victims of advertising, often raise the following issues: (1) advertising takes advantage of children's natural naivety and credulity; (2) advertising develops unnecessary wants and needs, and hence, consumerist attitudes in children; (3) advertising develops unwelcome social attitudes (such as gender and race prejudice and stereotyping); (4) advertising has a negative effect on children's health and safety (e.g., sugary foods advertising). Their main charge against advertising, however, is that children can not protect themselves from advertising, because they can not distinguish advertising from general programming, do not understand its selling intent and know nothing about its persuasive tactics.

To summarise the writings of those researchers, who expressed contradicting views, it was generally conceded amongst them that children could understand and interpret advertising messages and act as wise, rational consumers. Such researchers as Buckingham (1993a), Young (1990), and Hodge and Tripp (1986) argue that young people are not as vulnerable

and naïve in relation to advertising, as they were habitually described. In fact, Buckingham and Young claim that even young children have some capability to analyse and decode advertising messages and, therefore, they reason that regarding children as a captive, exploitable audience (e.g., Fox, 1996) means undervaluing their abilities to process texts effectively.

Following the same argument, O'Donohoe (1995) finds that young adults are also particularly sophisticated consumers of advertising. This finding is borne out by my study, as shown in Chapter 7, from which it is evident that the respondents in this study demonstrated significant knowledge and understanding whilst interpreting advertisements, and at the same time, presented themselves as sceptical towards advertising.

With few exceptions (e.g., Young, 1990; O'Donohoe, 1997), the writers, reviewed above, seem to hold an either-or position. They either believed that advertising had an unconditional influence on young people and thus, treated them as victims or attributed sophisticated knowledge of advertising's techniques and intentions to them, and argued that they can not be as easily influenced by advertising as believed by their opponents. Whilst there certainly appears to be evidence for both such arguments, this study will attempt to demonstrate that adolescents can possess a sound knowledge of advertising techniques and effects, can be very able and articulate decoders of advertising messages, but still be influenced by advertising. Indeed, O'Donohoe (1997) demonstrated, in her study, that young people often approach advertising "with a great deal of ambivalence, seeing it as something to be enjoyed and endured in almost equal measures, and expressing both a sense of immunity from and vulnerability to its persuasive powers".

This research, therefore, seeks to move beyond other writings on this subject by hypothesising that, (1) advertising and advertising images can influence middle-class adolescents' attitudes and reported behaviour; (2) that middle-class adolescents are able to understand persuasive effects and tactics, employed by advertisers, and on the whole are capable of making sound judgements about advertising.

Moreover, to the best of my knowledge, most researchers, discussed above, limited their studies to television advertising. My study, however, goes further, selecting and analysing advertisements from both magazines and television. Today, because more adolescents read

magazines, advertisers believe that advertising through magazines is a potent way of advertising to young consumers. Therefore, I felt that it was important not to limit my study to television advertising, but to analyse the influence of magazine advertising as well.

Furthermore, according to Moschis (1978a: 81), the majority of advertising and young people studies are “either exploratory or descriptive, based upon little theory and do not report individual differences”, and according to Boush et al. (1994), the issue of how older adolescents might respond to advertising, has received little attention. Therefore, in addition to examining the role that advertising and advertising images play in influencing adolescents’ attitude formation, my research also endeavours to examine whether they are able to understand persuasive tactics, employed by advertisers and, on the whole, are capable of decoding advertising messages and making sound judgements about them. In order to do this effectively, I feel that it is important to understand the subject of advertising in general and therefore, probe into literature written on this topic.

Consequently, Chapter 2 of this study attempts to analyse scholastic writings on the definition, criticism and analysis of advertising. The arguments against and for advertising, gradually progress into an analysis of it, and proceed to introduce its symbolic system. The concepts of symbolic messages and images are presented, which are based mainly on writings of Barthes (1977b), and show that there is no concrete system for thinking about advertising. This symbolism will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 6 “Semiotic study of advertisements”.

Chapter 3 provides the conceptual framework for the study of the relation between media messages and the formation, reflection and reinforcement of adolescents’ attitudes. The theories of communication are examined, paying specific attention to this research, and writings on youth culture and media are reviewed. I feel that, before I attempt an analysis of the relationships, which exist between adolescents and media, and understand it more fully, I have to scrutinise relevant media and youth culture theories. These theories deal with cognitive, social and media related development of children and will attempt to provide some insight into the hypothesis of this study. In the section “Theories of communication”, I will introduce some concepts of Jean Piaget’s theory of stages, which explains how children and adolescents acquire cognitive structures at different ages. The

sections “Youth culture and media” and “Theories of communication” of this chapter, will be looking at many different uses young people have for advertising in post-modernity - many of which are non-marketing ones (e.g., diversion and entertainment). The theoretical framework of the section “Youth culture and media” will be applied in Chapter 7, which presents and analyses the findings of this research.

To test the hypotheses of my study, I have employed three methods of research: questionnaire, focus group interviewing and semiotic analysis. Chapter 5 will discuss these methods, endeavour to explain why they were chosen, and consider their chief advantages and disadvantages. Firstly, the theory behind each method will be explained, which will be followed by a review of the practical implementation of the questionnaire and focus groups methods, and then my own semiotic analysis of the advertisements.

The data collected as part of the research is presented in Chapter 7. Here, both qualitative and quantitative types of analysis have been performed, using the theoretical framework, introduced and developed in the previous chapters. The figures obtained from the research should prove useful in determining overall attitudinal and behavioural trends amongst adolescents.

Finally, Chapter 8 brings together, in summary form, all the data presented in the previous chapters. It is here that the significant findings of my research is presented and discussed. These findings will test the hypotheses of my study, either providing support for them or disproving them. From this conclusions will be drawn and recommendations for further research will be made.

## **Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework. Advertising: definition, criticism, defences and analysis**

“Pervading all the media, but limited to none, advertising forms a vast superstructure with an apparently autonomous existence and an immense influence.” (Williamson, 1978:11)

Modern advertising is a complex interweaving of psychological, social, economic and other factors. Therefore, it will be necessary to consider the interaction and impact of these areas on advertising as a whole. Researchers from different backgrounds have approached and tackled advertising in slightly different manners, each with its own merits. However, there is not always agreement between the disciplines. My particular background is that of Mass Communication and this will be reflected in the approach, which I will take in characterising and analysing advertising. Nevertheless, I do intend to introduce analysis and opinions from other disciplines, where I feel it is relevant or appropriate, to obtain a more rounded approach.

Much has been written on advertising theory, thus presenting me with a wide range of literary sources, some of which I will endeavour to examine as part of this study. In this chapter, I will begin by attempting to define fundamentally what advertising is and why it is given a form. A review of the opinions and writings of scholars and advertising gurus will shed light on historical and more recent thinking as to the advantages and disadvantages of advertising as a social phenomenon. This review will encompass a broad spectrum of works from the early exponents of advertising theory to more recent, and indeed, post-modern schools of thought. By extracting and building upon the theoretical content in these works, I hope to establish a background for analysis of the attitudes and reported behaviour of the adolescents, participating in this study. Thus, this review will serve as a basis for assessing the applicability of the first hypothesis, namely, that middle-class adolescents' do report being influenced by advertising and advertising images.

I will follow with an analysis of advertising, its functions and persuasive techniques. I have chosen to examine how the science of signs, called semiology, can be used to both encode and decode the messages, which are present in advertisements. It is my intention to use this as an analysis tool to give my own reading of the advertisements used as part of this study.



By considering this reading and those produced by the participants in the study, I will establish a method for testing the second hypothesis of this study, namely, that middle-class adolescents are able to understand persuasive tactics and techniques employed by advertisers, and on the whole are capable of skilfully decoding advertising's messages.

I feel that it is important to mention that the majority of the writings is of a general nature and has been written with a wider audience in mind, but I would argue that the theories are equally applicable to adolescents and in reviewing these writings I have attempted to extract and highlight those parts, which are of particular relevance. I have included a review of the criticisms and defences of advertising to help in understanding the negative and positive influences that it can have. For the particular age group used in this study, I believe that this is particularly important, as they are still in their formative years when such influences may be more pronounced.

## **Definition of Advertising**

Advertising is an inherent part of our everyday life. According to Leiss et al. (1986), it has become one of the great vehicles of social communication, promoting goods and services. It pervades commercial television and radio and is displayed on the pages of glossy magazines. Its billboards are erected for the attention of passing motorists and its attractive images posted all over our urban surroundings.

The messages used by advertising and the ways in which they are presented do indeed touch on many aspects of our daily life, all of which is intentional, of course. Indeed, as we live in a very consumer oriented society, where the product is of paramount importance, the medium through which we are made aware of this product is bound to exert some social influence over us. Given this, it is no wonder that advertising, as a subject, has attracted many researchers in a wide range of fields, who engage themselves in defining, criticising and analysing the advertising phenomenon.

There are a number of opinions on what the fundamental function of advertising is. It can be seen as a vehicle by which a product is presented, given an appropriate image and placed in relevant surroundings. Advertising has also been seen as having the role of informant, providing essential, and non-essential, information about the product and the marketplace in which it is positioned. Furthermore, it has been labelled as an agent of change; namely, change from brand A to brand B.

The magnitude and power of the industry is perhaps underestimated in the eyes of the general populous. Just a little thought will reveal to them that, in the UK alone 3 out of the 5 television channels available through terrestrial means are funded by advertising. I cite this free-to-air television in particular as, unlike magazines and subscription channels, it really does rely almost totally on the revenue from advertising.

According to Fowles (1996), writing on the interrelation between advertising and popular culture, advertising can be defined as paid-for messages. Prior to an advertiser placing his/her advertising on television, he or she should buy television time or as Jhally (1987:72), whose background is in communication, puts it, “audiences watching time”. If

an advertiser is interested in placing his/her advertisement on the pages of a magazine, he or she should invest in 'space'. In short, according to these scholars, advertising can be defined as a form of business expenditure, used in the hope of selling a commodity/commodities to the consumers. Although the definition of advertising as a business expenditure is certainly valid, one cannot help but notice that things have moved on significantly since the early days of simply 'buying space' to display ones wares. Advertising has taken its place as an integral part of modern culture, drawing on a wide range of symbols and ideas in efforts to communicate its message. This is, therefore, an over-simplification and one, which is biased more towards economic issues.

Many scholars, writing on the subject of advertising, have recognised that to make products appealing and attractive to the target audience, advertisers encode certain images into those commodities and then sell these images (and not necessarily the commodities themselves) to the audience. Williamson (1978), a proponent of semiology, chose to define advertising in terms of two functions, which it possesses. The first of these being its obvious function to sell things, its second function is identified as the occupation of a role traditionally fulfilled by either art or religion, that is the creation of a framework of meaning. As with Fowles and Leiss, Williamson's first function cites the economic function of advertising as defining it, but goes on to recognise that it has a greater role to play than simply selling a product.

The idea that advertising can act as a replacement for two such great cultural pillars as art or religion is indeed one that I think warrants further development. It is widely accepted that religion is in decline in Western society - at least in the Anglican and Lutheran churches - and, on the face of it, appears to be replaced by increased consumerism. However, the product itself has no meaning or depth but when embellished by the interaction of advertising it is given a place in our society and a persona is created for it.

Indeed, it is this very creation of a persona and the portrayal of advertising as an art form, which exhibits a classic characteristic of postmodernism. The distinction between high culture and popular culture becomes blurred by the close linking of art with consumerism. A classic example of this is the art of Andy Warhol, in which the juxtaposition of images of renowned consumer products became famous works of art.

The function of 'modern advertising' is considered by scholars to have gone far beyond the simple presentation of a product. It is now seen very much as an active tool and has become some kind of process, through which the product is transformed into a representation, or image. Fowles (1996) emphasises that the transfer of meanings from imagery to a product (and encouraging its viewer to do so as well), is the main focus of advertising.

It is really this latter consideration, rather than the earlier economic based definition, that I feel is of greater relevance to the hypotheses, which are under investigation in this thesis. With this in mind, it would be appropriate to define advertising in these terms, neglecting perhaps, its underlying economic function.

The transformation of meaning and imagery is not performed, however, on some *ad hoc* basis, but rather draws upon social, cultural and psychological issues. By giving consideration to these in the subsequent sections of this chapter, we can see how scholars and theorists argue for and against the use and implementation of these methods.

## **Criticism of Advertising**

Although I consider that economic issues are of lesser importance in this investigation, they do form a large basis for the criticism of advertising. Hence, I have included this to give a better overall picture, but with the greater emphasis being on social and cultural aspects.

Scholars, writing about advertising's role in society, offer a wide range of polarised opinions as to whether it has a positive or a negative role. Owing to its extremely commercial motives, advertising is consumed warily by the public and condemned by the critics. The Marxist critics argue that advertising is a wasteful and inefficient business tool, emphasising its role in raising the prices of goods because of its unnecessary business cost, and condemning the way in which mass advertising carries with it a certain insensitivity (e.g., Leiss et al., 1986; Norris, 1966).

According to Leiss et al. (1997), who considered advertising in a social context, Marxist economists perceive advertising as a vital and integral part of capitalism, its 'principal weapon', which plays a crucial role of stimulating demand in that system, fulfilling the needs of the capitalist and industrial society in which we live. Despite this fulfilment, many Marxist scholars argue that advertising is an essentially inefficient business tool, primarily because it stops small firms from entering the marketplace and competing with the larger firms on equal terms, the latter being able to throw vast sums of money at promotion of their products.

Continuing the idea that balance in the marketplace is driven by money, Rotzoll et al. (1996) suggest that demand in the market can be created by advertising. The consequence of this is that large firms will be relatively immune to competition from cheaper alternatives within the market, as they compete on the level of brand name and reputation, not price. This issue of brand and reputation is one, which will figure significantly later in my study. I believe that this issue of small firms being driven out by larger ones is certainly true in certain market sectors but it is a fact that small firms do still exist and probably do so on the basis of offering something different or special, thus appealing to people's sense of individuality.

Kellner (1995a: 330), commenting on the US advertising industry from a cultural perspective, indicated that in the early 1990s more than \$130 billion was spent annually on advertising. Accordingly, he estimated that only 8% of cosmetics sales revenue went to pay for ingredients, whereas a significant proportion of the remainder went to packaging, promotion and marketing. Norris (1966) criticises advertising as an institution that permits producers to manipulate the price of goods to their own advantage. Even Ogilvy (1963), a powerful advertising magnate, argues that 'persuasive' advertising for one brand against another is a waste of resource. Indeed, it is my opinion that too much advertising of a product can have a detrimental effect, causing consumers to be turned away from a product as the repetitiveness can reach such a level so as to become annoying. Hence, in this respect excessive expenditure on advertising can definitely be judged as a waste of resource.

Goldman (1992), whose interest lies in the social aspects of advertising, accuses the industry of continually emphasising the importance of commodity relations. According to

Goldman (1992), advertising adds value and credibility to the goods it promotes, and in the event of neither of these existing, creates them. Such actions are bound to have a detrimental effect on society, even though society, at the time, is unlikely to recognise this, as it is busy being contented with its latest acquisition. The idea of being able to add credibility and value where none exist does indicate one of the perceived characteristics of the media, and also to act as an authoritative source of information. Advertisements are frequently seen interspersed with factual news stories, in both television and newspapers, hence it seems plausible that this would add to the advertisers' ability to create credibility.

A frequent commentator on American society, Potter (1954:175) argues, that a consumer "must be educated to perform his role as a consumer, especially as a consumer of goods, for which he feels no impulse or need". He then suggests that advertising is the only social institution, which willingly undertakes this educational function, because "advertising", he argues, "...ultimately regards man as a consumer and defines its own mission as one of stimulating him to consume or to desire to consume" (Potter, 1954:177). Although the ability of advertising to provide information cannot be discounted, Potter seems to place it in an almost vocational role and see it as ministering to the population. I feel that this is a somewhat naïve view and the industry's apparent willingness to benefit the consumer should be considered in light of its commercial motives.

John Kenneth Galbraith's texts on "The Affluent Society" (1969) and "The New Industrial State" (1967), which attracted enormous academic interest, deserve to be heralded as "the most celebrated attack on the role that advertising plays in creating demand for goods and services" (Leiss et al., 1997:19). Galbraith argues that the needs of the consumers do not originate with themselves, but are instead created by advertising industry.

The very case for the existence of the advertising industry is used by Galbraith (1969) to reject the traditional economic theory of consumers as the principal independent decision-makers in the economy, and to argue that, in fact, producers are the chief decision-makers.

Galbraith speaks about "the management of demand", which consists of "product design, model change, packaging and even performance" and reflects the need to provide what are called "strong selling points" (Galbraith, 1967:203). He postulates that producers employ the advertising industry to control demand on their production by fabrication of false wants

and needs that this production endeavours to satisfy. If people were not pressurised to invest into an ever-increasing supply of new goods, which they do not really need, Galbraith argues, they would not spend their money on them. This however, would be very bad for the capitalist industrial system, which needs people to buy the goods, which it supplies. “Advertising and its related arts thus help develop the kind of man the goals of the industrial system require – one that reliably spends his income and works reliably because he is always in need of more” (Galbraith, 1967:210).

It was alluded to earlier that in adding value and credibility to the goods it promotes, advertising would actually seek to create these if they are not already in existence. It is this creation, which leads us on to the creation of desire itself. The suggestion, that consumers can perceive the need for a product not necessarily to satiate their own desires but those of the society in which they live (cf. Ewen, 1976), is the first step in the move towards manipulation of the consumer. The idea, introduced earlier by Williamson, that advertising is taking on the role of religion, is borne out by the way in which we are encouraged to enter into some form of ‘commodity worship’ and hence, the creation of a false need.

The method by which this false need is created draws on a variety of sources based on social values and human instincts. Speaking from a cultural viewpoint, Douglas and Isherwood (1996) and Ewen (1976), both suggested the idea that consumption is all about distinction. Such social values as prestige, beauty and success are used in order to appeal to the deepest human instincts, thus tricking people into consumption and making them buy something in order to gain or reaffirm status or position within society. Accusations are made by Kellner (1995a) of advertising tricking consumers into believing that their new purchases will make them happier and bring them desirable success by creating a link between the product and a set of physical and mental conditions, which the recipient may desire. One can draw parallels with Marx’s religion being ‘the opium of the people’, bringing happiness and taking away one’s pain. To quote Kellner (1995a), it provides “a utopian image of a new, more attractive, more successful, more prestigious ‘you’ through purchase of certain goods” (p.251).

The distinction which is to be gained by consumption is closely linked to the creation of identity, i.e., each product or service carries a meaning, attached to it by advertising, and when an individual buys it, he/she reinforces (and sometimes changes) his/her identity

(Elliott, 1997; Elliott and Auty, 1999). Consequently, it is maintained that advertising communicates the meaning of the commodity as object and tries to sell to the audiences not the commodity itself but the meaning attached to it. The way in which an individual consumes and his/her capacity to consume is centred on the social class to which this individual belongs, and the resources available to him/her. From this it could be concluded that, through the process of self-monitoring, individuals are able to adjust their behaviour according to which social groups they desire to belong. In terms of reacting to adverts, this involves an interpretation, or reading of the advert, and the social codes utilised therein. This is followed by a corresponding adjustment, or 'writing' as Elliott and Auty (1999) call it, of identity. On a similar note Kacen (2000) argues that in fact, the post-modern consumer is so "obsessed" with appearance, and therefore with consumption, he or she is eager to substitute appearance for identity.

There is a clear link forming between product, society and individual and, in my opinion, it would seem that the latter is in the position of least power. Taking on a view put forward by Miller (1987), that goods are representative of the culture in which we exist, we have to consider that they affect the way in which we interact socially and, generally, shape our everyday lives. In this scenario advertising persuades individuals to use consumption in order to make or reaffirm a statement about themselves, their interests and hobbies, their background, their status within society, and their neighbourhood. Indeed, as Elliott (1994:285) theorises 'consumption as cultural practice is one way of participating in social life and may be an important element in cementing social relationships'.

This is reinforced by Williamson's (1978:13) opinion that, through this process, therefore, people are made to associate themselves with what they consume. Associated with certain groups of purchases is the identification of the consumer as belonging to a certain social class or a group, but they also think that they can change their place in society, their social class and even their physical appearance by means of their purchases.

The thrust of these arguments is the unnecessary purchase of goods. The idea that we are not purchasing the product for the use that we can make of it in a practical sense, but are buying it for show, can certainly only be attributable to certain types of goods. In today's marketplace such goods are readily identifiable but I consider that there are two categories within this group. Namely, the branded goods, with their corresponding reputation, and



secondly, there is a genre of goods, which by virtue of either technological advancement or sheer expense, can alter one's social status.

Unnikrishnan (1996), having researched the impact of television advertising on children, supposed that advertising directed towards young people can create dissatisfaction, frustration and unhappiness because the products and services it promotes raise false expectations among them. As discussed previously, advertising was blamed for attaching desirable attributes to products, which "create hopes beyond the utility value of the goods that are purchased or desired" (Unnikrishnan, 1996:164), and linking the product to a whole lifestyle.

"Throughout the socialisation process, young people are exposed to heavy 'doses' of persuasive communications, many of which carry information on 'how to be cool'" (Elliott and Auty, 1999). Therefore, knowledge and understanding of such advertisements is an important part of achieving correct social interaction. This highlights one cause of concern, particularly for young consumers, that, given the necessity for socialisation, they can generally be more easily persuaded that buying the products advertised can effect a change in their lifestyles. Although such a concern was shared by von Feilitzen (1999) she did place further qualification on this by introducing the aspects of the child's background as an important guide to how the child's reaction might be to such a suggestion.

"...A child born into poverty, surviving on minimal attention, brutalised by a damaged parent, or brought up in an environment where life appears to be cheap, is likely to perceive the offerings of the media rather differently to a child who is valued at home, in school and within the local community. Inevitably images of glamour and success, seductive advertisements for fast cars, expensive clothes and other consumer durables... will inspire those, who have nothing, to find ways of obtaining what others appear to take for granted." (von Feilitzen, 1999:105)

Many critics of advertising aimed at young people (e.g., Unnikrishnan, 1996; Liebert, 1982) also argue that advertising can be potentially harmful to their health, because the majority of foods advertised are highly sugared. An observation by Liebert (1982:150) showed that, "Food ads focused on taste, especially sweetness and texture and provided little, if any, information about nutritional content or attributes, except perhaps 'fortified with essential vitamins' or 'part of a balanced breakfast'". Liebert, amongst others, suggests that younger children are considered particularly susceptible to such tactics as they do not fully comprehend the selling intent of advertising, and therefore cannot defend

themselves from its influence. In other words, these researchers perceived children as largely advertising illiterate. Taking into account that advertising literacy is “understanding of the purpose behind advertising and an ability to recognise where the ad begins and ends.” (Young 1990:10)

A frequent criticism of advertisements is that they do not portray real life issues and that the illusions advertised are removed from everyday life. Both Unnikrishnan (1996) and Williamson (1978) highlighted this with their support of Marxist ideology, arguing that advertising creates a system of class differences, by portraying only people from the upper and upper-middle class of society in their messages. Moreover, some researchers claim that advertising imposes and reinforces gender, occupation, class and race stereotyping (Unnikrishnan, 1996; Williamson, 1978; Fowles, 1996; Cross, 1996), which is particularly harmful to young viewers. According to Cross (1996), gender stereotyping is very common in advertising that is directed towards young people.

Accepting that advertising creates false wants and succeeds in its attempt to make people buy more goods than are needed to satisfy their immediate needs, one arrives at the inevitable conclusion that advertising has enormous manipulative powers. Vance Packard, a well-known sociologist and cultural critic, for example, argues that advertising controls consumers at a subconscious level. Advertising is seen by Packard (1960) as a threatening manipulator, which controls consumers' purchasing decisions by influencing their minds and interfering with their thoughts without them being aware of it. By arguing thus, Packard alludes to examples of the scientific research in psychiatry and the social sciences, which are used by advertisers in order to access consumers' thought processes so as to brainwash them later on.

Widespread reading and observation has revealed frequent references to advertisers attempting to influence adolescents through their peer groups or their idols, i.e., adolescents who have high status among their peers and whom they want to identify with and copy. This is recognised by Packard (1960) and later by Henriksson (1983) (investigating youth culture) who believe that advertising often operates at the subconscious level, employing knowledge of adolescents' psychological profiles and problems - the exploitation of peer pressure being just one of these psychological problems. However, as Leiss et al. (1997) point out, Packard was not able to proffer any

particular examples in which consumers were subconsciously manipulated into a purchasing act, which they otherwise would not have intended to make. Likewise, Myers (1986) argues that Packard's impression of a consumer, as helpless and mindless, cruelly bamboozled by advertising, is somewhat overstated. In this respect, I would concur with Myers and believe that Packard goes too far in his presentation of the consumer as a victim.

A number of scholars have criticised the advertising industry for linking consumer goods to various qualities, presented as being socially desirable, and also for playing on human fears, insecurities, irrationalities, idleness, vanities, passions and anxieties. Ewen (1976) identifies the creation of connections between values and products, which become accepted in society and can subsequently be exploited by the advertising industry. The use of exploitation is further developed by Hobart (1998), who recognises the ability of adverts to make use of human frailties or weaknesses.

The media researcher, McLuhan (1964:229) argues "ads use the most basic and tested human experience of a community in a grotesque way". According to Brierley (1995) and Henriksson (1983) advertising appeals to the non-rational, emotional psychology of the consumer, exploiting such values as status, sexual desire, patriotism, passion, emotions and impulses. I interpret this as meaning that the consumer is persuaded to buy in order to access one or more of these values, and hence, obtain an experience or state of mind, which they were not previously party to.

An extension of the use of emotional psychology is recognised by such critics as Williamson (1978), Myers (1986), Kellner (1995a) and Dyer (1982) who accuse the advertising industry of employing magic to work for them. According to them, advertising acts as some mythical figure, beckoning the audiences in the dark world of consumerism, sometimes against their will. Advertising images, they argue, appeal to people's core desires for status, beauty and wealth (ref. Myers, 1986). In this approach, there has been a movement away from simply selling a product towards the presentation of an image, and not a simple image, but one, which contains an element of 'magic'. Myers (1986:15) argues that by promising overnight transformation (the Cinderella effect), advertising induces the audiences "to sell their souls in a supermarket". Likewise, Goldman (1992:24) states that advertising is selling not the products, but desired attributes: "the object

becomes an active agent capable of doing all the things that a gorgeous, sexy and young person can do". The advertisement's ability to operate on different levels, and convey different meanings to different viewers, means that it is very capable of selling to us our own idea of what we would like to become. The viewer is expected to enter the world of advertising and assume the position of either the beautiful man or woman present in the advertisement. Through this they are led to believe that by purchasing the advertised products, they can undergo a transformation. Elliott (1994) says that in post-modernity, consumers are encouraged to use television advertising, to magically change themselves, becoming whoever they would ideally want to be. However, he also states that 'the choices as to which self to construct and present attended by the possibility of social consequences which may be very negative' (p.288).

In an advertisement directed towards young females, a fairly unattractive girl with a lifeless complexion can be swiftly transformed into a fairy princess by buying and using a beauty aid. As Goldman (1992:25) puts it: "fantasies sell commodities and commodities sell fantasies". Williamson (1978) refers to the advertisements as 'spells', which provide a simple solution to any problem. Thus, advertising not only sells products, but also it sells magical images. Williamson (1978) states:

"In emphasising the effects of the product, in other words its role as producer, the image of magic in advertisements denies the fact that the product is produced, removing it from its real place in the world and at the same time promising a product from the product. We are allowed to be producers only by being consumers. Thus we can produce by proxy, merely, since we buy the product, and it will then produce the magic result – beauty, love, safety, etc." (Williamson, 1978:142)

Thus, the female consumer can be brought to believe that she is the producer of whatever it is that advertising is promising, because just by applying some cream on her face she can create another person, who is more beautiful, sexy and young and, therefore, more successful. Being female myself, I feel that I am in a position to comment on this particular aspect of advertising. Certainly, in my opinion, these magical images are frequently in the form of beautiful women and, with the juxtaposition of the product one is led into believing that the product aids the beauty. Hence, it is not difficult to disguise the facts with subtle amounts of misrepresentation - a technique, which advertisers have come to excel at.

I also consider that there are certain dangers associated with the use of magical images in advertising, as the apparent distinction between people and product is diminished, with the effect of turning people into a tradeable commodity. Williamson (1978:12) shows how advertising translates the language of things into the language of people: "...advertisements have to translate statements from the world of things... into a form that means something in terms of people". Thus, according to Williamson, advertisements "are given a humanly symbolic 'exchange-value'".

According to Jhally (1987), advertising is inundated with gendered images. As a result, advertising has received its fair amount of criticism from feminist writers (e.g., Winship, 1987). Myers (1986:88) points out that the feminist critics claim that, despite the contemporary image of women as strong and independent career women, advertising continues to stereotype women as housewives. She goes on to argue that feminist criticism revealed "the ways in which idealised, glamorised images [employed by advertising] damaged and manipulated women, making them feel second class citizens - fat, lumpy and unloved", going so far as to claim that, despite the women's negative perception of themselves, these images actually encourage rape and sexual assault by men. Likewise, Dickinson et al. (1998:64) concur with Myers (1986), that over the years, little has changed in the way gender roles are defined. The male voice is still considered that of authority and women are portrayed as being "forever younger than their male counterparts".

The influence of post-modernism, whereby cultural barriers are broken down and the presentation of the product becomes more important than the product itself, can be seen in many aspects of advertising. The use of art, distorted as it may have been, as a selling tool is prevalent and forms part of the so-called 'magic' employed in advertisements. According to Strinati (1992), "the point at issue here is the changing content and tone of advertising, the move away from the simple and direct selling of a product...". The intention to sell remains but the effort is overwhelmingly put into style and appearance. In order to achieve this in a sufficiently subtle manner, high art is often used to convey a sense of 'something better' and to give currency. Frequently snippets of classical music are used to create 'theme tunes' the popularity of which can soar, whilst the piece from which it is taken still languishes in silent obscurity. Thus showing that "post-modern popular culture refuses to respect the pretensions and distinctiveness of art..." Strinati (1992). Post-

modernism is, of course, not limited to art but to our whole sense of reality as implied by Baudrillard (1983) when he claimed, “post-modern culture distinguishes neither between reality or unreality, nor between “true” or “false” representation.” Criticism of advertising has, indeed, shown how products are imbued with ‘magic’ and placed into unreal situations, all with the purpose of making us think that there is more there than in reality. Hence, it can be seen that post-modernism is prevalent in the advertising of today.

To summarise, it has been argued that advertising as a whole, is wasteful and inefficient as it raises the prices of goods because of its unnecessary business cost and obliterates (or lessens) the competitive and rational nature of the marketplace; it cunningly manipulates consumers by playing on their weaknesses and thus creates false needs and wants. Thus, criticisms of advertising tend towards portrayal of the consumer as a mere victim of manipulation and machinations, unable to defend her or himself. It appears that some critics have neglected to accord children any ability to perform their own evaluation of advertisements and, hence, make any purchase related decisions. For example, Young (1990) considers that not all the children who pay attention to advertisements, automatically assume that what they advertise is good for them. “If the child sees ads for junk food only, does he or she assume that junk food is good for you ‘because the ads say so’?” (Young, 1990:131). The extent to which this is true, argues Young, is dependent upon the distinction made by the child in separating the ad-world from reality. The environment of their up-bringing plays an important part in the decisions which will be made and in Young’s opinion, realisation that the advert and reality are not necessarily one, could be provoked by the widespread presence of healthy, but non-advertised products, both at home and in the shops. I share in this emphasis of environment on the formation of the child’s decision-making process. I also consider that citing every consumer, be it a child or an adult, as simply a victim of advertising manipulation is a somewhat short-sighted and over-simplified statement.

## **Defences of Advertising**

In this section I shall present the relevant views of some defenders of the advertising industry (together with some of my own opinions). However, it should be noted that there is some crossover between the critics and the defenders with respect to certain aspects. Economic arguments figure prominently as a means of defending the industry and these will be covered, so as not to neglect their importance.

Many scholars and academics, writing in defence of advertising, have based their cases on advertising's economic functions, claiming that consumers should be provided with market information. Potter (1954), who put forward both pros and cons of advertising, wrote that advertising is an institution of 'social control' that forces people to purchase goods for which they have no need. He also maintains that advertising should be viewed as a creator of demand. This concept is shared by many of the critics of advertising; but while the critics claimed that advertising is a mere solution to the problem of realisation, and only exists to create demand for products that were not necessary to produce in the first place, many of the defenders argued that by creating demand advertising actually stimulates progress. "Advertising", Potter advocates, "created modern American radio and television, transformed the modern newspaper, evoked the modern slick-periodical, and remains the vital essence of them at the present time" (Potter, 1954:168). Therefore, in this sense, advertising could be construed as being beneficial to our modern society, acting as an agent of change and progress and thus preventing stagnation. It has helped to shape and direct our media of today. It has a desire to be constantly inventive in order to remain one step ahead of the consumer and I feel that this helps to drive product development and change.

This opinion is reinforced by David Ogilvy, one of the most important figures in the American advertising industry and one of the first, who believed that products can be differentiated on the basis of brand image and advertising. In his book "Confessions of an Advertising Man" (1963) he quotes two great wartime politicians, Roosevelt and Churchill, who argue that advertising "spreads the knowledge of the higher standards" and "nourishes the consumer power of men...spurs individual exertion and greater production" (ref. Ogilvy, 1963:185).

Norris (1966) attempts to defend advertising as well as to criticise it (ref. previous section). By describing advertising as an institution that communicates information to the consumers, thus enabling them to understand the advantages of the producer's products, he, who at one time condemned the stupefying effect of mass advertising, introduces a self-contradicting argument, claiming that consumers will benefit if money, received from the fruits of advertising, were invested by the producer in product improvement, research and development. Indeed, consumers would benefit if industry was so selfless as to invest in this fashion, however, I see this as being rarely the case with modern industry who all too often place the interests of the shareholder over that of the consumer.

Although Potter (1954), Carey (1989) and Norris (1966) reinforced some judgements of the Marxist scholars discussed earlier, unlike these Marxist scholars, the former also believed that advertising could perform some positive economic functions, such as providing opportunities for employment. They argue that the greater the demand that is out there, the more goods are produced, the more people are needed to produce them, hence, the less unemployed people there are on the market. Potter (1954:172) recognised that advertising begins to fulfil an essential economic function when there is an abundance of goods.

This "consumer's culture", according to Potter, is only possible in a capitalist society, where goods are in abundance. The economic theorist Bell (1966) presents the consumer's choice as his free choice, not influenced by the advertising industry, thus proffering that the consumer is able to choose rationally, according to his/her preferences.

Michael Schudson also portrays consumers as rational buyers in the free market who will only pay attention to those advertising messages they already agree with and which fit into their set of preconceived ideas (Schudson, 1984:IX). Thus, he argues that the consumer's choice is a free, independent choice and he/she makes his/her decisions rationally, based on the information obtained from advertising. By arguing that desire for possessions is natural, and pleasure in goods is quite common-place, Schudson (1984:248) presents a counter argument to those scholars, who claimed that "people need to be instructed in the emotions as well as the arts of consumption..." and that "the people have to learn to desire more goods" (e.g., Galbraith, 1967,1969; Ewen, 1976; and Potter, 1954).



In recognising that advertising does promote product development, for non-expendable consumer goods it is logical to assume that this development would increase reliability and durability. Therefore, one would normally anticipate that at some point, markets would reach a saturation point. However, the desire to sell more, promotes innovation, and frequently, the exploitation of new technology. Hence, advertising is once more present to play its role in this cycle.

Buckingham's (1993a) study shows, that contrary to critics of advertising, which is directed at children (e.g., Unnikrishnan, 1996), children are not vulnerable and innocent victims of advertising but "'streetwise' and highly cynical about advertising – and indeed ...capable of protecting themselves from its alleged effects" (Buckingham, 1993a: 245). Likewise, Young (1990) argues that young people are able to defend themselves against advertising's alleged harmful effects, and if some of them are not, such public bodies as the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and the Independent Television Companies' Association (ITCA) ensure that all of them are sufficiently protected.

The social importance played by advertising is reported by O'Donohoe (1993) who notes that advertising frequently forms a basis for conversation. Indeed, respondents in her survey were reported as considering it important to correctly interpret advertisements, which they were presented with. This could be explained by the importance attributed to advertisements as a guide for necessary social interaction and communication of social identity and meanings, as discussed earlier by reference to Elliott and Auty (1999).

Carey (1989) defends advertising by arguing that its only function is to raise consumer's awareness about the new products in the marketplace, thus greatly augmenting their freedom of choice. He maintains that advertising is an essential part of an economic system. In accordance with the concept of economic rationality, Carey (1989) sees the consumers as rational beings and, therefore, believes that they are able to detect truth in the market place, using advertising simply for information purposes.

Retired advertising executive Bud Turner reinforces Carey's opinion and presents a counter-argument to those scholars, writing about advertising's manipulation of the consumer. He asserts that advertising and products follows society and that success is

based on “being in the right place at the right time”(quoted in Leiss et al., 1986:4). McLuhan also suggests that advertising performs an historical function by providing a truthful reflection of contemporary daily routines, thus contradicting Goldman (1992), who argues that society is a reflection of advertising.

Thus, advertising defenders maintain that the consumer makes his/her decision on the basis of the marketing and advertising information available in the market. “While critics often assume that relatively objective criteria can be applied that will make some products and services objectively better buys over others, advertisers frequently suggest that the individual should be the sole judge of what criteria she or he will apply in reaching a purchase decision” (Rotzoll et al., 1996:63).

Thus, there appear to be two different schools of thought on whether society shapes the ad or vice-versa. Drawing on earlier references to post-modernism, it can be inferred that there are many more drivers to encourage advertising to challenge the bounds of society than be challenged by it. However, society is realistically too complicated an entity to be driven by one force alone and there must surely be fierce competition between these forces. Despite this difference though, there is agreement that, if consumers do make a purchasing decision, then the market information received by them is perceived as satisfying, and so they make a rational decision to purchase, which is based on this rational market information.

Myers (1999) presents the opinion of advertising professionals, who claim that advertising only has a limited effect on sales, and acts in combination with other social, economic and cultural factors. Likewise, Schudson (1984) strives to prove that advertising has a very limited impact on people. He argues that consumers mainly rely on the news media, friends, family, acquaintances, word-of-mouth information, consumer education information, price, and their own expertise, when making decisions to purchase. Advertising, he continues, is only one of the factors in a multitude of information sources.

It would appear that scholars, such as Schudson (1984) present a counter argument to those critics of advertising, such as Packard who claim that advertising manipulates consumers subconsciously and persuades people to buy goods and services, which they do not need. The work of Myers and Schudson suggests that advertising has only limited effects in

changing the way in which people consume as people have developed distrust to the vast majority of advertising. As a direct result of the vast range of choice present in the marketplace, thanks in part to advertising, the role of advertising now becomes one of brand influence over product influence.

As Myers (1999) points out, advertising professionals maintain that they would not be able to sell a product, which is of poor quality, or would certainly not be able to sustain such sales; and if they do sell something, it is because it is a worthwhile product, and not because the consumer could be manipulated into believing that it is good and, hence, make a purchase on this basis. In this latter case it is unlikely that the manipulated consumer would make a repeat purchase. This supports my earlier argument against the opinion of Packard.

The defenders of advertising speak in favour of persuasion and symbolism in advertising. For example, Linder (1970) claims that intelligent buyers seek information about products from advertising, even if this information is incomplete. The reason for this, he argues, is that people lack time to obtain complete information about goods they want to purchase. Thus, he justifies persuasion by maintaining that the contemporary time-starved, money-rich professionals want to be persuaded by advertising.

Schudson debates the opinion, which is supported by the critics of advertising, e.g., Williamson (1978), Goldman (1992) and Ewen (1976), that symbolism in advertising is deceptive and, therefore, wrong. His main argument is that, in western culture, meanings were always attached to things, prior to advertising in its present form coming into being. Therefore, he states that it always was and is entirely within human nature to attribute a symbolic interpretation to objects, and thus there is nothing wrong with symbolic representations in advertising. Accordingly, Douglas and Isherwood (1979) claim that if advertising tries to sell to the audiences not the commodity itself, but the meaning attached to it, it is the meaning they want to buy most of the time. Thus, it is argued that consumers actually need advertising to influence them in their purchasing decisions, and as a result of this need, they not only simply allow advertisement's symbolism to pervade them, they positively desire it.

I referred to post-modernism earlier, noting that it plays the part which advertising has played in the creation of post-modern popular culture. Hence, the two are interlinked and the direction in which much of modern advertising is going makes its one with postmodernism. In this sense the two can be seen as supporters of each other hence, to criticise one would be to lay the same criticism upon the other. Therefore, it is logical that any advocate of the post-modern would relate to the current climate of persuasion and symbolism present in today's advertising. The increasing importance of mass media within modern society has brought with it a whole host of new and revised occupations, which are essentially of a middle-class nature. According to Strinati (1992), these 'middle-class occupations...are crucial to the development of post-modern popular culture.'

To summarise, if both critics and defenders of advertising agreed that its prime function was to create demand by persuading consumers to buy goods, then they disagreed on the economical consequences of this function, regardless of whether they were positive or negative. The defenders of advertising maintain that it stimulates progress, by increasing production and thus, decreasing unemployment. They argue that advertising is necessary as a source of marketing information in an economic system, which helps consumers to make the right decisions in the marketplace. Most defenders of advertising tend to dismiss any harmful effects of advertising. However, according to Kellner (1995a):

"...Such dismissal of the effects of advertising covers over the fact that there is evidence that much advertising does work and that, moreover, advertising is part of a climate that promotes consumption, along with marketing, promotion, telecommunications, packaging and display, and an environment of stores, malls and shopping." (Kellner, 1995a: 333)

Analogous to the critics of advertising, who do not envisage the 'rational' consumer, presenting him/her as a confused and piteous victim, manipulated by malevolent marketers, the defenders of advertising claim that the consumer is a rational, problem-solving person and his/her purchasing decisions can not be influenced. Thus, both the critics and the defenders of advertising offer highly restrictive descriptions of buyer's behaviour, thus leaving themselves open to criticism.

## **Analysis of advertising**

“Meaning lurks in the depths, where it is hidden, and we need to explore these depths, strip off the layers of meaning, unpack the nuggets of truth, decode the signal, skim off the different messages, and dig down to get at the truth.” (Young, 1990:170)

As the modern advert is frequently a multi-faceted entity, it will be necessary to break it down into its constituent parts. Parts which, when studied in isolation, can be more easily understood. Only then can we re-assemble these parts into the whole and gain a fuller understanding of their interaction and overall meaning.

Both critics and defenders of advertising have attempted to perform some form of analysis of it. According to McLuhan (1964), because advertisements have to compete for consumers’ attention with television programmes and magazines’ features, they are created to be nothing less than perfection. “Any expensive ad represents the toil, attention, testing, wit, art, and skill of many people. Far more thought and care go into the composition of any prominent ad in a newspaper or magazine than go into the writing of their features and editorials” (McLuhan, 1964:228). Likewise, Kellner (1995a) argues that television advertisements are expensive, sophisticated, talented and imaginative art forms, which are produced with the best high-tech instruments available on the market.

Numerous studies, e.g., Young (1990), Williamson (1978), Leymore (1975), Fowles (1996) and Brierley (1995), have been carried out in an attempt to demystify the persuading process. Williamson, for example, holds that “analysing ads in their material form helps to avoid endowing them with a false materiality and letting the ‘ad world’ distort a real world around the screen and page” (Williamson, 1978:11). Therefore, she continues, some analysis is necessary to uncover the ‘meaning’ of the message which advertising carries to the consumer.

Fowles (1996:83) attempted to analyse advertisements in “the product versus the appeal” context, arguing that advertising sells images and meanings together with the product. “The symbolic appeal”, she argues, “is often a perfected condition that is personally sought

after but unlikely to be obtained in full (such as beauty, or love, or transcendence), whereas the commodity is a thing that can be readily purchased and possessed” (Fowles, 1996:83).

Given the extensive effort and thought which goes into producing a modern advertisement, it is self-evident that any one analysis technique used will only reveal certain aspects of the subject. In attempting to obtain guidance in this matter, I have naturally consulted and relied upon a number of experts in this field. I will, therefore, be selecting certain of their techniques, which I consider appropriate to my study, but will not necessarily cover any one in depth. This is, apart from semiology, which I have chosen to focus on in this particular work.

## **Functions of advertising**

According to Rotzoll et al. (1996), there are four basic functions of advertising – precipitation, persuasion, reinforcement, and reminder. It is argued that the first function - “precipitation”, generates awareness about a brand or product among the consumers. The second function – “persuasion”, is applied in order to induce purchase by appealing to basic human emotions. The third – “reinforcement” is applied in order to make the consumer believe that the choice he/she made about the particular brand was the right choice. And the last function – “reminder”, is called on to constantly remind existing consumers about the brand he/she uses at the moment. I would anticipate that not all four functions are necessarily present in every advert and that, in some, certain functions are accorded a higher importance than others. However, the inference is that, in a well-designed campaign, which may include several adverts, consideration should be given to performing all of these functions.

According to Brierley (1995), advertising employs two core methods of persuasion. The first is called the “reason why” method (a later version of this method is called USP - unique selling proposition), and it occurs when advertising creates a reason for purchase (for example: ‘Buy this washing powder, because it washes whiter than any other washing powder’). In other words, a method designed to appeal to the rational side of the consumer. The second method of persuasion is called “atmosphere” advertising. It is used when there

are many products in the market that look almost the same, perform similar or even exactly identical functions, but need to be differentiated in order to be sold, for example, soap. The importance of brand differentiation is, therefore, recognised here. However, by claiming that advertising appeals to the non-rational, emotional psychology of the consumer, playing on sexual desire, patriotism or passion, a counter-argument is presented to those defenders of advertising (e.g., Schudson, 1984; Carey, 1989), who analysed the consumer as a rational decision-maker. In my opinion, the nature of the consumer should not be considered in such a clear-cut fashion and there should be scope, amongst scholars, for recognising that consumer behaviour can range from rational to irrational depending on the situation, and the make-up of the consumer. Other differentiators, such as class, background and education, should be considered in assessing the effect of advertising appeal. Therefore, any moves to pigeon-hole consumers on the basis of a limited study should be treated with caution.

Despite this perhaps misguided assessment of the consumer, Brierley does go on to make a valuable assessment of the industry. He maintains that advertisers believe that raising consumer awareness is their most important task, because nowadays every advertising agency has to compete with many other advertisers in the media and at the same time struggle to overcome the ever-increasing resistance of the media-savvy consumer. The second important task is to sustain consumer interest. In order to do this, creative people in advertising devise an image for a brand, which is completely different from everything else around.

Woodward et al. (1996) devised a diagram, which attempts to analyse how advertising moves a consumer along a continuum from awareness to knowledge, to liking, to preference, to conviction, and ultimately, to purchase:

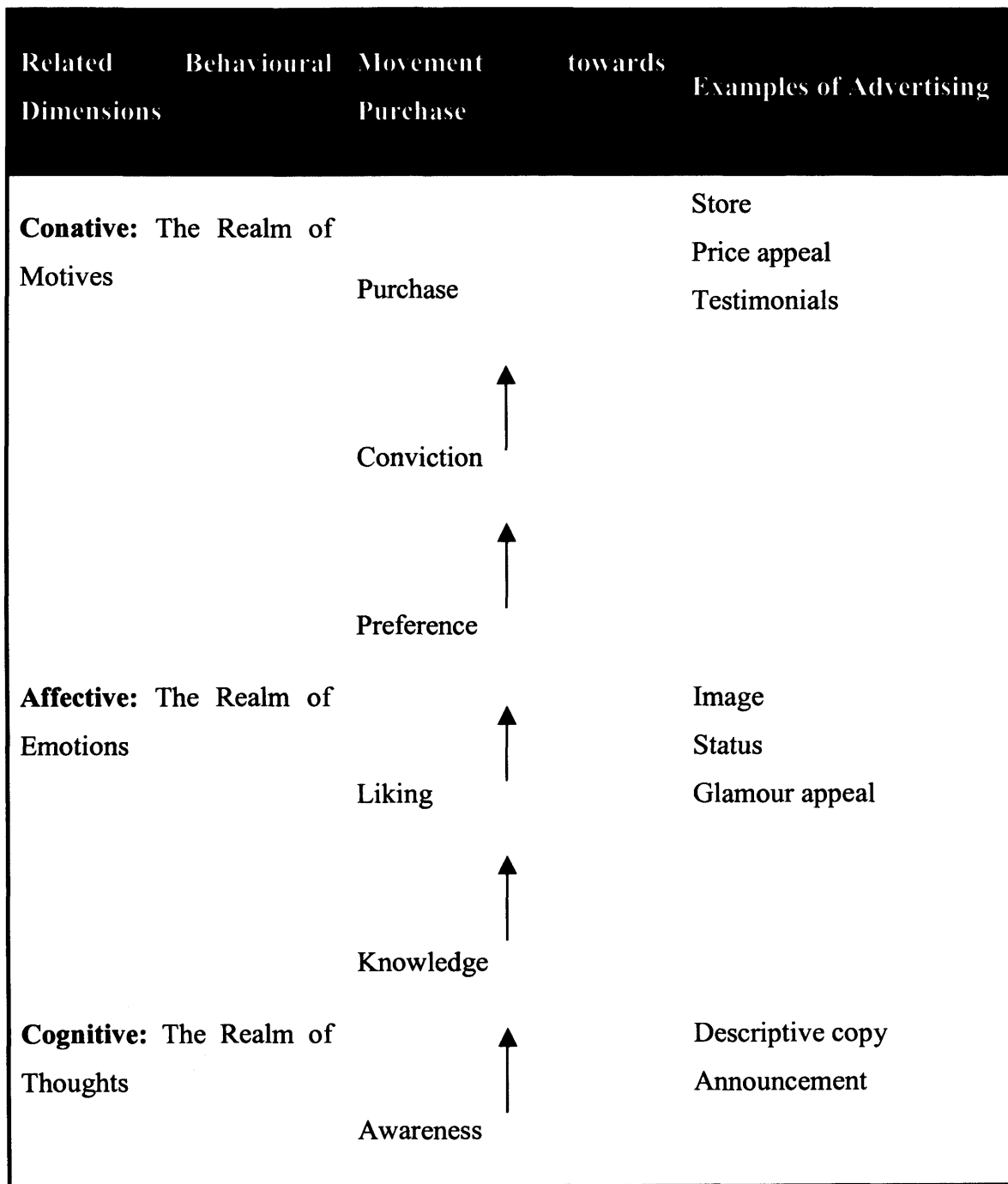


Figure 2.1 (from Woodward et al., 1996:295)



## **Selling techniques employed**

Many writers have argued that advertising attempts to motivate consumers to purchase products by employing numerous selling techniques. In this section, I shall be conducting a brief overview and assessment of some of these techniques, trying to provide information about the thinking behind them.

According to Woodward et al. (1996), one of advertising's selling techniques is offering products as a means of obtaining power, status or prestige. I have already discussed in the previous sections, the change in social and mental state, which is perceived, by the individual, to be possible. "Advertising", they argue, "present vignettes, images, icons, or emblems of power which can be had for a price" (Woodward et al., 1996:301). Solomon (1988) argues that the advertisements, that want to establish a connection between the product and certain social status, make heavy use of symbols that are conventionally associated with this status. He gives an example of an advertising campaign for Johnnie Walker whisky. Because this whisky appeals to the upwardly mobile buyer, it "associates itself with such conventional status symbols as sable coats, Rolls-Royces and black gold" (Solomon, 1988:64). This highlights one of the criticisms raised earlier relating to the unnecessary purchase of goods. We see highlighted here particular genres of goods, which convey status. In a practical sense, the function of these goods could easily be performed by a cheaper alternative but we are persuaded that such goods are necessary simply to maintain status.

Woodward et al. show how advertisers are trying to persuade people that products could actually add meaning to their lives. For example, they say, advertisers promise "...we can combat hunger by giving ten dollars per month to sponsor a child in a foreign country" (Woodward et al., 1996:303). At the same time, they argue, advertisers excel in establishing social norms for their consumers, i.e., the former attempt to instruct the latter on "what is good or bad, in or out, right or wrong" and endeavour to establish "how we should look, dress, and eat" (Woodward et al., 1996:303). This argument is favouring the idea that the ad leads society; a topic, which was discussed earlier together with the potential problems of coming down on one side or the other.

Sentimental images such as flowers, puppies and little children are used in the advertisements to break the hostility of the audience, draw their attention to the screen and associate the product with the image (for example, soft toilet paper may be associated with puppies). Also, in order to decrease the hostility of audiences, the advertisers try to flatter them and in this way co-opt them, e.g. by presenting protagonists in the advertising to appear as one of them.

In the same way that advertisers highlight the good qualities of a product, which we may desire, a few advertisements attempt to appeal to the viewer's numerous insecurities, e.g. low-esteem, guilt, fear of isolation, fear of putting on weight or not getting a job and so on. These advertisements promise to prevent disaster or solve all these problems through purchase of the advertised product. According to Woodward et al. (1996:305), guilt is "the most prominent appeal used in advertising" – parents are made to feel guilty if they do not buy the advertised products for their children; lovers are made to feel guilty if they "do not spend at least three months' wages on an engagement diamond"; children are made to feel guilty if they do not spend some money in order to show their love for their parents. Guilt and fear are commonly employed in the controversial advertisements of the Italian clothing company Benetton, in order to secure the audience's attention, e.g. advertisements with images of AIDS-patients and convicted prisoners (Brierley, 1995). Although these tactics are aimed at all ages of consumer, it is perhaps the young that may be the most vulnerable. Young (1990) considered that an appropriate regulatory authority could protect young people who were not able to defend themselves against such tactics. The potential problem with this is determining the point at which action against the advertiser should be taken, bearing in mind the consideration that there will always be someone who is affected.

The use of images and scenarios, which are distinct from present everyday life, are prevalent. Advertisers seek to create a world, which is somehow better than the one we are in, by the use of fantasy, escapism and nostalgia, with the purpose of sustaining consumer interest and establishing brand credibility. As an example Brierley cites an advertising campaign for Tango, in which nostalgic images of old times were used. As he argues, the older generation of viewers in particular finds such nostalgic advertisements attractive, as their images "conjure up warmth and childhood memories" (Brierley, 1995:168). In order to establish familiarity and authority in advertising, advertisers strive to present their brands as consistent over the years (e.g., Coca-Cola, PG Tips, Heinz). Such brands have

not altered their packaging and presentation almost since the time they were first established in the market, so people can instantly recognise a bottle of Coca-Cola or a box of PG Tips tea.

Sexual instincts, according to Freud (1915), are those human primal instincts, which bring us pleasure. Freud argues that, a human being's entire life is governed by his/her pursuit of pleasure: "the pleasure principle long persists, however, as the method of working employed by the sexual instincts, which are so hard to "educate", and, starting from those instincts, or in the ego itself, it often succeeds in overcoming the reality principle, to the detriment of the organism as whole" (Freud, 1920:221). Therefore, after Freud, sex plays a very important role in human lives. This role first manifests itself as infantile sexuality when we are still infants (Freud, 1908), and carries on to dominate our conscious and subconscious adult life (Freud, 1915). According to Freud (1926:29), "...our civilisation is built up entirely at the expense of sexuality".

Thus, it comes as no surprise that in our culture a very important place is given to sexuality (Foucault, 1977). This is why advertisers actively exploit the human obsession with sex. According to Elliott (1997:288), 'post-modern consumption is inextricably linked with aspects of sexuality, both conscious and unconscious, as it promises the satisfaction of previously taboo desires through imagery and representations'. Solomon (1988:69) argues "sex never fails as an attention-getter... by showing the flesh, advertisers work on the deepest, most coercive human emotions of all". Likewise, Woodward et al. (1996:306) argue that explicit uses of sexual imagery "increase the amount of time spent looking at the ad, which can translate into higher message recall and positive associations".

On the opposite end of the spectrum to the use of sex is the utilisation of so-called 'high culture', as a selling technique. Under the influence of post-modernism, which seeks to breakdown the boundaries between 'high' and popular culture (Strinati, 1992), the use of art and classical music are frequently employed to be symbolic of a higher social standing. An interpretation of which is that the product represented will, somehow, increase one's status.

## Semiology

According to Myers (1986), semiology was imported from France because of its ability to decode the ideological messages of capitalism. Semiology or semiotics, which claims to be the science of signs, derives from the theories of the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, originator of modern linguistics, and the philosopher Charles Sanders Pierce, the founding father of the North American semiotic tradition, who were both working at the beginning of the 20th century. Barthes was an early supporter of semiology and, according to Culler (1983), when choosing the title of his chair at the College of France, named semiology as his field.

“It is therefore possible to conceive of a science, which studies the role of signs, as part of social life. It would form part of social psychology, and hence of general psychology. We shall call it semiology (from the Greek *sēmeîon*, “sign”). It would investigate the nature of signs and the laws governing them.” (Saussure, 1983:15)

Semiotics is, in fact, closely linked to post-modernism and an understanding of the former could be considered a pre-requisite for a proper appreciation of the latter. Post-modern thinkers, such as Derrida, do rely heavily on knowledge of semiotics. The origins of post-modernism are centred in France, which also saw the origins of semiotics, hence, the two subjects are very much inter-linked and I shall be making frequent references to post-modernism during this investigation of semiology.

Myers (1986), in her critical approach to the interpretation of advertising, argues that, in order to achieve a better understanding of the role of advertising in our everyday life, it is necessary to analyse the ways in which its meanings and images are produced. Likewise, Tolson (1996) maintains that media texts are supposed to produce and reproduce meanings and signs and the study of these signs is undertaken by a branch of science known as semiology. Myers (1986) considered that an essential part of semiology is the construction of messages with the understanding that any meaning contained therein is man-made.

Peirce (1960a) states that there are three types of signs: iconic, indexical and symbolic. “An icon is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses, just the same, whether any such Object actually exists

or not” (p.143). In other words, an iconic sign is a sign, where the signifier directly resembles the signified, i.e., a photograph of a girl is an iconic sign, because it directly resembles the girl. An indexical sign is defined as a sign, which “refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object” (p.143). In other words, an indexical sign is an indication of its referent. For example, smoke is an index of fire; a sign caused by the thing which it signifies. A symbolic sign is a sign, which “refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the Symbol to be interpreted as referring to that Object” (p.143). Therefore, a symbolic sign is a sign, which is entirely a matter of conventions established by the language system. This highlights one of the potential problems of the use of language to convey meaning, namely, the very fact that it is established ‘by convention’ and that there is no transfer of absolute knowledge. As such, this plays into the hands of post-modernists, who champion the absence of truth and departure from reality.

Barthes (1957:113) states that, semiology assumes interdependence between a signifier i.e., a material form, a signified i.e., a “mental concept”, and a sign i.e., a “concrete entity”. Similarly, Williamson in her book “Decoding advertisements” (1978), gives an illustration of a sign, signifier and signified in the commercial message:

“...A sign is quite simply a thing - whether object, word, or picture - which has a particular meaning to a person or group of people. It is neither the thing nor the meaning alone, but the two together. The sign consists of the Signifier, the material object, and the Signified, which is its meaning. These are only divided for analytical purposes: in practice a sign is always thing-plus-meaning.” (Williamson, 1978:17)

Analogously, Bignell (1997:11) points out, there are two sides to every sign: one “is the vehicle, which expresses the sign...and exists in the material world”, and is identified as signifier; and another “is the concept which the signifier calls forth when we perceive it” and it is called signified.

Myers (1986:100-102) considers that the basic question, which underpins semiological analysis is the way in which meaning is created and the answer to this question can be found by identifying those ‘signifiers’ present in an advert which engage the mind of the reader. Dyer (1982:118) defines the signifier as “having potential but not actual meaning”

and the signified as the “concept or meaning, which the signifier refers to”. Therefore, the signifier expresses the signified and together they form a sign, i.e., the signified is shaped by the signifier. In order to explain the relationship between the sign, the signified and the signifier in detail, Barthes (1957:113) gives an example of a bunch of roses. Conventional knowledge tells us that roses are associated with passion. According to Barthes’ arguments, the image of roses is acting here as the signifier, the meaning of passion – as the signified, and together they comprise the sign: “passionified roses”.

In his famous book “Mythologies” (1957), which according to Culler (1983:40), “stands at the beginning of a tradition of demystification”, Barthes analyses the connection, which exists between nature and culture, referring to it as “mythologies”. Using the term “mythologies”, he suggests that the meanings within media texts are agents of shared cultural traditions, part of a socio-cultural heritage. From his point of view, in generating mythical meaning, cultures seek to make their own norms seem facts of nature, i.e., the most natural remarks about the world depend on cultural conventions and codes.

Thus it is argued that in order to read into the meaning, i.e., decode it, one should belong to, or have a sound knowledge of a culture, which produced this particular meaning. For example, if a member of a non-western culture does not know that roses are associated with passion, he/she will not be able to make this mythical connection. According to Barthes (1957:126), “mythical signification always motivated and contains some analogy”. For example, for ‘passion’ to attach itself to ‘roses’ there must be some analogy between ‘roses’ and ‘romance’. As Barthes (1977b) puts it:

“The variation in readings is not, however, anarchic; it depends on the different kinds of knowledge – practical, national, cultural, aesthetic – invested in the image and these can be classified, brought into a typology.” (Barthes, 1977b: 46)

Therefore, it is argued that mythical meanings are not simply confined to the text, but reproduced by it. As a result, mythical meanings are attached to a common cultural space, into which we are all socialised, and they also help to interpret real life situations (for example, people buy roses on Valentine’s Day because the image of roses is associated with passion). According to Barthes (1957), myth is a form of communication, a ‘language’, and a system of social meanings.

The simplicity with which the signifier is united with the signified, the principle of the Saussurean model, has been criticised by Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher and post-modernist. In his 1976 work *Of Grammatology*, he highlights the fallacy of this union and postulates that there is no one-to-one correspondence as there are multiple interpretations of the signifier. This is indeed true and, as I have highlighted, interpretation very much depends on background and social grouping. However, the intention of the signifier and signified combination is surely targeted at the 'most likely' interpretation based on an understanding of the cultural norms. There will always be exceptions to the rule, which one cannot cater for in a general investigation and, therefore, for the purposes of this study I shall be favouring the more general interpretation.

Alvarado et al. (1990), approaching the subject from a media point of view, acknowledge signifiers to be bearers of signification or meaning. The signifiers, they argue, belong to a paradigm, consisting of the same associative set of elements, which could be substituted for them and with which they are contrasted, formed due to the functions they share. A paradigm is therefore a class of signs, which can occur in the same context and which have been chosen from a variety of options. Further selection follows and chosen signs will then be combined within a text in a particular structure. These structures are referred to by Alvarado et al. (1990) as "syntagms".

According to Dyer (1982:126), syntagmatic structures are "the permissible ways in which elements succeed each other or combine together in a chain of discourse". "In advertising", she argues, "the syntagm is the advertisement or series of advertisements as they appear on the screen or page – a chain of visual, verbal and aural signs" (Dyer, 1982:126-127). Thus, in order to connote a meaning of an object, the chain of discourse should be disconnected and the object should be analysed in isolation, as discussed in the earlier section on Analysis of advertising. Developing a theme chosen by Tolson (1996:4), who takes, as an example, an advertisement for Kleenex Boutique tissues, which featured the use of roses. In the context of this advertisement, 'roses' can be classified according to their paradigmatic system, which consists of other signs that could be denoted as "plants that bloom and bear blossoms" (Collins English Dictionary). However, roses and not lilies, daffodils or carnations are featured in the Kleenex Boutique tissues advertisement, because they are perceived more as feminine and romantic/passionate flowers than any other flower

from their paradigmatic system. Therefore, paradigmatic structures “facilitate the associative and connotative use of terms: they assume a code or coding” (Dyer, 1982:127).

The implications of these opinions, expressed above, is that advertising has developed a set of codes, or rather a general understanding, of what meaning or interpretation is assigned to any particular sign. Adoption of this stance, therefore, suggests that the advertising industry considers the audience as passive and therefore not playing an active part in interpretation or decoding. In other words, the meaning and message is more or less predefined, and only one culturally and socially defined meaning can be contemplated - which is quite opposite to the general opinion of post-modernists. Accepting that, a certain amount of passivity is conceivable on the part of the audience when it comes to turning the signifiers into signifieds, this is only one part of the audience’s function. There is still the matter of assembling the multiple signifiers into one overall message, and in this respect the audience cannot be considered passive, as active thought is required.

These codes represent an accumulation of knowledge, in particular on a cultural level, which enable a reader to recognise the signs as having a particular function or role. Barthes (1977b) identifies five such codes: “the proairetic code”, which helps the reader to follow the plot sequence; “the hermeneutic code”, which helps the reader to identify what is a mystery in the plot and also help him/her to solve it; “the semic code”, which provides cultural stereotypes; “the symbolic code”, which helps the reader to interpret details in the plot symbolically; and “the referential code”, which provides the cultural information in the plot. For example, audiences would most probably recognise the signifier ‘red rose’ as a sign of ‘love’ and ‘passion’. This would occur because they have had numerous relevant social and cultural experiences that led them to believe in this cultural stereotype. Therefore, here the signifieds ‘Love’ and ‘passion’ act as a semic code.

The presence and nature of cultural stereotypes is well understood by the advertising industry. The use of these stereotypes is, for the industry, a fairly safe way of putting a message across and frequently forms the foundation to many advertising campaigns.

As Myers (1986:98) puts it, “all meaning is man-made”. Likewise, Dyer (1982:135) maintains “codes are forms of social knowledge which are derived from social practices and beliefs although they are not laid down in any statute”. Thus, these writers argue that



most advertisers not only employ a set of codes, but expect the audiences to employ their practical, national, cultural, and aesthetic knowledge to decode their advertisements.

According to Dyer (1982), denotation and connotation are very important concepts in semiotic analysis. “Denotation is a literal and obvious meaning given by a sign or symbol” (Collins English Dictionary). Therefore, by denotation we imply that there is an objective interpretation of the sign, which can be readily recognised. Barthes (1977b: 17) calls this literal meaning of the sign; its “manifest meaning” or its “analogon”, and identifies it as the first aspect of the signifier, which is full and historically meaningful.

However, according to Barthes (1957, 1977b), the meaning of an image cannot be restricted to its literal interpretation. Post-modernists, who emphasise the polysemic nature of signs, vehemently attacking the assumption that there is only one accepted interpretation, reinforce this. We can illustrate this by once more considering the issue of the ‘rose’. Thus, looking at a picture that depicts roses, a spectator would recall many cultural/historical images which are attached to these flowers: ‘rose’ as the national emblem of England; ‘rose’ as the historical image of the House of Lancaster (Red Rose) and the House of York (White Rose); ‘rose’ as an image of a pretty, young woman (English Rose); ‘rose’ as a symbol of love, romance, passion. Therefore, for just this one sign we have a handful of possible interpretations and indeed, this can be influenced by the context in which it is placed. Barthes defines this process of attaching cultural associations to literal meanings as connotation – a process in which a sign acquires its second, non-literal meaning. In the context of an advertisement, the image of ‘roses’ would not be read as simply “shrubs or climbing plants, having prickly stems and fragrant flowers”, but it will be read as one of the mythical associations attached to these flowers. Indeed, it is probably true to say that the literal meaning of the sign is the one least likely to be used or implied. Therefore, the use of the non-literal interpretation of a sign in different contexts opens the way for an even larger number of interpretations. Hence, it can be argued that advertisements create new meanings by means of re-employing the old ones.

I feel that this increased scope for interpretation, however, does put considerable onus on the spectator, who can only attach all these cultural meanings to the image of ‘roses’, if he/she has knowledge or experiences of certain social codes and associative meanings (Dyer, 1982). According to Vestergaard (1985), the connotation of a sign widely depends

on personal experiences and knowledge of the individual who performs the connotation. He goes on to argue that, because all members of the same social/cultural system share experiences and cultural knowledge, all of them may make similar connotations of a sign. Similarly, Tolson (1996) states that all members of a certain culture have at their disposal a number of social/cultural codes. By means of combining elements within these codes they enable themselves to communicate meanings.

Therefore, if an advertiser wants to appeal to all individuals in one particular culture, she/he can safely encode, in the context of the advertisement, 'cultural meanings' which are generally known to be shared by almost every member of this particular culture. Hence, we arrive at the most probable interpretation of a particular sign for a specifically targeted society. For example, in the context of an advertisement for a beauty aid, members of Anglo-Saxon culture would most certainly read the sign 'a girl with roses' as an image of a pretty, young woman – English Rose. However, at the same time there are some codes, which may be known to some members of the culture but unknown to others. For example, some members of Anglo-Saxon culture may not know that the image of a 'red rose' historically represents the House of Lancaster, however widespread this knowledge appears to be in this particular culture.

The sign is not the sole vehicle by which the message is transmitted. A linguistic message frequently complements the visual message in order to provide additional contextual reference. Thus, Barthes claims that language is not just the prime example of a semiological system, but also the reality on which the semiologist always relies, in effect never studying anything but language. As Saussure (1983) pointed out, there are two basic concepts, which are employed in the linguistic message: 'la langue' and 'parole'. La langue is "language considered as an abstract system or a social institution, being the common possession of a speech community" (Collins English Dictionary). In other words, it is the linguistic system. Parole is speech, the countless expression, spoken and written, of a language "as manifested in the individual speech acts of particular speakers" (Collins English Dictionary).

I consider the linguistic message as being used to provide clarification and aid in the process of convergence to one interpretation, thus removing the ambiguity of the polysemic sign. It can supply the link between the image and the situation in space and

time and guide the audiences in the right direction, helping them to choose the right meaning from the variety of other meanings available. Moreover, as Brierley (1995) notices, these rhetorical devices are used in order to secure the memory of the viewer, as most of the time they are short, sharp and funny and therefore easy to remember. Barthes (1977b: 38) defined this practice as “anchorage”. Another form of the linguistic message is called “relay”. In relay, according to Barthes (1977b: 41), “...text and image stand in a complementary relationship”. Likewise, Vestergaard (1985) agrees that relay denotes a mutual relationship between text and the image, when both of them (unlike in anchorage) promote the overall message. According to Dyer (1982), relay is widely used in television commercial advertising, which also extensively employs photographic and filmic images.

The use of semiology as a technique for encoding and decoding advertisements does rely heavily on certain levels of cultural knowledge being attained and also that a certain reading and interpretation of a sign exists. Saussure assumed that a structure existed, within the minds of socialised members of society, which would logically link the signifiers with their signifieds. Barthes, in his later work, adopts a more pragmatic approach, recognising the presence of polysemy, the existence of multiple interpretations, which moves away from the social structure, which is central to the work of Saussure.

In my opinion, the influence of postmodernism has acted to complicate the analysis of advertising. The accepted blurring of cultural distinctions which is now prevalent in most forms of advertising complicates the semiotic approach, which relies on there being certain cultural conventions encoded into the mind of the reader. Therefore, if the input, or the encoding of messages, is unclear, determination of the output is likely to be equally unclear. The lack of a rigid cultural model, on which to base the interpretation, therefore compounds the problem of analysis. Hence, the reading of a post-modern text necessarily requires a different, or more expanded approach, than the semiological approach of Saussure.

Clearly, there are advantages and disadvantages in the employment of semiology as a method of studying advertising messages. Without referring to any post-modern criticisms of semiology, Leiss et al. (1997) single out three main weaknesses of this method. They argue that there is a certain lack of agreement among scholars writing on semiology on what is discovered in a message. That it is “impossible to base an overall sense of

constructed meanings on the examination of a large number of messages” (Leiss et al., 1997:214). I consider that it is not feasible to apply semiology as a method of studying advertising messages to all of these messages without discrimination - even Williamson in her analyses did not take a random sample of advertisements but specially selected them to illustrate her points. In recognising the effects of post-modernism, however, I am faced with a number of questions, which relate to the analysis requirements of this particular study. These will be dealt with in a later discussion on the limitations of the semiotic analysis process.

## **Chapter 3 Theories of communication as related to young people**

The role, which media plays in developing and reinforcing the attitudes and behaviour of young people, is a subject, which has attracted a considerable amount of research. In this chapter I will endeavour to review the academic writings on this subject, which will provide an insight into the existing attitudes and reported behaviour of the adolescents, participating in this study.

This review will be introduced in two parts. The first, communication theories, is divided into three sections – (1) cognitive theory, which analyses the development of children's intellect and their abilities to process information; (2) socialisation theory, which examines how they interact with society and vice-versa, paying special attention to gender issues; (3) reception analysis, which looks at how audiences respond to media information.

In the second part I will attempt to review the theories of youth culture, which illustrate how adolescents acquire identity through interaction with such social factors as the media, school, parents, peers and fashion. I would argue, in light of my hypothesis, that advertising is not alone in influencing the development of adolescents' attitudes and reported behaviour, but acts in conjunction with these social factors.

## **Theories of communication**

### **The cognitive theory**

The theory of Jean Piaget, the Swiss psychologist, who studied the development of the basic cognitive skills in children and adolescents, maintains that an infant, entering the world deprived of these basic cognitive skills, will achieve the rationality of an adult only after passing through a series of stages of development, each of which provides an essential foundation for the next, and is influenced by environmental and personal forces. These stages are: the sensory-motor stage (0-2 years), in which children behave mostly according to their basic instincts; the pre-operational stage (2-7 years), in which children form mental representations of the visual stimuli they receive; the concrete-operational stage (7-11 years), in which children can mentally manipulate several dimensions of a situation at the same time; and the formal-operational stage (11 - adult years), in which children can apply their mental capabilities to solve abstract logical problems (ref. Piaget, 1964).

Piaget identified the sensory-motor stage as being one with intelligence but no thought. According to him, “there is intelligence before speech, but there is no thought before speech” (Piaget, 1974:11). Thus, child acts automatically to achieve his/her goal, i.e., without thinking. One such experiment, which Piaget used to demonstrate this, involved showing a bright object to the child, during which he concluded that the child would acknowledge his/her interest while seeing the object, but if this object is hidden, his/her interest will be lost. Thus, it was concluded that during the sensory-motor stage, the child progresses from behaving according to his basic reflexes and instincts, to developing some conscious ways of conduct.

However, Piaget has proven that a child, who is already one year old or older, will not only acknowledge his/her interest in the object shown, but search for it when it is hidden. Thus, the child achieves the cognitive ability to analyse and integrate events, which occur separately in time. Moreover, the child eventually learns to differentiate one object/subject from another, and detect various relationships between them.

It is during the “period of the preoperatory representation” (Piaget, 1974:16), that the child gains the capacity “to represent something with something else” (Piaget, 1974:17) and hence the beginning of speech and the progression of symbolic behaviour into a more advanced form. Alongside the development of speech is the development of play, or the ability to represent something by means of an object or gesture. However, during this period the child is still unable to distinguish between the whole and its parts, i.e., the child will not be able to see the difference between flowers and carnations, or between trees and maples. Moreover, the pre-operational child employs neither deductive nor inductive reasoning to analyse a chain of events. For example, if an apple was cut into two halves, the child would perceive that these two halves measure up to something more than the whole apple. In other words, the child cannot adapt the meanings of the words to anything, but his own understanding of reality - the whole reality of the child centres on the child.

Although at the beginnings of the pre-operational stage the child’s arithmetic is more qualitative than quantitative, towards the end of this stage it becomes quantitative and the child learns that objects have meanings independent of his/her interpretation of reality. “Actually, on this practical level, we are witnessing an organisation of movements and displacements which, first centred on the body itself, gradually de-centralise and lead to a space in which the child situates himself like an element among others” (Piaget, 1974:56).

According to Piaget, during the period of the concrete-operational stage the child learns to distinguish between the whole and its parts. The child’s cognition develops to such an extent that he/she is enabled to deal with the classes and the subclasses of the objects/subjects at the same time. The child also becomes able to perceive that objects do not change through the alteration of their conditions. For example, a concrete-operational child is able to understand that a quantity of water, which previously was in a big glass, and then was poured into a small glass, would not be altered. Interaction with other children on a more intellectual level, for example in the playing of games with relatively complex rules, erodes the social and intellectual egocentricity, which has been present up until now. The construction of logic, and the ability to use it to solve problems, has begun. However, there is still strong evidence of egocentricity such as in the conflict between duty and desire, where the latter can still overrule the former, and hence promote reversion to the egocentric state (Piaget, 1964).

Piaget states that during the formal-operational stage, the adolescent learns how to contrive formal theories of events. The adolescent's logical thinking and the process of his/her "de-centering", progresses to a more advanced form. During this stage, the adolescent, who is no longer constrained by immediate reality, learns to apply his/her logical thinking not only to physical structures but also to cognitive ones. The adolescent masters the art of employing the rule of logic to skilfully analyse his hypothesis and reach intelligent conclusions.

The formal-operational stage is witness to many transformations and is terminated, according to Piaget, with an equilibrium level at the age of about fifteen, after which these transformations are more or less complete. Piaget claims that during this period the child "not only becomes capable of reasoning and of deducting on manipulable objects, like sticks to arrange, number of objects to collect, etc., but he also becomes capable of logic and of deductive reasoning on theories and propositions" (Piaget, 1974:24). In order to achieve the formal operational stage of developments, Piaget argues, the child must successfully complete all the preliminary stages of development.

Thus, Piaget suggests, as children mature, their cognitive performance improves due to the change in their mental abilities. Grinder (1973), Buschke (1977) and Ward et al. (1977) agree that young people's recall also improves with age. Buschke (1977:260) states that adolescents have "better retrieval and random retrieval capacity than younger children". His explanation of this phenomenon is similar to that of Piaget's, i.e., as children mature, their memory improves and the number of items they can recall increases.

Piaget's theory has, however, attracted some criticism. It was generally argued that this theory did not account for the fact that "various structures are learned at different ages in different cultures and within different subcultures in a single culture" (Ward and Wackman, 1973:122). In other words, Piaget's theory was accused of not allowing for the fact that improvements in cognitive performance of a child may directly depend on the environment, in which this child is brought up, and blamed for its rigidity in adhering to the concept of age related stages, which each child apparently has to go through, developing into a rational adult in the process. I am inclined to agree that this "series of 'ages and stages'" as Buckingham (1993a: 14) puts it, is somewhat simplified as it seeks to



generalise all children, disregarding the fact that every child is different, coming from different family backgrounds and educational environments.

Relating this theory to media and advertising, it may be assumed that, as children mature, their ability to process information, and construct meanings from commercials, increases, as well as their ability to recall images. Ward and Wackman (1973), who studied pre-operational and concrete-operational children, found that older children knew more about commercials than younger children, had a better recall of the commercial messages, a clearer understanding of the distinction between the product in the commercial and the symbolic images of this product, demonstrated disbelief and cynicism towards the commercials; and were able to logically justify their answers and displayed greater knowledge and awareness of advertisers' tactics and the effects they wanted to achieve.

My study examines young people in the highest stage of cognitive development, namely the formal-operational stage and its subsequent 'equilibrium'. At this stage, according to Piagetian theory, adolescents are able to successfully decode media messages and extract meanings, previously encoded in the text in an adult-like fashion. This study provides further evidence for Piaget's theory, demonstrating that the respondents, in their majority, were able to analyse and decode advertising messages.

### **Socialisation theory**

Socialisation theory explains the process of acquisition of gender identity by infants — through interaction with other people around them young children learn what gender they are members of. They also learn which behaviours or activities are considered more appropriate to members of their gender. This happens because parents tend to treat girls and boys differently, expecting them to behave according to their sexual stereotype, e.g., girls are expected to be polite and caring, and boys are encouraged to be assertive (Bilton et al., 1996; Head, 1997).

Likewise, Durkin (1985) and Fowles (1996) argue that gender role stereotypes conform to prevalent social expectations, which impose certain patterns of behaviour on an individual, living in our society.

Relating this theory to advertising, it might be assumed that a communication tool such as advertising could be a ready source of information about male and female behaviour. "The media excel at polished representations, so the representation of gender will be found perfect here as nowhere else." (Fowles, 1996:215)

Many scholars (McRobbie and Nava, 1984; Durkin, 1985; Unnikrishnan, 1996; Williamson, 1978 and Fowles, 1996) studied how females are represented in advertisements. They concluded that often females appeared as housewives, secretaries, carers, or lovers, the majority of them being young and beautiful. Very often females were represented as objects of desire for males, i.e., sex objects, and males are shown as dominant, in control of females. Moreover, females were quite often portrayed as unintelligent, in contrast to males, who usually demonstrate a high level of technical knowledge about the product advertised. Gray (1992:122) speaks of male genre and female genre. She defines male genre as certain kinds of films and programmes, which are designed for and enjoyed by men, e.g., war, horror, soft pornography, action adventure. Female genre is similarly defined by certain kinds of films and programmes, which appeal to women, e.g., soap operas.

According to Gray (1992:122), "the construction of masculinity and femininity across the institutions within society is so powerfully aligned to the social categories male and female, that people [willingly put] themselves into a gendered position, offered to them by media text". Likewise, the findings of my study [questionnaire] show that participants abide by the conservative gender conventions - they have a tendency to read gendered magazines and watch gendered programmes and advertisements (e.g., girls were likely to favour cosmetics and food advertisements and boys - computer games advertisements).

There are two schools of thought relating to the acceptance of gender identities in society. The modern school followers (Hermes, 1995; Winship, 1987; Dickinson et al., 1998), accuse media, such as advertising and television, and society, of imposing gender identity upon its members. On the other hand, post-modern scholars argue that, consumers are preoccupied with creating their personal identity through the items, which they consume. Hence, the post-modern environment allows for a similar creation of gender identity, thus making it an instrument of self-expression, which is not imposed by society. Therefore,

acceptance of any gender conventions becomes no longer a pre-requisite for conforming to society, but more a matter of personal choice. Indeed, Kacen (2000:349) states that, “gender is an individual accomplishment, not a socially constructed one”.

Thus, post-modern scholars believe that advertising could not be accused of shaping gender-related attitudes, which are prominent among young people. However, in my opinion, it can be accused of reinforcing them.

Mangleburg (1999) and Boush et al. (1994) argue that such social agents as family, peers and media are extremely important contributors in the ways children learn to participate in society. According to Moschis (1984), advertising is also one of the important social agents. When children reach adolescence, their attention turns to the opposite gender, whose ideals they seek in the media and advertising (Moschis, 1979). Very often these ideals take the form of beautiful celebrities, as, according to Fowles, “adolescents find opposite-gender celebrities more attractive and interesting” (Fowles, 1996:223).

It is argued, therefore, that adolescents use media-endorsed ideas of gender attractiveness in order to evaluate their own attractiveness as well as that of others.

## **Reception analysis**

From the theoretical review presented in the first part of this chapter, it is clear how important a role communication theories play in understanding the development of adolescent attitudes towards advertising. The interaction between cognitive and socialisation theory is indicative of the influence, which peers and environment can have over the cognitive performance of the adolescent.

Numerous writers (e.g., Jensen, 1986 and 1987; Ang, 1991 and 1995; Miller et al., 1998; Holub, 1984; Hagen and Wasko, 2000; Curran and Gurevitch, 1992) have attempted to review the work of reception researchers, and based on their work, have formulated a definition of reception analysis and its aims. In general, they acceded that reception analysis is effectively the study of audiences and is concerned with investigating the ways in which recipients or audiences construct meanings out of media texts. It is argued,

therefore, that the meanings never have any uniform reading, or any value of their own, but can, and inevitably will be, interpreted by each of the recipients of these meanings according to his or her own desire. According to O'Donohoe (1994), reception researchers argue against the idea that audiences can be passive receivers of the meanings imposed upon them by the media, but instead should be considered as independent contributors to the construction of these same meanings.

Ang (1995) and Jensen argue that reception researchers regard the recipient as “a product of his social structure” (Jensen, 1986:73) and believe that the recipient should not be considered in isolation from a variety of social factors, such as his/her education and social status, which shape his/her outlook on life:

“...Media texts acquire meanings only at the moment of reception, that is, when they are read, viewed, listened to, and so on. In other words, audiences are seen as producers of meanings, not just consumers of media content: they decode or interpret media texts in ways that are related to their social and cultural circumstances and to the ways in which they subjectively experience those circumstances.” (Ang, 1995:214)

Thus, reception theorists assume that recipients' interpretation of media texts is profoundly influenced by their social and cultural backgrounds, gender, their personality traits, and many other social factors.

Curran and Gurevitch (1992) supported the position of some feminist reception researchers, who voiced disapproval of the way in which media treats the gender issue, by accusing the media of reinforcing women's inferior position within society. Indeed, the concept of gender and gender identity is a significant one within reception analysis research. In my opinion, this is because every society develops its own concept of gender and associated behaviour with a corresponding impact on its fundamental operation as evidenced by the creation of gender-specific roles within society.

Many of the writers, mentioned above (the exception to this is Ang, 1991 and 1995), noted that reception analysis research is in an interrelationship with uses and gratification research, the latter arguing that post-modern audiences use media according to their perceived needs, satisfactions, wishes or motives (see O'Donohoe, 1994; Elliott, 1997;

McQuail, 1997)). Indeed, in order to understand how and what meanings audiences construct out of texts, it is necessary to perceive what motivates them, of what use media is to them and what gratifications they get from it.

It appears to be the aim of reception researchers to generate classifications based on social origins and audiences' needs. However this idea of being able to 'pigeon-hole' media consumers neglects their own creativity, which is manifest in the variety of decodings and gratifications resulting. This diversity occurs regardless of their social background, hence, highlighting the caution, which need to be exercised when performing such categorisation.

Many of the writers, mentioned above, have emphasised that reception theory, like many other theories, has its limitations. Ang (1995), who agreed with the reception researchers' point of view, that audiences should be regarded as autonomous, powerful decoders and producers of meanings, stressed that reception researchers tend to overestimate the power of audiences, and underestimate the power of media. At the same time, she accused reception analysts of losing touch with everyday life when analysing the interrelationship between audiences and media texts. Likewise, Miller et al. (1998) argued that reception researchers tend to isolate their theories from the issues of everyday life. Like Ang (1995), Miller et al. (1998) hold that the power of audiences should not be overestimated. They also argue that the way in which reception researchers present media, i.e., as powerless and meaningless institution, does not make any sense.

In relating this theory to young people and advertising, many scholars concerned themselves with investigating how young people interpret advertising messages and whether they are able to interpret them correctly. Researchers, such as Boush et al. (1994), claim that adolescents are (1) intelligent and active viewers, with advanced abilities to interpret media messages; (2) aware of the functions of advertising; (3) sceptical about it; and (4) aware of the ultimate aim of advertising, which is to persuade people to buy the products. My study demonstrates that participants possessed a sound knowledge of the tactics and effects of advertising and were able to discuss technical aspects of both the product and the advertisements. They understood that the ultimate aim of advertising was to persuade people to buy, and therefore, the majority of them did not rely on it necessarily to be truthful. According to my study, participants did not want to admit that advertising influenced them. However, they readily conceded that advertising can be persuasive and,

therefore, other people may be influenced by it<sup>1</sup>. Thus, participants, in their majority, were sceptical towards advertising and knowledgeable about the marketplace.

Participants proved to be creative decoders of the meanings and symbols encoded in advertisements and often, in line with the arguments of the reception theorists, were skilful at using that knowledge in constructing the meanings. In this respect my study supports the findings of O'Donohoe's (1997) study, exposing young post-modern audiences as active and sophisticated consumers of advertising. The respondents of my study were able to semiotically decode the messages, sent by advertisements, and were not afraid to voice their criticism towards them. My study also supports the argument of McQuail (1997), establishing that participants could not be regarded as equal, as some proved to be more intelligent and experienced than others.

However, it should be pointed out that, although participants displayed high levels of scepticism about advertising and its claims, and were keen to establish that they did not believe themselves to be influenced by it, there is a possibility that they did so in fear of being mocked by their friends for conceding that advertising does influence them. Also, because they know that in our society it is not desirable to be influenced by advertising, it is possible that they did not want to be thought of as doing something undesirable. Although participants did appear as independent, critical and powerful decoders of advertising messages, in line with the arguments of reception researchers, there is an apparent danger to overestimate their power:

"...when pursuing the notion of the active audiences too far, one risks the romanticism...The problem is that the emphasis on the ability of audiences to create meaning and experience pleasure ultimately results in confusing audiences' activity with power." (Hagen and Wasko, 2000:17)

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<sup>1</sup> See Focus Group Findings, p.215

## Youth culture and media

Adolescence is a period of significant change in a young person's life, during which they are struggling to establish their identity, discover themselves and integrate into society. At the same time they are free from the many burdens of adulthood and able to enjoy themselves in the company of their peers.

As early as the forties Parsons (1949), who was among the first social scientists to describe hedonism in youth culture, argued that the main aim of the urban middle-class youth in America in the forties was having fun in company with the opposite sex, achieving prominence in athletics and enjoying freedom from adult responsibilities in every way possible. He went on to argue, as parents and school started to encourage the development of individuality, youths grew rebellious and arrogant of adult customs and became inclined toward the more hedonistic youth culture, which he illustrated as an outgrowth of youth's inability to cope with the strain of moving into adulthood. Parsons described hedonists as young people who conform to peer standards and resist adult expectations, failing to affect any concern for political affairs and indulging into the "cult of immediacy" (Parsons, 1949:220).

Likewise, Grinder (1973) argued that adolescents of the sixties were very materialistic:

"They live in a consumption economy, where people seem to prefer the convenience of throw-away containers. Modern science could demonstrate easily, even to a child, the intrinsic merits of various consumer product, yet advertisements in the mass media cloud the issue by relating the products to people's psychological needs." (Grinder, 1973:6)

Already by that time, Grinder had spoken about the enormous market power of young people, and their ever increasing spending on music, clothing and grooming. Correspondingly, modern researchers tend to suggest that the spending power of the post-modern adolescent is ever increasing (ref. Boush et al., 1994).

Adolescence is generally regarded as the time of life when the adolescent makes the transition from his family to his peers. According to Heaven (1994:73), "it is the peer group that forms a vital and often useful avenue by which the adolescent makes the

transition from the family to the wider world". In other words, the peer group assists the adolescent in gaining his independence from his/her parents and thus achieving some sort of freedom and responsibility of adulthood. Therefore, the peer group serves as a tool for the adolescent to make the transition from family into adult society, and the social activities of the peer group form an environment in which the adolescent learns many useful social skills.

Thus, the peer group's acceptance is extremely important for young people and the need to conform is high. "Just as entrance to a peer group depends upon achievement and conformity, failure in these respects may mean exclusion from the group" (Grinder, 1973:246). This conformity expresses itself in the adolescents' desire to fit into their peer group by dressing and behaving in ways appropriate to this group. Adolescents' conformism, more often than not, is commercially driven and actively encouraged by marketing and advertising - "both the clothes and music industries", Head (1997:34) argues, "are dominated by the notion of contemporary fashion, the necessity of being up-to-date in one's possessions".

Although some research, e.g., Dickenson (1995), Tapscott (1996) & Fry (1995), attempted to conceptualise youth culture as 'mass culture' and 'global culture', the study of lifestyles of young people over three generations (Frith, 1992; Grinder, 1973; Brake, 1980; McRobbie, 1984; Roar, 1995) has shown that youth culture is not some homogenous group, applying to those roughly under twenty, but is a complex kaleidoscope of several subcultures, of different age and sex groups. These researchers advocate that media influences on young people should be studied in the context of their environment, i.e. social and economic class, the various subcultures they belong to and gender. For example, McRobbie (2000) suggests that differing regulation of boys and girls both inside and outside the family is one of a range of phenomena, which point to the inadequacy of the conceptualisation of youth as a unitary category.

Many writers in the sixties and seventies have emphasised the effect of socialisation within the various cultural sub-sections. As an example, it was noted that high school students in the sixties had structured their own social status system and adopted certain keys to describe the positions their peers occupied in it. The terms 'social', i.e. 'high society'



group of students, and 'hoody', i.e. 'lower society' group of students, were adopted in order to distinguish their life styles, dress, speech, and interpersonal relationships, consequently creating a diversified students' youth culture (Grinder, 1973).

Correspondingly, post-modern scholars tend to suggest that the 'typical' youngster has been replaced by seven different kinds, each with their own distinct values. The classification includes 'conservative careerists', 'moral fibres' and 'corporate clubbers' (Redhead, 1997).

Since the beginning of the 1970s, theorists of youth subcultures in Britain have appropriated the notion of 'style' from marketers of teenage fashion commodities and mobilised it for their studies of opposing subcultures in the post-war period (McRobbie and Nava, 1984). These theorists argue that young people have always used commodities and style to represent their sub-cultural identity. Hebdige (1979:103) says, "it is through the distinctive rituals of consumption, through style, that the subculture at once reveals its 'secret' identity and communicates its forbidden meanings". Hence, the expressive styles of the members of various youth sub-cultures have been recognised by scholars not only as a protest against ageism, sexism and class structure in then-contemporary society, but also as the means of promoting their own cultural identity.

Numerous researchers argue that symbols such as clothes, music and leisure activities are constantly used by contemporary young people to define who is a member of a particular social group and who is not. Amit-Talai and Wulff (1995), for example, argue that girls' youth styles are a type of consumption that is directly connected to their bodies, i.e. young teenage girls form their appearance through cosmetics, jewellery, hairstyles and clothing. Amit-Talai and Wulff (1995) note that youth culture is separated from adult society through its involvement with popular music, which brought it close to the market. Likewise, Storey (1996a) argues that a subculture can acquire its identity only through consumption and music consumption in particular. Indeed, according to Kacen (2000:345), "consumption plays a central role in the construction of consumer identities".

Similarly, Frith (1992) claims that in contemporary youth culture music also plays an important part. He maintains that popular music assists young people to find their place in youth culture, to express their individualities; helps them to realise their identity and gives

them a sense of personal fulfilment. Thus, these researchers argue that popular music helps young people to separate themselves from the adult world, to manifest nonconformity and rebelliousness and distinguish themselves from members of other youth subcultures.

Studies of youth culture have received a considerable amount of criticism. I tend to agree with Buckingham (1993a) that although studies of youth culture have concentrated in some detail on particular media forms - notably popular music, other media forms have tended to be neglected. Moreover, the approach to youth subcultures has been challenged from within cultural studies. McRobbie (2000), for example, maintains that sub-cultural theory paid very little attention to young women. She argues that girls had to have their place within studies of youth culture. This view is echoed by Head (1997), who argues that within academic writings on youth culture “we find many extreme examples of male bias and dominance”. Clark (1972) and Frith (1992) also rejected gender elitism, which is present in sub-cultural theory. Frith (1992:178) states that girls are not included in the world of popular music: “...young women are not just being denied a means of self-expression and pleasure; the music is also working directly to keep them in their domestic place”. Clark (1972) argues that cultural studies should study all youth without exception. Furthermore, Buckingham (1993:89) presents a behaviourist argument, which accuses the media of playing a “uniformly sexist” role in society and reinforcing negative gender stereotypes, by providing “the raw material for boys’ fantasies of power and influence”.

## **Chapter 4 Advertising and adolescent consumers**

Taking previous arguments into account, it may be concluded that young people's attitudes develop under the influence of many factors: social and economic class, education, youth subcultures, popular culture, peers and family. However, as discussed above, scholars of media studies argue that media, i.e., television, magazines and advertising, also play an important part in young people's attitude formation.

In this chapter I will attempt, with my hypotheses in mind, to analyse both sides of the interaction between adolescents and advertising. In the first section, I will endeavour to investigate the role, which advertising images play in influencing adolescents' attitude formation. In order to do this I will analyse various socialisation agents, which, as previously discussed, in conjunction with advertising, influence adolescents' attitude formation. Following on from the review performed in Chapter 2, I will reconsider the methods and tactics of persuasion, this time making specific reference to young people. In the second section, I will examine a variety of literary sources, investigating the reported responses of adolescents to advertising. Finally, I will analyse the issue of adolescents and fashion as it plays such an important role in the life of the contemporary youngster (Henriksson, 1983).

## **Role of advertising and advertising images in influencing adolescents' responses to advertising**

As discussed previously, past research on the role of advertising and advertising messages in influencing children's purchasing decisions did not pay much attention to the effects of commercials on adolescents, and the issue of how they might respond to advertising messages has received limited attention. However, young adults today constitute a very large and lucrative sector of the consumer market; they buy clothes, footwear, food, drinks, CDs, videos, books and many other consumer products. American and British research shows that in recent years, there has been a substantial increase in adolescent consumer spending (e.g., Fry, 1995; Dougherty, 1993; Shim, 1996), and that adolescents have considerable influence in their families' purchasing decisions (e.g., Foxman and Tansuhaj, 1988; Foxman et al., 1989). As a result, more than ever before contemporary adolescents are being bombarded by advertising messages, directing them to become intensely consumption oriented. Advertisers believe that television and, recently, magazine advertising is the best and easiest way to reach young consumers all around the world (Fry, 1995).

### **Socialisation agents**

Many scholars (e.g., Moschis et al., 1984; Moschis, 1984; Shim, 1996; Schudson, 1984) claim that advertising is only one of many socialisation agents, which influence adolescent's purchasing decisions. A social agent is defined by Moschis et al. (1984:314), as "a person or organisation... involved in socialisation [of the individual], who have influence because of their frequency of contact, primacy and control over rewards and punishments of the individual". Rotzoll et al. (1996:8) argue that the individual's response to commercials depends on "...the interaction of factors outside ourselves (e.g. the presence or absence of other people, the physical environment) and those inside ourselves (e.g. our moods, past experiences, current knowledge, physiological state) which change from time to time". Therefore, adolescents rely on many factors when making a purchasing decision, i.e. family, friends and their own experiences.

Further to Piaget's idea of an equilibrium being reached in terms of logic and reasoning, adolescents still grow in wisdom, which manifests itself as a profession of greater immunity to commercials in the form of lower attention and a display of more critical reactions to commercials. They also tend to know more about consumption and advertising in general than their younger counterparts. Likewise, Boush et al. (1994) shows that scepticism towards advertising increases significantly as adolescents get older. Hence, the adolescent develops his or her own identity, having a greater involvement in consumer decisions, ultimately leading to an expression of that identity through self-motivated purchase and consumption.

It was argued that social class should be taken into account when analysing adolescents' purchasing decision-making. According to Moschis (1978a), adolescents from the upper and middle classes receive a greater exposure to informative literature, such as advertisements in newspapers and magazines, and hence this can place them in a better position than their counterparts from lower social classes, with reference to making an appropriate purchasing decision. As discussed in the previous paragraph, and argued by Moschis (1984), middle class adolescents are more inclined to profess greater immunity to commercials and display more critical reactions to commercials than working class adolescents. Hence, it can be concluded from this that, in general, adolescents of higher socio-economic background play a greater role in consumer decisions and have greater knowledge about the marketplace in general than adolescents of lower socio-economic background.

Likewise, it is also necessary to consider education as one of the most important factors when analysing adolescents' attitudes to advertising (Baker et al., 1977). Marx (1995) calls the college market "its own segment", claiming that college educated young adults differ from those, who were not educated, in term of expenses, economic prospects and so on. Maintaining consistency with the view taken on social class, Moschis (1984) argues that the more consumer-related knowledge acquired at school by the adolescent, the greater his/her dissatisfaction with his/her consumer environment and the greater his/her ability to read advertisements critically. Boush et al. (1994) and Mangleburg (1999) show that the more knowledge about persuasive methods and tactics employed in advertising, acquired by the adolescent, the more he/she is likely to be sceptical of advertising.

Family, peers and school personnel are also important when analysing adolescents' attitudes to advertising and purchasing decision-making (Fowles, 1996). Bearden et al. (1989) argue that consumers in general are willing to "conform to the expectations of others regarding purchase decisions". Young people are extremely conscious of what their 'cool' classmates will say if they wear or buy a particular brand. Peers, however, can influence attitudes to advertising negatively as well as positively (Boush et al., 1994).

Despite adolescents seeking their own identity through, and control over, their purchases, there is evidence that the family influences adolescents' brand predisposition and helps young people to differentiate exaggeration and product-related information in the advertisements. As Moschis et al. (1979:107) argue, "for products where price, social acceptance, and performance is of great concern... preference for parental advice is great. Peers, as a source of information, appear to be important in buying decisions concerning items important for peer acceptance". They go on to argue that adolescents acquire consumer knowledge by observing their parents' consumer behaviour. The influence of friends and parents plays a part in many other aspects of adolescents' behaviour, and therefore, I consider it logical that this extends to the area of consumption and purchase.

O'Donohoe (1994) argues that adolescents often watch advertisements for purposes other than marketing or economic. She gives examples of such other gratifications, sought from advertising, as diversion, entertainment and escapism. According to Moschis (1978a), adolescents who watch television advertisements purely for social reasons, develop more favourable attitudes to brands and products advertised than adolescents who do not watch advertisements for these reasons. My focus group study (p.215) has also demonstrated that advertisements frequently formed the basis for light-hearted conversations among respondents.

### **Methods and tactics of persuasion employed in advertising, directed at young people**

The tactics and methods, which are used by advertisers to promote purchase, have been studied and commented on by many researchers. Ranging from the psychological to the social, I consider that there is virtually no technique, which has not attempted to drive the motivation of consumption.

As discussed above, researchers argue that advertising attempts to transfer symbols onto commodities. Likewise, Henriksson (1983) and Unnikrishnan (1996) claim that advertising to adolescents promotes products, which “link to a whole lifestyle” or “attaches special attributes to products, which create hopes beyond the utility value of the goods” (Unnikrishnan, 1996:164).

Unnikrishnan (1996:303) offers examples of images being used to sell cold drinks to young people: “music and pop stars, youngsters drawn to one another, irresistible men and women, high frolic and lots of fun”. These images attempt to draw the attention of the adolescent, who is desperately trying to become something, to build her/his image. Thus advertising sells the ‘best’ image acceptable for a contemporary teenager: the image of a cool, trendy, beautiful, fair and clear skinned, happy youngster. These sorts of advertisements promise that, by some magic, the product will transform the youngster into some Venus or Adonis.

The importance of being physically attractive is a common cultural trait in Western societies (Martin et al., 1997; Baker et al., 1977). Baker et al. (1977) argue that people, in general, use physical attractiveness to judge someone they have not been acquainted with before, and that less attractive children are less popular at school than their more attractive counterparts. Likewise, Grinder (1973) says that less attractive children may be subjected to rejection, ostracism and contempt from their peers. He goes on to argue that a young person’s self-esteem is largely affected by his or her perceivable physical attraction. For example, if an adolescent girl believes that she is pretty or beautiful, her self-esteem will in general be higher than the self-esteem of her not-so-pretty counterpart.

A glance through most modern forms of advertising media will quickly reveal that, on the whole, the industry is geared towards presentation of the ideal body image. This is why beautiful images are being endlessly sold to the adolescent consumers. Highly attractive and superficially slim models are always present in television and magazine advertisements, promoting new trends in fashion, cosmetics and footwear to young people. Martin et al. (1997) in their article “Stuck in the model trap: the effects of beautiful models in ads on female preadolescents and adolescents”, discuss how advertising can influence young people’s perceptions of physical attractiveness. Advertisers, they claim, use thin and

good-looking models (often unrealistically so) to market products, exploiting the assumption that thinness equals beauty. Young girls, they argue, are also led to believe that if they buy Cover Girl or Max Factor products, they will look like those models.

Advertisers believe that adolescents will buy in the hope of succeeding in their own image building or in attracting a potential partner. As Williamson (1978:78) puts it, “the product...being advertised on the grounds of its exchange-value, its capacity to buy something else, in this case [Anne French cleansing milk], crudely, a boyfriend”. Thus, girls who want to buy good looks and love, which comes with them, go for these images.

However, according to O’Donohoe (1994:66) ‘... there are grounds for concern here. If advertising is influential in setting standards for attractiveness for potential partners, [young people] may be setting themselves up for disappointment’.

I concur with O’Donohoe and think that there is a potential negative side to the use of such images; this being the realisation that such status or image is unattainable, which can result in loss of self-esteem, despair, stress, guilt and feeling of shame. The exposure to pictures of thin models from a very early age can put increased pressure on young girls, which can lead to some plaintive results (e.g., links have been made in the press between these images and the rise in conditions such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia).

In contrast, Fowles (1996:164) gives evidence from Myers and Biocca (1992), that college students, who viewed advertisements, showing very thin models, felt more elated afterwards. Young students, claims Fowles, judged themselves as thinner than they had prior to watching the advertisements, because they saw themselves in their future ideal shape. “More than anything else, the imagery in advertising is that of idealised human beings... it happens because advertisers have learned over time that this is what consumers want to look at” (Fowles, 1996:156).

According to Solomon (1988), advertising often exploits young people’s fears and insecurities, in order to sell to them. Lack of social acceptance amongst their peers is cited as being their biggest fear. Hence, the idea of belonging to a group is seen as being of great importance and is thus exploited by advertisers when they show scenes of adolescents



interacting and generally being happy. One such example, of a McDonald's advertisement, is quoted by Solomon (1988), who identifies their response to the 'group appeal'.

As discussed in the section "Analysis of advertising" (Chapter 1), such advertising tactic as celebrity endorsement is widely used by the advertisers, targeting youngsters. According to Henriksson (1983), in advertising aimed at children and adolescents, celebrities, who they can easily identify with and try to imitate, are being frequently employed. In my investigations of adverts, suitable for use in this study, I encountered many instances of product endorsement by well-known footballers, singers and film stars, who had been utilised as 'authority figures', giving their positive opinions about the products they present. The desired effect of using such figures is, I believe, two-fold. Namely, the advocating of use by the celebrity lends an instant appeal and an enhanced product or brand recall due to association between the celebrity and the product.

Music always was an important element of youth culture: youth subcultures appropriated and innovated musical forms and styles as a basis for their identity (ref. Chapter 3, the section "Youth culture and media"). According to Benady (1994) and Fry (1995), MTV provides the most up-to-date music available to young people, so advertisers, who perceive adolescents as the main target audience, can be sure to reach this market, if they advertise on MTV. In order to sell to the young, Benady (1994) and Fry (1995) argue, advertisers focus on the daily concerns of teenagers, such as sex and dandruff.

Similarly, Jhally (1987) talks about MTV as an advertising-based service, with adolescents as target audience, and Levy (1983) says that young people are MTV's loyal audience that supports it by buying records, which were advertised on MTV. Dougherty (1993:28(1)) claims that "there is one sure way to learn what's hot and what's not on the nation's campuses - MTV's weekend programming".

What kind of advertising appears on MTV? Dougherty (1993) claims that it is advertising 'cool' commodities, which attract fashion-conscious adolescents. The Ball's ("Headbanger Ball", Saturday night MTV programme) most popular advertisement, Dougherty (1993) observes, is for 'trendy' trainers. Then he lists Cinn-A-Burst chewing gum, Snickers Ice Cream Bars, Nintendo, cleansing products, Head & Shoulders Shampoo, soaps, creams, Cover Girl, Max Factor, long-distance calls (AT&T) and bottled water Evian. "Profit-

making television”, says Levy (1983:33), “creates an unreal environment to get people into what is called a ‘consumer mode’”. MTV, as its executives boast, is the perfect environment for that.

Fry (1995) claims that after MTV watching, magazine reading is adolescents’ favourite activity. Kellner (1995b), in his turn, believes print advertising to be of high importance, claiming that 50% of advertising revenues go to various print media. According to Alderson (1968) and Hermes (1995) adolescents read magazines because they can identify with their stories, feel a part of their sub-culture, receive advice on fashion, beauty, health and hygiene, and learn how to be popular at school and successful in their relationships with the members of the opposite sex.

According to Harriott (2000), the editorial assistant of Sugar, her magazine, which is the biggest selling magazine for teenage girls, sells 430,217 copies a year, Bliss sells 287,796 copies a year, Just 17 sells 230,190 copies a year, Mizz sells 160,426 copies a year and 19 sells 126,606 copies a year. Emap Metro’s publisher Barbara Patterson claims that British teenagers spend more than three million pounds a month on magazines (Fry, 1995). According to Campaign (Campaign, 2000a: 30), publishing companies do not fail to respond - the National Magazine Company, which is a joint venture between Emap and Hachette, has recently launched three new teenage magazines into the market, which are Cosmo Girl (a ‘younger sister’ to Cosmopolitan), Elle Girl (a ‘younger sister’ to Elle) and the BBC’s project (a youthful version of the famous Hello). Publishers of Elle and Cosmopolitan hope that when adolescents, now reading Elle Girl and Cosmo Girl grow up, they will become loyal readers of Elle and Cosmopolitan.

Thus, young girls are encouraged to read more and more magazines. Advertisers, in their turn, are very interested in buying advertising space in the newcomers as well as in the firmly established titles. Knowing how popular magazine reading is among teenagers, they understand that it is the best way to reach this very fickle and elusive market (ref. Campaign, 2000a). Advertisers realise that teenage magazines have a high degree of trust, which is transferred on the advertiser, who can convey more detailed information that cannot be seen on television and can be certain to reach their target market. Harriott (2000) claims that, last year, Sugar readers spent over £303 million on records, tapes and CD’s,

over £5.5 million pounds per week on toiletries and cosmetics, over £12 million pounds a week on clothes.

Many researchers (e.g., Thau, 1996 and Tapscott, 1996) argue that teenagers prefer high-quality (high-cost) advertisements to all others. Advertising cost is enormous because commercials aim to be technologically superior to regular television programming - to be noticed, they have to stand out. As discussed in the section “Analysis of advertising”, the advertisements are the end products of hard labour, careful testing, intelligence, creativity and expertise of many people. Therefore, as a rule, advertisements are sophisticated, talented and imaginative creations, which are produced with the best high-tech instruments available on the market. Unnikrishnan (1996) argue that this technical superiority of advertising is one of the tactics, which advertisers employ to catch adolescent viewers’ attention and to make a lasting impact on their minds.

## **Adolescents' beliefs about the tactics that advertisers use to persuade them and their overall attitude toward advertising and its images**

There are, of course, good reasons why mass communication scholars and advertisers alike should be interested in contemporary teenagers' perception and thoughts about advertising. First of all, young people are exposed to vast amounts of advertising during their teens and secondly, they have large disposable incomes (Boush et al., 1994; Fry, 1995). Henriksson (1983) and Unnikrishnan (1996) emphasise that there are three basic reasons for the advertising industry to take young viewers seriously. Firstly, most of them have more money to spend than ever before; secondly, they are seen as a major force in influencing their families in household purchasing decisions; and thirdly, breeding future brand loyal consumers is seen as very important by advertisers. There is also an identifiable need for mass communication scholars, to devote some of their time to investigating the understanding of advertising messages by adolescents, particularly with reference to enabling some form of media education policy to be established.

According to Fry (1995), adolescents today are really no different from the previous generation and their attitudes to life remain basically the same: they still fight their parents and try to copy their 'cool' classmates. However, the lifestyles of young people are very much different. The new young generation is often described as the children of a post-modern society, who live in a world, which is different to the world of their parents in terms of new technology and new advanced media (Venkatesh, 1992). More than ninety percent of students at public universities and community colleges have the potential to access the Internet either through remote access at home or through the school library (Tapscott, 1996). Tapscott (1996) argues that this generation's tastes for video games have enormously enriched both Sega and Nintendo, and its preference for the interactive, rather than the passive, is turning them away from television, towards the Internet and magazines. Indeed, Neil Raaschou (quoted in Fry, 1995:37(2)), managing director of Attic Futura, argues that magazines have become a more important teenage media than television, simply because the former are more interactive than the latter.

Young people are also an extraordinary media-literate group, receiving a better education than their parents and grandparents ever did (Dickenson, 1995; Richman, 1994). According to O'Donohoe (1994:250), the post-modern young consumer is a 'highly competent consumer of advertising in post-modern times'.

Numerous researchers argue that contemporary adolescents are provided with more than just the media 'savvy' to avoid being influenced by advertising. Due to a life-long exposure to media and advertising, they are less trustful to their appeal, than their parents were (Thau, 1996). It is argued that the main attitudes and perceptions on consumption are formed before a child reaches adolescence (e.g., Moschis and Moore, 1979). However, as discussed above (ref. "Role of advertising and advertising images in influencing adolescents' attitude formation"), research shows that attitudes and beliefs toward media and advertising change with age: older teenagers are said to have greater consumer knowledge, have a better capacity to differentiate product attribute information in advertisements and be more sceptical about advertising in general than their younger counterparts. Younger children are more likely to watch advertisements and then pester their parents to buy a product advertised than their older counterparts, who are more cynical about the credibility of commercials.

This life-long exposure to media has also brought a certain well-informed, if amateur, approach to adolescents' appreciation of advertising: if an advertisement is read as a genuine window into their lives, young people are very receptive to it. However, if advertising fails to express its ideas and looks unnatural, then the now media-savvy teenagers will easily see through this smokescreen and latch on to the intent to exploit. Consequently, advertising will inevitably fail to persuade them. According to Dibb et al. (1994), unethical actions, and untruth in particular, might destroy the trust young customers have in a particular company or product. Moreover, it is believed that, when young people form the slightest suspicion that a company is exploiting them, they simply condemn it (Thau, 1996). According to Moschis et al. (1979), brand name and price are important considerations in adolescents' purchasing decision-making. Adolescent consumers may decide not to pay attention to an advertisement, which does not feature their favourite brand, or which features a very expensive item. Likewise, Moschis (1978a) states that adolescents are very likely to respond to low prices advertised when considering a purchase. As Thau (1996) argues, contemporary adolescents are seeking value for money

and generally are more practical than the generation of their parents when it comes to making purchases.

Research (e.g., Reed, 1994; Thau, 1996; and Tapscott, 1996) shows that many young people hold that a 'good advert' should include the qualitative characteristics of the product and sometimes follow it with distribution of free samples, e.g. as a supplement to their favourite magazines. Adolescents believe that advertisements must not demand them to buy anything, especially in rude or unethical forms, which include misinformation. An advertisement, according to Tapscott (1996), should trustfully and plainly, i.e. avoiding vague messages, explain why young people should buy the product advertised. It should be of classical quality and very professional, showing all the qualities and worthy sides of the product and, probably, showing how to make most of those qualities.

Nevertheless, such writers as Fry (1995:37(3)) and Boush et al. (1994) claim that the post-modern teenager is prone to advertising influence. "Nearly half have gone out and bought a product on the basis of an ad. A similar proportion will have either used a money-off coupon or discount card or sent away for product information" (Fry, 1995:37(3)).

After contemplating a vast number of advertisements (an average British child is exposed to in excess of 5,000 commercials per year), it is no wonder that an adolescent should have favourite advertisements and less favourite ones (Boush et al., 1994). According to 'Childwise' research (summarised in Fry, 1995), the best-liked and most persuasive advertising comes from Sega, Nintendo, Toys 'Я' Us, Lego, and HMV. Reebok, Nike and Pepsi are also among popular teenage brands.

However, post-modern researchers, such as Elliott (1997), claim that young people in post-modernity use advertising for many different purposes, many of which are not related to marketing transactions, i.e., in these instances advertising is consumed independently of the brands, which it promotes. 'Advertisements', writes Elliott (1997:291), 'can be seen as cultural products in their own right, and young people consume them independently of the products and have a creative symbolic relationship with them'. This may be the reason why respondents wanted to see young handsome people in the advertisement (where there are also a lot of computer graphics and special effects involved) and listen to good quality

music; they also did not expect an advertisement to be extremely ‘business-like’ and very serious<sup>2</sup>.

O’Donohoe (1994:61) came up with fourteen non-marketing uses of advertising, amongst which were: “entertainment”, “escapism”, “aspirations and role models”, “reinforcement of attitudes and values”, “education” and “peer relationships”. Thus, she claims, it is evident that young people treat advertising as media in its own right, which should not be only used for economic purposes. The advertisements give young people something to talk about with their friends, to break the boredom of the television programmes, to assess their own and their potential partner’s attractiveness and the opportunity to sit back and enjoy good-quality entertainment.

To summarise, it has been argued that post-modern adolescents want advertisements to be short, fun, informative, and they do not want them to be patronising. They like a lot of good jokes, humour, great music and actions, and do not like cheap and vulgar scenarios, wishing them to be of classical quality and very professional in every sense. It is evident, therefore, that contemporary adolescents make big demands on advertising and use it as a cultural product in its own right, enjoying it, using it and learning from it as they enjoy, use and learn from other television programmes.

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<sup>2</sup> See Findings, p.135

## **Adolescents and Fashion**

According to Kellner (1995a), the fashion industry is advertising's principal commercial affiliate.

“Advertising and fashion promote a worldview complete with ethics, politics, gender role models, and a sense of appropriate and inappropriate daily social behaviour. These two industries thus have crucial economic and socialising functions in creating consumer demand, shaping behaviour, and inducing people to participate in and thus reproduce consumer society.” (Kellner, 1995a: 331)

The findings of the questionnaire<sup>3</sup> show that fashion is one of the primary interests of respondents. Thus, I felt it important to review academic writings on the subject of fashion and its role in adolescents' attitude formation.

As Henriksson (1983) argues, the consumer market constantly creates new life-styles and consequently, new fashions. For example, jeans, which were first invented to be practical working clothes for the working men, are now perceived as fashionable by adolescents, and those, which bear designer labels, are even more so. According to the questionnaire, it is not enough for fashion conscious participants to have just any jeans, or even Levi's jeans. They want to wear Calvin Klein, Donna Karen or Versace jeans. Likewise, Henriksson (1983:52) argues, “When buying a pair of jeans, half of all adolescents would rather wait until they can afford the right ones”.

According to Du Gay (1997), fashion, in the sense of what is fashionable, is constantly changing. Fashion is always ultra-modern, always on the move, always attempts to keep ahead of the times. Young people are always on the look out for something fresh and new, and therefore, an item that was very fashionable yesterday, is an outdated outfit today. According to Blumer (1969:278), “fashion is...caught in an incessant and recurrent process of innovation and emulation”. Likewise, Du Gay (1997:121) argues “the essence of fashion in clothes is that it compels us to discard a garment before it has outlived its usefulness, though, oddly enough, this does not mean that fashion items are invariably sold without regard to durability”.

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<sup>3</sup> See Questionnaire analysis p.135



Listening to teenagers' everyday conversations, I have discovered that they are very fashion conscious – most of them know what the latest fashion is. Having more money to spend on clothes than ever, they can afford to believe that Versace and Armani can be only worn one season - the season they are out, because later they become outdated. A conversation between several classmates was overhead: "Look, I have bought this Calvin Klein jacket from T.K. Maxx [a retail outlet where one can buy famous designer labels at reduced prices, because they are last season's]", one girl said. "Huh!" replied her friends, "we would never buy a designer label from last season". According to Blumer (1969:277), "the fashion conscious person is usually quite careful and discerning in his/her effort to identify the fashion in order to make sure that he/she is 'in style'". As Barthes argues (1957), fashion relies on myth in order to present its practices as natural forces, e.g., this season's jackets will be of leather, so a leather jacket is a 'must' – the fashion industry tells us, thus announcing an inevitable natural occurrence. As Culler (1983:76) puts it, "...fashion energetically and resourcefully naturalises its signs because it must make what it can of small differences, proclaiming the importance of trivial modifications".

Blumer (1969:278) argues "...fashion requires a certain type of socio-cultural environment if it is to exist". One would not be able to imagine the conversation, cited above, taking place in an ordinary school of such impoverished countries as Albania or Romania. Such conversation can only become commonplace in an affluent, consumerist society, such as British society. Moreover, Blumer (1969:286) maintains that: "the area in which fashion operates must be one that is involved in a movement of change, with people ready to revise or discard old practises, beliefs, and attachments, and poised to adopt new social forms; there must be this trust in the future". In other words, fashion can only thrive in a wealthy democratic society, which grants freedom of choice to its citizens.

According to Barthes (1957), fashion is a system that creates meaning by differentiating garments, endowing detail with significance, and establishing links between certain aspects of clothing and worldly activities. According to Schudson (1984:157), "fashion in dress, better than any other example of consumption, is a material, externalised symbol system that connects people to social worlds and individualises them in those worlds. For more and more people ... clothing came to be expressive and signifying". Young (1990:106) agrees by noting that adolescents "constantly update their views on different kinds of people according to the clothes they wear".

According to Henriksson (1983:52), when adolescents buy an item of clothing, one of the important factors, influencing their purchasing decisions, is “the knowledge that somebody else will approve of their purchase” and most of the time this ‘somebody’ is their peer group. For the benefit of their peer group, adolescents are keen to demonstrate which group they belong to, i.e., they are keen to publicise their social identity, and for this they utilise many different factors, of which fashion is one. Elliott (1997) goes on to argue that the peer group actually helps an adolescent make his/her purchasing decision. Fashion advertisers, he maintains, use this phenomenon to influence adolescents through their peer groups.

According to Blumer (1969:284-85), fashion has its psychological motives. Fashion, he says, can be ascribed to “efforts to escape from boredom... impulses... spirit of adventure... rebellion against the confinement of prevailing social terms, ...hidden sexual interests, an effort to increase the attractiveness of the self... ...desires for personal prestige or notoriety”.

Blumer (1969) states that prestige is an important factor in the fashion system. He argues that “fashion has respectability; it carries the stamp of approval of an elite – an elite that is recognised to be sophisticated and believed to be wise in the given area of behaviour” (Blumer, 1969:277). According to Barthes (1957), it is meaning that actually sells clothes. Du Gay (1997) postulates that because fashion is one of the most reliable methods by which people position themselves and others in the social world, a desire to have designer labels in one’s wardrobe is directly connected to the desire to obtain upward social mobility. Indeed, according to Culler, “Life is a competition which your clothes win or lose for you” (Culler, 1983:75). Accordingly, Barthes (1957) argues that consumers use fashion as a tool with the help of which they can signify something, which was insignificant before.

“In a mobile society, commercial products with familiar names provide people with some sense of identity and continuity in their lives. And in a society with a high concern for social mobility, material possessions of known and ranked standing provide statements of social status and may provide entry into the desired social world”. (Schudson, 1984:157)

Nowadays, however, non-elite fashion or non-designer fashion has universal importance for young consumers. The major part of the clothing sales in the UK is now consolidated in the retail sector (Phizacklea, 1990). Such retail outlets as Top Shop, Miss Selfridge, Warehouse and Benetton stock large collections of catwalk-inspired fashionable items and, according to the questionnaire<sup>4</sup>, are popular with fashion conscious participants of this study. According to Phizacklea (1990), the secret of Benetton's success lies in their advertising's eye-catching controversy, their branding politics and production organisation.

"Benetton only produces goods in response to direct orders, and both the pattern of sales and re-orders are continuously fed back to Ponzano headquarters by a private and exclusive information-technology network." (Phizacklea, 1990:15)

According to Kellner (1995a), advertising sets the trend for what is 'in fashion'. Advertising, he argues, is devoted to stylish images of fashionably dressed people. Thus, the message that advertising sends is that "in a competitive world a man must be well dressed and fashionable" (Kellner, 1995a: 337). According to Solomon (1988:67), fashion is all about power, and advertising is quick to exploit it: "the object itself really doesn't matter, since it ultimately disappears behind the presumed social potency of its owner. Semiotically, what matters is the signal it sends - its value as a sign of power".

Adolescents have a desire to be popular, to belong (Solomon, 1988). According to the focus groups results<sup>5</sup>, participants were keen to conform to peer standards, especially with regard to fashion. Therefore, for them fashion is not so much about power, but about social acceptance. Fashion helps them to 'belong', to feel a part of the crowd, to be 'in'. Wearing what everybody else wears helps ensure that they "won't be stuck home alone on Saturday night" (Solomon, 1988:67).

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<sup>4</sup> See Questionnaire analysis, p.135

<sup>5</sup> See Focus Group Findings, p.215

## **Chapter 5 Methodologies**

At the beginning of the present study, I developed two hypotheses, one of them being that advertising and advertising images can influence middle-class adolescents' responses to advertising; and another, that middle-class adolescents are able to understand the persuasive effects and tactics, employed by advertisers, and on the whole are capable of making sound judgements about advertising.

To test these hypotheses, I have employed three methods of research: questionnaire and focus group interviewing and utilised semiotic analysis to provide a background for assessment of the responses. This current chapter will endeavour to explain the use of the chosen methodologies and discuss their chief advantages and disadvantages.

### **Questionnaire development**

The questionnaire is a very old method of data collection. According to Kent (1993), this method has been employed in Britain since 1790 and was used for asking people questions about all aspects of their lives and recording their responses.

"A questionnaire is a document used as a data capture instrument and which does two things: it lists all the questions a researcher wishes to address to each respondent, and it provides space of some mechanism for recording the responses." (Kent, 1993:62)

As part of this study, self-completion questionnaires were employed, which, as the name suggests, is a type of questionnaire in which participants are required to give their own answers in writing (Kent, 1993). It was designed to examine whether or not (1) respondents read and/or purchased magazines, and to what extent; (2) they were interested in advertisements in the magazines and television; (3) they were taking part in consumption processes, i.e., used money-off coupons and bought a product on the basis of an advertisement; (4) they were exposed to main stream television programmes, and Satellite and Cable television programmes and to their advertisements; (5) they were fashion and brand conscious and, finally; (6) their critical understanding of selected advertisements had developed.

Particular attention was paid to the wording, question order and length of the questionnaire in order to ensure efficient collection of the responses. I endeavoured to prioritise the respondents' needs while wording and phrasing the questions. As Evans et al. (1996:201) suggest, the researchers should always aim to ensure that "each question means the same to every respondent, and indeed to the researchers". They also argue that questions that suggest the required answer or direct the respondents in any unintentional or intentional way, can present a serious problem for the researchers. Moreover, according to Hansen et al. (1998), a self-completion questionnaire should not be too long and the researchers should not undervalue question order. "Where questions are placed within a questionnaire", they argue, "is as vital a consideration as the wording of those questions" (Hansen et al., 1998:246).

Thus, I kept the questionnaire reasonably short, and made every effort to ask comprehensible questions and avoid asking complex, ambiguous and leading ones. I placed profile-related questions at the end of the questionnaire, since, according to Evans et al. (1996:202), when they are located at the end, "then 'the respondents' confidence has been gained and questions answered, before any intimate details on age, income, occupation and the like are requested".

Three types of question were employed in this survey: (1) single-answer questions, (2) multi-answer questions and (3) open-ended questions (ref. Kent, 1993). These types of question will be discussed more fully in the section "Data processing: SPSS".

According to Deacon et al. (1999), two main techniques may be adopted in order to administer self-completion questionnaires. They may be sent through the post, or personally delivered by the researcher. According to Hansen et al. (1998), personal delivery is preferable to mailing in the case of small-scale research, as the former may ensure a higher response rate among respondents. In light of their opinion, I chose to adopt the personal approach technique, personally delivering and handing the questionnaires to respondents.

I felt that it is important to point out that the self-completion questionnaire, as a method of research, has its strengths and weaknesses. According to Deacon et al. (1999) this method

is relatively inexpensive. Moreover, they argue that it can reach potential respondents better, than many other methods, and at the same time, make only limited demands on the social and personal skills of the researcher.

According to Hansen et al. (1998), the main problem of this method is that it must adhere to time constraints and, therefore, the space available for answers must be restricted. Self-completion questionnaires have to be short, they argue, since it is conceded that long questionnaires tend to fatigue respondents, who become very reluctant to fill them in from the beginning till the end. Following Tunstall's (1971) research, Hansen et al. suggest that it is advantageous for a researcher to arouse respondents' interests in the topic of research, because then it is easier to increase their "tolerance level" (Hansen et al., 1998:236). Taking this into account when designing my questionnaire, I endeavoured to make respondents as interested in the topic as possible, by asking questions closely related to their everyday concerns.

### **Testing questionnaires**

Prior to conducting the survey, a pilot study was considered necessary to ensure that uniformity could be maintained for the survey procedures, and to provide a basis for the calculation of the total survey time. According to Kent (1993:85), "the piloting of questionnaires...is critical for successful research".

Before the pilot questionnaire was presented, it was carefully checked to ensure correct wording, layout and the sequence of questions, paying particular attention to open-ended questions. This small-scale pilot survey was designed to pre-test my main survey, in order to see how it would work and, if necessary, to rectify design errors prior to the main data collection phase.

The pilot survey was conducted with a small sample of twenty-five students, out of whom eleven (44%) were male and fourteen (56%) female. Respondents were recruited through Beauchamp College, The Ridgeway, Oadby. All respondents were from a middle-class environment, and were between fourteen to sixteen years old. This survey took place in March 1999, in one of the classrooms of Beauchamp College. I anticipated the

questionnaires to be completed in thirty minutes timetable slot. However, respondents took approximately one hour to finish.

After the results were analysed, it became apparent that the original questionnaire required some significant modifications. Primarily, the allocated time was not considered sufficient for satisfactory completion. Therefore, it was appropriate to shorten the questionnaire by eliminating a number of questions, which, after careful consideration were judged not to be essential for the purpose of the current study. By reducing the length of the questionnaire, I ensured a significant reduction in time, necessary for completion. It was anticipated, therefore, that the modified questionnaire would take approximately thirty minutes to complete. Secondly, there were also questions in the pilot questionnaire, which respondents did not understand or required a significant amount of clarification. Thus, I endeavoured to make the formulation and the wording of all the questions as clear as possible. A consequence of two similar media areas, namely magazines and television, being studied was that some respondents gave identical responses to the majority of questions. Therefore, I decided to make the questions sound as different as possible, thus hopefully avoiding repetition of responses.

## **Sampling**

As Kent (1993:38) puts it, a sample is “a subset of cases selected by the researcher for the purpose of being able to draw conclusions about the entire population of cases”. When it came to sampling, a number of different ways to achieve a sample, which would ensure validity in testing the hypotheses, were considered. Random sampling and stratified random sampling, a detailed explanation of which was given in Hancock (1964), Hansen et al. (1998) and Kent (1993), were at once rejected, since they are designed to give an equal chance to each individual to being selected. As it is apparent from the title of my thesis and hypotheses, the identity of the future respondents were already specified in terms of their social class and age group.

Thus, quota sampling and purposive sampling were left for final consideration. Hancock (1964) states that quota sampling is a commonly used method of sampling and describes it as a method, in which selection of respondents is made in advance, according to various

factors, e.g., age and social class, and quantity of respondents is also specified beforehand. When employing quota sampling, a researcher needs to use his or her own estimation, in order to identify the factors specified, and as Hancock (1964) points out, misjudgement is a real possibility and as such is one of the limitations of this method. He also points out such disadvantages as the possibility of misinformation or incorrect selection.

Hansen et al. (1998) believe that the weaknesses of quota sampling, as a sampling method, can be overcome by employing a method of purposive sampling. According to Hansen et al. (1998), this is a method in which the researcher selects respondents from already pre-selected social class, area, or school, i.e., purposive selection is accomplished.

After careful consideration, the purposive sampling method was selected. Since the aim of my study was to explore the attitudes of middle-class adolescents, the participants were from an economically rich, middle-class suburban area of Leicester, receiving their secondary education at the prestigious Beauchamp College, which is in Ridgeway, Oadby. Oadby, formerly a village lying outside the city of Leicester, has in recent years been engulfed by the outward spread of the city's suburbs. It lies to the south-east of the city centre and is almost entirely residential (ref. <http://www.britannica.com>). Beauchamp College is very popular with the middle-class population of this area because it has a good record of academic achievement. For example, in the summer of 2000, 72% of Beauchamp's 469 year 11 students gained at least five A to C grades in GCSE, which is both a college and a Leicestershire LEA record. In the same year, the Leicestershire average was 48% and the average across the whole of England was 49% (ref. [www.beauchamp.leics.sch.uk](http://www.beauchamp.leics.sch.uk)). Therefore, owing to the requirements of this study to explore attitudes of middle-class adolescents, this selection was considered to be capable of ensuring validity in testing the hypotheses.

By choosing this sampling method, I opened myself to criticism. It could be argued that this sample is not representative, i.e., not everyone in the area had an equal chance to participate. However, according to Hartmann (1987:16), quoted in Hansen et al. (1998:241-242), "in much research, it may be neither necessary nor desirable that samples should be representative. The object may simply be to test a particular hypothesis". The aim of my study is to analyse the attitudes of a certain group of people, and not to make statistically significant forecasts.



Indeed, in Chapter 4 I suggested that social class should have an impact on purchase decision-making. Therefore, it would be advantageous to extend the study to test this relationship. However, this would add an additional dimension, which I believe is beyond the scope of this current study.

## **Recruitment**

I planned to engage approximately 150 students, hoping to get an equal number of male and female participants to ensure a range of responses. A letter was sent to the Principal of Beauchamp College, seeking her consent to interview with her students. With the assistance of the college, a number of classes were selected from two different year groups, in order to supply the necessary age range, providing a total sample size of 151 students.

The survey was carried out with all the students seated in a large hall at individual desks. A number of teachers were present to ensure that pupil discipline was maintained. The initial worry that teachers may inhibit the student's responses was unfounded, as pupil-teacher contact was kept to a minimum, except for the purposes of clarifying the wording of questions.

Participants were invited to complete the questionnaires. They were also asked to retain them, and not hand them in before the allocated time expired, in order to ensure that those students, who were taking more time to complete their questionnaires, did not feel marginalised or had a desire to compete with their peers on the basis of time scale. This was thought necessary in order to ensure a high level of completion and eliminate the temptation among the respondents to rush the questionnaire, jeopardising the quality of its completion.

## **Age and gender**

One age group was selected, ranging from 14 to 16 years old. This particular age group was chosen because I considered them to be in the middle of the group characterised as 'teenagers' or 'adolescents'. As previously discussed, in the field of consumer behaviour

research, specific attention to young consumers' culture is, with few exceptions, limited and is generally focused on very young children. Thus, by choosing this particular age group, I hoped to make a contribution to earlier research in the field of consumer attitudes and reported behaviour.

The group was of a mixed gender, consisting of 74 (49%) male respondents and 77 (51%) female respondents. I endeavoured to construct a mixed gender group in order to achieve a broad cross-section of discourses, views and ideas. It did not prove difficult to achieve an almost equal male/female split, because Beauchamp College is attended by students of mixed gender.

### **Timing**

The survey was conducted in November 1999. A particular day was suggested by the college as being convenient because a large number of students were available to take part in the survey with minimal interruption to their studies. I anticipated the questionnaires to be completed in a thirty-minute timetable slot. Despite the time restriction, I believed the time allocated was sufficient for satisfactory completion of the questionnaire, having tested it in the pilot study. However, towards the end of the session, the time allocated was increased by ten minutes as some participants were taking longer to finish.

### **Data processing: SPSS**

The structure of the questionnaire was such that the majority of the information collected was in a quantitative format. This greatly facilitated the task of statistical computer analysis. The general statistical package SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was considered to be appropriate for carrying out the analysis of this data. Having previously attended an introductory course for SPSS, I felt that I had sufficient knowledge of the package to be able to use it in a practical situation.

Prior to entering any data, I gave careful consideration as to how the information could best be coded in SPSS so as to yield the best output. Hence, an analysis of the

questionnaire results was carried out and from this I determined that cross-tabulation and frequency of response information would be required.

The questionnaire contained three distinct forms of questions. There were simple response questions, which involved only one possible answer, there were multiple response questions, e.g., lists of favourite magazines, and finally, there were open-ended questions, for which the respondents had to give answers in their own words. As Evans et al. (1996:199) suggest questions might be open-ended “to allow the respondent to answer in his or her own words, without the constraints of pre-determined optional answer”. According to Kent (1993), open-ended questions are used in order to register opinions, attitudes and beliefs of the participants. Since the main aim of this study was to test opinions, attitudes and beliefs, I considered it necessary to use this type of question.

Although only the first two types of questions yielded results, which were easily analysed, I resolved that information from the third type of question could also be considered. I decided to take a ‘keyword’ approach in order to extract some information from these responses. By this I mean that, because of the nature of the questionnaire, certain words could be expected to appear in the open-ended questions. By registering the presence of these words, taking into account the context in which they appeared, I initially planned that some form of statistical analysis could be applied to these questions.

In SPSS the data is set to consist of ‘cases’ and ‘variables’. In this study the case is a particular respondent, and the variable stores the response to a question. For the single-response questions, there was only one variable per question which contained the value of the response, e.g., Yes, No or Maybe. A separate variable, which accounted for the total number of different responses received, was ascribed for the multiple-response questions. The number of actual values of that variable was equivalent to the total number of different responses received for that question. However, I quickly realised that this would result in an excessive number of possible values, and applied a process of rationalisation to some of the multiple-response questions. For example, apart from a large number of well-known magazine titles already supplied in the questionnaire, some space was provided for specialist titles. When the time came to analyse results, I realised that there were too many of these responses. I considered that inclusion of such a wide range of data in the final statistics could easily water down the overall analysis and produce meaningless

conclusions. Therefore, I decided to use certain broad categories to classify these specialist responses, e.g., for magazines, categories such as sport, computing, etc., were employed. Moreover, where possible - to reduce the volume of data input, I created pre-defined lists of answers based on the responses given, which would then allow input of a simple number.

Once I had decided on the structure, I then began the task of entering the data. The results from the one hundred and fifty one questionnaires were keyed in. Once this was complete it was necessary to select from the many forms of analysis, which could be carried out. Those questions, where participants could list several answers, such as their favourite brands, required a variable to be used for each of these answers. However, SPSS allowed these variables to be grouped together, so that all responses for these questions were effectively treated as one variable, and then use this group to produce cross-tabs. These cross-tabs counted the numbers of different responses received and presented them in terms of males and females categories together with the total.

Cross-tabulation was performed, using SPSS, on two levels. Initially, results for each individual question were compiled showing the number of responses obtained from each gender group for the possible answers. This number of responses was also converted into a percentage of the column total, i.e. no. of males/females, to facilitate easier comparison. These cross-tabulations were subsequently extended, to test whether the responses given to one particular question had an influence over another.

Although no limitations were encountered in analysing the data, the answers to certain questions, particularly those relating to fashion, did result in the need to code a large number of different responses. Although I considered it inappropriate to group such responses into sets to reduce the total number of possible responses, I had to ignore some minority responses, i.e., those, which I decided to be incomprehensible and nonsensical.

The testing of whether any dependency existed, either between gender and response to a particular question or between the responses for two different questions was carried out by using the Chi-squared significance test on the cross-tabulated data obtained. The facilities within SPSS allowed this calculation to be performed easily. The output from the Chi-squared calculation is a value for Chi-squared itself and also a so-called significance value.

The Chi-squared value is a measure of how much the results have departed from a so-called expected frequency. This expected frequency is calculated by multiplying the row and column totals and then dividing by the total number of results. The differences between these expected frequencies and the actual values are then squared and added together to produce the Chi-squared value.

The significance value which is output from SPSS, relates the Chi-squared value to the number of degrees of freedom of the problem, i.e. a measure of the number of different categories within the problem. The significance is the probability of obtaining this Chi-squared value for the number of degrees of freedom. This then needs to be compared against a pre-determined value, below which, a positive dependence can be assumed between gender and response given. A figure of 0.05 (5%) has been selected for this significance value as this is conventionally accepted to be the level, below which, dependency is present. A more detailed explanation of this procedure can be found in Kent (1993).

In summary, the choice of analysis package and the method employed in coding the responses allowed for significant information to be extracted from the questionnaires in both tabular and graphical form. The flexibility of this set-up was such that the data could be easily combined and re-combined in order to produce an in-depth analysis, as required. Therefore, I felt that this package was appropriate in terms of processing the quantitative data.

## **Focus groups**

According to Hansen et al. (1998), the use of focus groups became a popular method of researching audience responses in the 1980s, in both commercial marketing research and the social sciences.

The often ideologically opposed focus group research is based around groups of individuals, who exchange opinions between themselves and the researcher, who is both recording these exchanges, and at the same time encouraging them (ref. Morrison, 1998). Many researches agree that focus groups provide the opportunity to concentrate on a

number of topics, which the questionnaire could not deal with in sufficient depth (e.g., Hansen et al., 1998).

Focus groups were selected as an appropriate method of investigation to use, in conjunction with the questionnaire, for a number of reasons. Firstly, focus group interviews ensure comprehensive data. Morrison (1998) views focus groups as an exceptionally good method of research for the purposes of obtaining in-depth information, where human behaviour is concerned. As Hansen et al. (1998) explained, individuals, brought into a group, are more likely to voice their opinions, while in conversation with other members of the group. Thus, Hansen et al. (1998) hold that the focus group method of investigation is preferred to the individual interview, because the focus groups emphasise the social nature of communication processes and do not reduce audience research to the study of an individual. Secondly, focus group discussions can generate information, which is not very easily accessible otherwise. According to Morrison (1998:171), simply being in the group can be encouraging for an individual, thus propelling him/her to “open up and explore avenues of enquiry that may have remained closed”. Thirdly, “one of the great advantages of the focus group as a research setting is that the respondent or participant controls the manner in which they wish to express themselves” (Morrison, 1998:171). In the questionnaire, it is the researcher, who controls the manner of expression (to a certain extent), by asking multiple-choice or close-ended questions.

However, while conducting focus group discussions, it is important to remember the limitations of this method of research. As maintained by a number of scholars (e.g., Krueger, 1998 and Morrison, 1998), the participants might be affected by the artificial context of the focus group environment and their assumptions or knowledge about the project and the responses, which are expected from them, can affect validity of the results.

According to Krueger (1998), focus groups cannot be used in any study, the intent of which is to generalise, i.e., one, which claims that its findings can be applied to an analogous situation. Morrison (1998:167) argues that focus groups “provide ‘limited reference’ to a population as a whole, since they cannot, with certainty, provide data on the general distribution of the responses found in the sample, they also provide only limited reference to the world of the individual”. According to Hansen et al. (1998), in a focus

group situation some participants may start to dominate the discussion and inhibit other participants from voicing their opinions. Also, group discussion may erect boundaries for non-conforming views, thus rendering disagreements amongst participants less apparent and impairing the results. There is also the opinion that focus groups are in some respect unnatural, artificial and structured events. "In the case of focus groups, they are actually less normal to most people than the completion of a questionnaire: most people are only too familiar with completing forms requesting information about themselves..." (Morrison, 1998:155).

However, the limitations of focus groups can be successfully dealt with by a skilled facilitator or moderator. "Focus group discussions, in order to produce 'useful' data, require active input and structuring on the part of the moderator" (Hansen et al., 1998:264). The moderator's role is to control and direct proceedings taking place in the focus group, to 'facilitate', 'moderate' and 'stimulate' discussion in the group (ref. Hansen et al., 1998:264). This topic will be dealt with more fully in the section "The moderator issue".

By definition, focus groups must have a focus, so that conversation concentrates on the research issues. To achieve this, Hansen et al. (1998) recommends that close attention is to be paid to developing the interview guide. I endeavoured to do so, using the general guidelines put forward by Hansen et al. (1998) and Liebes and Katz (1990), constantly striving to keep up with the directions, which I set for myself. This topic will be dealt with more fully in the section "The interview guide".

Fortunately, as discussed in Chapter 4, my subject of inquiry - advertising - is an important part of life for the participants. According to the results of my study (questionnaire), the majority of them pay attention to advertising on television and in the magazines, and buy the products advertised. Thus, the potential for artificiality and an unnatural context to the focus group was reduced, because it was not at all 'unnatural' for participants to talk about advertising.

## **Sampling and Recruitment of Groups**

The initial plan was to construct four groups, each consisting of nine students, with a roughly equal split of males and females. Therefore, a total of thirty-six participants were predicted.

It is generally agreed among focus group scholars (see Hansen et al., 1998; Morrison, 1998; Liebes and Katz, 1990 and Krueger, 1998), that in order to be successful, focus groups must be as homogeneous as possible, i.e., consist of individuals with something in common. In the case of this study, participants were of common educational background and of similar socio-economic environment. As discussed above, participants were also reasonably interested in the topic of discussion. Thus, I endeavoured, insofar as was possible, to construct homogeneous groups, believing that, in such groups, participants would enjoy maximum support from their class-mates, which would be very useful for 'breaking the ice' at the beginning of the discussions, putting participants at ease and helping them to develop confidence quickly.

To prevent any possibilities of criticising this focus group research for its inability to generalise, I feel it important to point out that this research is small-scale and qualitative, which did not have any intention to generalise. It was intended to reveal, in-depth, participants' thinking about advertising, to improve initial understanding of their attitudes and behaviour. Thus, the goal of this research was to delve in-depth into the topic, which required that a considerable amount of time be spent conducting research with small groups, groups which had been selected on a purposive basis.

According to Krueger (1998:71), "in focus group research, the strategy is to use 'purposeful' sampling, whereby the researcher selects participants based on the purpose of the study". Thus, as in the case of the questionnaire, the participants were chosen on the basis of purposive sampling. The participants were recruited through Beauchamp College - a letter was sent to the College Principal, asking her permission to return to the college some time in October 2000 to conduct focus group research.

The participants were selected from those one hundred and fifty students, who had been previously assembled for survey purposes and had agreed to supply their names for the



purposes of further research. It was anticipated that focus group discussions would help to explore their answers in-depth, clarifying their earlier statements and also give them the opportunity to explain the reasoning behind their thinking. Also, I hoped that focus group discussions would help the participants to generate new ideas and express opinions, which they felt difficult to express previously.

As a result of the focus groups having been selected from the original questionnaire group, such variables as age, social class and educational background remained unaltered. The groups were composed of participants of mixed gender. The questionnaire results indicated that gender issues required further consideration, with some differences having been recorded in viewing patterns. It was evident from their answers, that participants' viewing habits were gendered, as male respondents clearly preferred 'men's' programmes, such as sports programmes, and female respondents – 'women's' programmes, such as soap operas. Thus, I felt it was important to have mixed groups in order to examine, in greater depth, the beliefs and attitudes, which participants had on gender relations in connection with advertising.

It was explained to the participants in general terms that the purpose of these focus group discussions was to find out their opinions and reactions to advertising; and that the current focus group research would play a key role in the composition of my Ph.D. thesis.

### **Focus group procedure**

The initial plan was to show three advertisements, recorded during the participants' favourite programmes and three advertisements, extracted from their favourite magazines. These were identified with the help of information gathered through the questionnaire. I hoped that these advertisements would be sufficiently familiar to the participants, so as to increase their desire to participate in the discussion.

As a result of information, acquired through the questionnaire, it was established that the most frequently read magazines were: 1) Bliss; 2) Sugar; 3) Just 17; 4) FHM; 5) 'Computer Games Magazines'.

Information gathered through the survey shows that many of the participants have access to Satellite or Cable television. The most frequently watched Satellite and Cable programmes (or programme types) were: 1) MTV; 2) 'Sitcoms'; 3) Simpsons; 4) 'Documentaries'.

According to the questionnaire, the majority of respondents claimed to watch television ten to twenty hours per week. The most frequently watched terrestrial television programmes, which appeared on commercial channels, were: 1) Friends; 2) Home & Away; 3) 'Children's'; 4) 'Drama'.

Thus, I decided to choose advertisements, which appeared during these programmes and in these magazines and made further selection based upon the types of magazine and television advertisements, which were favoured by participants.

According to the questionnaire, participants were interested in the following types of magazine advertisements: 1) Clothes; 2) Footwear; 3) Computer Games; 4) Cosmetic and Hygiene; 5) Food and Drink; and in the following types of television advertisements: 1) Clothes; 2) Computer Games; 3) Footwear; 4) Food and Drink; 5) Cosmetic and Hygiene.

### **The interview guide<sup>6</sup>**

As discussed earlier, Hansen et al. (1998) recommend that the researcher draws up an interview guide in order to use it during the interview.

In my interview guide, which began with the note of introduction to my research, I listed all the topics I planned to cover, in the sequence that I wanted to cover them. I also specified, which issues stand in need of prompting and probing (ref. Liebes and Katz, 1990) and the length of time allowed for each question. Moreover, the exact timing for use of the visual aids, these being videotape with the television advertisements and the reproductions of magazine advertisements, was specified.

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<sup>6</sup> For a copy of the interview guide see Appendices, p.330

## **The moderator issue**

In order to minimise the disruption of the college timetable, the college could only allocate two forty-five minute-slots and provide two classrooms for focus groups discussion. Thus, two groups had to be interviewed at the same time. Therefore, I had to find an assistant, who was willing to act as the moderator for two of the group discussions.

As Hansen et al. (1998:273) emphasised, “if the moderator is someone other than the researcher, it is important that he or she is appraised fully of the aims of the research, the topics or issues to be covered, the extent of active steering and probing required”. Therefore, I made sure that the chosen moderator was well acquainted with the topic of my research; that he was well acquainted with the visual aids (magazine and television advertisements) and understood precisely when these needed to be introduced to participants; that he understood the importance of covering all the issues, outlined in the interview guide, and, therefore, sticking to the time-table, specified in the interview-guide; that he is prepared to maintain a healthy balance of contribution among the group-members; and he is prepared to “keep the discussion gently on course” (Hansen et al., 1998:273), making sure that it does not go in directions, which are of no relevance to my research. Moreover, I instructed him to listen to participants very attentively, taking particular notice of their language, tone and manner of speech and body language.

In an attempt to minimise the constraining effects in the focus group, I endeavoured, as a moderator, to put participants at ease, establishing a rapport with them by trying not to appear as an ‘authoritative’ figure, but as one of them, in order to stimulate discussion. This also involved encouraging the shy participants and putting domineering and intimidating participants in their places; and encouraging the participants to explain the reasoning behind their thinking, and to express their attitudes and perception as fully as they possibly could.

## **Actual implementation**

Prior to the discussion commencing, I introduced myself, my other assistant (a Ph.D. student, who was there to take notes and operate the video and audio equipment) and my

topic of research. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves, stating their sex, age, and name. They were told that this information will remain strictly confidential and will be used only by the researcher for initial identification.

Of the thirty-six students originally intended to participate, only thirty-five did actually make a contribution to the discussions. Thus, the gender split for the focus groups was seventeen males and eighteen females, which represented 49% and 51% respectively of the total contributors.

The magazine advertisements were then presented to the respondents, followed by the three television advertisements, each lasting approximately 30 seconds. These advertisements were: 1) 'French Connection Hygiene Products for Men', taken from FHM magazine; 2) 'Daniel Christian Jeans', taken from FHM magazine; 3) 'Wonderbra', taken from Bliss magazine; 4) 'Maybelline Cosmetics', recorded during terrestrial television programme Friends; 5) 'Juice Up', recorded during satellite Sports programmes; 6) 'FCUK – French Connection', recorded during MTV programmes. These advertisements were selected on the basis of the criteria described earlier. I selected these particular types of advertisements, as I believed that respondents would be able to relate more easily to them, and hence, be more involved with them, as they represented familiar items, used by adolescents in their everyday lives.

Following the viewing, students were given some time to familiarise themselves with the magazine advertisements and then invited to enter the discussion. I began the interview by asking students to tell me about what happened in the television and magazine advertisements they have just been watching and reading, and whether they liked or disliked them.

From the outset of the discussion, participants were actively encouraged to express their views without restraint and to give judgements freely about the advertisements viewed. Furthermore, expressing spontaneous opinions about advertising in general was welcomed. For the discussion to remain focused, I used an interview guide, which had been devised previously. I endeavoured to ask open-ended questions in order to avoid unduly leading the discussion and thus leading responses towards the direction of my own expectations for the research. I listened to participants very attentively, taking particular notice of their

language, tone and manner of speech, gestures and body language. They were asked to clarify their points, if their meaning was not clear, and were encouraged to explain the reasoning behind their thinking (ref. Krueger, 1998). The focus group discussions were recorded on audiotape, after having first sought the participants' agreement, and assuring them of total confidentiality.

## **Handouts<sup>7</sup>**

As part of the focus group interviews the participants were provided with a set of handouts. These contained the six advertisements, which they were going to consider and also a sheet, providing a list of tactics, which may be identified in the six advertisements to which they would be exposed. They were asked to consider this list of tactics, whilst viewing the advertisements, and to indicate, which tactics they felt were being used in them. It was explained to them that the list was not exhaustive and the tactics of their own choice could supplement those listed.

The purpose of the handouts was two-fold. Firstly, it had the effect of introducing the participants to the subject matter, which we were going to consider and, hopefully, provided them with a useful set of vocabulary, which they could use throughout the remainder of the interview. This was considered particularly useful for the less able adolescents, who may be reluctant to voice their opinion, and for creating a focus for the participants whilst they were viewing the advertisements, rather than have them simply view the advertisements without really thinking about them.

Secondly, because of its multiple-choice questionnaire type, the completed list was considered to be able to provide a good and clear set of data, concerning the tactics perceived in the advertisements. This would lend itself to a simple quantitative analysis and could later be compared with information obtained from the coding of the interview transcripts.

Criticism could indeed be levelled at the use of these handouts. It may be considered that the participants might have received an undue level of prompting. However, the benefits

gained by providing these handouts, such as giving participants a stepping-stone into the discussion, and putting them in the right frame of mind, were considered to outweigh the possible risks. Indeed, after analysis of the interview transcripts, it appears that the handouts did not unduly influence the course of the interview.

## **Timing**

Focus groups interviews were conducted in October 2000. I anticipated the four interviews to take no longer than forty-five minutes each. However, towards the end of some sessions, the time allocated was increased by three to five minutes, as some participants were late. As two interviews at a time were conducted, the whole process took no longer than one hundred minutes.

## **Measures**

The current study is examining how, and if, advertising and advertising images influence adolescents' attitudes and reported behaviour; and whether adolescents are able to understand the persuasive effects and tactics, employed by advertisers, and are capable of making sound judgements about advertising. Therefore, my interview guide contained questions, designed to identify the attitudinal and behavioural relationship between advertising and participants.

I have employed a number of measures, designed to assess general knowledge and attitudes toward advertising, beliefs about advertisers' tactics and effects, as well as attitudes towards various socialisation agents, influencing one's decision to purchase a product.

Attitudes measure. I tried to establish what attitudes in general participants have towards advertising and advertising messages. According to Boush et al. (1994:5), "attitude towards advertising is defined as a general predisposition in the processing of advertising messages". The participants were asked to articulate their general attitudes to the

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<sup>28</sup>For a copy of a handout see Appendices, p.332

advertisements shown, e.g., whether they liked or disliked them, what was their reason for it, and what in particular they liked and disliked in them.

Scepticism measure. I tried to identify whether participants received advertisements with a healthy degree of scepticism, or were inclined to believe or reject them entirely, thus establishing, whether participants believed that: (1) advertising aims to persuade, and (2) that persuasive message is biased (ref. Boush et al., 1994). The participants were asked to express their views as to the trustworthiness of the advertisements, e.g., whether they trusted or distrusted the information which the advertisements presented, and what were their reasons for it.

Measure of knowledge about advertisers' tactics. I wanted to identify what beliefs participants had about advertisers' techniques and tactics. As Boush et al. (1994:4) state, "although such beliefs do not cover the entire range of knowledge about advertising, they reflect one important domain: the perceived intentions of the persuasive agent". The participants were asked to identify different persuasive tactics, employed in the advertisements, e.g., showing how a product works, involving celebrities, using jokes, songs, computer graphics, special effects and so on.

Measure of knowledge about effects. I was trying to establish whether participants have an understanding of what advertisers are trying to accomplish, when they use particular tactics. I therefore invited participants to discuss what the advertisers are trying to achieve by employing these tactics, e.g., attract their attention, make them to want the product, make them remember and/or like the advertisement, make them to stop and think about the product, simply providing information about the product.

Measure of influence on purchasing decision. A critical evaluation of the socialisation agents, which participants indicated as influencing their purchasing decisions, was carried out. Participants' feelings towards these socialisation agents were considered. I measured this by inviting them to imagine that they liked the products presented by the advertisements, that they had enough money to buy these products, and that they thought the advertisements to be trustworthy. Then, they were asked whether, taking into consideration all the factors above, the advertisements were stimulating enough in themselves to make them want to go out and purchase the product, or whether they had to

rely on other sources as well, e.g., family, friends, school knowledge, and so on. The participants were also asked, if they were guided by price or/and brand alone, when making a purchasing decision.

Peer pressure measure. According to Fowles (1996), peers are a very important factor when analysing adolescents' purchasing decision-making. I was, therefore, trying to establish what role, if any, peer pressure plays in influencing participants purchasing decision-making. Participants were requested to think whether they, when making a decision to buy, take their social position or their position in the peer group into account, e.g., if their friends or their parents were buying a particular brand, would they follow them?

Measure of influence by advertising. I was trying to establish to what extent advertising influenced participants, whether they thought advertising to be generally persuasive and if so, what people they thought were persuaded? The participants were invited to discuss the persuasive power of the advertisements, e.g., to what extent they thought the advertisements, and, in particular, those, shown to them, could influence their purchasing decisions. The probe was: 'Do you know of any examples of influence from your or your friends or relatives lives?'

Measure of ability to make sound judgements and carry out critical analysis of advertising. According to Moschis (1984) and Young (1990), adolescents' knowledge about consumption and advertising in general increases with age. I tried to discover whether participants were able to make sound judgements about advertising in general. Therefore, I invited them to discuss the economic sensibility of advertising in the market place, e.g., whether they thought advertising is a useful business tool, or a wasteful and inefficient one.

### **Data processing: NUD.IST**

"...One dilemma facing the researcher [in focus group analysis] is between, on the one hand, reading through the interview transcripts to select striking or typical quotes which illustrate, confirm, and enhance the researcher's ideas of the processes and phenomena which are being investigated, and on the other hand, to remain open to new ideas, unanticipated responses, unexpected conflicts in the statements of participants and so on". (Hansen et al., 1998:278)



Once the focus groups interviews were completed, and all of them transcribed in full<sup>8</sup>, I had to perform some sort of analysis on the data which had been obtained. It was more appropriate to use qualitative analysis on this data, since the results were from a series of focus groups interviews. However, I felt that in addition to a qualitative analysis, it would also be useful if some form of quantitative data was obtained from the focus groups. In order to do this I had to determine a method for analysing and grouping the phrases and words used by the respondents. I could have performed this manually by listening to what each respondent said and then making notes based on key words or phrases, which they used. However, Hansen et al. (1998) in their book “Mass Communication Research Methods” mentioned that there were commercial packages available to assist the researcher in performing this type of analysis. One such package, which was in the possession of the University, was NUD.IST. The NUD.IST software allows sections of text (in my case, these were the transcripts of the focus group interviews), to be imported into the program. The user can then browse the text and, effectively, produce a highly structured set of notes by marking each portion of text as belonging to a chosen category or categories. This process is known as coding.

Therefore, it was possible to build a logical structure (known as the node tree) of categories, into which the appropriate portions of the text could be logged. A hierarchical structure was constructed using this node tree, where each node corresponded to a different category. Creating this node tree allowed me to group the categories, which I intended to use for coding the text.

NUD.IST divides the imported texts into text units, which can be described as the minimum amount of phrases or words, which together can sensibly be placed into a category. As a user, I had to choose what, or how much would be included in a text unit. It could be as little as a word or sentence or as big as a whole paragraph. In this particular case the text unit was chosen to be a section of uninterrupted discourse from each interview participant. By uninterrupted I mean not interrupted by another respondent, butting in with their new ideas.

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<sup>8</sup> For transcripts see Appendices, p.333

There are both advantages and disadvantages to selecting this as the basis for the text unit. A respondent could be making a lengthy discourse and putting forward several ideas in one block of text, which could, under certain circumstances, contradict each other. In this case, several codifications, or nodes, could refer to the same text unit. A solution to this would, perhaps, be to choose a sentence or phrase as the unit of measure. On the other hand, the respondent could take several sentences or phrases to express an idea, in which case a disproportionate number of text units could be coded to express the same idea. A brief review of the transcripts suggested that the paragraph type of text unit was more appropriate in this case, as the respondent's answers were sometimes quite vague and took several sentences to properly express their opinion. The potential problem of many nodes, or coding, referring to the same text unit was not considered to be problematic.

Once the interview transcripts had been imported into the software, I began the task of creating a preliminary node tree structure. During the focus groups I asked seven questions, which were designed to test my hypotheses. I used these as a basis for the initial node tree structure into which the various portions of the responses would be coded. New categories could be added during the coding of the text, which was useful because new ideas, and new ways of interpreting the respondents' answers, came to my mind whilst processing the text.

Coding of the information was an iterative process with numerous passes being made through the four focus group transcripts in order to fully realise all the information present within the text. Each time the node tree structure was revised and enlarged to ensure that the maximum amount of detail could be efficiently extracted. Categorisation fell into two basic categories, by advertisement and by question. By this I mean that the initial nodes were grouped depending on which of the six advertisements they referred to. Thus, characteristics for these advertisements formed one part of the node sub-tree. Secondly, I revisited the transcripts looking for persuasive tactics, advertising functions etc., forming another sub-tree, which was not specific to any particular advertisement.

Once this iterative process had been completed, I could then use the NUD.IST software to very quickly extract the relevant portions of text from the transcripts, for the purposes of performing a qualitative analysis. In addition to this, I was able to extract numerical information, based on the number of text units attributed to a particular category, or node,

so that a quantitative analysis could be performed on appropriate categories. I then imported this output into a spreadsheet program, so that tabular representations of this data could be produced.

## **General Limitations**

The methodology of this study has definite limitations. Firstly, according to Hansen et al. (1998), the poorly worded questionnaire can influence the results produced. Although every care was taken designing the questionnaire and interview guide for focus groups, the possibility that some impact may have occurred on participants' responses has to be taken into account.

Secondly, the greatest problem with focus group interviews was that it was very difficult to ensure that the participants were saying what they really felt and not responding in a way to suit me, the researcher. According to Buckingham (1993a: 250), "what children say does not necessarily reflect what they know, or all of what they know". The respondents, who, according to Piaget's theory of stages (ref. Chapter 3, the section "Theories of communication"), are passing through the formal-operations stage, are capable of perceiving what the appropriate 'grown-up' responses would be to my questions and, in order to please me, or to show off in front of their peers, may have adapted their responses accordingly. This should be taken into account while analysing their responses.

Moreover, the focus group environment presumed mixing of the respondents and could not ensure against them being influenced by each other in their responses. This research should, therefore, take into account that many responses were evolved during a collective discussion, and opinions could have changed during the course of the discussion.

Thirdly, as discussed earlier, the way people interpret or understand any text depends on their prior knowledge, cultural experiences, background, gender and age. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasise that the semiotic readings that I present in Chapter 6 are the results of my personal judgement, influenced by all the factors mentioned above, and should be considered as such.

Finally, this study analyses only a small group of adolescents, and therefore, does not attempt to state or imply that all adolescents, who come from a similar cultural and educational background, think or behave in the same way, as the respondents, presented in this study.

## Chapter 6 Semiotic study of advertisements

“The ad itself is not a neutral thing like the workings of an engine or the movements of the stars. It is a living cultural product and therefore will have different layers of meanings from the obvious to the culturally interpreted.” (Young, 1990:170)

As part of the questionnaire, and focus group discussions, participants were presented with ten advertisements about which they were asked a number of questions<sup>9</sup>. In this chapter I have conducted my own semiotic study of the advertisements. As discussed in the theoretical framework section, there are a number of factors, which govern interpretation of the messages encoded in any particular advertisement. Therefore, there is no such a thing as a ‘correct decoding’ and my decoding must not be viewed as anything but idealistic.

Such movements as post-modernism have made the task of analysis much more difficult by stripping away some of the reference points which would previously have been used. We can no longer assume that any particular cultural model applies and expanding the analysis to cover all possibilities may well result in over-dilution of the core message.

In performing analysis on the selected set of advertisements, it is natural that the awareness of such methods as semiology, may unduly influence my interpretation to see messages, which are not necessarily there. Therefore, given the time constraints and the age range of the respondents in this study, it is most likely that a more ‘face value’ interpretation will result. In other words, the visible signs may figure more strongly in their reading, leading to a more superficial interpretation. This is not necessarily negative, however, as the advertisers are well aware of the context in which their works will be placed and they know full well that the audience is unlikely to spend any significant amount of their time contemplating the hidden meanings.

Whilst, however, they may not spend time in front of the actual advert, the content of the advert may well form a basis for later conversation, as discussed by Elliott and Auty

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<sup>9</sup> For Participants’ analysis of questionnaire advertisements, see p.161. For participants’ analysis of focus groups advertisements, see Focus Group Findings, p.215.

(1999). Hence, it is in this scenario that deeper meanings, and any social relevance, may emerge. Indeed, the focus group is one such setting, which may promote a more thorough investigation of the adverts.

I planned to base my study on the theoretical terms and ideas outlined in the section “Semiology” (see Chapter 2, the section “Analysis of advertising”). I also considered it important to examine the potential audience of these advertisements, for the purpose of determining their target markets and to confirm that the advertisements were appropriate for both the questionnaire and focus groups respondents.

I will begin each of the ten sections, one per advertisement, with some factual remarks about the advertisements, and then introduce my semiotic analysis of each advertisement.

## **Limitations**

The nature of advertisements is such that their meanings are open to interpretation and, consequently, will be read differently by different people. According to Young (1990),

“If we make certain attributions about the types of people in the ad, however, cultural interpretation is involved and different meanings may be given. A working-class English viewer may see an ‘upper-class man’, whereas a middle-class viewer may see a middle-class man and an American may just see a high-status person.” (Young, 1990:168)

However, there are certain objective reference points, which one can use to base an analysis upon. According to Bignell (1997:47), “the theory of textual positioning assumes that there is one ‘correct’ reading of any ad, which is its true meaning. It de-emphasises the ambiguity of signs, since all the signs in the ad seem to lead finally to the true meaning”. Therefore, one supposes that the ‘correct’ reading refers to decoding the advertisement in the same way as it was encoded.

However, as there are often several ways of reading the connotations of the signs in any given advertisement, it is not a foregone conclusion that every reading will eventually converge on the true meaning. Even the semiotic analysis, which I propose to carry out in order to understand the questionnaire responses, will not be objective. As Leiss et al.

(1997:214) point out, semiology is “heavily dependent upon the skill of the individual analyst.... As a result, in these types of studies there is little chance to establish consistency or reliability...”. Nevertheless, relying upon academic writings on semiotics (see Chapter 2, the section “Analysis of advertising”, “Semiology”), and being inspired by such semiologists as Roland Barthes and Judith Williamson, I have endeavoured to examine the following advertisements in detail and to the best of my understanding of the theoretical concepts of semiotic analysis.

By choosing FHM as the source of two advertisements in the study, it is possible that I have opened myself to criticism for lack of impartiality. However, this was done intentionally. The pilot study<sup>10</sup> showed FHM to be a very popular magazine among male respondents - all male respondents said that they read it regularly. Even if the survey’s results did not show such total interest in this magazine, 34% of male respondents were still reading FHM regularly. In comparison to other magazines (e.g., Loaded attracted only 16% of male respondents), FHM proved to be the most popular magazine among male respondents, according to the questionnaire results. Notwithstanding this, however, these advertisements were in no way exclusive to FHM, and were equally likely to appear in any of the popular male, or indeed, female magazines.

According to Leiss et al. (1997:214), “semiology cannot be applied with equal success to all kinds of ads”. In other words, Leiss et al. (1997) argue, that the conclusions, reached after analysing one particular advertisement, should not be applied to the advertisements altogether. They proceed to criticise Judith Williamson, for choosing advertisements specifically to illustrate her arguments, rather than conduct a more ‘open minded’ analysis. Keeping in mind “the danger of self-confirming results” (Leiss et al., 1997:214), I tried to avoid this in my selection of advertisements. Given that I am attempting to investigate adolescents’ ability to decode media messages, the use of uncomplicated advertisements would certainly have resulted in a high number of learned responses. Therefore, I considered it necessary to select advertisements with a range of complexities, so that the respondents could be challenged on a number of different levels. Of those chosen, I consider the simplest to be the Maybelline advertisement. The most obscure is the French Connection Fashion advertisement, as it has no direct indication of the product.

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<sup>10</sup> For the pilot study results see B2.Pilot Study Data, p.298

## Sunny Delight<sup>11</sup>



### Background

Sunny Delight is produced by the Procter and Gamble Company, which is one of the largest advertisers in the world, with a turnover of billions of dollars. The company operates in many product markets, with the grocery market being just one of them ([www.sunnyd.com](http://www.sunnyd.com)).

Procter and Gamble have produced Sunny Delight since the late 1960s. It was first launched in the UK in April 1998. Sunny Delight is promoted as a healthy drink for kids, to be drunk 'home and away'. Quoting Sunny Delight's Home Page: "Sunny Delight is a vitamin enriched citrus beverage. Kids love the taste of orange, tangerine and lime juices. Mums love the fact that it is enriched with vitamins A, B1 & B6, and C" ([www.sunnyd.com](http://www.sunnyd.com)). In the supermarkets Sunny Delight is placed close to natural fruit juices, in order to underline its healthiness.

### Analysis

The initial step in performing a semiotic analysis involves identifying all the signs present in a particular advertisement. As discussed before (see Chapter 2, the section "Analysis of advertising", "Semiology"), there are several types of signs, which fall into the following broad categories: linguistic signs, graphic signs, symbolic signs, iconic signs (Pierce, 1960a). In this advertisement, there are several iconic signs present: a girl, a boy, their bicycles, a bicycle in the upper left corner with someone unidentifiable riding it, a fridge full of bottles, the bottles full of Sunny Delight drink. Linguistic signs are represented by the copy text, written in the upper right corner of the picture. There is also a graphic sign, the logo of Sunny Delight. The picture has a golden, sunny background. The golden colour is a symbolic sign.

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<sup>11</sup> Used in the questionnaire.



The girl's and boy's bodies and facial expressions, their bicycles, the fridge and the bottles are themselves all signs, belonging to familiar cultural codes. Their facial expressions are signs, which connote happiness, excitement and wild joy. These youngsters are clearly enjoying their rides. Their bodies connote physical fitness, harmony, health - both of the youngsters have well shaped bodies, pretty faces, perfect skin, hair and teeth. Their bicycles are signs, which connote mobility, playfulness and youthful and healthy recreation. The fridge connotes coolness, freshness and refreshment. In cultural convention, the golden colour may connote many things. According to Williamson (1978:24), "use of colour is simply a technique.... to make correlation between a product and other things". Thus, the yellow/orange tint to the whole advertisement represents a warm and active colour, one that is full of energy and life and also happens to be the colour of the Sunny Delight drink.

The blurring of the ground conveys movement and dynamism, to add to the idea of energy represented by the colour, and there is a sense that the whole advertisement is coming out towards the reader. Central to this is, of course, the fridge full of Sunny Delight, which, because of its orientation, appears to be thrusting itself at the reader.

Linguistic signs are present in the top right corner of the picture. As already discussed, the function of the linguistic signs is to supply the link between the image and the situation in space and time. They are used in order to guide the audience in the right direction, to help them choose the right meaning from the variety of other meanings available. Barthes (1977) calls this function an anchorage. The copy text reads: "Whenever, wherever, reach for the sun". Drawing on the presence of the graphic sign in the bottom right corner of the picture, the Sunny Delight logo (the drink's name has the linguistic sign 'the sun' inside), the iconic signs in the fridge and the bottles of Sunny Delight, an assumption can be made that the linguistic sign 'the sun' refers to the Sunny Delight bottles in the fridge, which the audiences are invited to reach for.

According to Fowles (1996:12), "...advertising usually has as its underlying intention the transfer of the appeal associations onto the product". Thus, the audience is encouraged to associate Sunny Delight with the sun. The sun itself is a "polysemic sign" (ref. Barthes, 1977b), meaning that it has several meanings. The sun, as a signifier, may signify warmth, fertility, light, natural goodness, beauty, health, happiness and cheerfulness (for example,

the boy and the girl in the picture can be said to have ‘sunny’ smiles). However, on the negative side, it may signify burning (a person can suffer from a sunburn or a forest fire can be caused by very dry, sunny weather), aridity or the desert.

In order to answer the question - ‘what does the signifier ‘sun’ signify in the context of this advertisement?’ - we need to examine the relationships, established between the signs in the picture, i.e., to decode the picture. The copy text, the logo and the bottles are all situated in the right side of the picture. Since, in our society we generally read from top to bottom and left to right, we will encounter first the copy text, then the boy, the fridge, full of Sunny Delight bottles, the girl, and then, finally, the Sunny Delight logo, which also acts as a full-stop in this semiotic system. Thus, it may be assumed that the advertisers wished to make a connection between the Sunny Delight, healthy, beautiful and happy teenagers, the freshness of the fridge and the sun. For such a connection to work, the sun, as the signifier, has to signify warmth, fertility, light, natural goodness, beauty, health, happiness and cheerfulness and not aridity or burning. Once this connection is established, much more meaning becomes available to us. The Sunny Delight bottles and the logo are golden and bright, like the sun. The Sunny Delight gives beauty, health and happiness, like the sun. There is also a golden light in the picture. Even though we cannot see the sun, we do see the golden Sunny Delight bottles, which replace the sun and can be thought of as assuming its role. Leiss (1997:248), when discussing an advertisement of a similar genre, states “in the magical world of commodities, products seemed to capture natural qualities and internalise them within the product image”.

“Whenever, wherever...” – it does not matter where you are, even if there is no sun outside, Sunny Delight is always in the fridge and able to provide you with a substitute. Thus, the qualities of goodness and naturalness, generally associated with the sun, are imparted to the drink, thus creating the mythical meaning of the advertisement, i.e., Sunny Delight possesses the qualities of the sun, providing health and happiness for its drinkers. According to Williamson (1978:103), “images of nature are ‘cooked’ in culture so that they may be used as part of a symbolic system”. Thus, Sunny Delight takes the place of the sun. The teenagers in the picture are happy and excited, as if they were enjoying the sun. However, instead of sun they are enjoying, or very soon will be, the Sunny Delight. This is why, as the advertisement conveys to us, their bodies appear physically fit and their skin, hair and teeth look so healthy.

This advertisement does not only exploit the audiences' knowledge of the cultural conventions, but its copy text directs the audiences to selecting the right meaning from the variety of other meanings available. According to Leiss et al. (1997:244), advertisements of this genre have the product-image format. In order to communicate its meaning to the audiences, this advertisement is employing the transfer of the natural qualities, which we associate with the sun, to the drink, and 'the sun' functions as a metaphor for naturalness.

### **Sunny Delight's readers**

This advertisement was placed in the March 1999 issue of Sugar magazine. This magazine claims to be Britain's best selling girl's magazine (Harriott, 2000). As the questionnaire results indicated, magazine reading is a very popular activity among the respondents, with the majority reading magazines as often as once a week. Sugar was among the most popular magazines among female respondents: according to the pilot study (ref. Appendices, p.298), 79% of female respondents said that they read it regularly, and, according to the questionnaire (ref. Questionnaire analysis, p.135), 69% of female respondents did.

Information, received from Sugar's editorial assistant Ms. Harriott, shows that its target audience comprises of eleven to nineteen year old girls. The articles in the magazine are dedicated to teenage fashion and style news, celebrity gossip, beauty and hygiene tips, personal health issues, social popularity issues and boy-girl relationships. According to (Harriott, 2000), the reader of this magazine (which is almost always female) is passing through her most traumatic teenage years, when her physique and her emotions are changing, and she has to decide what course her life will take. She is developing a sense of her own identity and forming her own attitudes and opinions about life. She is preoccupied with fashion, style, beauty and hygiene, celebrities, boys and her social life. Her own popularity within her social group is of great importance to her.

All this seems very probable after analysing the survey results, since female respondents have demonstrated much interest in these things. Moreover, on the basis of the articles and the images in the magazine, it would appear that their staff believes their readers to be very health conscious. Many readers write to the magazine with their particular health concerns

and a significant proportion of articles are dedicated to health matters. According to Harriott (2000), a typical Sugar reader is living at home with her parents, studying at school and wants to have a career of her own. She receives pocket money from her parents and, as a rule, has a part-time job. As a result, Sugar's readers overall boast of a very high disposable income of 1.5 billion pounds a year.

Sunny Delight was introduced to the market as a healthy drink for mobile kids. Therefore, it would satisfy a need for a healthy, 'cool' drink for the readers of Sugar, particularly given their preoccupations. However, Sunny Delight is promoted not only as a healthy, vitamin-enriched drink, but also a drink, which will ensure a fit body, a pretty face and a good social life. Notably, there are three youngsters in the picture, acting to emphasise that Sunny Delight is for social drinking. The assumption could be made that advertisers were hoping to convince their target market that this drink could not only improve their physical appearance and their health, but also make them socially popular.

## Hilfiger Athletics<sup>12</sup>



### Background

Today, Tommy Hilfiger is a \$400 million fashion empire. It is famous for its logo – the red, white and blue, which are the colours of the American flag. This logo is usually large and prominently placed. According to Tommy Hilfiger, his company's image can be described as "Crispness, purity with a little bit of a twist"

([www.nimbus.ocis.temple.edu](http://www.nimbus.ocis.temple.edu)).

The design house of Tommy Hilfiger launched Hilfiger Athletics in 1998. It is promoted as a sharp, clean masculine fragrance. Hilfiger Athletics is available in crisp greens, herbs and other citrus fragrances and is recommended for daytime wear. In America, it is sold in the price range from \$12 to \$45 ([www.fragrance.com](http://www.fragrance.com)).

### Analysis

This advertisement has several iconic signs, denoted by four men, one woman, their clothes, a bottle of Hilfiger Athletics perfume, the American flag and a ball. There are further iconic signs, denoted by the arms and faces of some people in the background (probably, men). There is a graphic sign, denoting the Hilfiger logo and the copy text - "Hilfiger Athletics. The new fragrance by Tommy Hilfiger".

Considering the group of people in the picture, we can see that their facial expressions and their physiques are similar to those, apparent in the Sunny Delight advertisement. Their faces express happiness and excitement, and their bodies are physically fit and healthy. They are clearly enjoying the game. They have young pretty faces, perfect skin, hair and teeth. Their facial expressions and their poses are signs, signifying playfulness and enjoyment.

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<sup>12</sup> Used in the questionnaire.

The presence of the ball signifies that a game, or some other form of sporting event, has taken place. It is likely, therefore, that the group of people is acting as a team. There is also a connection between this team and the American flag, which is quite prominent in the background, indicating the American origin of the team. Since the members of this team appear to be in a celebratory mood, one may presume that they won the game.

The clothes, worn by the members of the team, are graphically denoted as Tommy Hilfiger clothes, since they bear the Tommy Hilfiger logo. All people in the picture wear them, which also classify them as members of another team, namely, Hilfiger Athletics. A bottle of perfume also bears the Hilfiger logo, and therefore, it is also denoted as a member of the team. There is also a connection between the American flag, denoted iconically and the Hilfiger Athletic bottle, since it bears the Tommy Hilfiger logo, which is made up of the colours of the American flag. This establishes a further connection between the Hilfiger Athletics bottle and the team. The bottle is positioned in the bottom right corner, in front of everyone. It is placed so as to give the impression to the audience that it is not merely running together with the victorious team, but is out in front and has led the team to victory. According to Williamson (1978:35), “a product may be connected with a way of life through being an accessory to it, but come to signify it...”. Thus, Hilfiger Athletics is linked to the ‘real’ world in this advertisement, eventually taking over it.

Linguistic signs do not play an important role in this particular advertisement; however, the main text in the advertisement is ‘Hilfiger Athletics’. This is presented in a specific typeface which, being of italic form, has a certain dynamic feel. In this context, therefore, the text is more of an iconic sign.

Thus, Hilfiger Athletics connotes victory - American victory, to be specific. At the same time, this is an advertisement for Tommy Hilfiger’s new fragrance, Hilfiger Athletics – an American fragrance. This relay between victory and Hilfiger Athletics, which is constructed from connotations of the iconic, graphic and the linguistic signs, makes it easy to see what meaning the advertiser intended to attach to its product. Thus, victory was depicted in the hope that at some point in the future the reader will come to associate it with Hilfiger Athletics.

The Hilfiger Athletics advertisement takes on a feminist critique of advertising (e.g., Hermes, 1995; Winship, 1987), portraying men and the woman as equals. In fact, it even puts the woman into the leading role, placing her slightly ahead of the men. Therefore, it is designed to appeal to audiences of mixed gender.

### **Hilfiger Athletics' readers**

The advertisement was placed in the February 1999 issue of For Him Magazine (FHM). Overall, FHM has circulation of approximately 700,000 copies. Despite this magazine being aimed at eighteen to thirty year old males, the pilot study had shown FHM to be very popular with younger teenage male respondents.

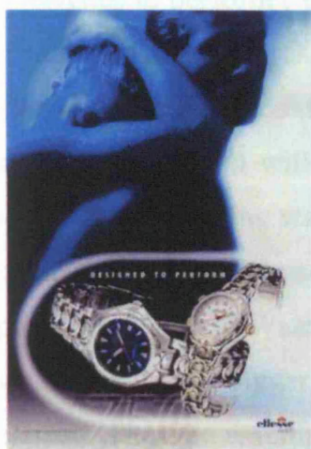
During 1998-1999, examination of several randomly selected FHM issues was undertaken. It appears that this magazine promotes a macho, anti-authoritarian culture of 'laddism', cultivating 'masculine' attitudes and values among its readers.

The general reader of this magazine is assumed to be style and fashion conscious, in love with sports cars and all the latest technical gadgets, likely to participate in some or other sports activity or watch sports programmes regularly, and be in some kind of a romantic relationship. It appears to me that this type of man likes to be perceived as a macho person, who likes to win in life. Thus, FHM readers are ideal recipients for the Hilfiger Athletics advertisement. Hilfiger-Athletics, which also stands out of the crowd (both figuratively and literally), would satisfy a real need for these readers, or, if they only aspire to the winning life-style, owning this fragrance could function as a sign that they belong to the group, which already uses a fragrance like this.

Therefore, the Hilfiger Athletics advertisement assumes that its audience either leads a winning life-style, or aspires to it - either way, they are in need of the Hilfiger Athletics fragrance. In the case of teenage male respondents, who admitted to reading FHM, they only aspire to the expensive winning lifestyle featured in the magazine. Therefore, they also qualify as the Hilfiger Athletic advertisement's target group.



## Ellesse Watch<sup>13</sup>



### Background

According to (<http://www.jobscircuit.co.uk>), the Pentland Group plc, the Ellesse brand was established in Perugia, Italy in 1959, when Leonardo Servadio identified the potential of combining exclusive design and style with a high quality performance product. Ellesse is mainly a sportswear and lifestyle brand, with a heritage in skiing and tennis. According to (<http://www.ellesse.com>), the Ellesse name is based on the initials, L. S. of its founder, Leonardo Servadio.

In 1959, Servadio created a revolutionary stretch ski pant, which established Ellesse among the elite alpine social circles, making it the ultimate aspirational brand. These values have been also upheld in the brand's relatively new product - Ellesse Watch.

### Analysis

This advertisement is a combination of iconic, linguistic and graphical signs. Taking the people, denoted iconically, first, we can see that their poses and positions are themselves signs, which belong to cultural codes. The people assume conventional gender roles - the woman is feminine, fragile and in need of protection, and the man - strong, masculine and protective. The woman is hiding behind the man, leaning on his back, and hides her face behind her arm. Her position connotes weakness and lack of confidence. The man stands upright, his head, back, and right arm supporting the woman and his face turned towards the audience. His position connotes power, strength and self-confidence. Looking at these two people together, however, we can also see that the woman's position in relation to the man could connote trust. The man, in turn, accepts her trust, shielding her from possible danger with his body, whilst watching attentively after her. Thus, I assume that these people could be a couple in a relationship.

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<sup>13</sup> Used in the questionnaire.



Here the linguistic signs are placed almost in the middle of picture. The copy text reads: 'Designed to perform'. It is positioned just below the man's right shoulder, and runs across his chest. One might assume that the linguistic signs 'Designed to perform' relate to the couple's performance in their relationship. They appear to be in a stable, quality relationship, which will last long, and will 'perform' in life. Below the copy, there are iconic signs denoting watches. Drawing on the presence of the graphic and linguistic signs on the right, the Ellesse Watch logo, one can assume that the watches denoted in the picture are Ellesse Watches. The watches are entwined, as the people in the picture. One watch is slightly bigger, more 'masculine' in design, and another is smaller, femininely elegant. Thus, an assumption can be made that the former is intended to be a man's watch, and the latter – a woman's. Accordingly, one might establish a correlation between the people in the picture and the watches. In the light of this connection, the watches are suddenly seen as reliable, quality watches, which can be trusted. According to Leiss (1997:249), advertisements of this genre use people as "representations of abstract qualities such as 'trust' rather than as living individuals".

Moreover, it might be assumed that the linguistic signs 'Designed to perform' also relate to the watches' technical performance. Like the people, they will not fail to perform well. Thus, both the relationship and the watches are 'Designed to perform'. From our experience, we know that only quality things will perform well. Therefore, the linguistic sign 'perform' signifies quality, at the same time signifying the Ellesse Watches. However, it is not explicitly indicated in the advertisement that these watches are quality watches. Thus, the mythic meaning of the advertisement, that the Ellesse Watches are quality themselves, is implied. According to Williamson (1978:30), "the product, which initially has no 'meaning', must be given value by a person or object which already has a value to us, i.e., already means".

In order to decode this advertisement fully, I have to return to analysing the people in the picture in detail. Both of them are young, have fit bodies, healthy skin, hair and beautiful faces. According to Fowles (1996), advertisements of this genre centre on the ideals of male and female attractiveness. The bodies of the models are displayed to the audience fully, since they do not wear any clothes. Thus, the image they project is that of sexiness, which is also conferred to the watches. The advertisement is shot in black and blue, and

then recombined to give it a luminous quality. This contributes to a strong moodiness in the advertisement.

Therefore, two mythical meanings of the Ellesse Watches advertisement were detected here, that the Ellesse Watches are quality watches, and that the Ellesse Watches are sexy watches.

### **Ellesse Watches' readers**

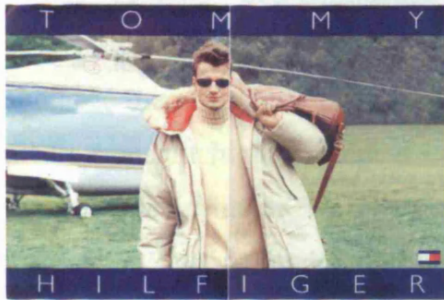
This advertisement was placed in the March 1999 issue of "19" magazine. Despite its main target group being women in their late teens and early 20s, it is one of the favourite magazines for teenage respondents, in a similar manner to FHM. According to the pilot study (ref. Appendices, p.298), 43% of female respondents said that they read it regularly, and, according to the questionnaire (ref. Questionnaire analysis, p. 135), 19% of female respondents did.

"19" magazine concentrates on all the important aspects of a teenager's lifestyle, such as young women's health and beauty, style and fashion, romance, relationships and celebrity gossip. The readers of this magazine appear to be fourteen to twenty-four years old, pursuing studies or having just started work, who are interested in fashion, relationships and are concerned about their health and appearance. Naturally, this is a similar target market to that of Sugar, the magazine from which the Sunny Delight advertisement was taken. Hence, similar characteristics and traits for the readership are likely to be seen.

Most likely, the target market of the advertisement was planned to be 'twenty-something's' with medium income, whose lifestyles require a reliable, stylish watch. As it appears, some of the audiences of this advertisement are in their teens, still students, who do not have any stable income. However, the advertisers would consider them a potential target market. This is because, according to existing research (see Boush et al., 1994; Fry, 1995), contemporary teenagers obtain large sums of money from their parents, and are not afraid to pester their parents for expensive trinkets. A quality, sexy and stylish watch would satisfy a need for the readers of "19" magazine, i.e., the target audience.

Beautiful, sexy, stylish and successful in their relationships (as appears from analysing a few copies of “19”), they are persuaded that they need an Ellesse Watch, *the* watch, which itself can be described as being sexy, stylish and technically successful, i.e., a quality watch, to emphasise their image. However, if the readers are only aspiring to belong to the group of beautiful, sexy, stylish and successful individuals, i.e., quality people, they would need this watch as a passport, which will give them admission into this group. Therefore, the reader of this advertisement is positioned by the advertisement as someone, who needs or desires an Ellesse Watch.

## Tommy Hilfiger<sup>14</sup>



### Background

Tommy Hilfiger identified his company in one sentence: "My style is sophisticated, to a certain extent athletic, worldly, and it reflects an ethnic mix, but is also right on the edge"

([www.nimbus.ocis.temple.edu](http://www.nimbus.ocis.temple.edu)).

Hilfiger's company promotes their products as stylishly sporty and comfortable and, at the same time, traditional and very American. Hilfiger's logo is always large and prominent and is widely recognised around the world, and Hilfiger's clothing is worn by a vast number of people - rock stars and presidents alike ([www.nimbus.ocis.temple.edu](http://www.nimbus.ocis.temple.edu)).

Tommy Hilfiger's clothing is a mixture of sportswear and tailored clothing, which helps it to appeal to both the classic and the fashion consumer. Moreover, Hilfiger have built their identity by sponsoring various events, and by running powerful avant-garde marketing campaigns, worth millions of dollars.

### Analysis

The picture is an iconic sign denoting a man and a helicopter, standing in the middle of a field. The man is wearing a sweater and a coat, and holding a bag in his left hand. There is the copy text (a syntagm of linguistic signs), 'Tommy Hilfiger', and a graphic sign, the Tommy Hilfiger logo. The linguistic and graphic signs in the picture make it clear that this advertisement is for a Tommy Hilfiger product (or products). Since Tommy Hilfiger's company is renowned for making clothes and accessories, it may be assumed that the products advertised are the bag, the coat, the sweater and the glasses, which the man in the picture is wearing.

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<sup>14</sup> Used in the questionnaire.

The man is outdoors, on his feet, solitary. He stands upright; his chin is confidently lifted up, his lips pursed in a self-confident smile. Thus, his pose and facial expression are signs, which connote self-confidence and self-reliance. According to Fowles (1996), advertisements of this genre often exploit cultural concepts of maleness. “Younger audience members, particularly adolescents”, claims Fowles (1996:215), “demand that the media transmit highly sculpted instances of masculinity and femininity”. Fowles argues that advertisements of this genre excel at the representation of masculinity in the hope that its readers “may partake deeply of the stereotype” (Fowles, 1996:223), and make a correlation between it and the product.

According to Leiss (1997:255), in advertisements of this genre “people stand for products and the connection between them is so complete, that they become interchangeable”.

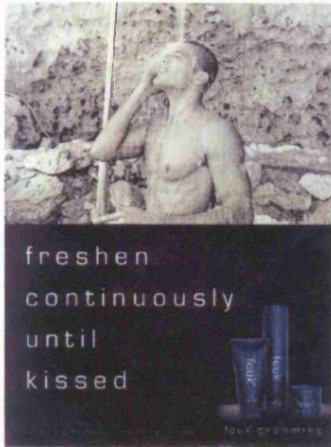
The man has well-balanced facial features, healthy skin and well-groomed hair. In our culture these signs connote attractiveness and sexiness. In the light of this connotation, a correlation is being made between the clothes and accessories, and the brand. The former must be viewed not as any common clothes and accessories - but as Tommy Hilfiger’s clothes and accessories, which an attractive, sexy man would wear. Hence, one mythical meaning of the Tommy Hilfiger advertisement is detected here - handsome and sexy men wear Tommy Hilfiger’s clothes and accessories.

To decode this advertisement more fully, we need to examine the connections, which exist between the man and the helicopter. The man in the picture stands alone in the field with a helicopter behind him. One might assume that the helicopter belongs to him, that he has just arrived and is in the process of leaving the field. The helicopter, therefore, is a signifier. According to Solomon (1988:65), advertisers often insert an expensive piece of equipment into their advertisements as a ‘conventional status symbol’. Thus, as a conventional status symbol, the helicopter signifies wealth and prosperity. In the light of this signification, another correlation is being made between the clothes and accessories and the brand. The former are not just any common clothes and accessories - they are Tommy Hilfiger’s clothes and accessories, which a wealthy and prosperous man would wear. Therefore, another mythical meaning of the Tommy Hilfiger advertisement is detected here - wealthy and prosperous men wear Tommy Hilfiger’s clothes and accessories.

### **Tommy Hilfiger's readers**

This advertisement was placed in the March 1999 issue of FHM magazine. The reader of this advertisement is positioned by it as someone, who needs or desires to buy Tommy Hilfiger's clothes and accessories. The readers, who appear to belong, or desire to belong, to the group of handsome, sexy, wealthy and prosperous men, are encouraged to buy Tommy Hilfiger's clothes and accessories to emphasise their membership of this particular social circle. According to Williamson (1978:48), "you do not choose in the shop, but in response to the advertisement, by 'recognising' yourself as the kind of person who *will* use a specific brand". The readers, who do not belong to this group, but aspire to be included, are encouraged to desire to buy Tommy Hilfiger's clothes and accessories in the hope that they will be admitted to this desirable group. According to Myers (1986), Dyer (1982) and Solomon (1988), advertisements of this genre are designed to appeal to people's pivotal desires for status and wealth.

## French Connection UK Hygiene<sup>15</sup>



### Background

Six years ago French Connection UK, the company which owns the Nicole Farhi brand, decided to abbreviate its full name to 'fcuk'. This abbreviation attracted criticism from the Advertising Standards Authority, as it believed that the viewer will not necessarily associate this abbreviation with the name of the brand but instead will see the misspelling of an expletive (Jones, 2000). However, FCUK dismissed the criticism, and went ahead with this avant-garde style campaign, which, according to Jones (2000), was designed to make the most of its 'fcuk' label and it proved a success. Instantly, the company's profits soared. BBC News on-line (5.07.2000) quoted an 84% sales increase in the first half of the year 2000. Stephen Mark, FCUK's executive director, said that this success has to be directly attributed to the 'fcuk' advertising campaign. This campaign has proved to be highly controversial. It was termed 'obnoxious' by a British High Court judge and the Advertising Standards Authority said that they "considered the advertisement was likely to cause serious or widespread offence, and that it was irresponsible and brought advertising into disrepute" (quoted in [www.yahoo.com/news](http://www.yahoo.com/news), 7.04.2001). As part of this campaign, FCUK also sponsored boxer Lennox Lewis, who was seen in his last heavyweight bout wearing the 'fcuk' logo on his shorts.

### Analysis

There are linguistic signs and iconic signs present in this advertisement. The man in the shower, the shower, the water, and the rocky wall, the grooming products in the lower right corner are all iconic signs. Linguistic signs are represented by the copy text, placed in the lower part of the picture and in the lower right corner.

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<sup>15</sup> Used in the focus groups.



'Freshen Continuously Until Kissed' is the copy text, placed in the lower part of the picture, using the font and lower case lettering typical of all 'fcuk' advertising, and with each word beginning with the letters of the brand name. The use of white text on a black background makes the text stand out clearly, and the horizontal alignment draws the reader's attention to the initial letters of each word. Thus, the copy text is made the most prominent item in the frame, and fulfils the function of being both a linguistic and an iconic sign, presenting the logo intertwined with a verbal message, which conveys the essence of the product. Thus, the link is established between the image and the product.

Above, the top half of a naked man is seen, standing underneath a shower, with a rocky background. This is an outdoor scene, printed in monochrome. The man is of athletic build, clean-shaven and with short hair. These are all signs, belonging to our familiar cultural codes. The man's body connotes physical fitness, harmony, and health. The presence of the rocks adds certain ruggedness to the scene, which, together with the athletic build of the main subject, signifies strength and manliness. The water, spilling down from above the frame, impacts upon his forehead and splashes off to cover his body. The water connotes coolness and freshness. The man is being freshened continuously by this water, and hence, this iconic sign is linked to the linguistic sign of the copy text.

A graphic representation of the products advertised is presented in the bottom right hand corner, each clearly displaying its 'fcuk' brand name with the copy text 'fcuk grooming' underneath. The primary purpose of the products is conveyed by this text, together with the use of the word 'freshen' in the other text. The word 'grooming' is a rather soft, smooth sounding word, and emphasises that these products are smooth and sleek and can impart the same characteristics to the user. The man's hand is placed on the side of his head, as if he is just about to rub it over his head in a grooming fashion. Thus, the linguistic and iconic signs are once again linked and reinforce each other.

The user of these products will, therefore, firstly be refreshed and secondly, will emerge groomed, which is where the second part of the main copy text comes into play. Namely, 'until kissed'. There is a definite sexual connotation here - the suggestion is that these 'fcuk' products can make one more appealing to the opposite sex by improving appearance and making one smell fresh, and could even earn one a kiss. This advertisement belongs to the type of advertisements which, according to Williamson (1987:38), "generate a



connection between a product and a second ‘product’, love, happiness etc., which it will buy”. Thus, the product has a hidden motive - that of increasing sex appeal. The man in the picture, with his naked athletic body, could certainly be considered quite sexy and could be an image, which the reader would desire.

Therefore, this advertisement presents, through the iconic sign of the man, all the functions of the product, i.e., freshening and grooming, but adds additional elements of masculinity and sexiness to enhance the appeal through the linguistic signs. According to Williamson (1978:85), “once deciphered, the language, instead being a system of signs, has become a sign complete in itself, which can then be exchanged with different forms of signs, i.e., pictorial ones”.

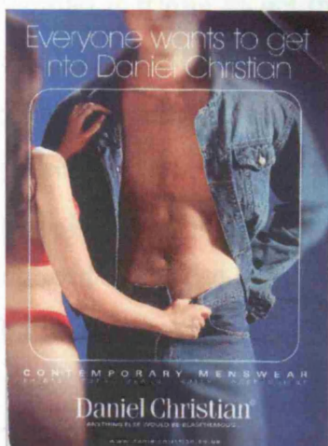
In terms of categorisation, defined by Leiss (1997), advertisements of this genre are a variation of the “personalised” format. The presence of the man lends a personal quality, as he is present in order to represent the product, and the viewers are invited to imagine themselves in his position.

As with all French Connection UK advertisements, there is always the presence of the somewhat risqué ‘fcuk’ logo, which has the obvious potential of being misread as an expletive.

### **FCUK Hygiene’s readers**

This advertisement was taken from the September 2000 issue of FHM, and hence, many of the characteristics of these readers have already been presented (ref. this chapter, “Hilfiger Athletics”). This advertisement fits in very well with the deduced desires of those readers, which are that of macho men, who wish to acquire a sexy image in order to be popular with the opposite sex.

## Daniel Christian<sup>16</sup>



### Background

On its home page ([www.danielchristian.co.uk](http://www.danielchristian.co.uk)) Daniel Christian calls itself an 'energetic' and 'ballsy' contemporary menswear label.

The Daniel Christian brand is portrayed as outrageous and wicked and, at the same time, exciting and individual.

### Analysis

According to Fowles (1996:174), "the market for jeans is a hotly competitive one, with new firms entering and exiting annually. Under these conditions, it will not do simply to display the garment; each manufacturer has to try hard to link its brand with a created set of meanings".

The large figure of the male, in the centre of the advertisement, is balanced by the smaller figure of the female, only half of which is visible. These are iconic signs. There are also linguistic signs in the upper part of the picture and in the lower part of the picture. The luminous blue colour is also a symbolic sign, which, like in the case of the Ellesse Watch advertisement, contributes to a strong moodiness in this advertisement.

The pun "Everyone wants to get into Daniel Christian" refers on one level to the product - Daniel Christian jeans and on another level possibly, to the man - who could be called Daniel Christian. According to Myers (1994:65), this type of a pun is the basic advertising pun – "the string of letters refers both to the name of the product and to a word with its own everyday meaning". Daniel Christian can stand for first name and a surname, and also for Christian, indicating a religious orientation, which makes it somewhat wicked.

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<sup>16</sup> Used in the focus groups.

The man is portrayed standing there passively, with his hands behind his back, while the woman is trying to get into his jeans. The woman, who is dressed very provocatively in a red bikini and projects a somewhat wicked image, is turned away from the viewer, but faces the man, one of her hands is on his shoulder, pulling on his already unbuttoned jacket, and another is undoing his jeans. The man's jacket is unbuttoned, revealing his well-formed body. Williamson (1978), when discussing advertisements of a similar genre, noticed that these types of advertisements frequently establish a sexual connotation, which backs up the whole idea of 'getting into jeans'.

The man's and the woman's sun-tanned, half-naked, well-formed bodies and postures connote an aura of leisure, sexual pleasure, and self-indulgence. Thus, the world of leisure and sexual pleasure is the world around the product, which the product signifies.

In terms of categorisation, defined by Leiss (1997:259), this is the kind of advertisement, which fits in the "the lifestyle format", "providing a direct vision of a consumption style". The product (jeans) is placed within a consumption style (relaxing, pleasurable, and sexual), eventually coming to represent this style.

At the bottom of the advertisement is another pun, which can also operate as a slogan: 'Daniel Christian. Anything else would be blasphemous.' As discussed above, this pun is referring both to the name of the product and to a religious orientation. The literal meaning of blasphemy is to show disrespect or contempt for God. By using this phrase, the advertisers are suggesting that, were any other clothing to use the word 'Christian' in their title, then this would be an insult to God. However, because Daniel Christian's quality and style are so good, or divine even, no affront would occur here.

### **Daniel Christian's readers**

This advertisement was placed in the August 2000 issue of FHM magazine. The intended consumers were men in their late teens and early-mid twenties, mostly unmarried and working. However, as it was discussed above, male adolescents also come into the range of the intended consumers, being regular readers of FHM.

For its intended readers, this advertisement supports the successful lifestyles of luxury, leisure and sexual pleasure. As discussed in Chapter 2, in the section “Analysis of advertising”, advertisers often exploit sex as a means of attracting consumer’s attention. This advertisement emphasises male and female sexuality, presenting conventional gender roles a little reversed. Here, it is the woman and not the man, who initiates a sexual relationship. On one hand, it may be that this scenario is sometimes present in the unconscious sexual fantasies (ref. Freud, 1915) of the modern man. On the other hand, the contemporary world is too complicated to be conventional - males do not always dominate, females are not always waiting to be dominated (ref. Fowles, 1996).

My hypothesis is that the perfect reader for this advertisement would be a man, interested in a sexual relationship with a female, who is sensual, sexually attractive and emotionally strong, capable of dominating and being dominated at the same time. This sort of a man would seek to project a somewhat unconventional and perhaps slightly wicked image.

Thus, the reader is promised that Daniel Christian jeans would present him with his desired image, and also, the lifestyle and relationships of the man in the picture. Beyond that, the reader is reminded that the quality of the product is divine.

## Wonderbra<sup>17</sup>



### Background

'The Wonderbra' was designed and patented in the sixties by a leading Canadian lingerie company Canadelle ([www.wonderbra.co.uk](http://www.wonderbra.co.uk)). According to its home page, "it was so called, because, through intricate engineering and over fifty two vital components, it created a fabulous cleavage where nature had neglected to do so".

Wonderbra's famous advertising campaign 'Hello Boys', featuring Eva Herzigova, changed women's attitudes towards lingerie, making them realise that underwear could be as fashionable as outwear. "Women loved the Wonderbra spirit of confidence, glamour and fun" ([www.wonderbra.co.uk](http://www.wonderbra.co.uk)).

### Analysis

This advertisement presents its case simply, and even goes so far as to present the operating instructions as part of the image. The reader is presented with an attractive model wearing the product, accompanied by a series of operating instructions, which demonstrate what benefits the product can bring the user.

According to Myers (1994:123), "the term *metaphor* comes from the Greek for *carry over*". Thus, the copy text in the top left corner - "I pull the strings" - can operate both as metaphor and fact. The product is operated by pulling the strings which, in turn, gives the reader complete control. This control also allows her to 'pull the strings' in the manipulative sense. This linguistic sign is directly linked to the product through a series of images, which demonstrate the strings being pulled. Moreover, there is a suggestion that the control does not simply stop at obtaining the desired cleavage, but could also extend to

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<sup>17</sup> Used in the focus groups.

controlling members of the opposite sex. The reader is invited to take control and is directly referenced in the text: “Pull the strings...see the effect...you want”.

Calling it “the one and only Wonderbra” conveys the uniqueness of the product. Thus, there is a linguistic sign suggesting that only this product can give the reader what they need. The text adjacent to this, which informs the reader that the product is new and offers ‘variable cleavage’, is presented in such a way, as to represent cleavage itself. Note the use of a capital ‘W’ in ‘new’ - the letter W forms a similar shape to a woman’s breasts - and also, the emphasised ‘V’ in the word ‘cleavage’ – the letter V forms a similar shape to cleavage. Thus, the linguistic signs, as in the FCUK hygiene advertisement, operate additionally in a graphic sense.

The advertisement communicates its primary message very clearly, visibly demonstrating what the product “can do for you”. However, the final aim of having such cleavage must be to attract members of the opposite sex. Hence, the proffering of Wonderbra wearers as ‘pullers of strings’ demonstrates that the product can impart to the user a certain level of control. Woodward et al. (1996) claim that advertisers often promise that the product advertised will, in one way or another, empower its buyer. Thus, Wonderbra is offered to the reader as a means of obtaining some sort of dominating power.

Although this advertisement is primarily intended for women, it could have an equal appeal to men, and give them the opportunity to see the effect that they want to see in their partners.

This advertisement operates like a mirror, presenting the image of a glamorous woman, with perfect cleavage, created by the use of the Wonderbra. Readers can imagine themselves in the position of the model, and can see themselves in the ‘mirror,’ giving a possible representation of how they would be, if they were to wear the Wonderbra. Williamson (1978:62), when discussing advertisements of a similar genre, states: “What the advertisement clearly does, is thus to signify, to represent to us the object of desire. Since that object is the self...”

## **Wonderbra's readers**

This advertisement was placed in the September 2000 issue of Bliss magazine. The questionnaire study showed Bliss to be the most popular girls' magazine, gaining 72% of female readership.

The Bliss readership is similar to that of Sugar and "19", i.e., full of style and fashion conscious teenagers, who are concerned with their appeal to the opposite sex. The Wonderbra is generally aimed at females with smaller breasts, who desire a more prominent cleavage. Placing of this advertisement in magazines, which are read by teenage girls, was meant to attract the attention not only of girls with smaller breasts, but also those, whose breasts are still developing. Thus, the target market is enlarged.

## Maybelline Mascara<sup>18</sup>

### Background

In the 1960s, Maybelline introduced its first mass-market mascara Ultra Lash, which was waterproof mascara in a tube dispenser. It was then that Maybelline introduced its famous slogan: 'Maybe she's born with it. Maybe it's Maybelline'. According to its home page, this slogan expressed the belief that "the natural beauty inherent in all women should be enhanced, not masked" ([www.maybelline.co.uk](http://www.maybelline.co.uk)). In the nineties, Maybelline New York was introduced into the UK market. The name Maybelline New York was chosen to "to reflect the spirit of brand's urban and trendy home town" ([www.maybelline.co.uk](http://www.maybelline.co.uk)).

Maybelline's home page describes the company's image as modern, dynamic, fast moving, fashionable and hip. These are qualities, which "are actively embodied by the brand's famous spokes-models - Sarah Michelle Gellar and Christy Turlington" ([www.maybelline.co.uk](http://www.maybelline.co.uk)).

### Transcription of the advertisement:

Dialogue	Actions
(VO – Voice over) (SMG – Sarah Michelle Gellar)	
SMG: Love the mascara...love the look but I'd hate stiff and brittle lashes... Well, get a feel of this....	Walks past hedge brushing it with her arm.
VO: New full and soft mascara from Maybelline.	Display of product packaging.
SMG: It's more of those lashes we	SMG face close-up.

<sup>18</sup> TV advertisement used in focus groups.



love...unbelievably soft.	Eyelashes being brushed with a finger.
VO: Maybelline's exclusive soft-wax formula keeps lashes soft, not dried out and brittle.	Now being brushed with Maybelline mascara.
SMG: It's like I've got a thousand lashes; all outrageously full and soft.	SMG walking past camera.
VO: New full and soft mascara from Maybelline.	Product images.
Sing.: Maybe she's born with it.... Maybe it's Maybelline.	SMG receiving soft Labrador puppy from a man.

## Analysis

Here juxtaposition is made between Sarah Michelle Gellar, the young woman who applies Maybelline to her lashes and the product - Maybelline. Maybelline is associated with Sarah Michelle. Williamson (1978:25), discussing a Chanel No. 5 advertisement, commented that "what Catherine Deneuve's face means to us in the world of the magazines and films, Chanel No. 5 seeks to mean and comes to mean in the world of consumer goods". Thus, applying this statement to Maybelline advertisement, what Sarah Michelle Gellar means to adolescents in the world of their magazines and films, Maybelline seeks to mean and comes to mean in the world of consumer goods. Gellar is a twenty-something popular teenage celebrity, best known from "Buffy the Vampire Slayer", in which her character is a high school girl, aged about sixteen. She is young and attractive and has soft facial features. The way she speaks, talks, and looks all suggest softness. There is even a soft, cuddly puppy, which is presented to her, to stand for softness. Thus, Sarah Michelle signifies the softness of youth, feminine beauty, sexuality and glamour and, at the same time, modern dynamism and fashionability. The product then acts as a substitute for her, also signifying youth, soft feminine beauty and glamour. This advertisement, in its entirety,

carries a strong emphasis on attractiveness. As already discussed (ref. Chapter 4, the section “Role of advertising and advertising images in influencing adolescents’ attitude formation”), the cultural norms in our culture dictate the importance of being physically attractive. This is especially true for young teenage girls. Sarah Michelle stresses how important it is for her (or for her lashes) to look attractive: “Love the mascara...love the look, but I’d hate stiff and brittle lashes...”. The emphasis is, therefore, on the role that the product plays in self-improvement - Maybelline is the answer to her plea, bringing an instant result: “It’s like I’ve got a thousand lashes; all outrageously full and soft”.

Another emphasis is on naturalness. According to Williamson (1978),

“...The importance of ‘the natural’ increases directly in proportion as society’s distance from nature is increased, through technological development. ...Nature and culture are thus completely elided, and this elision necessarily “removes” the complex and contradictory area of their interaction”. (Williamson, 1978:124)

The advertisement implies that Sarah’s lashes, with Maybelline applied, look as natural, as her own lashes, but much better: “It’s more of those lashes we love...unbelievably soft”. Here Maybelline is described as “full” and “soft” and the lashes, after application, as “outrageously full and soft”. The contrast between the “dried out and brittle lashes” and “unbelievably soft” lashes, gives latter the status of the ‘natural’ lashes, which one can be born with: “Maybe she’s born with it... Maybe it’s Maybelline”. Maybelline, therefore, is denoted as a ‘natural’ mascara, which functions like nature, or even better than nature, giving one “more of those lashes”, more than was provided by nature.

### **Maybelline’s audience**

This advertisement ran on commercial television in October 2000 during the intervals of the terrestrial television programme *Friends*, named as one of the favourite television programmes by the respondents (ref. Chapter 5 “Methodology”, the section “Focus group”). It was recorded off the air in late afternoon/early evening. According to Young (1990), during these periods the child audience is larger than the adult audience.

The intended audience of this advertisement is teenage girls and young women in their early twenties, for whom personal attractiveness is important, and who are concerned about their health and appearance (see Chapter 4, the section “Role of advertising and advertising images in influencing adolescents’ attitude formation”). According to Harriott (2000:6), young girls tend to go out a lot and “use make-up and fragrances as part of their overall grooming routine”. Therefore, an ordinary teenage girl is very interested in the new make-up look and is an avid purchaser of make-up. Harriott (2000) claims that 90% out of a total of 430, 217 of their readers, use make-up and, between them, spend a third of their money on toiletries and cosmetics.

The focus groups results showed that celebrities are also one of the main interests that female respondents have. According to one female respondent (F37), “...celebrities are like a good role model in people’s lives, if you see them using it then, ok, she used it, I’ll go and buy it now”.

Therefore, this advertising is probably doubly attractive to the intended audience. The advertiser invites the viewer to occupy Sarah Michelle’s space and see her own lashes transformed into lashes “all outrageously full and soft” and amazingly natural. Thus, the viewer is persuaded that she also hates stiff and brittle lashes, and therefore, she has to get a feel of Maybelline.

## Juice Up<sup>19</sup>

### Background

Juice Up is a soft drink, produced by one of Britvic's soft drinks brands, Robinsons. Britvic, which also owns such brands as Tango and Pepsi, is part of the global Bass Group, and is a highly successful company, with a turnover of almost £550 million pounds.

Juice Up's label contains following information: "Juice Up is a new range of delicious and nutritious juice drinks. A smooth blend, containing real fruit juices and dairy goodness, with calcium and vitamins B, C, & D". Juice Up contains Water, Fruit Juices (17%), Skimmed Milk (8%), Flavourings, Citric Acid, Stabiliser (Pectin), Calcium Chloride, Lactic Acid, Preservatives (Potassium Sorbate, E242), Sweetener (Aspartame), Vitamins, Colour (Carotenes).

### Transcription of the advertisement:

Monologue	Action
My dad doesn't seem to have any time for me now his new girlfriend's moved in.	Teenage guy sitting, in a relaxed pose, on chair with Juice Up bottle in hand.
We used to watch the football and that... She's all right, I suppose and she makes dad happy.	Camera flicks from full scene, to close up of Juice up bottle throughout advert.
She buys me things and stuff.	The reversed brand name "Up Juice!" appears in the right hand corner.
Every time I want something, I'll go...ooh, I like that; and it'll turn up in the end. And I think I've got everything I ever wanted.	

<sup>19</sup> TV advert used in focus groups.

But if she's gonna buy me...then it's gonna cost her.	
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## Analysis

The caption of this advertisement is “Up Juice”. According to Williamson (1978:84), “ads can use language closer to or further from our own, to produce different effects – we decipher a certain meaning from the style of the language used, the way in which it is written”.

The young boy, featured in the advertisement, is an ordinary teenager - possibly a schoolboy - with an ordinary appearance. He chats about his life, whilst playing with a drink, which turns out to be a bottle of Juice Up. His language is very colloquial and his subject is a very common subject of concern among teenagers - his parents, or to be precise - his father and his father's girlfriend. The Juice Up bottle is not mentioned in the monologue, however, it is constantly present in the boy's hands throughout the advertisement. Here, by featuring a teenager and employing colloquial language, the advertisers are linking an ordinary teenager's life to the drink.

“Juice Up”, which is the brand name, is transformed into “Up Juice!” at the end of the advertisement. It was possibly intended to stand for a confidently arrogant, or even obscene, exclamation, which may be employed in an everyday discourse among teenagers. According to Fowles (1996), advertisements of this genre do not depend on a straightforward message, but on a playful scenario from an ordinary teenager's life. It appears not to be designed to look like an advertisement, but more like an interesting documentary on teenagers' lives.

The setting, being so informal and easy-going, is designed to encourage the viewer to occupy the boy's place. Juice Up is shown to be with the boy, when he has troubles and concerns. However, the advertisement finishes on an optimistic note, when the boy self-assuredly states: “But if she's gonna buy me...then it's gonna cost her!” The advertisement

ends with the drink and the reversed brand name 'Up Juice!' in the right hand corner, emphasising the optimistic nature of the drink, which acts as a confidence-booster and a problem-solver. The viewer, therefore, is invited to imagine how Juice Up will give him/her the confidence, so much needed in his/her teenage life, and will help him/her to 'take it easy' and 'juice-up his life'. The product, therefore, becomes interchangeable with a feeling. According to Williamson (1978:38), "when two things are made interchangeable and hence equal in value, they may be used as currency for one another".

### **Juice Up's audience**

This advertisement is intended for young people in their teens. Like Maybelline, this advertisement ran in October 2000 during the intervals of satellite Sports programmes, named as favourite by the respondents (ref. Chapter 7, the section "Questionnaire findings"). It was on late afternoon/early evening, when teenagers were watching, after returning from school/college.

According to Harriott (2000), teenage years are often traumatic, and, as their bodies change, they are faced with different life choices. As they experience constant change, they feel vulnerable and tend to lack confidence. They have many problems and urgently need solutions (how to look cool and feel great, how to fight spots, how to be popular with their friends, how to get on with their parents, or their parents' girlfriends/boyfriends). They are often defiant and are desperately trying to assert themselves among their friends.

Juice Up, therefore, is designed to stand for a kind of 'reassurance' drink, the one over which these problems can be discussed and solutions found. The drink, therefore, offers to teenagers a welcome respite from all their troubles and concerns, for it appears to bring reassurance and pleasure, and help them to assert themselves. The viewer may, momentarily, occupy the boy's place; certainly, the composition invites this act of the imagination (the boy is sitting on the chair talking to somebody invisible, who might be his counsellor). As his story draws to a close, it looks like he will be leaving his chair soon. Any teenager, who wants to find a solution to his/her problems, of course, may occupy the empty chair.

## French Connection UK Fashion<sup>20</sup>

### Transcription of the advertisement:

Dialogue	Action
Boy: Red Girl: Green	Frumpy Caroline's Unexpected Kerfuffle Enters door into party.
Fancy Cakes Unlimited Kitchen	Bumps into Fred, drops contents of bag. Sees newspaper on floor with headline "Famous Cat Unearths Killer".
Fool Completely Useless Kipper	Caroline removes hat & they recognise each other. Fred holds up her knickers.
Fred Caroline Unusual Keks	Holds up book, clock, an object & plays kazoo.
Fiction Clock Utensil Kazoo	Holds flippers, toy submarine & toy kangaroo.
Flippers Crikey U-boat Klumpy	
Fantastic Coincidence Us Kinky	
Fairy Costume Underneath Kit	Caroline removes coat to reveal fairy costume – flies away.
F C U Kiss	They kiss.

<sup>20</sup> TV advert used in focus groups.

## Analysis

This advertisement is very carefully composed. The girl Caroline and the boy Fred are the main characters in this advert-play. Even if the viewers know that their story is fiction, they might choose to believe that it is a real-life possibility - Caroline and Fred bump into one another, recognise each other and, eventually, fall in love. Their conversation, though meaningless, is tinged with humour, and may emphasise the ordinariness of everyday teenage-life, being highly unusual all the while. The language of this advertisement is also highly colloquial, of the kind that teenagers use.

What is most important, however, is the use of language. 'Frumpy Caroline's Unexpected Kerfuffle' – are the first four words in this advertisement, which can easily be abbreviated into FCUK. The other eight lines follow, each of them consisting of four words, starting from the letters F, C, U, K. Thus, the advertisement uses the abbreviation FCUK throughout, constantly reminding its viewers of the brand name, so that, eventually, it would imprint itself on their minds.

Brand name, product (the clothes that the boy and the girl are wearing), sensuality, femaleness and back to brand – these are meant to constitute a circle of signification (ref. Fowles, 1996). What might the viewers see in this advertisement? The story is very romantic and, at the same time, unusual. The girl and the boy are young, beautiful and well built. They meet in a very strange place, among strange people and their conversation is built around an unusual subject – the contents of Caroline's bag. However, the conversation is only a pretext for a romantic kiss at the end of the advertisement. They kiss when Caroline's reveals her true magical persona, by removing her coat to reveal a fairy costume, and then flying away. Thus, the viewers may connect the brand with a fairy-tale romance, something of a Cinderella-type: an ordinary girl Caroline magically transformed into a fairy, finding her love. Moreover, the brand also might be connected with the playful teenage style of life – two young and attractive models, the language, the style of humour, and even the contents of the bag, indicate it.

This advertisement makes the most of the 'fcuk' label – a logo, as already mentioned, guaranteed to elicit a double take and give a shock.



## **FCUK's audience**

The perfect viewer for this advertisement is a teenager – male or female. As discussed before, the latest fashion is the biggest interest of young females. However, as proved by the results of the questionnaire, boys can also be keen fashion followers.

Teenagers of both sexes wish to be popular with the opposite sex; therefore, romance is very important for them. Moreover, they always like to have fun, no matter what they are doing. According to Thau (1996), contemporary teenagers want advertisements to be short, sharp and fun, and they do not want them to be patronising. This advertisement is short and sharp, it provides fun, it speaks in colloquial, teenage-language, and therefore, is not patronising; and it is romantic. Thus, it was designed to be well liked by the teenage audience.

The French Connection brand, therefore, is designed to stand for fun and romance, offering teenagers a chance to escape to a pleasant fantasy world, where every girl and every boy can enjoy themselves, have fun and find love. The viewers may momentarily occupy the boy's or the girl's place, re-living their experiences.

## **Chapter 7 Findings of my study**

### **Questionnaire analysis**

Analysis of the data collected by the questionnaire survey is presented here in three sections, assessing, initially, the levels of media exposure to which the respondents are subjected. This utilises their own reported information on how often they either read magazines or watch television. I then move on to investigate their reported responses to the advertising contained in such media followed by an assessment of any trends, using Chi-squared tests, which may be present between the exposure to advertising and desires to purchase, in order to construct a profile of the respondents and, hence, assess their behaviour.

The questionnaire sample size consisted of one hundred and fifty one respondents. The gender split between male and female was approximately equal with seventy-four males and seventy-seven females. These figures represented 49% and 51%, respectively, of the total number. To respect the respondents' anonymity, I have replaced any names with a numerical code. Thus, a male respondent was coded as Mn and a female respondent as Fn. At the beginning of this study, each questionnaire was coded and a unique number (n) allocated to it. This also facilitated the task of identifying the respondents, who later participated in focus group interviews.

Data from the questionnaires is presented in a tabular form and gives the number of responses received for a particular category. Separate figures are given for male and female respondents with the 'Total' column representing the sum for each row. Totals are not given for the columns except where the total number of responses was not equal to the number of participants, i.e. 74, 77 and 151 respectively for male, female and all. The figures in brackets give the responses expressed as a percentage of either the number of male, female or total respondents.

Chi-squared tests were employed, where appropriate, in order to assess the independence of the two categories under consideration. The significance values presented are to be assessed against a 5% ( $p = .05$ ) confidence level, above which the categories are to be considered independent from each other, e.g. males are equally likely to answer yes or no

to a particular question. The significance testing has also been used to provide information on any gender-related dependencies.

As discussed in Chapter 5 “Methodologies”, the questions were designed to examine the respondents’ interest in advertising in magazines and television, and their attitudes and behaviour as consumers. Their participation in the consumption process is investigated by asking Q.7 and Q.14, which inquired if they had used money-off coupons from magazines, and whether they had ever purchased a product on the basis of an advertisement. I felt that it is important to find out, if there are any other factors that influence respondents’ consumer attitude and behaviour, by asking questions Q.16 and Q.17, which investigated their fashion and brand consciousness. Q.18 was designed to gauge their critical understanding of the advertisements presented to them. In addition, a measure of their exposure to the advertising medium is investigated via questions on frequency of magazine reading/purchasing and television viewing.

In performing analysis on the results from the questionnaire, the testing of the hypothesis will not necessarily require the use of all the data acquired. An investigation of trends within certain result sets and the correlation between the answers to different questions will be used to provide a foundation, upon which, conclusions about the hypotheses can be drawn. With the aid of some statistical analysis, it will be possible to determine levels of inter-dependency, which may exist between the responses obtained. Sub-division of responses by gender is also used, to assess any gender differences, which may arise.

The questionnaire data will be used for the purposes of creating a quantitative profile of the target group. This profile will include their levels of exposure to the various media, their attitude to the advertising contained therein and, finally, whether they considered themselves sufficiently influenced as to have purchased a product.

## Media Exposure

Exposure has been tested through a number of questions relating to magazine reading/purchase, television viewing and the use of discount coupons. The assumption is made here that there is a correspondence between advertising exposure and exposure to these media. Naturally, there will be cases where this does not apply, for example, television viewing of a non-commercial station. However, it is considered that, in the case of television, a proportion of viewing time will, on average, be dedicated to commercial television and, hence, carry a corresponding exposure to advertising via this medium.

The results, presented in Table 7.1, are the responses to questions 2 and 3 in the questionnaire, giving information about the respondent's magazine reading and buying habits.

Table 7.1 Frequency of reading/buying magazines

	Reading			Buying		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Every day	10(14)	4(5)	14(9)	-	-	-
More than once a week	11(15)	11(14)	22(15)	4(5)	1(1)	5(3)
Once a week	18(24)	24(31)	42(28)	8(11)	9(12)	17(11)
Twice a month	4(5)	20(26)	24(16)	11(15)	21(27)	32(21)
Once a month	13(18)	8(10)	21(14)	23(31)	27(35)	50(33)
Less than once a month	11(15)	8(10)	19(13)	15(20)	12(16)	27(18)
Never	4(5)	0	4(3)	9(12)	5(6)	14(9)
Other	3(4)	2(3)	5(3)	4(5)	2(3)	6(4)
$\chi^2$	19.9			7.4		
Significance	0.005			0.29		

These results indicate that magazine reading is generally popular amongst the respondents, with less than 10% either not reading at all or specifying the 'Other' response. Once per week is the most popular frequency at which magazines are read and once per month is most popular for purchase. Since many of the most popular magazines are released monthly this result is not surprising.

These results do support some of the claims made by Fry (1995:1), namely that, "Magazines remain a primary kid's medium - particularly at the high end of the age range"

and that monthly magazines are more popular among adolescents than weekly ones. Neither of the sexes dominates with respect to magazine reading/purchase; however, there are some differences at certain frequencies. This is highlighted, somewhat, by the Chi-squared analysis, which shows that magazine reading is dependent upon gender (significance  $< .05$ ) whereas magazine purchase is not. A deeper investigation of the drivers for the reading significance show that this association arises almost totally as a result of the bias in the 'Twice a month' figures. Therefore, it is possible that this low significance, for reading magazines, is anomalous and that the results for buying magazines are a truer reflection of reality, i.e. gender does not have an impact on frequency of magazine reading

To complement the frequency of reading information, respondents were asked to provide information on the type of magazines, which they read. Although the results from this question are not listed here (see Appendix, p.321), it was evident that magazine consumption amongst adolescents is heavily gendered. The magazines, most favoured by females, in order, are Bliss, Sugar and Just 17, each of which was read by more than 50% of the female readership. The leading male magazine - FHM – was read by just over one third of male participants. It is evident from the female responses that many of them read at least two or more magazines. The male responses are, however, more polarised, with FHM being the clear leader as far as an individual title is concerned. The general content of FHM is similar to the most popular female magazines, i.e., feature based articles on health, style and sex (for a detailed analysis of the magazines see Chapter 6 "Semiotic study of advertisements", "Hilfiger Athletics"). From this data it is evident that male participants also favour magazines of a specialist type, such as sport and computer games. Such a trait, however, is not reflected in the reading habits of females. This could be partly due to the fact that, "boys like things, while girls like emotions" (Fry, 1995:2).

Taking television as representing a similar vehicle as magazines for conveying advertising, a similar range of questions ensue and will provide information, which can support that obtained for magazines.

Respondents were initially questioned on their access to satellite or cable television. As this is an almost exclusively commercial medium, it is considered that such access will increase the potential for advertising exposure amongst the participants. 62% of

respondents did say that they had access to satellite or cable television. As with magazine adverts, the frequency/quantity of television viewing is seen as being a measure of overall exposure to advertising via this medium. This data is presented in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Frequency of television viewing

Hours per week	Male	Female	Total
20+	17(23)	18(23)	35(23)
10-20	35(47)	46(60)	81(54)
5-10	18(24)	12(16)	30(20)
<5	2(3)	1(1)	3(2)
Never	0	0	0
Other	2(3)	0	2(1)
$\chi^2$	5		
Significance	0.29		

Mangleburg (1999) argues that the extent to which adolescents watch television is related positively to their experience of advertising and, accordingly, of the marketplace. According to the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Committee on Consumer Policy report, television has very considerable powers of persuasion.

“It has the potential to bring into the home programmes, which give pleasure, enjoyment and intellectual involvement. From an advertiser’s viewpoint, television can place a salesman in every home in the knowledge that the commercial message will reach a captive audience of a magnitude incapable of being reached by any other advertising device.” (OECD, 1982:10)

From data presented in Table 7.2 it appears that the majority of respondents watch between 10 and 20 hours per week. This represents between approximately 12.5% and 25% of their free time (free time is time spent away from school, where the respondent is neither sleeping or eating, and usually amounts to approximately 70 hours per week). Also, the significance value of 0.29 ( $> 0.05$  confidence) showed that gender did not have an impact on the number of hours spent watching television.

25% is not, perhaps, as large a proportion of their time as might be expected. However, as Fry (1995) argues, television’s attraction for adolescents is less easy to define than

magazine attraction, because unlike younger children they control their own viewing habits, without being monitored by anyone else. Therefore, these results should be approached with some degree of caution, as it is very difficult to ensure that participants' reports are truthful, and not designed to suit what they think the researcher would want to hear from them.

To provide background information on the viewing habits of the respondents, they were asked to list their favourite/most watched television programmes for both terrestrial and cable/satellite television. These results are given in the appendix, however, a discussion ensues below.

From the results we see that for terrestrial television, soap operas, such as *Eastenders*, *Neighbours* and *Home and Away*, sitcoms, such as *Friends*, and cartoons, such as *Simpsons* and *South Park*, figure most prominently in the respondents' choices of programmes. The soap operas, which are intended for family viewing, are significantly more popular amongst female respondents. The themes, which are featured in these soap operas, such as romance, relationships and family issues, are also prevalent in the popular teenage girls' magazines. Male respondents, on the other hand, favoured sport and motoring programmes. The values of 'laddism', present in those programmes, which were significantly more popular amongst male respondents than females, correspond to the same values present in the popular male magazines, such as *FHM*. These results demonstrate another interesting detail - male respondents use both satellite and terrestrial television to watch sport and motoring programmes, whilst female respondents use both of these media to watch soaps and sitcoms.

Although the respondents were not limited to specifying programmes from commercial television alone, because it was felt that this would unduly restrict their freedom of choice, their responses indicate that a significant number of the programmes they watch appear on commercial television.

According to Ward et al. (1972:4), the most frequently watched advertisements take place during adolescents' favourite programmes. In Britain, only commercial television channels can show advertisements, with the ITV channels being the most popular amongst children and adolescents (Fry, 1995).

Although participants watch programmes, which are generally targeted at adults, children's programmes are also quite popular (one-quarter of both male and female respondents watch children's programmes). Hence, this does not fully support Fry's (1995) argument that, MTV aside, adolescents prefer to watch entertainment programmes intended for adults.

From this data it appears that both male and female respondents tend to be attracted by musical and documentary television programmes.

For satellite and cable television viewing we see a similar picture to terrestrial, with a few variations. One particular variation is the presence of MTV, the music television channel, which is only available via satellite or cable. This channel proves the most popular amongst respondents and, therefore, provides evidence for Dougherty (1994) and Fry (1995), who argue that MTV is the most popular programme among adolescents. A number of the programmes, which participants watch on satellite and cable television are repeats of those that they watch on terrestrial television. In this case, these respondents will receive additional exposure to advertisements.

Unlike the results for terrestrial television, which provided some evidence for gendered viewing, the responses for this satellite/cable television do not carry such marked differences between male and female viewing habits. However, it is not possible to explain such differences from the data obtained.



## Media Attitudes

The respondents' attentiveness towards advertising can be seen as a general indicator of their attitude towards it. Hence, for both magazine and television advertising, respondents were asked if they paid any attention towards adverts.

For these questions the available response categories were Yes, Sometimes or No. The results for magazine adverts are reported in the table below and show that, on the whole, a positive attitude is taken towards adverts in magazines. Whilst the majority of respondents did not commit, preferring to select the 'Sometimes' category, almost 30% overall, did positively report attentiveness to adverts.

Table 7.3 Attentiveness to magazine adverts

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	23(31)	18(23)	41(27)
Sometimes	44(59)	54(70)	98(65)
No	7(9)	5(6)	12(8)
$\chi^2$	1.94		
Significance	0.38		

Less than 10% of respondents registered no attentiveness towards magazine adverts, which does go towards supporting Fry's (1995) argument, that adolescents display great interest in magazine advertising and also that of Moschis (1978a), who concluded that adolescents gather information about consumer products from newspapers and magazines. A broadly equal split was obtained between the genders, which is supported by the significance being greater than 0.05, showing that attentiveness is independent of gender.

To further assess respondents' opinions, with regard to magazine adverts, they were asked to provide information on the types of advert, which they may be interested in. This information is presented in the table below.

Table 7.4 Types of magazine adverts of interest

	Male	Female	Total
Cosmetic and Hygiene	4(6)	53(74)	57(41)
Clothes	30(45)	57(79)	87(63)
Footwear	27(40)	46(64)	73(53)
Computer Games	50(75)	11(15)	61(44)
Cars	25(37)	6(8)	31(22)
Food and Drink	12(18)	23(32)	35(25)
Sport accessories	5(7)	1(1)	6(4)
Gadgets	1(1)	1(1)	2(1)
CDs/Video	1(1)	2(3)	3(2)
Total responses	155	200	355
No. of participants	67	72	139
$\chi^2$	94		
Significance	< 0.001		

This data shows that clothes advertisements attracted the most responses. However, these are mostly from female respondents. Footwear advertisements feature in second place overall. Yet, like in the case of clothes advertisements, these overall results are not evenly distributed between the genders, with females showing more interest than males. The significance test, with a result less than 0.05, revealed a very high dependency between gender and the types of advert of interest.

Within the genders, computer games and clothing advertisements appealed the most to male respondents. Similarly, cosmetic and hygiene advertisements received interest from a very high percentage of female participants, in contrast to a very low percentage of male respondents. This could be interpreted as a natural consequence of participants' magazine reading practices, as discussed in relation to Q4.

As with magazines, respondents were queried on their attentiveness towards television advertising, the results for which are given in Table 7.5. The majority of respondents (91%) expressed a positive or at least a passing interest, which was in line with those responses obtained for magazines. Unlike magazine advert attentiveness, however, all negative responses were elicited from male respondents. Overall, though, the results show

that there is not a significant 'anti-advertisement' culture within the target group and that the adverts are received favourably.

Table 7.5 Paying attention to TV adverts

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	20(27)	27(35)	47(31)
Sometimes	41(55)	50(65)	91(60)
No	13(18)	-	13(9)
$\chi^2$	14.9		
Significance	< 0.001		

In this instance, though, the significance result is quite different to that obtained for magazine advert attentiveness, with a significance considerably less than 0.05 indicating a strong link between gender and attentiveness. However, I believe that this is due to the fact that none of the female respondents answered 'No', which has a large effect on increasing Chi-squared. It is possible, therefore, that this can be classed as an anomaly especially in the light of the results in Table 7.3.

To complement the information, gathered for magazine adverts, respondents were asked to provide details of the types of television advert, which were of interest to them. These results are presented below.

The results from Q.6, concerning types of magazine advertising of interest, are generally confirmed by this data, which is shown in Table 7.6. For example, clothing advertisements are the most popular in both cases with a broadly similar gender split. As in the case with magazine advertising, more female than male respondents preferred advertisements for food and drink and cosmetics and hygiene. On the other hand, male respondents had a preference for car advertisements. Therefore, as discussed earlier, gender affinities are prominent among participants.

Table 7.6 Types of television advert of interest

Category	Male	Female	Total
Cosmetic and Hygiene	6(10)	48(65)	54(39)
Clothes	32(51)	64(86)	96(70)
Footwear	22(35)	46(62)	68(50)
Computer Games	51(81)	21(28)	72(53)
Cars	24(38)	13(18)	37(27)
Food and Drink	21(33)	34(46)	55(40)
General Games	1(2)	0	1(1)
Sport accessories	2(3)	2(3)	4(3)
CDs/Video	3(5)	3(4)	6(4)
Telephones	0	2(3)	2(1)
Total Responses	162	233	395
No. of Participants	63	74	37
$\chi^2$	63		
Significance	< 0.001		

These results also provide evidence that adolescents are interested in the same type of advertisements in both magazines and on television. Significance testing (< 0.05) leads to the same conclusion as for magazine adverts, i.e. a high dependency between advert type and gender.

As with magazine advertising, specific target audiences are achieved by consideration of their viewing habits and, once again, these habits are highly gendered. The argument of Ward et al. (1972) that types of commercials vary with the type of programme is valid in this instance.

### Media responses

It can be considered that purchasing a product is a reflection of the participants' response to media messages and influences. For the purposes of the questionnaire, two questions have been used to test this response.

Respondents were asked, in question 14, to indicate if they had purchased a product as a result of having seen an advertisement, and answered in accordance with Table 7.7. The response, which I am trying to obtain with this question, is whether the respondents'

consider themselves to have been sufficiently influenced by an advert so as to make a purchase.

Table 7.7 Advert related product purchase

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	51(69)	60(78)	111(74)
No	23(31)	17(22)	40(26)
$\chi^2$	1.57		
Significance	0.21		

According to Liebert (1982:97), “the ultimate test of commercials is in the arena of purchasing”. Therefore, as this data shows, the majority of respondents did consider that advertising had played a role in their purchase of a product. The factors, which may have influenced the respondents reported advert-related purchases, will be investigated later, by considering the interaction between advertising exposure and interest reported by the respondents.

With respect to gender, the significance value, being greater than the 0.05 confidence limit, does indicate that there is no link between gender and purchase of a product on the basis of an advert. Hence, we conclude that both males and females are equally likely to answer ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ to this question.

This question was followed, for those who responded positively, by a question on the influencing factors, which motivated them into purchasing the product. This information was considered important, in order to ascertain the respondents’ perceived reason for the purchase and is reported in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8 Influences on purchasing

	Male	Female	Total
Liked product	39(80)	47(78)	86(79)
Liked brand	12(24)	16(27)	28(26)
Liked ad quality	7(14)	14(23)	21(19)
Peer pressure	16(33)	18(30)	34(31)
Parents advised	2(4)	1(2)	3(3)
Needed product	2(4)	1(2)	3(3)
Special offer	0	2(3)	2(2)
No. of responses	78	99	177
No. of respondents	49	60	109
$\chi^2$	4.0		
Significance	0.68		

Multiple responses were, in some cases, received from each respondent; hence the number of respondents participating has been used as the basis for calculating the percentages. Chi-squared analysis showed the influence on purchase to be independent of gender. (i.e., the significance value being greater than the 0.05 confidence limit indicates that there is no link between gender and influences on purchasing)

According to Fowles (1996), Moschis et al. (1984) and Boush et al. (1994), consumers do not rely solely on advertising to make their purchasing decisions but are influenced by a number of factors, namely, family, friends, brand, price and affinity. Considering the role of the advert in this instance, it appears that its primary function has been to present the product and any corresponding information. The actual quality of the advert was reported as an influencing factor, indicating that slick and high-quality presentation does have some value amongst the respondents.

The second most important factor to be recorded is peer pressure. Respondents claimed that they frequently followed their peers' advice and/or conformed to their expectations as to what purchase to make.

In addition to testing advert-related product purchase, the use of money-off coupons was investigated, shown in Table 7.9, as being representative of a positive interaction between the participants and the advert/product.

Table 7.9 Usage of money-off coupons

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	29(39)	50(65)	79(52)
No	45(61)	27(35)	72(48)
$\chi^2$	10.0		
Significance	0.002		

These results show that there is a roughly equal split between the respondents, overall, for the response to this question. This provides some evidence for Fry (1995), who argued that more than half of young people regularly use money-off coupons from magazines to make a purchase. After examining the gender split, it becomes evident that female participants were almost twice as likely to use a money-off coupon than males. This is reflected in the low significance value obtained, which highlights the fact that females are more likely to say 'Yes' and males 'No'. The type of magazine that the participants read is likely to play a significant role. For example, male participants favoured FHM, which is an adult magazine, and hence, any money-off coupon appearing in this magazine is less likely to be used by a teenager. On the other hand, females purchase and read magazines specifically targeted for their age, and hence, the goods advertised there, are the goods that they are likely to use regularly. If they liked a product advertised they may use a money-off coupon to purchase it.

## Trend analysis

Having presented and considered the responses to individual questions, I shall now move to investigating patterns and trends, which may exist between the responses to different questions. The purpose of this assessment is to establish a link between exposure, attitude and product purchase. Once again, I shall use Chi-squared significance tests to assess the level of dependency between the different variables.

As discussed previously, although viewing of adverts directly was not tested, the quantity of media consumption, either magazine or television, will be considered as an appropriate measure. By considering this correspondence between this measure and reported advert-driven purchase we can establish if a relationship exists, and use the Chi-squared test to assess whether purchase is dependent on contact with media.

Table 7.10 provides a cross-tabulation between the results obtained for magazine reading frequency and advert related product purchase. The figures given represent the numbers of responses obtained for each particular correspondence and, in common with all tables in this section, have been split into male, female and all respondents.

Table 7.10 Crosstabulation of Advert Related Product Purchase to Magazine Reading

Advert-driven Purchase→	All			Male			Female		
↓Reading Frequency	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Every day	10	4	14	6	4	10	4		4
More than once a week	15	6	21	7	3	10	8	3	11
Once a week	31	10	41	11	6	17	20	4	24
Twice a month	15	5	20	1	1	2	14	4	18
Once a month	16	5	21	11	2	13	5	3	8
Less than once a month	13	5	18	8	2	10	5	3	8
Other	5		5	3		3	2		2
Never	6	5	11	4	5	9	2		2
Total	111	40	151	51	23	74	60	17	77
$\chi^2$	2.8			5.9			4.6		
Significance	0.9			0.56			0.86		



Using a standard confidence level of 0.05, it is clear that the significance values for magazines are well in excess of this, hence, the statistical test supports the absence of a link between advert-driven purchase and exposure to magazines. Given the small number of responses in some categories, certain expected frequencies fell below a figure which was considered acceptable for Chi-squared analysis. In order to counter this, the reading frequency categories were further grouped into high, medium and low (i.e.  $\geq$  Once per week, Once or twice a month and the remainder). Although doing this increased the expected frequencies to an acceptable level, it had little effect on the overall results, hence this has not been reflected in the table. This provides an indication that these results should be treated with some caution.

Similarly, television viewing was compared against advert related product purchase and the data presented in Table 7.11. The presentation format is the same as Table 7.10.

Table 7.11 Crosstabulation of Advert Related Product Purchase to Television Viewing

Advert-driven Purchase→	All			Male			Female		
↓TV Viewing	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
> 20pw	26	9	35	11	6	17	15	3	18
10-20 pw	60	21	81	25	10	35	35	11	46
5-10 pw	21	9	30	12	6	18	9	3	12
< 5pw	3	-	3	2	-	2	1	-	1
Never	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	1	1	2	1	1	2	-	-	-
Total	111	40	151	51	23	74	60	17	77
$\chi^2$	1.07			0.90			0.52		
Significance	0.9			0.92			0.91		

The results for television viewing concur with those for magazines. Therefore, it is not possible, from the data obtained, to prove the fact that greater exposure to advertising media increases the likelihood that a purchase will be made on the basis of having seen an advert.

As reported earlier, the respondents were queried on their general level of interest towards adverts displayed in magazines and on television. The majority of the respondents adopted

the middle ground with regard to attentiveness, but with an overall bias towards the positive. Therefore, we can investigate the hypothesis that attentiveness to advertising does influence the likelihood of an advert-related purchase being made. Attentiveness was investigated for both magazine and television advertising and both sets of results are reported below in Table 7.12 and Table 7.13

Table 7.12 Crosstabulation of Product Purchase to Magazine Advert Attentiveness

Advert-driven Purchase→	All			Male			Female		
↓Attentiveness	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	36	5	41	21	2	23	15	3	18
Sometimes	71	27	98	28	16	44	43	11	54
No	4	8	12	2	5	7	2	3	5
Total	111	40	151	51	23	74	60	17	77
$\chi^2$	14.3			11.3			4.6		
Significance	< 0.001			0.004			0.10		

The results indicate that, overall, product purchase is influenced by advert attentiveness. However, there appears to be a discrepancy for the female respondents with a high significance, suggesting that, for females, purchase is independent of attentiveness. Again, this suggests that some caution should be exercised in the interpretation of these results.

Table 7.13 Crosstabulation of Product Purchase to Television Advert Attentiveness

Advert-driven Purchase→	All			Male			Female		
↓Attentiveness	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	39	8	47	15	5	20	24	3	27
Sometimes	66	25	91	30	11	41	36	14	50
No	6	7	13	6	7	13	-	-	-
Total	111	40	151	51	23	74	60	17	77
$\chi^2$	7.2			3.8			2.9		
Significance	0.03			0.15			0.09		

The corresponding results for television viewing show a similar pattern overall, with the the low significance indicating a dependency. However, the inter-sex values do indicate a measure of independence (significance>0.05). The previous analysis of the television

advert attentiveness did indicate that there was a potential anomaly in the significance values for female respondents.

Finally, we assess how the respondents' use of a money-off coupon, correlates with them having reported making an advert-inspired purchase. This information is presented in Table 7.14. A low significance should be likely here, as there should be a perceived link between using a money-off coupon - which essentially are a form of advertising - and the idea that one has purchased a product under the influence of an advert.

Table 7.14 Crosstabulation of Advert Related Product purchase to Coupon Usage

Product Purchase→	All			Male			Female		
↓Coupon Usage	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	65	14	79	22	7	29	43	7	50
No	46	26	72	29	16	45	17	10	27
Total	111	40	151	51	23	74	60	17	77
$\chi^2$	6.5			1.07			5.4		
Significance	0.001			0.3			0.02		

Indeed, the test for independence gives significance below the 0.05 threshold for the whole target group and, therefore a link is evident. Similarly for the female respondents, a 0.02 significance shows that there is a relationship between product purchase and coupon usage. However, the results for the male respondents show their responses to be independent, suggesting that they did not necessarily perceive the use of a money-off coupon as representing an advert related purchase.

## Conclusions

The media exposure of the respondents was initially assessed and provided strong evidence that participants, both male and female, are both regular readers of magazines and avid television viewers, with more than half watching between 10 and 20 hours per week.

As far as magazines are concerned, it is worth noting that the reported frequencies, at which the magazines are read, do appear to be somewhat biased by the frequency at which they are issued. Therefore, frequency of reading should not necessarily be taken as an indicator of how interested the respondents are in magazines. For example, the popular male magazine, FHM, is only issued monthly and, therefore, as seen, results are biased in favour of the monthly reading option.

There is another factor, which may well influence the frequency of magazine purchase, and that is cost. Given that it is unlikely that a weekly magazine is going to be only a quarter of the price of a monthly one, the cost of purchasing on a weekly basis is likely to be high. Even though it is a well-known fact that teenagers do have a relatively high disposable income (see Boush et al., 1994), there are many items drawing upon it. This is reflected in the fact that a higher proportion of participants read magazines, rather than purchase them. Although, overall, only a small percentage admit to not purchasing magazines at all.

The titles and genres of magazines both read and purchased by the respondents demonstrate that the most popular type of magazine amongst the respondents is the lifestyle type of magazine. In other words, broad subject-based magazines, which cover fashion, health, style, gadgets, relationships and sex. The latter subject seems of particular interest to adolescent males, who chose FHM as their most popular magazine. As discussed in Chapter 6 “Semiotic study...”, this magazine, whilst discussing all things ‘laddish’, puts particular emphasis on things of a sexual nature as this is supposedly foremost in the minds of the young adult male audience, at which the magazine is primarily aimed. As early as the 1960s it was observed by Alderson (1968) that teenage boys displayed great interest in expensive sex magazines for adults, which were of a pornographic nature. However, what would have been considered pornographic in the 1960s, when such an observation was made, nowadays seems to be accepted as a norm in

the mainstream magazine market, and magazines containing such material are no longer transferred to the 'top shelf'.

The evidence that male participants did not indicate any interest in any magazines aimed at their age group may be explained by the fact that, as far as I am aware, there are no magazines currently in circulation, which are aimed specifically at the teenage-male market. Hence, the male respondents have simply turned to a genre of magazines aimed at an older age group. On the other hand, female respondents have several magazines aimed at their age range, such as Bliss, Sugar and Just 17, and tend to remain loyal to them.

Moreover, male respondents displayed some interest in serious, hobby-orientated or specialist magazines, e.g., computer games magazines and sport magazines. This interest was hardly taken up by female respondents. McRobbie (2000) argues that although adolescent girls have a greater affinity to reading, their general interests are narrower than those of boys. She also implies that whilst girls in general have not many interests aside from fashion, beauty, celebrities and romance, boys display a great variety of outside interests and hobbies. The findings of this research provide some evidence for her argument.

This research provides evidence that the majority of both male and female respondents have equal opportunities to access satellite or cable television in addition to terrestrial television. Having access to satellite or cable television means that the respondents are frequently exposed to additional sources of advertising. These commercial channels generally carry a greater proportion of advertisements than those, present on terrestrial television. Those participants, who watch these channels, named MTV as the most popular channel. As already discussed, this channel is very much advertising-oriented, holding adolescents as its most important target market (ref. Benady, 1994; Fry, 1995; Jhally, 1987).

Significance testing on the frequency of magazine reading/purchase and gender did show a dependency for reading (signif. =0.005), however, this was considered slightly anomalous given the result for magazine purchase (signif. =0.29), which showed independence. The results for the latter were a somewhat more consistent and believable and did not contain

any sharply biased results. Hence, it is concluded that there is no gender impact on the frequency of magazine reading or purchase.

All participants said they watch terrestrial television. The majority of them could be classified as medium viewers, watching, on average, two hours per night. Nearly a quarter, however, did admit to watching more than twenty hours per week. Male respondents, generally, tended to watch slightly less than females. This could be due to the fact that male respondents spent more time playing computer games, as the high proportion of males taking an interest in this type of magazine would suggest (ref. Q.4). Despite these observations, the results of the Chi-squared test, with a significance figure of 0.28, did show that there was no dependency on gender and that the figures were in line with the expected frequencies, as determined from the marginals.

These results provide some evidence that although participants claimed to be only medium viewers (ref. Q.11), they also admitted to watching a wide range of programmes available to them. This could have two possible explanations: either respondents watch somewhat more television than they admitted (as discussed in Q.11), or their viewing patterns are based on selective preference.

Most of the programmes which participants reported as watching were soap operas, sports, cartoons, children and teenagers programmes - data is reported in the appendix, p.321. By inspection it can be seen that, female respondents tend to watch soap operas and male respondents - sports programmes (for a detailed discussion of gendered viewing see Chapter 3 "Theories of communication as related to young people").

The findings of this research show that occasionally or on a regular basis, participants do pay attention to advertisements in magazines. Only a small proportion of the respondents stated that they never pay attention to advertisements in magazines, with the majority stating that they sometimes pay attention. Given their marketplace knowledge, displayed in Q.16 and Q.17, however, it is likely that they pay attention to the advertisements somewhat more frequently than they admitted. On the other hand, it would be quite difficult to ignore all the advertisements placed in these publications, because tactical placement of advertisements means that the most appropriate advertisements usually appear in the

correct place, and hence, are specifically directed towards the readers of a particular magazine, thus guaranteeing to attract more interest.

Participants also admitted to paying attention to television advertisements (Q.12), though less so than to advertisements in magazines. Female respondents tended to admit to this more often than males did. These results are contrary to the results of Q.5, which suggested an almost even gender distribution. This may be due to the fact that female respondents tended to watch more television than male respondents, and consequently, had a greater exposure to advertising (ref. Q.10, Q.11).

Significance testing, for both magazine and television advert attentiveness supported the observations made above. The even gender split, for magazines, was attributed a significance of 0.38, demonstrating that neither gender showed a strong bias towards any particular response. However, this was not the case for those paying attention to television adverts, for which there was a very low significance caused by the lack of negative responses by the females. Some reasons for this were offered above, but it is possible that this result is somewhat anomalous.

Respondent's interest in advertising was further tested by asking about the particular types of advert of interest. In general, it was noted that they demonstrated an active interest by recalling numerous details from different advertisements and this can be seen as evidence that participants possess sound knowledge of the marketplace. From the pre-determined list of advert types provided in questions 6 and 13, the fact that only a few participants indicated all the categories of advertisements, may be interpreted as meaning that they are selective as to what advertisements to watch, having a predetermined range of brands (ref. Q.16 and Q.17), or product types, whose advertisements they take an interest in.

Taking into consideration the nature of the responses, what begins to emerge here is that the majority of participants tend to abide by rigid gender conventions. This is supported by the Chi-squared significance tests performed, which indicated that there was a strong dependency between advert type and gender for both magazine and television advertisements. The Chi-squared value was mostly influenced by biased responses to Cosmetic and Hygiene and Computer Games adverts.

Therefore, it appears that participants responded to advertisements, which appealed to their particular gender, e.g., females have a liking for cosmetics, food and clothes, and males for computer games and car advertisements. This is quite fascinating, given the current state of affairs in the contemporary world: there are more and more opportunities given to women to receive a good education and to develop their careers and consequently, there is the appearance of more and more women in employment, responsible for high-powered jobs. However, according to Bilton et al. (1996:223), although "...there is the appearance of new themes – including issues of gender equality...on the four terrestrial channels of British television, only 30% of speaking roles were taken by women; the more 'serious' the programme, the fewer women there were ". Therefore, Bilton et al. (1996) imply that treating women as 'the second sex' is still present today. This makes current Winship's (1987) argument on genders stereotyping. Based on the results of this study I would support these arguments. I would also argue that so-called 'gender' advertisements, i.e., those in which young people are targeted according to their gender, are very prominent nowadays.

Although participants argued that advertising is not the most important factor of influence - which was an affinity to the product advertised - one third of them admitted to having been influenced by it directly. Moreover, more than half of the respondents admitted to having used a money-off coupon from a magazine to purchase a product/products, which were advertised there (Q.7). The use of money-off coupons demonstrates a particular level of interest in the product, as a certain amount of effort is required to use them. Significance testing showed there to be a dependency between advert-driven product purchase and money-off coupon usage.

In general, a greater proportion of female participants admitted to have bought a product on the basis of advertising. This may be due to their greater interest in advertising in general, as is clear from their responses to Q.5 and Q.12. Gender did not prove to be an influencing factor in the response to either the question on advert-related product purchase or the factors influencing purchasing decisions.

Therefore, the findings of this research provide strong evidence that participants do pay attention to advertising and display a great interest in the products presented in magazine and television advertising, which manifests itself in consequential purchase. This is



supported by the significance values of  $<0.001$  and  $0.03$  for the correlation between advert related product purchase and attentiveness to magazine and television adverts respectively, for the whole target group.

There are four main factors that influence participants to go out and buy a product on the basis of an advertisement: affinity to the product, peer pressure, affinity to the brand and advertising (Q.15). An affinity to the product is the major contributing factor to the respondents being influenced by the advertisements – 79% of the respondents said that they would consider purchasing a product advertised if they liked that product. This appears to be logical, as people normally would not be expected to buy things which they disliked. 19% of the respondents claimed that on occasion, advertising itself had influenced their purchasing decisions. Likewise, O'Donohoe (1997) found that there was a sense of vulnerability in many young people's comments when talking about advertising, suggesting that they were not always able to defend themselves from the pervasiveness of advertising. However, it is possible those participants were unclear as to how liking the advertisement relates to liking the product and that the two are perhaps closely intertwined.

The findings of this research provide some evidence for the arguments of Moschis et al. (1986), Fowles (1996) and Ault (1983) that peer pressure is one of the most important factors influencing adolescent's purchasing decisions. According to participants, one third of them frequently conformed to their peers' expectations when it came to making a purchasing decision.

Another factor was brand loyalty – 26% respondents said that they had to like the brand to buy it. This is reflected in their responses to Q.16 and Q.17. The reported contents of their wardrobes demonstrate that image is very important for participants. Most of the well-known and fashionable brands were covered in this survey and even brands, which one would perhaps consider to be out of reach, in terms of expense, were reported to reside in participants' wardrobes. In general, participants viewed brand names and designer clothes as highly desirable. As discussed earlier (ref. Q.16), participants seemed to associate the concept of 'brand' with the idea of 'quality'. It may be due to their cultural knowledge, e.g., in our society it is generally assumed that the higher the price the better the quality. This is not always the case of course, but the prejudice, which connects the quality and the

price, exists, and therefore, should be taken into consideration while analysing the responses.

These findings provide evidence that participants place high importance on the projection of a correct image. As discussed in the section “Adolescents and fashion” (see Chapter 4), they are doing it mostly through their clothing. According to some respondents, there are brands, which they ‘wouldn’t be caught dead in’. Some respondents characterised such brands as Hilfiger and Kappa as brands only for ‘townies’, i.e., less affluent urban population. On a similar note, Elliott (1997) claims that in post-modernity, consumers may use brands and products to ‘maintain and communicate identity and social meanings’ (p.285). It is clear that in this instance respondents are trying to do just that - communicate their social identity by carefully trying to disentangle themselves from the so-called ‘townies’.

In attempting to establish connections between the respondent’s answers to different questions, exposure to media was initially considered and its relation to advert related product purchase. The evidence, from the high significance values obtained (minimum 56%), indicates that for the target group and both media types, there was no apparent relation between these two categories. Hence, from the data available we conclude that those respondents who were subjected to greater media exposure were no more likely to have made a purchase on the basis of an advertisement than those subjected to less exposure. It is claimed by Elliott (1997) that, in post-modernity ‘consumers no longer consume products for their material utilities’ (Elliott, p.286). This is maintained by O’Donohoe (1997), who goes on to state that paying attention to ads does not necessarily induce the purchase of a product owing to the fact that the experiences, which one gains, are indistinguishable from those obtained from mass media in general. Hence, ads offered ‘a range of rewards which had little to do with brand or product choice’ (p.250). Therefore, it is not surprising that respondents who had greater exposure were no more likely to have made a purchase.

On the other hand, however, the comparison of advert attentiveness and product purchase demonstrated a more positive relationship, albeit with some discrepancies between the sexes - the possible anomalies were addressed previously. Attentiveness to both magazine and television adverts, for the whole target group; show a level of dependency, with

significance values below 0.05. Individual sex significance values did, however, tend to suggest that there was no particular bias on the basis of gender - a result which was mostly concluded from the assessment of the individual questions.

A final assessment was made between the use of a money-off coupon and product purchase. Again, the significance test demonstrated a positive relationship for the whole target group (0.001), but this was not carried through into the individual gender group assessments for the male participants (0.3) for whom the two categories proved to be independent.

### **Limitations**

I feel that it is important to acknowledge that the data discussed above resulted from responses to quite direct, and potentially leading, questions in the context of a questionnaire. Therefore, although a wide range of advertising and media areas were covered, the responses do not necessarily provide us with evidence about the way that adolescents interact with marketplace, media and advertising outside of this context.

Furthermore, there were a number of discrepancies between the overall significance values and those for individual sexes, which is probably attributable to the small numbers of responses obtained against certain categories.

## Participants' analysis of questionnaire advertisements

"The product, which initially has no 'meaning', must be given value by a person or object which already has a value to us, i.e. already means something. Therefore at this stage something about the product is being signified and the correlating thing or person is the signifier." (Williamson, 1978)

In this subsection of the questionnaire respondents were asked to undertake analysis of four magazine advertisements: Sunny Delight, Hilfiger Athletics, Ellesse Watch, Tommy Hilfiger<sup>21</sup>. These advertisements and the magazines, in which they appeared, are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 "Semiotic study of advertisements".

Participants were presented with six questions for each of the advertisements. My aim was to establish whether or not they were 'literate' in advertising (ref. Buckingham, 1993a), i.e., whether or not they were able to decode an advertisement independently. Participants, therefore, were invited to speculate about the advertisers' intentions and motives, the messages they sent across, and their target audiences. They were also encouraged to judge advertisements without restriction, giving their spontaneous opinions on whether they liked or disliked them, and discuss whether or not they appealed to them. The questions were devised to encourage the respondents to place themselves in the position of the advertisers and hypothesise what choices they made while constructing the advertisements, and why they made those choices. The last question within each advertisement – 'when you look at the picture, what images come to your mind immediately?' - was designed in line with my first hypothesis, which assumes that adolescents possess sophisticated abilities as readers and decoders of the advertising messages.

Tabulated data for the responses to questions on advert familiarity, appeal and desire to purchase, is presented for male, female and all respondents. The table gives the number of responses obtained in each category, which is also expressed as a percentage, in brackets, of the number of males, females or total responding. The number of respondents participating in each question is given at the bottom of each table as the N value. It should be noted that not all the questions in this section were answered by every respondent.

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<sup>21</sup> For larger photographic representations of these advertisements see Appendices, p.362

In addition to this tabulated data, cross-tabulations are presented, in the conclusion for each advert. The purpose of these is to assess any dependency between the three questions posed on familiarity, appeal and purchase. Hence, cross-tabulations are made between familiarity and appeal, appeal and purchase and, finally, familiarity and purchase. The values presented are significance values resulting from a Chi-squared analysis and are subdivided by gender. As before, values over the 0.05 confidence level will be taken as indicating that the two categories are independent and that a positive answer to one does not imply a positive answer to the other.

### Q.18.1 Sunny Delight



#### Analysis

##### Q.18.1.1 Are you familiar with this advertisement?

This question was designed to be a closed question, requiring simple Yes/No answers.

Table 7.15 Familiarity with Sunny Delight advert

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	81%	86%	83%
No	19%	14%	17%
N Value (% total)	74(100%)	76(99%)	150(99%)

The majority of respondents said they were familiar with this advertisement. This may be due to fact that this advertisement was placed in Sugar, one of the favourite magazines amongst female respondents (ref. Q.4). This does not, however, explain widespread males' knowledge of it, as, according to the results of Q.4, none of the males were reading this magazine. One possible explanation may be that this advertisement had also run on television, and according to some of the comments, participants were well aware of it. It is possible, therefore, that television and magazine advertising campaigns are closely intertwined in the perception of participants, thus causing them to report familiarity not with this particular advertisement, but a similar one for the same product.

#### Q.18.2.2 Does this advertisement appeal to you?

Although this question was posed in an open format, prior to coding, answers were analysed to check for a positive or negative response, and grouped accordingly in the table below.

Table 7.16 Appeal of Sunny Delight advert

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	38%	45%	41%
No	62%	55%	59%
N Value (% total)	74(100%)	76(99%)	150(99%)

From this data it appears that this advertisement did not appeal to the majority of the respondents. Here, familiarity and appeal had an inverse relationship, i.e., although the majority of participants said that they were familiar with this advertisement, more than half of them stated that this advertisement did not appeal to them.

They justified their views by arguing that this advertisement was boring, unrealistic, of poor quality and not informative enough. They were critical of this advertisement also because they perceived it as being too juvenile, and felt that it patronised them:

F21: No, I don't like the way it was done. Too babyish. The way the people say things, what they say is annoying' [reference to Sunny Delight television adverts]<sup>22</sup>.

M6: It does not really appeal to me because it does not tell you much about the product.

F31: Not really, because it does not say anything about Sunny D.

M102: No, because everyone in it looks like twats with no individuality.

F59: No, not really, because it does not really advertise the product, it just has a little label in the corner.

M20: No, not really, as children on bikes have nothing to do with the product.

F15: No - too much of the same shades of colour. Boring product. The flying fridge - what is that all about!

F14: No, because Sunny D has got nothing to do with bikes.

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<sup>22</sup> [...] Indicates a comment/clarification by the author.

- M113: No, seeing a person riding a bike and an open fridge is not really likely to make me buy a drink!
- M4: No, because it comes on all the time. Also, it does not give a child's point of view, i.e., 'The great stuff kids go for' - I do not!
- F49: No, because it is a tacky advertisement. Looks as if it's for kids. But does look refreshing - the orange and all that.
- F124: No - the advert is too babyish.
- F45: Not really - it appeals to younger kids, looks a bit childish.

Thus, for these respondents the image in this advertisement provoked resistance. This advertisement has clearly failed to persuade them. There was a general consensus among the respondents that this advertisement was treating them 'like kids'. Although the respondents are still, strictly speaking, classified as children, they do not perceive themselves so and are affronted by anything that might treat them in this fashion.

Some respondents felt that there was insufficient information present in the advertisement. As seen in later analysis, respondents considered that an important function of advertising is providing information. In other words, it appears that participants were seeking hard facts about products, to enable them to formulate their own opinions.

Many participants disliked the drink and, consequently, disliked the advertisement. For them the product and the advertisement were closely interconnected, i.e., they could not enjoy this advertisement, if they did not like Sunny Delight. As is evident from the comments, cited below, the responses were based on knowledge of the product rather than the advertisement:

- M117: No, as I have heard from friends that it is disgusting.
- M25: No, it tastes bad, and is more expensive than the superior regular orange juice delivered by milkman.
- M94: No, it tastes sick and the kids on it are too fake.
- F120: No, because I have tried Sunny D and do not like it.
- M75: No, because I have already tried and I hate it.
- F35: No, because I think Sunny Delight tastes horrible and this advert is cheesy.



Some were critical of the fact that this advertisement made attempts to deceive them, claiming that Sunny Delight was a healthy product when it was not (this point will be dealt with more fully later on). The comments, cited below, show that not only was their nutritional knowledge not influenced by the claims of this advertisement, but they forcefully rejected the message sent by this advertisement that drinking Sunny Delight would make them healthy:

- M18: No, because I don't like the drink much anyway, and all the guys in the ad have cheesy grins and act like the product makes them healthy, whereas its actually filled with sugar and additives.
- M16: No, because they said on one programme that Sunny D has only 10% orange juice and all the rest is rubbish, and they do this to make it taste good.
- F22: No, it does not. Because it makes the product look cheap and tacky. It is concentrating on how it would make you feel, rather than the taste or what goodness is inside it - vitamins, minerals, etc.
- M133: It does not appeal to me, because I know how many 'E' numbers there is in it.

Less than half of respondents admitted that this advertisement appeals to them. This is expressed by their emphasising its various qualities. They argued that this advertisement was bright, colourful, and had young, fit, happy and beautiful people in it. This provides further evidence for Reed (1994), Thau (1996) and Tapscott (1996), who suggested that these are the qualities of advertisements, which are most appreciated by adolescents. There is also evidence of activity and vitality in the advertisement, which translated into energy for the respondents and, as pointed out by respondent F98, becomes associated with the product. Many of the respondents, quoted below, appreciated this advertisement's depiction of unconventionality:

- M17: Yes, because they have bright colours and say how nice and healthy it is.
- M1: It appeals because there is colour, excitement almost.
- M19: Yes. Looks refreshing, invigorating. Appealing colours.
- F53: It is jazzy and bright.
- M88: Yes it does, because it is very over the top.
- F98: Yes it does, because it makes me think that Sunny Delight will refresh you and give you energy.
- F100: Yes. It has fun and happy people in it.

F13: Yes, because it is nice and bright so it is eye catching (13 similar responses)

Q.18.1.3 Why do you think the advertisers chose these particular people to advertise their product?

The data obtained from this open-ended question was qualitatively analysed paying particular attention to the words used by the respondents to describe the people in the advertisement. The responses were also reviewed to identify patterns, which are indicated next to some of the quotes presented, as a number of similar responses. Such a review allowed approximate quantities to be associated with the various types of responses obtained.

By asking - ‘why do you think the advertisers chose these particular people to advertise their product?’ - participants were, in semiological terms, invited to decode this advertisement. According to their responses, they were able to indicate reasons for which the advertisers chose their models. Some participants were keen to speculate about the assumptions that advertisers made about their audiences. They argued that since the advertisers desired this drink to be perceived as a healthy drink by their young audiences, they have chosen young, fit and beautiful people to represent these audiences:

M19: They look healthy, fresh, fit and happy.

F116: Because they are young. Kids are more active now, if they like the look of it they will make their parents to buy it.

M65: Because they are children and they [the advertisers] are trying to get children to have it because they are the next generation.

F112: Because they look fit and healthy so the advertisers try and make us think that if we drink this product we will be fit and healthy too!

There is some evidence that participants approached this question seriously, displaying their ability to make critically sound arguments. They implied that this advertisement tried to establish a link between the product and certain positive values, i.e., youth, health and beauty. Participants also acknowledged the existence of peer pressure, and the fact that they, as the ‘teenage generation’, were susceptible to it:

- M77: Teenage generation is an easy target. They will buy whatever they think everyone else in their crowd is buying.
- F68: They [the advertisers] choose young, slim and pretty people...they probably try and make you think that if you use their product you too will become young, slim and pretty.
- M18: They [the people in the ad] look healthy and they [the advertisers] hope to somehow link Sunny Delight to bodily health.
- M82: Because they are good at acting, they are teenagers; they try to get teenagers to buy it.
- F21: They thought that if we saw it, we would use it, because the people in it are about our age
- F39: Because the people look healthy and active (14 similar responses).

#### Q.18.1.4 Would you buy this product?

Use of the open-ended format for this question allowed participants to formulate their own answers, with the purpose of obtaining a brief explanation from them. Before coding, responses were analysed and, where possible, were grouped into positive, negative and unclear answers. These are presented in the table below.

Table 7.17 Purchase of Sunny Delight

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	49%	54%	51%
No	41%	43%	42%
Maybe	11%	3%	7%
N Value (% total)	74(100%)	76(99%)	150(99%)

A small majority of respondents said that they would buy Sunny Delight. This is a higher proportion than those who reported a liking for the advertisement, but not as high as the number who were familiar with the advertisement. However, there are a number of undecided responses and these could indeed change the balance. One might expect there to be a correspondence between the appeal of the advertisement and a willingness to purchase the product (ref. Fox, 1996). Although, it is true to say that appeal of the advertisement does not always correspond to the appeal of the product (ref. Buckingham, 1993a). It could, therefore, be the case that there are some loyal Sunny Delight drinkers, who did not like this particular advertisement.

Although some participants argued that they would buy the product not because they were influenced by this advertisement, but because of many good qualities of Sunny Delight - they claimed that this drink was tasty, refreshing and a good thirst-quencher on a hot summer day or when playing sports, many of them said that the quality of this advertisement made them more inclined to buy the drink:

- M20: [According to the advert]... this product is good to drink on the move.
- F116: I bought the drink once because the advert was good, then I tried it and loved it!
- F106: Yes, it looks good to drink and it has got a nice picture to attract me.
- M5: Yes, because I like it and because of the way they present their adverts on TV.
- F43: Yes, because of the advert. The advert makes it sound good - the people like it in the advert.
- F21: [According to the advert] ...this drink is healthy and tastes good.
- M105: Yes, because it has vitamins in it.
- F13: Yes, because the advert shows that it gives you strengths.
- M19: Yes, from the advert. However, I have been told that it tastes horrible.
- F68: Although I don't think the advert really appeals to me, I may try the product as it makes it look fresh and that when you drink it, you too have lots of energy.

From these comments it appears that a few respondents trusted, somewhat too much, the advertisers' pledge - if the advertisement made the product look appealing it was reason enough for them to buy this product. Moreover, contrary to the participants who, as discussed below, resisted the influence of this advertisement on the basis of their previously acquired nutritional knowledge, the participants, quoted above, seemed to extract their nutritional knowledge from this advertisement.

Nevertheless, the findings of this research provide evidence that respondents were aware of the potential health hazards associated with Sunny Delight. More than one sixth of the respondents argued that they would not buy Sunny Delight because they feared that this drink's nutritional value was not as good as it was presented by this advertisement. They were keen to express their concerns about the contents of this drink, its nutritional value and its impact on health:

- M42: No, because I know the product has too many 'E' numbers. (3 similar responses)
- F57: No, I feel sick after drinking it and it is sickly. (2 similar responses)

M10: No, because it has got 10% orange juice, I would rather have 100% orange juice.

M148: No, because it is bad for you! (6 similar responses)

F24: No, because of all the chemicals. It is not very healthy. (5 similar responses)

F37: No, I have tried Sunny D before and it is disgusting. 100% water and no orange juice!  
It is foul, so it does not appeal to me.

Since the knowledge, demonstrated above, was not really present in the advertisement apart from a brief reference to three vitamins, it is possible that the respondents were deriving their nutritional knowledge from their friends, media and family.

Indeed, according to [www.uncaged.co.uk](http://www.uncaged.co.uk) Sunny Delight is a drink, which is unhealthy in its contents and is produced by a company, which tests its products on animals. According to [www.knightsbridge.co.uk](http://www.knightsbridge.co.uk) and to The Uncaged, Procter and Gamble kill an estimated fifty thousand animals each year. The Uncaged claims that Sunny Delight actually contains only 5% fruit juice. Other ingredients include sugar (ten teaspoons for every 500ml bottle), citric acid, vegetable oil, carboxyl methylcellulose, sodium citrate, flavourings, modified starch, potassium sorbate, dimethyl dicarbonate, and xanthan gum. According to The Uncaged, the occurrence of harmful side effects following consumption of Sunny Delight by very young children is possible.

Some respondents also argued that the drink was overpriced and did not represent value for money, supporting arguments presented on [www.uncaged.co.uk](http://www.uncaged.co.uk) and [www.knightsbridge.co.uk](http://www.knightsbridge.co.uk).

#### Q.18.1.5 What message the advertiser is trying to send across to you?

The open-ended format was once again used to allow participants to formulate their own responses. These responses were reviewed to give a general indication of the respondents' feelings towards the advertisement. Some similar answers were obtained from respondents for which the number occurring has been indicated next to a characteristic quote, below.

Through their responses, the young people implied that the main message the advertiser was trying to send across was that of the naturalness and healthiness of the drink, as well as that of fashionability and energetic 'craziness' of the drink. The participants, quoted below,

did not fail to notice that this advertisement was trying to establish a link between the drink and certain values:

- M150: If you drink it, you will be refreshed, healthy, and good-looking. (9 similar responses)
- M18: Drink Sunny Delight and you will be healthy and active.
- F120: Everyone likes SD, it is popular and it tastes good and gives you energy.
- M117: Sunny Delight is refreshing, cool and fun.
- M1: Go out, enjoy life, go crazy with SD.
- F108: They want you to see it as a 'cool' drink, so they use young 'cool' people.
- M52: You will be sporty, sexy and energetic.
- F30: SD is a 'fashionable' drink and people will think you're a laugh, adventurous, etc., if you drink it.
- M34: I think they are trying to say that everybody my age drinks it, so I should copy them.
- M113: Maybe that if you buy this drink you will become young and energetic, like the people featured.

Moreover, some respondents were aware of the obvious selling intent of the advertisement and quite a few voiced their opinion on this:

- M121: It sends across so that you should buy it.
- F134: So, people will buy it and it is good for kids.
- F14: I think it is trying to say Sunny D is good and healthy, so go and buy it.
- F47: To buy their product, they try to make it more colourful than other products.
- M4: Buy this drink and it will refresh you from sports and give you loads of energy.

Thus, the majority of the respondents were able to define the messages, which the advertiser was trying to send across to them.

#### Q.18.1.6 When you look at the picture, what images come to your mind immediately?

In line with two previous questions, the question - 'when you look at the picture, what images come to your mind immediately?' - was designed not only to invite spontaneous responses, but also to encourage participants to think critically about the advertisement, and once again, to decode it. A simplistic method of ranking words by their frequency of

occurrence was used to assess those feeling or thoughts, which were most associated with this advertisement.

To answer this question, participants volunteered the following statements: 'Happiness', 'Enjoyable', 'Holiday', 'Fun', 'Activity', 'Sports', 'Energy', 'Sunshine', 'Summer', 'Bright', 'Hot', 'Thirst', 'Cool', 'Friendship', 'Freshness', 'Orange', 'Oranges', 'Health', 'Goodness', 'Youth', 'Beautiful people'.

According to Fowles (1996), advertisements are devised with an aim to transfer the appeal association onto the product. The depiction of young happy people, enjoying themselves while playing sports was, no doubt, intended to help the viewer to make the link with Sunny Delight. Thus, the connection was made between the product and the values, cited above.

In this advertisement the predominant colour is orange, which establishes a connection with sunlight (or 'sunshine', as the respondents put it down), summer, and, of course, the oranges. This connection already suggests the natural and pure quality of this drink, emphasises its apparent goodness – in line with Procter & Gamble's policy, Sunny Delight is placed close to natural juices on the supermarket shelves, in order to underline its healthy image. Here the drink is depicted not only as healthy, but also tasty and fun stuff for young people.

## **Conclusion**

The majority of respondents were familiar with this advertisement or were, at least, sufficiently familiar with the product to consider themselves familiar with this, or other similar advertisements. Although the majority said that the advertisement did not appeal to them, an almost equal number of them claimed that they would buy the drink.

On the whole, this advertisement did not appeal to the respondents. The negative responses attached the traits of boring, unrealistic and uninformative to the advertisement. They considered its approach to be somewhat childish and, perhaps, a little unsophisticated for their particular age group. Many respondents did not take the advertisement at face value

and called upon some of their own pre-conceived ideas. These ideas came either from previous encounters with the drink or from opinions of others. Thus, the advertisement could not appeal to them as they had already taken a dislike to the product. The citing of the drink as being unhealthy figured quite prominently among the responses.

In general, respondents were able to demonstrate an awareness of health and nutrition issues when considering the product and to discuss these issues with some fluency. They had knowledge of the low real orange juice content of the drink and were, in some cases, disturbed by this. This particular information was not available from the advertisement, and some respondents considered this to be a deficiency.

Although a few participants found the concepts within the advertisement a little too abstract for them to be able to perceive a link with the product and did not see how the activity implied by the portrayal of a person riding a bike could suggest that this can be assisted by the drink, the majority of the respondents understood that the advertiser was establishing a link between the product and certain positive values, i.e., between healthy and happy youngsters, the goodness of the sun and the drink. They were able to successfully articulate this, at the same time displaying their ability to analyse the advertisement both critically and effectively. In the main, the respondents were able to cope with the task of decoding this advertisement. They were able to come up with imaginative hypotheses of the messages that advertisers send to their audiences and the images, which they had encoded into the advertisement.

In spite of this, many respondents were influenced by this advertisement and some openly admitted to this. Their being influenced does not mean, however, that they would go out directly and purchase the product. Most of the time they seemed to simply enjoy the aesthetics of it. However, there were some indications that participants did sometimes buy the product after they had seen the advertisement. Indeed, the majority of them said that they would purchase or consider purchasing Sunny Delight. It is evident from their comments that the initiation of purchase is not entirely as a result of the advertisement - many relied on their personal affinity to the product and on their friends' advice.

Those participants, who did find the advertisement appealing, did give a fairly standard set of responses as to why this was so. For these participants the advertisement obviously



worked and it worked in the classical manner. In this case, they recognised the energy conveyed in the advertisement by means of bright colours and the energetic young people. They saw how this energy could be provided by the product and were influenced by these energetic, happy people and, perhaps, felt that Sunny Delight could buy them some of this. However, the majority of respondents saw how the use of young actors made the advertisement more relevant to their generation and perceived how the energy of the actors was directly related to the energy provided by the drink. They perceived the reasons why the actors portrayed in the advertisement were selected and their role was, generally, correctly identified.

As discussed in the introduction to this section, it was considered beneficial to identify any trends, which may be present in the participants' responses. This was achieved by performing cross-tabulations of the responses to the three single-answer questions posed on the adverts used in this section. These were then tested for significance/dependency using the Chi-squared technique. This resulted in a considerable quantity of tabulated data and, for clarity; this is contained in the appendix p.326, with a summary table given below.

This technique, therefore, allows us to gauge the likelihood that the appeal of an advert may result in purchase of the product, for the particular group of respondents tested. Similarly, the link between familiarity with the advert and the other categories can be tested for its influence. As before, results have been presented separately for male and female respondents.

Table 7.18 Significance values for crosstabulations

Sunny Delight	All	Male	Female
Appeal vs. Purchase	< 0.001	0.036	0.036
Familiarity vs. Appeal	0.14	0.43	0.21
Familiarity vs. Purchase	0.73	0.70	0.97

From the statistics recorded for this advertisement, significance values of less than 0.05 indicate that there is a dependency between appeal of the advertisement and a desire, or willingness, to purchase the product. The remaining criteria are generally independent for this particular advert, with a significant level of independence present for the correlation

between familiarity and purchase. Hence, knowledge of the produce does not appear to have influenced their desire to purchase.

## Q.18.2 Hilfiger Athletics



### Analysis

#### Q.18.2.1 Are you familiar with this advertisement?

The results for this question are presented in the table below.

Table 7.19 Familiarity with Hilfiger advertisement

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	51%	64%	58%
No	49%	36%	42%
N Value (% total) (No people participating)	74(100%)	76(99%)	150(99%)

From this data it appears that the majority of the respondents stated that they were familiar with Hilfiger Athletics advertisement. The fact that more female respondents were familiar with this advertisement than male respondents were, is not easy to account for, since this advertisement appeared in FHM magazine, which was very popular, but only amongst male respondents (ref. Q.4). It may, however, be due to the possibility of females reading copies of FHM, which belonged to their brothers or boyfriends (although they did not report it) or to the possibility of this advertisement appearing on television. This is a more likely explanation, since television advertisements often appear in magazines, as is the case with the Sunny Delight advertisement.

#### Q.18.2.2 Does this advertisement appeal to you?

In the table below, responses with common trends, e.g., Yes or No, were grouped together.

Table 7.20 Appeal of Hilfiger advert

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	49%	70%	59%
No	51%	30%	41%
N Value (% total) (No people participating)	74(100%)	76(99%)	150(99%)

These results show that the majority of the respondents said that the Hilfiger Athletics advert appealed to them. More female respondents than male respondents were captivated by this advertisement, whereas more male respondents than female respondents answered that it does not appeal to them. There appears to be a positive relationship, in this case, between familiarity and appeal.

Participants argued that the major appeal of this advertisement was its 'professional' presentation. The respondents mentioned 'professional' use of bright colours in the advertisement and pronounced it 'eye-catching'. This support Fox's (1996:128) suggestion, in respect of the advertising industry, that adolescents sometimes buy an item because "of some fancy footwork behind the commercial's cameras":

M140: It does, because the picture is colourful and looks exciting.

F147: Yes, because there is not too much of the same colour...

M78: Yes, again because it has bright colours and teenage theme.

M113: Yes, the colours are quite appealing...

F47: Yes - it made me look closer because there is a lot going on.

Some responses suggested that this advertisement was well-liked because of its progressive stance towards racial and sexual issues:

F147: ...mixed race and sex on it.

M142: Average, multicultural

F147: Because they are black and white, male and female, they are all good looking and slim.

Hilfiger Athletics takes on a feminist critique of advertising, portraying both men and women as equals (ref. Chapter 3). One female respondent noted that the models, used in

the advert, represent both races and both sexes, and therefore, portray an image of equal opportunities in life.

Moreover, the fact that this advertisement had young, fit and happy people having fun, although they were older than the models in the Sunny Delight advertisement, appealed to them. As already discussed, many participants wanted to see people of their age in the advertisements, which were aimed at them, and this advertisement had won them over partly because its models seemed to be of roughly the same age, as themselves:

F43: Yes, because people are young and it makes the perfume look like it's aimed at us.

F98: Yes, it does, because it makes you think that you will have a great time wearing it.

M123: Yes, because they look like they are having fun and more real.

F86: Yes - people my age (so-so) having fun.

F73: Yes, because it looks like a bunch of people having fun.

Both male and female respondents said that they found this advertisement appealing because it happened to be advertising their favourite brand. Participants, quoted below, perceived the Hilfiger brand as a very popular, fashionable and good quality brand and its advertisements were consequently respected:

F21: It appeals to me because it is a fragrance of a brand name and the way the advert was made was interesting.

M95: Yes, because I like the brand name. (7 similar responses)

F68: It appeals to me as it looks lively and Tommy Hilfiger is a well-known brand so I expect it does smell nice.

F55: Tommy Hilfiger is a well-known brand name, the bottle on the advert looks good and the advert doesn't look too tacky.

F96: ...it looks like good quality and is likely to have a good scent, as it is Hilfiger.

The comments, cited below, emphasise the general belief expressed fairly consistently throughout the answers to this question:

M17: ...we all need to smell good because it attracts.

F29: Yes, the people look fit and attractive to opposite sex.

F32: Yes - it looks like you get noticed by wearing it, because of the scent.

According to Fowles (1996), our society nurtures such cultural prejudice as non-acceptance of one's natural smell. It has been a long time now since it became a norm to 'smell good', e.g. use a perfume or deodorant to suppress one's natural smell, which is considered 'bad' and even impolite in our society. On the other hand, the artificial smell of perfumes is considered to be attractive and acceptable. In this case, this study demonstrates that some participants appear to be not only the 'victims' of sexual prejudices (ref. Q.6, Q.9 and Q.13), but cultural ones as well.

Somewhat more than one third of participants argued that this advertisement did not appeal to them. They said that they did not like the make in general, thought that the product did not provide value for money (i.e., it being a main-stream brand, but expensively sold), and the advertisement was boring, silly and of poor quality:

F124: ...I don't like the make.

M18: ...because the product is smelly and is too expensive, and it shows a group of Americans playing sports in a field, which frankly doesn't show any use for the stuff.

M77: Tommy Hilfiger is a mainstream product that townies buy.

F101: ...it looks boring and not very appealing or interesting.

M46: ...because it is unimaginative and boring. It is also a bit too 'I love America'.

F15: ...because it is fake, boring and not colourful enough.

M40: What you smell like will not improve your athletic ability.

From the comments, cited above, it appears that a small minority of participants, who whilst able to perceive the link drawn between the product and values, seemed to actively reject this link. Indeed, some respondents identified an 'American' link with the product and this appeared to provoke some resistance.

#### Q.18.2.3 Why do you think the advertiser chose these people to advertise this particular product?

The data obtained, in response to this question, was qualitatively analysed paying particular attention to the words used by the respondents to describe the people in the advertisement. The responses were also reviewed to identify patterns, which are indicated

next to some of the quotes presented, as a number of similar responses. Such a review allowed approximate quantities to be associated with the various types of responses obtained.

A significant proportion of the respondents thought that the advertisers chose their models to advertise Hilfiger Athletics because they were young. They argued that this was because advertisers wanted to target young people. Many respondents believed that these people were chosen because they were good actors, because of their personality and appearance and also, because they were fit and sporty. Again, these participants were able to perceive a link drawn between the product and values, in this case youth, beauty and health. In fact, appearance figured highly, receiving reference in almost all responses. It is interesting to note, at this point, that the product is actually a fragrance and can, therefore, do very little to enhance one's physical appearance, however an association between looking good and the product has been made:

M84: Because they are young, sporty, and good-looking. (16 similar responses)

M119: Healthy people in the advert make other people think that they would be healthy and look good if they use Hilfiger Athletics.

F15: Because they want to show that happy beautiful model people use Hilfiger fragrances.

M44: They look young, fit and sporty and this is whom they are trying to market the product to.

M150: Because they are good looking people and sexy.

F70: ...it's to attract young people into wearing it because young people are in the advert.

#### Q.18.2.4 Would you buy the product advertised?

Grouped responses for this question as presented in the table below and were obtained by analysing the participants' responses for positive, negative and unclear answers.

Table 7.21 Purchase of Hilfiger Athletics

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	36%	45%	41%
No	50%	36%	43%
Maybe	14%	19%	16%
N Value (% total)	74(100%)	74(96%)	148(98%)

In answer to the question – ‘would you buy the product and why?’ - there was no distinct difference between those in favour and those against buying Hilfiger Athletics. Although the advertisement succeeded in appealing to the majority of respondents, it is likely that prejudices against the Hilfiger brand, mentioned earlier, had a detrimental effect on the desire of respondents to purchase this particular product.

As with Sunny Delight, there was no definite link between appeal of the advertisement and purchase of the product. However, the proportions were reversed in this advertisement, as the appeal was greater, but the desire to purchase less.

According to the responses, cited below, the major reason for buying the product was the popularity/commonness of the brand name. However, from their responses it is evident that one factor, which did influence their choice of brand, was peer pressure. In other words, it appeared that the respondents were more likely to buy the product if everyone else in their crowd was buying the same one. For many, the reason to buy was the desire to be ‘in’, i.e., to be accepted by their group of friends:

F147: Yes, because Tommy Hilfiger is a popular brand.

F29: Maybe, because everyone likes Tommy Hilfiger, but too expensive.

M90: Yes - because I like design and because it is expensive hardly, and people wear it.

M54: Yes. Probably because everyone who tried it, likes it. I would assess it for myself.

M113: Adverts are geared to make kids think that by buying that particular product they will fit in with the crowd; and that’s all most adolescents want – conformity (also used in Q18.3.2).

These responses suggest that participants were not only ready to acknowledge the fact that peer pressure does exist, but were keen to speculate about the effects of its influence on them. Moreover, as M113’s insightful comment demonstrates, some participants were able to realise that advertisers were exploiting the fact that teenagers are ‘an easy target’ for peer pressure, by playing on their fears of not belonging and of being rejected.

Although some respondents claimed that they would buy Hilfiger Athletics for its worthy qualities alone, e.g., its pleasant smell, it was evident from their responses that advertising

had a role to play in influencing their purchasing decisions. The comments, cited below, illustrate how participants, while perceiving the connection between the product and value, appeared to believe that such a connection really exists. Although they were able to decode the messages correctly, they seemed to take these messages literally. In a number of cases, these statements were quite matter-of-fact. One respondent (F60), for example, said, - ‘yes [I would buy Hilfiger Athletics], because the people in the ad look very attractive and I would want to look like that’:

F98: Yes, I would, because it has a nice smell and would make you feel energetic.

F43: Yes, it looks like it makes you fresh, feeling sporty. The product looks appealing.

M1: Yes. Since it makes you think you are somehow better.

F41: Yes, because it looks different and it looks to brighten up your life.

As the responses quoted above demonstrate, advertising alone can be quite a powerful factor influencing participants’ purchasing decisions.

The respondents, who said that they would not buy Hilfiger Athletics, claimed that they would not commit to purchasing any of Tommy Hilfiger’s products, because they did not like this brand, considering it too common:

F124: No, I don’t like the make.

M129: No, because it is ridiculously expensive. You are paying for the name and not the stuff in the bottle.

M65: No, because Hilfiger’s for townies. (2 similar responses)

F111: No, because I don't like Tommy Hilfiger products. (3 similar responses)

#### Q.18.2.5 What message the advertiser is trying to send across to you?

Participants’ responses, to this open-ended question, were reviewed to give a general indication of their feelings towards the advertisement. Some similar answers were obtained from respondents for which the number occurring has been indicated next to a characteristic quote below.

To the question - ‘what message is the advertiser trying to send across to you?’ - participants volunteered the following statements:



- F29: Use that perfume and you'll become fit, attractive and smell good and not sweat.
- F31: It is a sporty, fresh fragrance.
- F64: Young and pretty adults use it.
- M135: You will get friends [if you use this fragrance].
- F139: It is fun and you will have a good time wearing it.
- M142: Hilfiger is the 'in thing'. Buy it and you are cool.
- M77: If you buy our product, you'll get to be gorgeous, and if you are a girl, you will be able to play football.
- F43: It makes you feel energetic and sporty, it smells nice, so buy it.
- F53: If you are active, up-to-date kind of person, you should buy Hilfiger Athletics.
- F104: That the product is brilliant makes you good at sport and you will be popular because everybody wants to smell good.
- F73: I think it is just saying, have fun and enjoy yourself. (8 similar responses)
- M78: That if you want to be an outgoing person, who attracts the opposite sex, then wear it.

There was evidence of recognising that the advertisers wanted them to think that Hilfiger Athletics would assist them in their efforts to acquire new friends or remain popular with the old ones, as it was presented as the 'in-thing', which would help them to fit in with the crowd. The respondents were also able to decode an image of a 'good time' projected by this advertisement and discovered the connection it made to the perfume. They argued that this advertisement tried to make them believe that if one wears Hilfiger Athletics, one is in for a good time. They also detected another message to them as the viewers, which was that Hilfiger Athletics would make them feel energetic and sporty. As discussed earlier, Hilfiger Athletics is promoted as a sharp and clean masculine fragrance and 'energetic' and 'sporty' are traditional images of masculinity in our culture (ref. Grinder, 1973).

As is evident from these comments, participants were under no illusion as to the persuasive functions of advertising. Most of them, at one time or another, did not fail to mention that they were certain of advertising's selling intent. Some responses were very much to the point:

- F134: Buy it! That is what all advertisers want.
- M54: Buy Hilfiger Athletics spray because the energetic people recommend it. Good fragrance.
- M16: To buy this product, wear it and you will have nice women, who are sporty.

F26: That the fragrance is good quality for its cost, and to go out and buy it.

M34: I think, they are telling me to buy it.

F128: Buy it, it smells good, everybody loves it.

M90: New product, go out and buy.

M122: Buy it now. (10 similar responses)

The idea of the packaging of product and image together is also identified by the participants' responses, by their referencing to both the purchase of the product and acquisition of the associated image.

#### Q.18.2.6 When you look at the picture, what images come to your mind immediately?

As with all questions of this type, participants were encouraged to write down as many answers as they desired. The responses were reviewed for the most common occurrences of words used to describe the images presented in the advertisement.

In answer to the question – 'when you look at the picture, what images come to your mind immediately?' – the respondents volunteered the following statements: 'Sporty'; 'Athletic'; 'Youth'; 'Fit'; 'Healthy'; 'Carefree'; 'Happiness'; 'Sand'; 'Tropical Island'; 'Relaxation'; 'America/American flag'; 'Great Time'; 'Hit'; 'Fun'; 'Excitement'; 'Energetic'; 'Football'; 'Modernity'; 'Summer'; 'Fresh'; 'Noise'; 'Beach'; 'Holiday'; 'Unisex'; 'Competition'.

Participants, in the majority, displayed an ability to detect images, which were encoded into this advertisement. Although not everyone participated in this task, the majority of the respondents did cite two or more images.

Williamson (1978:25) argues: in perfume advertisements, "the function of differentiation rests totally on making a connection with an image drawn from outside the ad world". As discussed earlier, Tommy Hilfiger designed Hilfiger Athletic with American patriotism in mind. Indeed, all his products boldly remind us of their American origin. Consequently, the respondents were right to assume that such images as 'America/American flag' were encoded into this advertisement. Tommy Hilfiger described his company's style as 'athletic and worldly'. These findings demonstrate that the respondents did not fail to

decode such images as 'Sport', 'Athletics', 'Fit', 'Energetic' and 'Competition'. All these images project the company's style and promote Hilfiger Athletics as a sporty fragrance, for worldly people in action, who are not afraid to compete in life, people who are accustomed to win.

Participants were also able to recognise such images as 'Fresh', 'Modernity' and 'Excitement', arguing that they were encoded into this advertisement in order to present Hilfiger Athletic as a clean and fresh fragrance, modern, exciting and 'right on the edge'. And, as discussed earlier, participants speculated that, by showing people having a great time on the beach, advertisers wanted to project the image of 'Fun', 'Noise' and 'Holiday'. Again, they were able to discern that the advertisers wanted to connect these images with Hilfiger Athletic, to help viewers to automatically associate Hilfiger Athletic with a fun time, holidays abroad or simply with a hot summer day.

As discussed earlier, participants suggested that advertisers chose sporty, fit, healthy, young, carefree and fun people to enable the fragrance to acquire their image, which then, according to Williamson (1978), becomes a quality of its own and can then be transferred to any lucky individual who purchases it. At the same time, according to Williamson (1978:47), '...you do not simply buy the product in order to become a part of the group it represents; you must feel that you already, naturally, belong to that group and therefore you will buy it'. Tommy Hilfiger sees its consumers as the people who have the life-styles similar to those presented in this advertisement, or who aspire to be like them. Hence, for this advertisement to be successful, its viewers had to recognise themselves as the people who will use Hilfiger Athletic. It appears, therefore, that advertisers assumed that it is relatively easy for a consumer who is sixteen to thirty-five years of age, and enjoys a fun, active life, to recognise him/herself in the Hilfiger Athletic advertisement.

## **Conclusion**

As with Sunny Delight, the majority of respondents were familiar with this advertisement. A similar majority also said that this advertisement appealed to them. This appeal, however, did not transfer through to a desire to purchase the product, which is possibly due to a number of mitigating factors.

These findings show that females had considerably greater awareness of this advertisement than males, despite it having appeared in a male magazine. Indeed, the recorded appeal of this advertisement to females was significantly higher than for male respondents. Two explanations might be considered. Firstly, the images of independence and confidence, projected by the only woman in this advertisement, could have appealed to female participants. Secondly, although this particular fragrance was intended to be used by men, this was not very clear from the advertisement and many female respondents appeared to have been attracted by this advertisement. When it came to the purchase of the product, females again recorded a higher number of positive responses than males. Therefore, the positive qualities attributed to this advertisement have appealed to the female respondents, even going so far as to influence them into purchasing the product, despite it not being intended for them.

Traditional factors played a part in making this advertisement appealing, i.e., bright colours, activity, good-looking people and, judging by the responses obtained, it would seem that these factors had been successfully transferred to the product itself. The advertisement appealed to both sexes through its inclusion of both genders within the advertisement. Indeed, a few respondents even picked up on the mixed racial content of the advertisement, implying that through these tactics the advertisers have ensured that they appeal to the widest possible audience.

The fact that more respondents were willing to buy Sunny Delight than Hilfiger Athletics may be due to the fact that this product is a perfume, a bottle of which is considerably more expensive than a bottle of Sunny Delight. Indeed, a number of respondents highlighted the expense of this product.

The significance values for cross-tabulations of the Hilfiger Athletics responses are presented in the table below, analysis of which is given later in this section.

Table 7.22 Significance values for crosstabulations

Hilfiger Athletics	All	Male	Female
Appeal vs. Purchase	<. 001	<. 001	<. 001
Familiarity vs. Appeal	<. 001	0.002	0.012
Familiarity vs. Purchase	0.004	0.062	0.023

The majority of the respondents used the same reasons to explain two different decisions: a decision to buy the product and a decision about whether they like its advertising or not. Some claimed that they would buy the product because of peer pressure, some because they liked the brand and perceived it as a quality brand. Notably, the respondents also claimed that they would buy the product because they were influenced by this advertisement.

One possible explanation could be that if participants found an advertisement appealing then they would actually contemplate buying the product. Indeed, this is borne out by the statistics, which show a dependency for the cross-tabulation between appeal and desire to purchase. Accordingly, when asked why they would buy the product, some of the respondents said that it would be because they liked the advertisement; some of them stated it would be because they liked the characters in the advertisement. Some respondents even stated that they would buy the product because the advertisement makes it look appealing.

The existence of peer pressure is more evident from the responses to this question than to the question of Sunny Delight. This is logical, as perfume can be considered more of a personal item than a drink (ref. Baker et al., 1977). Sometimes the peer pressure manifested itself in reverse, i.e., some respondents did not want to buy Hilfiger Athletics because they did not want to conform to the majority, who they termed 'townies.' They obviously believed that they belonged to a group, which stood apart, and they desperately wanted to be somewhat different, professing rejection of the mass-produced and desiring more elite produced items, implying that only those who wanted to look like the Tommy Hilfiger advertisement would buy Tommy Hilfiger. For a detailed discussion of youth sub-cultures see Chapter 3 "Theories of communication as related to young people", the section "Youth culture and media".

The respondents in their majority were keen to speculate about the audience, which was targeted by this advertisement. The majority of respondents appeared to understand why these particular actors were chosen to feature in this advertisement. They understood that advertisers chose young actors because they wanted to target a young audience and the fact that they chose men and women, both black and white, meant that they also wanted to target a more diverse audience. At the same time, they also realised that the advertisers tried to link their product to the images which their models represented. Many of them realised that the choice of healthy, fit people was somehow intended to link with the product itself and convey the idea that it can produce the same effects in the viewers. Also, they recognised that young people were used to provide them with a reference point to associate themselves directly with the advertisement.

Likewise, the majority of participants were able to understand advertising messages and skilfully decode and analyse them. The respondents, who received the message of a 'fun', 'sporty' fragrance, which can enhance one's lifestyle and sex appeal, identified positive qualities, present in the advertisement. Many respondents identified the underlying message of the advertisement, which was to buy the product. The images, which came to the respondents' mind, were generally of an up-beat nature, expressing fun and enjoyment.

Although the advertisement appealed to the majority of respondents, there was no overall majority in favour of purchasing the product. Of those, who were in favour, many were taken by the brand itself, perceiving it as a popular brand, and hence, something they would like to possess. Positive values, conveyed by the advertisement, did influence respondents towards making a purchase. Negative responses were frequently against the brand itself, for no particular reason, but others saw purchasing and use of the product as a way of classifying the wearer into a particular social class or group. These respondents thought of this as undesirable, probably because they wanted to be perceived as being sufficiently individual. Hence, there was a resistance to fitting in with a particular crowd.

Surprisingly, all significance values for this advert indicated that there was a dependency between the responses obtained from all three quantitative questions. The inference from this is that those who were familiar with the advert also liked it and that this carried through into a positive desire to purchase. Similarly, those who were unfamiliar, disliked the advert and had no desire to purchase the product.

In conclusion, the advertisement was reasonably popular with the participants and they were able to decode it successfully.

### Q.18.3 Ellesse Watch

#### Analysis

##### Q.18.3.1 Are you familiar with this advertisement?

This question was designed to be a closed question, requiring simple Yes/No answers.

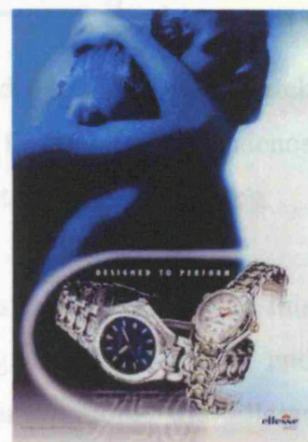


Table 7.23 Familiarity with Ellesse Watch

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	38%	22%	30%
No	62%	78%	70%
N Value (% total)	74(100%)	74(96%)	148(98%)

From this data it appears that the majority of the respondents were not familiar with the Ellesse Watch advertisement. Given the fact that this advertisement was placed in “19” magazine, a popular magazine for teenage girls, it is somewhat surprising that more male than female respondents claimed to be familiar with this advertisement. This might be due to fact that many magazines feature the same advertisements in the hope of increasing their target audience, and thus male respondents may have seen it in one of their favourite magazines, or on billboards.

##### Q.18.3.2 Does this advertisement appeal to you?

Analysis of the responses to this question was performed as for previous open-ended questions, with the results being presented in the table below.

Table 7.24 Appeal of Ellesse Watch

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	49%	35%	42%
No	51%	65%	58%
N Value (% total)	74(100%)	74(96%)	148(98%)

These results demonstrate that the majority of the respondents said that the Ellesse Watch advertisement did not appeal to them. Therefore, there appears to be a correspondence between familiarity and appeal - this can be assessed by subsequent significance testing.

The most common reason given, as was the case in Q.18.2, was lack of affinity to this advertisement. Their criticism was expressed by emphasising its poor quality and presentation techniques. These participants argued that, in their opinions, the Ellesse Watch advertisement lacked excitement, and that it was gloomy and obscure, and hence, uninteresting. In particular, participants did not like the serious-looking, motionless people in this advertisement:

M135: No, because it is boring.

M20: No, as the man and woman have nothing to do with the product.

F139: No, it is boring and not very eye catching.

M129: No, I do not like the style of the watches'

M42: No, because it is in a dull blue.

F87: No, there is not really much to it and it has nothing to do with the product that it's advertising.

F108: Not really. They look very serious and not like they are having fun. I don't know why they have them advertising watches.

I felt that some of the singular responses such as,

M77: No. I think using the miracle of sex, as a way of selling their overpriced rubbish is unforgivable.



deserve special attention. As will be discussed later, it is evident that some respondents were not only able to perceive that such persuasive techniques as sex was employed, but also believed that to use sex to sell is unacceptable.

Some participants also argued that it is foolish to pay just for the label:

- M18: No, they overcharge and the watches are ugly. They quite clearly do not give you any advantage over cheaper watches for the extra cash you pay.
- F25: No. I would not pay attention to this ad, because I have got a decent watch. Why should I want to get another one, just because it is Ellesse and more expensive. They both do the same job.
- M40: No. Whether your watch is £30 or £130 and has an Ellesse badge on it makes no difference - I would get a good fake one for £15.
- F85: No, because they are mostly a rip off, you could probably get a similar watch without the name cheaper.

These respondents, unlike the majority of their brand-conscious contemporaries (ref. Reed, 1994), were able to make rational judgements about the quality of Ellesse watches and argued that they do not present value for money. As found by Buckingham (1993a), young people like to be perceived as 'wise consumers' by their elders.

"A 'wise consumer' [is one] who is capable of making rational judgements about the product quality and value for money. The wise consumer is the one who shops around, comparing the different products on the market, testing products before buying, and rejecting the deception of packaging, publicity and advertising." (Buckingham, 1993a: 250)

Thus, here participants presented themselves as 'wise consumers'.

Nevertheless, some participants said that this advertisement appealed to them. According to them, the major appeal of this advertisement was its presentation:

- M142: Yes, colours, style...
- M17: It has deeper shades of blue, grabbing your attention, drawing it to the watches.
- F101: Yes, I think the way that it looks dark and peaceful makes it more appealing. Less is more.
- M61: Yes, because the background image is unusual. The pictures of the watch look good.

F100: Yes. I like the way it is set out.

M36: Yes, it is very eye catching.

M78: Yes, because you see the naked people at the top, which catches the eye automatically.

These respondents were fascinated with this advertisement's modern design, excellent colours and fine graphics. They stated that this advertisement won them over because it is different and stands out from the crowd. Other words, which participants used to describe this advertisement, included 'grabbing your attention' and 'eye-catching'. Some noted an attempt to link the positive qualities of sporty and beautiful models to the products, and eventually, to audiences:

M84: Because they are young and sexy.

F122: Because they are young and are quite attractive, just like the product.

F24: They are beautiful, and beautiful people make the product appear better.

M93: Young, good looking, makes people think they will be more like the people in ad.

M18: They seem to look fresh and pure and clean, so they are probably trying to link that to the watch - good looks and pure performance.

Some participants said that they liked this advertisement, because it advertised a 'good quality watch for men and women' (M63). The unisex appeal of this advertisement also found support (cf. Q18.2), particularly among female respondents. In a similar manner to Hilfiger Athletics, the presence of a woman in the advertisement caught the attention of the female participants, who were able to identify with this figure. The presence of both a woman and a man in the advertisement seems to have led to the assumption that the product is for both sexes:

F120: So it can appeal to wider range of people [unisex].

F27: They are a man and a woman - the watches are designed for men and women.

F55: A man and woman - these watches are suitable for people of both genders.

F57: Because they are young and will appeal to both sexes.

F13: ...the advert is not sexist; it has a boy and a girl.

Males, on the other hand, seemed to interpret the presence of a female, particular in the layout of this advertisement, with the suggestion of success in attracting members of the

opposite sex. Therefore, they recognised that this advertisement implied that Ellesse watch could increase sex appeal:

M19: Sex appeal - attempt to associate their watch with pulling girls, etc.

M6: They choose a man and a woman because tries to show to the males that this watch can attract women.

M78: Because they are sexy, perhaps the advertiser wanted to show sexiness.

M36: They have sex appeal, and create sex appeal for the product.

Some respondents admitted that they were influenced by this advertisement. Only a few respondents, quoted below, did not explain (or did not have sufficient knowledge to explain) which persuasive tactics influenced them:

M131: Yes, from looking at the advert, but no, because of the price.

M105: It does, because it makes you to buy the product.

M119: Yes. It kind of made me sucked into the advert.

The majority of the respondents, however, appeared to be aware of persuasive tactics, employed by this advertisement, and many thought that is was the 'professional' presentation of this advertisement that won them over:

F106: Yes, because the advert is good and I like the design of the watch.

F15: ...it is futuristic, funky and different. It shows you the product well and is interesting to look at.

F122: ...the use of the elegant and sophisticated colours.

From the responses, listed above, it appears that the respondents liked this advertisement because it was different from all the others, used computer graphics and modern design, featured young, beautiful, healthy people, and was sexy.

#### Q.18.3.3 Why do you think the advertiser chose these people to advertise their products?

The data obtained, in response to this question, was qualitatively analysed paying particular attention to the words used by the respondents to describe the people in the advertisement. The responses were also reviewed to identify similar responses. Such a

review allowed approximate quantities to be associated with the various types of responses obtained.

In answer to the question - 'why do you think the advertisers chose these models to advertise their products?' - about one-third of respondents thought that it was because they were young, attractive, well groomed, fit and sexually appealing. There were statements making reference to how the use of these models gave the impression that the advertisement was targeted to a more specific audience. For example, the respondents said that because the product was intended for both men and women, the advertisers chose representatives of both sexes:

M1: Men and women of this age are whom the product is made for.

F146: They use a woman and a man, because they have his and hers watches.

M81: Because it is a male and female kind of watch.

F55: A man and woman - these watches are suitable for people of both genders.

F59: To show that it is for boy/men and women/girls.

M135: Because they are men and women - watches for males and females.

#### Q.18.3.4 Would you buy an Ellesse Watch?

Analysis and subsequent grouping of the results was performed on the responses to this question, as presented in the table below.

Table 7.25 Purchase of Ellesse Watch

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	47%	40%	44%
No	53%	60%	56%
Maybe	0%	0%	0%
N Value (% total)	74(100%)	73(95%)	147(97%)

When asked - 'would you buy an Ellesse watch?' - the majority of the respondents said that they would not. Taking a view on the responses received for familiarity, appeal and purchase, it appears that there is a good correspondence between all three for this particular advertisement, a fact which can be supported by significance testing. Some responses indicated this connection clearly:

- M42: No, because the ad does not appeal to me. (2 similar responses)
- F53: I do not know, maybe because it is an up to date brand and most likely good quality, but the advert does not want me to buy it.
- F87: No, not from the advert, nothing is said about it or how good it is.
- F21: No, it does not appeal to me because it doesn't look very convincing and worth buying.

Participants argued, as discussed above, that they would not buy this watch because it represented poor value for money, i.e., was overpriced and not of a very good quality. Some commented that if they were planning to buy a watch, they would perhaps select other well-known and fashionable brands, which offered better value. This is more evidence of the 'wise consumer' mentality, which manifested itself throughout the answers to the question:

- F86: No - looks too posh and expensive. (4 similar responses)
- F85: No, because they are mostly a rip off, you could probably get a similar watch without the name cheaper.
- F100: No, do not like the style and it would probably be too expensive because it is a brand name.
- M80: No, I've heard of and seen better watches from family friends of mine.
- M44: No, I don't want to spend that much money on a watch.

Some respondents said that they would buy an Ellesse watch. They justified their answers by stating that they approved of and respected the Ellesse brand, perceiving it as a quality name:

- F122: Yes, because Ellesse is a big brand name and it has quality.
- M78: Yes, because again it is a proven name in the shops.
- M54: Yes. Probably because I know the company, they make good quality stuff.
- M81: Yes, because it is a good company.
- M19: Yes, the watch looks good and is from a reputable company.

As was identified earlier, the majority of the respondents argued that they would be more likely to purchase a well-known brand. It seemed that the perceived quality of the product is much more important to them than any of its other qualities. Some of the respondents

implied that they liked the style of the watches and thought they looked fashionable (also see Q.17).

Some of the respondents said they would purchase the product on the basis of this advertisement. Some statements were very apparent. For example, respondent F13 said: 'Yes [I will buy them], there is a boy and a girl on the ad, therefore it is not sexist. Because she perceived this advertisement to be not sexist, she was prepared to buy the watches. Other respondents made similarly apparent statements:

F35: Yes [I will buy them], because it [advertising] looks nice.

F120: Yes, it is quite nice. The advert encourages me to buy it.

F14: Yes, because the advert does appeal to me.

One of the male respondents (M7) even claimed that this advertisement prompts him to pester his mother for a new watch: 'It's about time I need a new watch, mum!' Thus, there is evidence here that participants do sometimes pester their parents when it comes to expensive purchases.

#### Q.18.3.5 What message the advertiser is trying to send across to you?

The participants' responses were reviewed to give a general indication of the respondents' feelings towards the advertisement. Some similar answers were obtained from respondents for which the number occurring has been indicated next to a characteristic quote, below.

In answer to the question – 'what message the advertiser is trying to send across to you?' - some of the statements participants volunteered were as follows:

F32: It's all you need to wear – that is why naked people are on the advertisements.

F68: It is a sexy watch for young, trendy people.

M83: If you wear an Ellesse watch then your partner must have one too.

M91: The message that the advertiser is trying to send is to buy the watch.

M78: That the watch is not something that just tells the time, it is also sexy and good-looking.

F124: Have a relationship that is good, long lasting like these watches.

M149: The watch will make you have a good sex life. (8 similar responses)

Many respondents were aware of the sexual aspects of this particular advertisement and this is reflected in their responses.

Words 'Designed to perform' are quite prominent. For participants this was quite straightforward - advertisers, they argued, tried to establish a link between Ellesse watches and such values as 'quality', 'performance' and 'reliability'. They claimed that this advertisement is designed to represent Ellesse watches as high quality reliable and long-lasting watches:

F31: They are good quality watches, designed to perform.

F139: Your watches are your future and they can take you into millennium.

M20: That the watch performs very well.

M63: Good quality watches for men and women.

F98: That this watch will survive through anything.

Some of the respondents also noted how the exemplary qualities of these watches are magically transferred on to the reader. The 'lucky' Ellesse watch owners-to-be are persuaded that they would not only be able to look better, 'more sophisticated', but also perform better in life, e.g. strike a good quality relationship, and/or even could perform better in bed – all for the price of a watch:

F122: Buy this watch and you will look elegant and sophisticated.

F124: Have a relationship that is good, long lasting like these watches.

M77: If you wear this watch you will get sex.

F30: They are his and her kind of watches and they look attractive and make you look nice.

M19: That if you buy this watch you will have girls trailing after you.

Thus, the respondents were able to perceive that the sexy image projected by the naked couple is passed on to the watches. They argued that the advertisers wanted their audience to believe that if they wear these watches they would be not only perceived as sexy and more desirable, but their sexual life would magically improve:

F45: That the watch has sex appeal, it will enhance your sex life.

M40: It has two people trying to talk sexy and it says 'Designed to perform', this watch improves your sex life.

M46: That Ellesse watches increase your sexual appeal.

As with the other advertisements, the majority of the respondents were also able to perceive the selling intent of the advertisement:

M7: Buy the watch.

M88: Buy a trendy watch.

M91: The message that the advertiser is trying to send is to buy the watch.

F122: Buy this watch and you will look elegant and sophisticated.

F35: The message it is trying to send across is the watch is great - come and buy it.

#### Q.18.3.6 When you look at the picture, what images come to your mind immediately?

Participants were encouraged to write down as many answers to this open-ended question as they desired. The responses were reviewed for the most common occurrences of words used to describe the images presented in the advertisement.

To the question - 'when you look at the picture, what images come to your mind immediately?' - participants came forward with the following statements: 'Sex'; 'Love/passion'; 'Relationships'; 'Darkness'; 'Silence'; 'Success'; 'Shower/water'; 'Fish'; 'Sea'; 'Refreshing'; 'Future'; 'Space'; 'Cool'; 'Winter day'.

Sex was the single most prevalent image, which came into the mind of the respondents. In fact, almost one third of participants included it in their list. As it was discussed above, this advertisement used an old method to sell – sex. According to Woodward et al. (1996), prominent sexual images are used to attract the audience's attention and act to stimulate their imagination. As a result, the attention span, which such advertisements can hope to gain, is increased and this has the effect of improving message recall. According to Solomon (1998), the slogan "Sex sells" was the slogan of the American advertising industry for many years.

In the analysis, conducted in Chapter 6, I suggested that gender roles are conventionally portrayed in this advertisement, i.e., the woman is feminine and weak, while the man is masculine and strong, and thus, this advertisement could not be said to have a progressive



stance on gender issues, however some respondents read this differently. They perceived this advertisement not to be sexist only because it portrayed both sexes, and that won their sympathy.

## **Conclusion**

A significant majority of the respondents were unfamiliar with this advertisement. Of this majority, females rated higher than males, which is surprising as this advertisement had been run in “19”, which is a popular female magazine, whose target audience is, ideally, in their late teens, as its name suggests. This might be due to the fact that, as it appears from questionnaire responses on magazines, this title was read by only 19% of female respondents. A much greater number of the respondents have shown an interest in Bliss and Sugar girls’ magazines, which target audience is, ideally, teenagers in their early and mid teens. Nevertheless, this advertisement was chosen for its presentation style and its content rather than its ability to be familiar.

The unfamiliarity of this advertisement was accompanied by a similarly low appeal. Respondents, who felt negatively towards this advertisement, used such words as ‘boring’, ‘no fun’ and ‘dull’ to describe their perception of this advertisement. Consideration should be given to the fact that they had just viewed two very active advertisements and that this advertisement could be taken as serene by comparison. Their expectations may have been somewhat polarised by this. However, some of those to whom this advertisement did not appeal were, in some cases, unable to connect the imagery used in the advertisement with the product itself.

Although unfamiliar with the product, many respondents were aware of the Ellesse name and had developed a perception of the brand as being expensive and exclusive. Indeed, some thought that the brand was overpriced, were seeking better value in their purchases and felt that Ellesse watch did not give value for money. Those respondents, to whom this advertisement appealed, were enticed by a number of the aspects of the presentation style used, such as the colours and the layout. The presence of the man and woman in this advertisement, whom the respondents identified with sex appeal and beauty, helped, in their opinion, to present the product in a sexier manner. They felt that this closely

intertwined, semi-naked couple, who were themselves sexy, also transferred this value to the product, thus increasing its desirability. The respondents were also able to identify how the presence of both man and woman in the advertisement instantly made the product interesting to both genders. Some of the male respondents took the sexiness idea a little further and felt that the product could make the wearer sexier, and hence, more appealing to the opposite sex.

Participants - both those who said that it appealed to them and those who said that it did not - were keen to discuss the presentation of this advertisement. From their responses, it appears that such details as computer aided graphics and design were amongst those factors, which influenced their willingness to purchase. Some respondents said that the presentation was such that it did not make the advertisement appealing; some said that they liked the advertisement because of its clever juxtaposition of colours.

Although some of the respondents were clearly influenced by this advertisement, it did not stop them from being able to skilfully analyse it. They appeared to understand the reasons why the advertisers have chosen their actors, perceiving that a connection was established between their positive qualities and the product. Most participants were able to offer informed and critical explanations to the questions - 'does this advertisement appeal to you?' and 'would you buy this product?' They did not fail to notice that such a persuasive tactic as sex was employed in this advertisement and some even decried its use. They understood that sex was employed simply to sell the watches. The most common images, which participants suggested were 'sex' and 'love'. They perceived that two young people, a man and a woman, were linked to the watches by simple juxtaposition: they carry an image, which is then transferred to the watches. Participants also noted that the people and the watches were linked by the words 'Designed to perform'. This connotes potency of the relationship and the watches. This relationship is designed to perform because people prepared to make it happen, so the watches, by connection, are designed to perform because Ellesse Watch guarantees its quality.

In analysing the messages present in the advertisement, the participants highlighted many of the tactics encoded and used. The use of gender, sex and beauty were all mentioned and linked to the product. Respondents identified with the age of the models used, as being broadly similar to their own age and were able to explain that the advertisers used these

actors in order to target young people such as themselves. Again they identified the use of both sexes in the advertisement as making it, and the product, appeal to both males and females.

Statistical analysis of the cross-tabulations for this question is given below, in Table 7.26.

Table 7.26 Significance values for crosstabulations

Ellesse Watch	All	Male	Female
Appeal vs. Purchase	<. 001	<. 001	<. 001
Familiarity vs. Appeal	<. 001	.001	0.16
Familiarity vs. Purchase	<. 001	0.006	0.007

The majority of participants said that they would not buy this watch. A few attributed this to the advertisement itself, but the majority cited other reasons such as value for money and reasons of style. There was evidence of peer pressure, particularly in the negative responses, as some respondents considered the style of the watch, or the brand itself, to be undesirable.

The statistical analysis provides evidence to indicate that there is considerable dependence between the three criteria assessed by the quantitative questions posed. The only exception to this being the link between familiarity and appeal for the female respondents.

Of those, who said that they would buy the product, many used their existing knowledge of the brand's reputation claiming that, as it was a good, well-known brand, the watch was also likely to be a quality product. In some cases, respondents said that the appeal of the advertisement was sufficient to persuade them to buy the product.

## Q.18.4 Tommy Hilfiger

### Analysis

#### Q.18.4.1 Are you familiar with this advertisement?

This question was designed to be a closed question, requiring simple Yes/No answers.

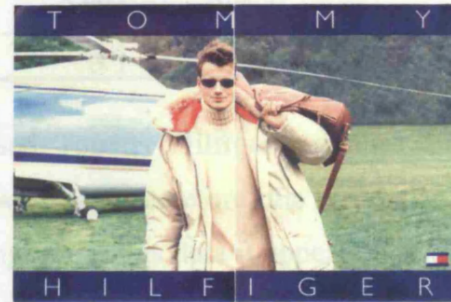


Table 7.27 Familiarity with Tommy Hilfiger

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	38%	45%	42%
No	62%	55%	58%
N Value (% total) (No people participating)	74(100%)	75(97%)	149(99%)

These results show that the majority of participants implied that they are not familiar with this advertisement. Here, female respondents appeared to be more familiar with this advertisement than males. As in the case with Hilfiger Athletic, this fact is not easy to account for, due to the fact that this advertisement was placed in FHM. This may be due to the fact that many magazines feature the same advertisements and it could also have appeared on billboards.

#### Q.18.4.2 What products does it advertise?

The responses to this open-ended question were assessed to determine correct recognition of the advertised product. These results are presented in the table below.

Table 7.28 Identification of the products

	Male	Female	Total
Correct	77%	62%	70%
Incorrect	22%	34%	28%
N Value (% total)	73(99%)	74(96%)	147(97%)

The Tommy Hilfiger advertisement, which advertised Tommy Hilfiger's clothes and accessories, was somewhat vague and not straightforward, and therefore, the respondents were asked to identify what products it was advertising. From this data it appears that the majority of the respondents knew or were able to guess the correct answer. In this case, more males than females answered correctly. Again, this may be due to the fact that this advertisement was placed in FHM and, because more males than females read it, the former had more time to study this advertisement in detail than the latter. This explanation, however, is not very appropriate, as it contradicts the findings of Q.18.4.1 - only somewhat more than one third of male respondents said that they were familiar with this advertisement. Otherwise, it may be explained by the possibility that males were generally more familiar with the Tommy Hilfiger men's range than females.

These results demonstrate that participants knew this advertisement, or the Tommy Hilfiger's range of clothing, quite well - only 28% of them could not give a correct answer to the question - 'what products does it advertise?'

#### Q.18.4.3 Does this advertisement appeal to you?

Positive and negative appeal were assessed from the participants' responses to this open-ended question and reported in the table below.

Table 7.29 Appeal of the Tommy Hilfiger advert

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	32%	35%	34%
No	68%	65%	66%
N Value (% total)	71(96%)	74(96%)	145(96%)

These results show that the Tommy Hilfiger advertisement did not appeal to the majority of the respondents. Here, there is a positive correspondence between appeal of the

advertisement and familiarity with it, but a negative relationship between recognition of the product and appeal.

The most frequent response, volunteered by participants, was that they thought that this advertisement was too prosaic, serious, and consequently, 'boring'. As discussed earlier (ref. Q.18.1 and Q.18.2), participants already demonstrated that they did not like serious looking, grown-up types of advertisements and preferred effulgent, colourful, and playful advertisements. Though, it is necessary to mention here that some of them also disliked 'childish' advertisements, as the responses to the Sunny Delight advertisement showed.

Some participants, who were exclusively females, saw this advertisement as being targeted principally at men, because of the sexy man in it. As discussed earlier, they were generally keen to speculate who this advertisement was targeted at. As it appears from the responses listed below, these participants resisted the appeal of this advertisement mainly because they did not believe that it was targeted at them:

F70: Not really, because it is advertising for men.

F73: No, because it is men's clothes.

F146: No, it is obviously something to do with men and I am not a man.

F55: I wouldn't exactly buy for me, because it's menswear.

F32: No - there is a man on it - a woman can't wear man's clothes.

As found by Buckingham (1993a: 256), young people in general are irritated when it "is not immediately clear what is being advertised". Likewise, for many respondents this advertisement lost its appeal because it was not straightforward as to what product is being advertised. Throughout the discourse of this question, statements like - 'you can't see at first what it is they are advertising' - appeared with regular frequency. As is evident from the responses quoted below, many participants said that this advertisement did not appeal to them because they did not know for sure what was being advertised:

M115: Not really as you can't see at first what it is advertising.

M63: No, because you cannot tell what they are advertising.

F28: No, because I am not sure what it is advertising.

F29: No, it is not obvious what they are trying to sell.

M88: No, not really, because do not know what it is advertising.

M93: No, it has not explained what is being advertised.

F87: No, there is no meaning to it.

As in the case of Hilfiger Athletics, some participants argued that they did not want to pay just for the label. They argued that the Tommy Hilfiger brand was expensive and did not offer any value for money, because it was not very good quality and was vulgar. Again, participants were keen to present themselves as 'wise consumers':

M18: No, any one knows it's not very good quality, it is expensive, does not look any good and the name is splattered onto the clothes, it's like being an advert.

F30: No, because I do not like the clothes and I think the man's ugly.

M69: No, because I have got good clothes already.

F144: No, because I would never buy an item of Tommy Hilfiger clothing in my life. But the man is quite fit.

M140: No, because they are highly overpriced and I do not like the look.

As it appears from the responses above, if participants liked the advertising, they were going to think seriously about buying the product, and vice versa, if they were not interested in buying the product, there were not going to be attracted by the advertising. For example, some of the female respondents said that the advertisement did not appeal to them because the product is 'only for men', therefore they are not interested in it; and one male respondent said that the clothes are 'very expensive', so he cannot afford to buy them and, therefore, he is not interested in the advertisement.

Nevertheless, approximately one third of participants indicated that this advertisement appealed to them. According to them, the major appeal of this advertisement was that it happened to advertise their favourite brand. The words, which they used to describe this brand, included: 'original', 'nice', 'common' and 'trendy'. Many female respondents said that the advertisement appealed to them because they liked its model, who was young, sporty and good-looking:

F139: Yes, because there is a gorgeous man on the advert.

F100: Yes. It has a good-looking man on it!

F37: Yes - the man is rather appealing.

F68: Yes - a good looking man!

- F45: Yes - the man looks sexy.
- F72: Yes, because the man in the advert is quite good looking.
- F35: Yes, because there is a nice fit man on the front.
- F132: Yes, because they have used an attractive man, wearing good clothes.

As this type of comment originates only from female respondents, this provides further evidence to Baker et al. (1977), who demonstrated that teenagers pay more attention and display their affinity to an advertisement, which contains models of opposite gender.

Because Tommy Hilfiger is a designer brand, the majority of the respondents discussed the looks and fashionability of the clothes and accessories and, of course, the quality of this brand. From their responses it appears that these qualities are quite important determinants of participants' affinity or otherwise:

- F136: Yes, because I love Hilfiger clothes.
- M90: Yes - I like it and it is a good brand name.
- M67: Yes, as it is a brand name.
- M125: Yes, because it is a good brand.
- F72: Yes, because it's a good brand name.

Yet again, respondents refer to the popularity, 'commonness' of this brand amongst their friends. As respondent M77 said (quoted in full in Q.18.1), teenagers 'will buy what they think everyone else is buying', providing evidence for the existence of peer pressure:

- F60: Yes, because Hilfiger is common in our generation.

Some respondents (perhaps unwittingly) admitted that this advertising influenced them. However, they were able to perceive what persuasive tactic influenced them. As with previous advertisements, they were able to understand that this advertisement established a connection between the product and the model:

- M19: Yes, makes you think you will look like the man.
- M93: Good looking, makes people think they will look as good as this man.
- F108: They think women will fancy the man and other men might want to be like him.
- F127: They chose a good-looking man so they can show that you can also look good in their clothes.



- F144: Maybe he is trying to say that if you wear these clothes, you will be as fit as the man in the picture.
- F24: Because girls will be attracted to the man and men will want to look and dress like the man.
- F30: Because he looks manly and he would be attractive to some women and a role model for some men who would like to look like him.
- F98: Because men might think that if they wear the clothes they will look like him.

#### Q.18.4.4 Why do you think the advertiser chose this man to advertise these products?

Data obtained to this open-ended question was qualitatively analysed, paying particular attention to the words used by the respondents to describe the model in the advertisement. The responses were also reviewed to identify similar responses. Such a review allowed approximate quantities to be associated with the various types of responses obtained.

In answer to the question - 'why do you think the advertisers chose this particular person to advertise their products?' - participants replied that it was because this man was young, affluent, fit and attractive.

- F68: As he is young and good-looking.
- M74: Because he looks young, healthy and good-looking.
- M89: Young, hip, cool, trendy.
- M44: He is young and the same age as the target audience.

They also thought that this man was chosen because of his sexual appeal and strength:

- F124: Young, fit, sexy looking.
- F132: Because he is attractive.
- M36: He is sexually appealing to women, I think.
- F128: They chose a good-looking man so they can show that you can also look good in their clothes.
- F146: He supposedly sexy and women are meant to find him attractive, so that people watch the advert, which will make likely that people will buy it.
- M46: He is slick looking, well groomed, has strong muscles, and handsome.

All the images, discussed above, sum up to one: that of a 'quality person', which in turn projects an image of a 'quality product'. Participants again did not have any difficulty to perceive that there was a connection between the product, the model and such a value, as

quality. Other respondents implied that Tommy Hilfiger products, which are advertised by this model, are perceived as ‘quality’ products.

#### Q.18.4.5 Would you buy the product advertised?

This question was designed to be an open-ended question, where some space was provided for participants to formulate their own answers, briefly explaining themselves. Before coding, responses were analysed and, where possible, were grouped into positive, negative and unclear answers. These are presented in the table below.

Table 7.30 Purchase of Tommy Hilfiger product

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	36%	32%	34%
No	64%	68%	66%
Maybe	0%	0%	0%
N Value (% total) (No people participating)	72(97%)	72(94%)	144(95%)

In answer to the question – ‘would you buy these products and why’ - the majority of the respondents said that they would not. As with the Ellesse advertisement, there was a correspondence between the responses obtained for familiarity, appeal and purchase, with the latter appearing to be the most closely linked.

Some respondents argued that that they would not buy the products advertised, because they did not like the Tommy Hilfiger brand in general. They were critical of this brand, condemning it as a ‘cheap and common’ brand, which is only ‘for townies’. According to one female respondent (F144), ‘...townies are people that dress in Nike, Kappa and Hilfiger and think they are good when they are not’. According to Collins Shorter English Dictionary, “townie, often disparaging, a permanent resident in a town, esp. as distinct from country dwellers (or suburban dwellers) or students”. F144 also said: ‘I would never by an item of Tommy Hilfiger clothing in my life’. From their responses it is clear that some participants distinguished this brand as a common brand and, therefore, unacceptable for use by them, being middle class students. Such a phenomenon was clearly identified by Auty and Elliott (1998) in their statement that “fashion involvement is likely to be associated with differences in sensitivity to social surroundings in that those who are

highly motivated to fit into a particular group will need to be aware of the fashion cues not just of that group but other less desirable groups so that the “wrong” cues may be avoided”.

Moreover, these students were the ones, who were able to decry advertising as subordinate to exploitative and dishonest companies, and Tommy Hilfiger’s company, in their opinion, was one of those:

M143: No, they are [clothes] made in countries where people get paid next to nothing, then sold here for a lot. (1 similar response)

F100: No, the label is too expensive.

M18: No, it's townie shite. (3 similar responses)

M65: No, because I don't like Hilfiger.

These responses serve as evidence that some participants were aware of such political-economy issues, as the exploitation of workers from the Third World countries by rich Western companies. Consequently, they argued, consumers in this country are also exploited, because they are charged much more than it costs to produce Tommy Hilfiger clothing. These participants were not prepared to pay just for the label, especially when they suspected that the company exploits them or, as it is obvious in this case, others.

Contrary to the respondents, quoted above, somewhat more than one third of respondents said that they would buy Hilfiger’s products because they liked the brand. They stated that it is a quality brand and they respect it because it is a famous designer name. My study shows that designer names are important for participants, e.g., most of them have designer clothes in their wardrobes (ref. Q.17).

F136: Yes, I would - it looks comfortable and it looks good.

M5: Yes, because I like Tommy Hilfiger things, I have had them before and nothing gone wrong.

M105: Yes, because it is a designer label.

M90: Yes - I like it and it is a good brand name.

No respondents admitted to being influenced to buy the product solely as a result of the advertisement. Many cited some previous knowledge or awareness of the brand.

#### Q.18.4.6 What message the advertiser is trying to send across to you?

Responses to this question were reviewed in order to gain an understanding of the respondents' feelings towards the advertisement and also to identify similar responses. Such a review allowed approximate quantities to be associated with the various types of responses obtained.

In response to the question - 'what message is the advertiser trying to send across to you?' – most participants were able to volunteer many sophisticated, critical answers:

- F29: You will be cool and fly around in a helicopter (get noticed) if you wear Tommy Hilfiger.
- M17: If you wear these clothes you can look good no matter what you are doing.
- F30: You can be powerful and rich if you wear Hilfiger.
- M46: Tommy Hilfiger clothes are action packed and worn by sexy people.
- F68: It is an outdoor, trendy sports make.
- M75: That it is only for upper class.
- F53: These clothes are for the up-to-date cool people.
- M140: 'I am an exciting man - wear what I wear'.
- F24: Handsome men are associated with Tommy Hilfiger products.

Tommy Hilfiger defined his style thus: "My style is sophisticated, to a certain extent athletic, worldly, and it reflects an ethnic mix, but it is also right on the edge". This quotation can be used to characterise the Tommy Hilfiger's advertisement. On the picture there is a sophisticated man, a man of the world, who treats adventure as an every-day part of his life. A man of action, who is rich, confident, and of course, handsome.

The link between the images that the man projects and the products advertised was recognised by the majority of the respondents. The respondents perceived that this advertisement led its viewer to believe that if he purchases the clothes, he would automatically acquire the life style, which the man in the advertisement enjoys.

#### Q.18.4.7 When you look at the picture, what images come to your mind immediately?

Again, participants were encouraged to write down as many answers to this question as they desired. The responses were reviewed for the most common occurrences of words used to describe the images presented in the advertisement.

In response to the question - 'when you look at the picture, what images come to your mind immediately?' - respondents came forward with the following statements: 'Flying'; 'Sky'; 'Helicopter'; 'Outdoors'; 'Nature'; 'Action'; 'Holidays'; 'Winter'; 'Wealth'; 'Handsome'; 'Confidence'; 'Careless'; 'Cool'; 'Calmness'; 'Warmth';

The participants were aware of the links, established by the advertiser, between the product and the life-style portrayed. The man looks out from this advertisement as if to tell its viewers that they too could enjoy his lifestyle if they bought Tommy Hilfiger. All the images, quoted by the respondents, are attributes of that lifestyle. Such images as 'wealth', 'confidence', 'outdoors' and 'action' were volunteered more often than others.

#### **Conclusion**

Nearly two-thirds of respondents were unfamiliar with this advertisement, with males making up a greater part of this section. This is in spite of the advertisement having been extracted from FHM, the most read male magazine amongst the male respondents. The presentation of the advertisement was such that it was not immediately obvious, to a number of respondents, exactly what was being advertised. I expect that many respondents used their prior knowledge of the Tommy Hilfiger brand to suggest that it was actually clothes and accessories, which were being advertised. Many respondents probably have experience of other Tommy Hilfiger campaigns, which could explain why the products advertised are quite well known.

However, this advertisement did not appeal to many of the respondents. As with Hilfiger Athletics, there were some outside factors, which could explain this lack of appeal. Female respondents correctly identified this advertisement as being for male clothing and accessories; hence, they were generally not interested in it and said that it was not meant to

appeal to them. Those who were unable to identify the products being portrayed found the advertisement unappealing for this reason and, again, a certain number used their pre-conceptions of the brand to put the advertisement down. Pricing and value also figured as important factors. This advertisement appealed to less male than female participants, the majority of whom cited the good-looking man as being the main reason for this advertisement to appeal to them. Both males and females identified with the man as presenting a positive image, obtained from both being handsome, and also wearing Tommy Hilfiger clothing. It was felt that men would desire the image/appearance of the model. This image of youth, affluence and attractiveness portrayed by the model were values, which both genders identified with.

For this advertisement there was a positive correspondence between the appeal of the advertisement and the number of respondents prepared to purchase the product, as shown in Table 7.31. The arguments for and against purchase of the product centred mainly on knowledge and perception of the brand. The good quality and designer nature of the product were highlighted in a positive sense. However, negative respondents felt that the brand/products were overpriced and also, on a social level, identified a certain amount of exploitation, which occurs in the manufacture of these garments. Again, some, giving it a certain position in the fashion world raised the use of the product/brand by “townies”. This is perhaps a veiled reference to some sort of peer pressure, although, from the responses obtained, there is no real evidence for this.

The respondents recognised the messages encoded in this advertisement and were able to ascertain the meaning behind the majority of these messages. They were able to justify their answers, frequently giving critically informed responses. They were also able to display sound judgement in response to the question - ‘why do you think the advertisers chose this particular person to advertise their product.’ They identified that the advertisement targeted audiences, which had gender and age characteristics common to the model.

The significance values, given below, do indicate that, for this advert, there was considerable dependency between the categories of familiarity, appeal and desire to purchase for both male and female respondents. The respondents are, therefore, showing

some consistency in their support for this product, in other words, those who like the brand are both aware of and approve of its advertising campaigns and vice-versa.

Table 7.31 Significance values for crosstabulations

Tommy Hilfiger	All	Male	Female
Appeal vs. Purchase	<. 001	<. 001	<. 001
Familiarity vs. Appeal	<. 001	0.003	0.002
Familiarity vs. Purchase	<. 001	<. 001	0.015

They were also able to perceive that a link was established between the desirable values and the products/brand and, successfully decoded the encoded images. They proved able to provide a good set of responses regarding the messages being sent by the advertiser. They also identified that the advertiser wanted them to think that wearing these clothes can help them achieve a certain lifestyle, look attractive and appear wealthy.

## **Conclusion for Questionnaire findings**

In general, participants were able to demonstrate their ability to critically analyse and decode advertisements. They were aware of the intents of advertising – in particular its selling intent, and were very often critical towards it. They were sceptical as to whether the advertisements tell the truth and were keen to present themselves as ‘wise consumers’, who are not influenced by advertising. Nevertheless, this study provides some evidence that advertising influenced them. Significance values, for the relationship between attentiveness to advertising and product purchase, for example, were indicative of a positive connection. These findings demonstrate that, at some point, the majority of the respondents (52%) had used a money-off coupon from magazines to buy an advertised product.

Moreover, almost three quarters of participants admitted that they had bought a product in connection with an advert. In support of this, they cited an affinity for the product as the most influential purchasing factor. The actual quality of the advert was considered by 19%, of those responding positively to the product purchase question, as having influenced their purchase.

This was further investigated by considering the influence of media exposure, for which, the evidence gathered suggests that respondents are regularly exposed to a considerable amount of magazine and commercial television advertising. As was discussed at the British Psychological Society Conference in Glasgow (2001) (in The Times, March 30, 2001, p.7 by Alexandra Frean), “the longer that parents leave their children watching television, the more toys they will be asked for at Christmas”. Although this statement is about younger children, I would argue that high exposure to advertising enlarges adolescents’ marketing knowledge and makes them sophisticated decoders of advertising (ref. Mangleburg et al., 1999). The evidence from the first part of the questionnaire did not, however, demonstrate a definite link between media exposure and the purchase of a product. A corresponding assessment of the participants’ analysis of advertisements gave information on familiarity, which could be construed as representing exposure, and purchase. This generally indicated a positive connection, with significance values below 0.05 for three out of the four adverts presented. On the basis of this data, though, I would not consider there to be a significant association between exposure and purchase.



Despite this, one third of respondents did admit to having been directly influenced by advertising, when considering product purchase and, for the remaining two-thirds the advert may have been considered as a mere reminder rather than a persuasive device.

Therefore, I would consider that the evidence presented could neither prove nor disprove such arguments as Boush et al.'s (1994:173) "that there is no guarantee that having such a knowledge [marketing knowledge] protects one from persuasive attempts".

What does emerge from the data collected is that participants cannot be characterised as innocents, who just take in advertising messages without attempting to analyse them, as argued by Unnikrishnan (1996) and Fox (1996). This study proves that participants in their majority are intelligent decoders of advertising, displaying an ability to critically analyse it and give judgements about it. Nevertheless, there are indications that advertising influences them. According to Young (1990:124), "there is some experimental evidence to show that although children are equipped with knowledge of advertising's techniques, and understanding of advertising's intent, and express a cynicism about advertising in general, they are still influenced by an ad to the extent it will affect their choice of product".

## **Limitations**

Though my study provides some evidence that the respondents proved to be intelligent decoders of advertisements, I felt it is important to mention a few limitations, which may arise. First of all, it is not clear from my study if participants are 'clever decoders' of advertisements all the time, or whether they are only when prompted. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that the questionnaire was conducted under 'artificial' circumstances, since most of the advertisements in magazines and on television are consumed in the home.

## Focus Group Findings

Using the information from the focus group interviews, this section will aim to investigate how adolescents respond to commercials, i.e., whether they like them, dislike them, find them trustworthy, untrustworthy or are simply indifferent to them, and their reasons for it. Both qualitative and quantitative assessments will be made of the focus group data, the quantitative data having been extracted from the coding of the interview transcripts using the NUD.IST software. I interviewed thirty-five (100%) participants in four focus groups, out of who seventeen (49%) were male students and eighteen (51%) were female students. Because the purpose of this study was not to compare the focus groups' data against each of the four groups, but to analyse this data all at once so it could compliment each other, I will not distinguish between the groups but report joint results of all four interviews.

To simplify the task for participants, they were asked to think about the commercials shown to them and encouraged to make specific reference to a selected commercial when talking about their likes and dislikes. However, I also encouraged them to talk about advertisements in general, and bring examples of their favourites into our discussion. I tried constantly to encourage them to explain themselves and to consider why they adopted a particular attitude or view. Their responses ranged from definite likes to definite dislikes with a minority of indifferent responses.

My own analysis of the advertisements presented is given in Chapter 6, together with the corresponding limitations. I feel that it is important to mention that my analysis will not be used to measure the decoding skills of focus group participants. However, I shall refer to the analysis during discussion of the participant's responses.

The interview transcripts were used to provide both qualitative and quantitative data from the focus groups. As explained in Chapter 5 "Methodologies", the NUD.IST software was used to organise and count numbers of text units, which referenced a particular topic. These numbers were broken down into their male and female components and are presented in tables as a series of percentages. As for the questionnaire tables, the following formula was used to derive the percentages,

$$Percentage = \frac{Frequency\ of\ response}{Sample\ Size(N\ Value)} \times 100\%$$

The basis for the percentages is the sample size, here termed the N value, which is quoted at the bottom of each table and represents either the number of males, females or the total number of participants who responded to a particular theme. This value can, therefore, vary between each theme as different numbers of respondents participated in each of them. It should also be noted that the sum of the percentages will not necessarily equal 100% as the same respondents can answer on more than one advertisement at a time.

The time constraints were such that it was not possible to obtain verbal responses from all of the participants. At the expense of obtaining more ordered data, which was really the realm of the questionnaire, I thought it necessary to allow as unconstrained discussion as possible, in the hope that it would promote the formation of better ideas. It is for this reason that at times the statistical data, portrayed in the tables presented in this section, seems incomplete. However, its main intention was to illustrate trends and not to provide exact details.

The layout of this section follows that of the interview guide, which was designed to provide information about the measures indicated in Chapter 5 “Methodology”. Thus, participant’s likes and dislikes are presented first, which should provide insight into their general attitude towards the advertisements shown and advertising in general. As a means of investigating their scepticism, the results of whether they thought the advertisements trustworthy, follows. Next, the tactics, which participants perceived as having been used in the advertisements, and the factors, which were likely to encourage purchase, are presented. Finally, the economic functions of advertising, as perceived by the participants, are discussed.

Full transcripts for the four interview sessions can be found in the appendix. As with the open responses on the questionnaire, the respondents’ names have been replaced with a code. Thus, a male respondent was coded as Mn and a female respondent – as Fn, where n represents a unique number. The number assigned to each respondent is the same as that

assigned to him or her during the questionnaire to enable comparisons to be performed between the two sets of data.

#### Theme 1 Why did you like/dislike advertisements shown/Advertising in general?

I reviewed the transcripts for instances where the participants expressed their favour or disfavour for any of the advertisements, which had been shown to them, or advertising in general. This was carried out on a per participant basis and repetitions of sentiment by the same participant were not counted. Because of time constraints, not every participant was able to respond to this question and hence the N value has been adjusted accordingly. The figure quoted in brackets next to each N value represents the percentage of the total number of respondents (i.e., 17 males, 18 females, 35 total).

Table 7.32 Like/dislike of adverts (from transcripts)

	Male	Female	Total
Liked	64%	58%	62%
Disliked	36%	42%	38%
N value (% total)	14(82%)	12(67%)	26(74%)

After viewing all the advertisements shown to them, participants were asked, - ‘what advertisements did you like/dislike?’ As is evident from this data, more participants, particularly the males, said that they liked rather than disliked the advertisements. Considering the data in light of the advertisements presented during the session, the FCUK Fashion, FCUK Hygiene and Wonderbra advertisements were liked the most. Conversely, the most disliked advertisement was Juice Up. Approximately one quarter of participants did not provide answers to this question (by saying ‘did not provide answers’, I mean did not speak out in response to the question).

Table 7.33 shows the proportions of specific references made to the advertisements shown, when reviewing the participants likes and dislikes. This table resulted from the answers to a multiple-response question, where participants could provide a positive or negative response for as many advertisements as they desired. Therefore, the percentages quoted have been based on the N values given at the bottom of the table, which represent the number of respondents who participated in answering this question. The number of

responses obtained in each category is also given, for reference. Note that the sum of the percentages will not necessarily equal 100% as the same respondents can answer on more than one advertisement at a time.

Table 7.33 Like/dislike of adverts on a per advert basis (from transcripts)

	Like			Dislike		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
FCUK Hygiene	14%	33%	23%	0%	0%	0%
Daniel Christian	7%	17%	12%	0%	0%	0%
Wonderbra	43%	8%	27%	0%	17%	8%
Maybelline	14%	0%	8%	14%	8%	12%
Juice Up	7%	0%	4%	29%	50%	38%
FCUK Fashion	14%	42%	27%	7%	0%	4%
N value (100%)	14(82%)	12(67%)	26(74%)	14(82%)	12(67%)	26(74%)
No. of responses	14	12	26	7	9	16

As is evident from the table above, there is an apparent difference between male and female affinities. 19% more female than male respondents liked the FCUK Hygiene advertisement and 35% more male than female respondents liked the Wonderbra advertisement. Baker et al. (1977), who encountered a similar phenomenon in their study, argued that people, in general, pay more attention and display their affinity to those advertisements, which contain models of opposite gender. However, this is not always the case, as proven by the respondents' reaction to the Juice Up advertisement – 21% more female than male respondents disliked this advertisement although it featured a male model. Thus, the explanation of Baker et al. (1997), even though it does seem to work in some cases, cannot be applied to all of them. Participants always appear to have many reasons, for liking or disliking the advertisements, which I will take into consideration, when analysing their responses later on.

The FCUK Fashion advertisement was also perceived differently by male and female participants. According to the data from the table above, 28% more female than male respondents liked this advertisement. Such a preference is not surprising, when considering the questionnaire responses to Q.6 and Q.13, in which 79% of female respondents,

compared to only 45% of male respondents said that they were interested in clothes advertisements in magazines, and 86% of female respondents, compared to only 51% of male respondents said that they were interested in clothes advertisements on television.

### Theme 1.1 Why do you like the advertisements shown and advertising in general?

In justifying their responses, many respondents made reference to the tactics, which they had noticed being used in the advertisements presented, expressing a liking for those, which used such persuasive tactics, as abbreviation, slogans, messages and headlines. The semiotic study identified a number of persuasive tactics, many of which were similarly identified by the participants.

My analysis showed that the majority of participants made reference to persuasive tactics. One particular set of advertisements, which exploited these tactics, was the FCUK (Fashion and Hygiene) advertisements. It is evident from the responses below that participants particularly enjoyed discussing these advertisements. Their discourse revealed that these advertisements were perceived as clever, thought-provoking, high quality advertisements. Participants viewed these advertisements in a similar fashion to crossword puzzles, enjoying solving them and said that they enjoyed being able to interact with them:

M131: I thought they were all [magazine adverts] good, catchy.

Interviewer: Are they thought provoking in any way?

F120: Yes, because they don't give too much away.

F51: It makes you more interested [talks about FCUK].

F139: I liked the FCUK one [Fashion and Hygiene], because I liked the word abbreviation they have, it is very good. I also liked this one [Daniel Christian Jeans], because I liked the slogan.

F130: FCUK slogan helps you to remember the ad.

F85: I like French Connection [Fashion]- I found every word they said added to FCUK, they were going through them. I liked French Connection [Hygiene] - they're spelling the word again, it is clever word play.

F72: The French Connection [Fashion & Hygiene] ones, I think, their adverts are a little cleverer, more brought about.

F71: I liked French Connection [Fashion] ad, because it was linked, they shared some interest.

It was identified that, the content of the FCUK advertisements was such that the viewer was required to make a series of connections in order to properly understand the advertisement. A number of the participants identified the existence of a link in these advertisements and were able to understand that some form of word play was being used based around the FCUK brand name. This is a general characteristic of this brand's advertising campaign.

Such advertisements as FCUK and Daniel Christian Jeans were identified as making use of word-play puzzles and slogans, concluding that these would act as an aide-mémoire. In addition to the word-play puzzle, the use of humour was also apparent in the FCUK Fashion advertisement, which was connected with the portrayal of a playful teenage lifestyle. M52 and M94 also identified the use of this tactic:

M52: I liked the French Connection [Fashion] one, because it was funny, because I think they met before, when they popped into each other, they'd met before and they liked each other.

M94: ...I liked French Connection [Fashion], it was quite funny I think, I understood that she was supposed to work in the kitchen at the party; they talked about pants, pretty funny that.

The use of advertisements, such as this, which portray a type of lifestyle, has already been shown to be popular amongst adolescents (see the section "Questionnaire findings", "Hilfiger Athletics"). This format allows participants to link this advertisement's story to their own lives, as romance can always find its way into every teenager's life. Participants implied that they liked this advertisement, because it was unlike other advertisements. There was also an appreciation for modesty on behalf of the advertiser, as participants did not like to feel the advertisement was too pushy, and preferred to be given space to come to their own conclusions about the product.

F130: I think that the FCUK [Fashion] one was good, it stands out; it is not trying to say how much better it [FCUK] is. Whether the Maybelline one is trying to say how much better it [their product] is, but French Connection is leaving it up to you, is not that pushy.

F85: The FCUK one, I think, like, sounds better, because it does not push the product too much in your face, it sort of, discreetly saying - well, this is the product. The Maybelline one, I think, they are trying to push the product in your face. The Juice Up one, I think, they do not really tell you much about it, and they're saying here is this product.

Not everybody, however, was able to understand the FCUK advertisements, although they were still attracted to them. It is obvious, from the comments below, that some participants

were not able to recognise fully the meaning of the imagery and tactics used, and therefore could not fully appreciate the messages encoded in the advertisement:

F21: I liked the French Connection [Fashion] one, it catches your attention, and it is different to the rest. I did not know what were they trying to achieve, I did not understand it.

F30: I liked the French Connection [Fashion] one, it just, probably caught my attention, but I did not understand what it was about.

F51 and M129 also talked about advertising in general when trying to explain what advertisements they considered as 'catchy'. In their opinion, advertisements do not have to be boring or repetitive, and must be short, quick and sharp, delivering a message without the assistance of many words. This provides evidence for Thau (1996), who claims that adolescents like advertisements, which grab their attention from the beginning.

F51: Yeah, it's got to get my attention straight away. Like if they're really catchy you might want to look into them in detail, like on TV, if there was a catchy ad on TV, you'd want to carry on watching it. If it started off with something really boring, then you'd just switch off.

M129: Little short quick adverts that don't say much, like Play station - you see a hedgehog running around.

Unlike participants who enjoyed challenging, thought-provoking, complicated advertisements, M129 liked the Juice Up advertisement, because it was 'simple and straightforward':

M129: The only one which catches my eye is the Juice Up advert, because it's very, sort of, simple, straightforward, you don't have all the people prancing about.

The majority of participants were very forthcoming about what advertisements in general they liked/dislike. Advertisements, such as Coca-Cola for example, were liked because of their humorous, honest and caring attitude, providing further evidence to Reed's (1994) argument that such values as trustworthiness, generosity and honesty add trust to brands:

F37: I really like that Coke one, as well. I like that one. It was set in an office and shows normal day, like, and you know that the product can make a bit of a difference.



For participants, quoted below, the main reason for liking an advertisement was that it featured either their favourite celebrity (e.g., Sarah Michelle Gellar), or just beautiful models:

- M94: I liked Wonderbra, it has got a nice girl on it, not that I wear a bra, but it gets my attention, if I wore a bra and I looked like that, I would be happy. I liked the Maybelline one, because it has got Michelle Gellar on as well. She is pretty nice.
- F30: I liked the FCUK one and I thought that the Wonderbra one was OK, made me want to buy it.
- M78: I liked Daniel Christian jeans, because it has got some nice woman, pulling his jeans down. I liked the Wonderbra one, she is pretty nice.
- M52: The Maybelline one, I thought it is quite good because they had Michelle Gellar in it.

From the gender of these participants, it is evident that male students are more likely to appreciate the presence of a beautiful female model in a commercial than their female counterparts. There is, therefore, evidence here that many advertisements, which are primarily intended for women, could have an equal (or even stronger) appeal to men, and vice-versa (for example, see the section “Questionnaire findings”, “Tommy Hilfiger”).

Likewise, in their study Baker et al. (1977:540) show that “the male subjects... react positively to the attractiveness of the female model...”, and “the sex and physical attractiveness of an ad model.... seem to be an important determinant of the attention-getting value of the advertisement and the subjects liking the ad”. Accordingly, Fowles (1996:221) claims “adolescents find opposite-gender celebrities more attractive and interesting”.

M94 considered the Wonderbra advertisement from a girl’s perspective, saying that if he were a girl, he would be happy to look ‘like that’. F30 seemed to agree with him even to the point that she was ready to buy the product advertised, just to look like the woman in the Wonderbra advertisement. Thus, the operation of the advertisement like a mirror, as identified in my semiotic study, has functioned successfully in this instance as the viewers have imagined themselves in the position of the model.

## Theme 1.2 Why do you not like the advertisements shown and advertising in general?

38% of participants said that they did not like the advertisements shown or did not like advertising in general. As demonstrated in the questionnaire analysis, participants disliked advertisements, which they considered to be too repetitive or too long. The semiotic study showed that all the advertisements contained a variety of signs, links and meanings and, hence, from an analysis perspective, were quite interesting. The suggestion by the participants that some of the advertisements were boring is, therefore, a possible indication that they interpreted them differently:

F21: I did not like the juice up - boring, I did not understand it....

F71: ...Juice Up was boring, there was no connection.

When participants were bored by an advertisement, they did not want to discuss it in detail, expressing themselves in a few words. Juice Up, for example, was said to be boring because they could not understand the connection between the advertisement and the product, which was discussed in detail in my study. More specifically, they did not understand how a teenager and his private life could be linked with juice. As F96's comment illustrates - to quote just one representative judgement - when participants could not 'relate' the advertised product to the advertisement, they had difficulties to recall what is being advertised:

F96: You might look at it [Juice Up] and in a few minutes understand the advert and remember it but you couldn't really remember the product because it doesn't relate to it. People start talking about it and say: "What was that advertising anyway?" and you won't actually remember the whole point of the advert, which is to sell the product.

Some participants (e.g., F85) perceived that in the Juice Up advertisement there was a connection between the emotional value (happiness) and the product. According to Williamson (1978), advertising in general tries to establish connections between the product and emotional values. Such a connection appears to be present in this particular advert and is identified by the participants.

Although M78 did not see this connection, he expressed an opinion that sometimes the absence of connections can benefit advertisers, making people remember the

advertisement, because, it is more abstract and unlike other advertisements - potential evidence of post-modernist's arguments, as discussed earlier in this study.

M78: Juice Up, it is a bit stupid, because you do not know what he is going on about, he is going on about his private life and he's got a drink in his hand. Because it is so stupid, people will think about it when, like, buying the drink, so it makes you to remember it.

M94 disliked the Juice Up advertisement simply because he had tried the product and did not like it (this trend is discussed more fully in the section "Questionnaire findings"). He did not look at this advertisement as separate from the product advertised, but as directly connected to the product, that is, because he disliked the product advertised, he disliked the advertisement also:

M94: I have bought it [Juice Up], tastes like piss. I did not like it.

Some participants' language and the tone of their voice revealed that they disliked the use of sex appeal, having correctly recognised it as one of the persuasive techniques

F139: I disliked the Wonderbra one, because it's bit too raunchy for being on, just like in articles and stuff.

F120: I think some of them have sexual things. I don't think that there's really that much need for it all the time and it's, kind of, in every one.

F98: The Daniel Christian one makes it look as if you put those jeans on yourself, you will become really sexy, but if you're ugly and put them on, you're still gonna look sexy.

Remarkably, girls did not appear to consider themselves to be the target audience of the Wonderbra advertisement, despite it having appeared in a popular girls' magazine, some considered the intended target audiences to be young men, who were in the market for buying presents for their partners:

F71: I would not buy Wonderbra thing, 'cos the woman looks a bit tacky; I think that they want the men to buy it for their partners or whatever.

F97: Again, I disliked the Wonderbra one, which would probably, appeal to men more than women.

## Theme 2 Why do you trust/distrust the advertisements shown and advertising in general?

In this question I have attempted to analyse the participants' responses on the trustworthiness of the advertisements shown to them and advertising in general. This question met with significantly fewer explicit responses than the previous question and the N value reflects this.

Table 7.34 Trust/distrust of adverts (from transcripts)

	Male	Female	Total
Trust	57%	56%	56%
Distrust	43%	44%	44%
N value (% total)	7(41%)	9(50%)	16(46%)

Participants were asked, - 'what advertisements did you trust/distrust and why?'. As evident from Table 7.34, which presents the overall picture regarding this particular topic, more participants said that they trusted advertisements (56%) than distrusted them (44%). Subdividing this category into responses for individual advertisements proved difficult as respondents did not voice their opinions about every advertisement but preferred to stick to a select few. Indeed, there was a tendency for participants to be led, or influenced, by the response of the previous speaker. In a few cases they simply concurred with the previous speaker, thus making a truly independent analysis of their response difficult. Nevertheless, I endeavoured to examine the transcripts very closely for references to individual advertisements, in the context of trustworthiness, presenting the results in Table 7.35.

Table 7.35 Trust/distrust of adverts on a per advert basis (from transcripts)

	Trust			Distrust		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
FCUK Hygiene	29%	33%	31%	14%	0%	6%
Daniel Christian	14%	0%	6%	29%	0%	13%
Wonderbra	14%	0%	6%	14%	0%	6%
Maybelline	43%	22%	31%	43%	44%	44%
Juice Up	14%	0%	6%	14%	11%	13%
FCUK Fashion	29%	33%	31%	14%	0%	6%
N value(% total)	7(41%)	9(50%)	16(46%)	7(41%)	9(50%)	16(46%)
No. of responses	10	8	18	9	5	14

The data, presented in the table above, show that the most trusted advertisements were FCUK Fashion (31%), FCUK Hygiene (31%) and Maybelline (31%). Advertisements such as Daniel Christian Jeans, Wonderbra and Juice Up, were rarely mentioned. Less than half of the participants provided answers to this question (by saying ‘provided answers’, I mean spoke out in response to the question). Although in many cases participants’ body language indicated that they agreed or disagreed with their colleagues, who answered the question, such responses were not possible to quantify.

We can see from the table above that there are some significant discrepancies between male and female responses. For example, only some of the male respondents expressed their trust of such advertisements as Daniel Christian, Wonderbra and Juice Up, with no females expressing their trust of either of them. However, when they were asked to name the advertisements, which they distrusted, the same percentage of male respondents said that they distrusted Wonderbra and Juice Up and even more so – Daniel Christian. Females, though, did not comment about Daniel Christian and Wonderbra again, a small number only expressing their distrust of Juice Up. The results for the Wonderbra and Juice Up advertisements are not wholly surprising, as female respondents did not express their affinity for these advertisements either. However, Daniel Christian was the third most popular advertisement amongst females and yet failed to receive any expressions of trust. A possible explanation for this is that, Daniel Christian is a male product and, as such, its quality could not be directly verified by the female participants, hence, they may have felt unable to say whether they trusted or distrusted any of the claims made by the advertising.

Maybelline was the most referred-to advertisement, in terms of expressions of trust and distrust. Both males and females commented on the trustworthiness of this advertisement. Although, overall, more respondents distrusted this advertisement than trusted it, it was the female respondents, who trusted its claims less. As with the Daniel Christian advertisement, product knowledge and usage enable better judgements to be made, and females are certainly in a better position than males to judge this advertisement’s claims.

Comparing male and female responses in respect of trusting Maybelline, it is evident that, percentage-wise, almost twice as many males as females trusted this advertisement. As discussed above, there is a possible influence from the gender of the model used, which could have contributed to their expressed affinity (ref. Table 7.33).

## Theme 2.1 What reasons did you have for trusting the advertisements shown and advertising in general?

56% of participants said that they trusted the advertisements shown. They demonstrated a degree of awareness of advertising regulatory bodies, such as the ITC (Independent Television Commission, which enforces codes and governs standards and practice in television advertising) in particular, concluding that it would be illegal for an advertiser to lie. This knowledge, however, was not enough for them to think that all advertisements present the 'total truth'. Although M36 admitted that advertisements sometimes try to glamorise their products, he hastened to add that 'the reputable companies wouldn't do that', displaying his trust for well known, respectable brand names:

M36: You've got to trust them because the ITC ensures, like, tells them what they can and can't do.

Interviewer: That means, they can't lie, but what else can they do?

M36: You can be kind of influenced by the product, which might not be as good as it looks, but can be, kind of, glamorised, but most of the reputable companies wouldn't do that.

F72: The Maybelline one, I thought... I do not think that it was totally true, but I think some of what they're saying is true, because they can't just come out with her [Michelle Gellar] little lies, because, probably it is illegal or something. I would not buy it, because, just I would not...

Likewise, as evident from the comments below, other participants displayed their trust for the advertisements of well-known, respectable brand names. Accordingly, Reed (1994) describes adolescents as the consumers hungry for brands, who are very practical in their purchases, preferring more expensive, but well-known products, to cheaper, but unknown ones. Thus, FCUK [Fashion and Hygiene] advertisements were trusted, because students knew this brand and had 'tested' the product - some of them or their friends had bought various items from FCUK. The main argument for trusting FCUK advertisements was that French Connection is quite a large and reliable company. This provides some support to Moschis et al.'s (1979) argument that brand name is one of the most important considerations in adolescents' purchasing decision-making:

F72: I have been to French Connection, so I know what it is like, and that's why I would think that it's true what's being written in French Connection.

- M52: If I was going to buy something, I would probably buy French Connection men's products, because they look really good and, again, French Connection is a big company. I would buy French Connection T-shirt, because French Connection is quite a large company, reliable, I know about them. Daniel Christian Jeans look all right, but I am not really sure about them, never bought them before.
- F71: I trust French Connection [Fashion & Hygiene] ones. ...I have bought something from them before, and I know what they're style-like – it's good.
- M84: I buy French Connection stuff. I won't buy it because of the ad, because the ad does not show anything about their products. I buy French Connection because it's a trustworthy company, a lot of other people buy stuff from there, and so you can trust them.

The response of M84 highlights the importance of the information function of advertising, which will be discussed in greater depth later. In this case, the general lack of product visibility meant that the advertisement failed to provide sufficient information. Moreover, it highlights the importance of social sources like 'other people', in influencing participants' purchasing decisions.

Participants, quoted below, implied that they trusted the Maybelline commercial because they believed Sarah Michelle Gellar's testimonial. Although F130 thought that many advertisements lie, she was prepared to try Maybelline because Sarah Michelle Gellar was advertising it. The use of celebrity endorsement was identified as being used by advertisers in the Maybelline advertisement in order to attract young people's attention. 42% of participants identified this persuasive technique (ref. Table 7.37) where 'unquestionable' authority figures such as film stars and professional actors give their testimonial in favour of the product (ref. Henriksson, 1983). This seems to be benefiting the advertisers, as demonstrated by the comments below:

- F130: Looks like it is worth trying it [Maybelline]. The Maybelline one makes you believe it, but so many of them [adverts] lie. You kind of know that it's not going to be any better than any other mascara, but because she [S.M. Gellar] says that, you might as well try it.
- F37: Celebrities, yeah, because celebrities are like a good role model in people's lives, if you see them using it then, OK, she used it, I'll go and buy it now.
- M6: In the Maybelline one, they say, like, used by professionals, film stars, and so if it can work for them...
- F37: They also say, make-up artists use it; you think that if professional actors use it, it's got to be good.

These responses illustrate participants' willingness to admit to being influenced by the advertisements. However, throughout the discourse they described the effect of

advertisements in the second person 'you', which helped them to be somewhat distanced from the topic.

Contrary to those participants, cited above, who are prone to misjudgement or over-trusting a commercial's claims, which have been reinforced by a celebrity testimonial, participants, cited below, found it easier to relate to and to trust advertisements, which portrayed real-life teenagers (not celebrities) and their lifestyles. They trust such advertisements because they perceive them to be portraying the real world (without necessarily realising that this is one of the persuasive tactics, employed by the advertisers):

F37: And the other one, the Juice Up advert, where she's talking about her brother [describing another Juice Up advert, which she saw on television]. People can relate to that, it's in their nature. Then you've got a pretty good chance of that product selling.

F43: There is an ad, M&S [Marks and Spencer] one, where everyone's normal. They're not using blond blue-eyed person; they're using different people because that's what the world is like.

M129: It's like Juice Up advert, you can see yourself sitting there telling someone what you've done today.

One of the intentions of the Juice-Up advertisements is to place the viewer in the position of the actor within the advertisement. The success of such a tactic is confirmed by respondent M129.

Participants, quoted below, trusted the FCUK Fashion advertisement because they were impressed with its visual presentation. Evidence from analysis of the questionnaire responses showed the importance of good quality visual presentation amongst the participants, a quality whose importance was reiterated during the focus group discussions:

F96: FCUK [Fashion] was quite effective.

Interviewer: Why?

M36: FCUK actually represented the product nicely and it looks quite impressive, it reveals, like, the quality kind of item that people might want to go out and buy.

A similar sentiment was echoed for the Daniel Christian advertisement:

F51: Yeah, and the jeans. It's kind of blurred in the background and stuff.



52% of participants (ref. Table 7.42) thought that one of the main functions of advertising was to provide information and believed that people needed to be allowed to make their own conclusions and decisions after viewing an advertisement. F51 did not think that advertisements lie, but she thought that the audience might misjudge them, or interpret them incorrectly. F51, without realising it, supported arguments of Schudson (1984) and Carey (1989), who regard consumers as rational beings. In F51's opinion, advertising provides information and does not have preferred meanings. Thus, from the comments she made, I concluded that she saw the audiences as rational consumers:

F51: Some of the products give you their info, put it in such a way that you have space for your own view, so if you do get it wrong then it's your own fault.

## Theme 2.2 What reasons do you have for distrusting advertisements shown and advertising in general?

44% of participants said that they did not trust advertisements. Contrary to those cited above (see F130's, F37's and M6's comments about celebrities), a number of participants, quoted below, thought that the presence of celebrities or just beautiful people make advertisements look less trustworthy, because the selling intention in them is so apparent. These respondents were able to conclude that Sarah Michelle Gellar was chosen for her flawless appearance and that, therefore, Maybelline mascara could not improve her appearance much. Thus, they were able to analyse the Maybelline commercial effectively, ably identifying the celebrity's role in it:

- F71: I do not trust that product [Maybelline], I think they put her [Sarah Michelle Gellar] on it to make it look good and, like, people think that if they use that product, they will be like her, or they will be pretty like her, but that does not work.
- F21: I would not buy it, because, see, they put Sarah on because they want people to be persuaded by her to buy the product, because she is a celebrity, she is pretty, they'd think: "Oh, I like her lashes, I'll buy it". I don't know whether she is telling the truth.
- F139: Also, the models. In a way, it does not make you believe it as much, because they are not like normal people. I would believe them [adverts] more, if they used normal people, but they only like to pick pretty people, and so, it is obviously going to look good on them.
- M129: It makes me laugh, because that's never really going to happen. They've all created them like that; they're not going to put people off because they want them to buy the product.

Participants perceived that they were supposed to desire to be Sarah Michelle Gellar and put themselves in her position.

Participants' responses were often characterised by a considerable degree of disbelief, and, as M129's statement illustrates, sarcasm even. M94 and F96 – to quote just two representative judgements - distrusted commercials because they were able to perceive their main purpose - to sell:

- M94: I am not really sure, because I don't trust much things on TV, because most of them are lying or may just not work or something like that. Because usually what they want me to do, it's just buy, that's what they really want - the money, they must just be trying to lie to you and just getting money. So, you buy it, and they are happy, 'cos they've got the money.
- F96: ...the whole point of the advert is to sell the product.

One fifth of participants could not trust the commercials, because they did not give enough or gave misleading information about the product (ref. Table 7.40) e.g., did not specify the price, or created the impression of being dishonest. According to Dibb et al. (1994), misinformation or untruth in advertising may destroy the trust young customers have in a particular company or product. M36, for example, criticised an advertisement for televisions, which he saw, for its deceptiveness – he pointed out that the high price of the television set advertised was not made apparent in the advertisement:

F55: Sometimes the information won't be exactly given so you don't really have a view, if you know what I mean.

F96: Sometimes they hint at things, but they don't say it, so you have to make things up.

M36: I saw that Flat TV advertised, went out and saw it.

Interviewer: Did you buy one?

M36: No. It cost £9000. They did not mention that in the advert.

Participants were eager to try and articulate how advertisers, in order to sell the product, focus on one particular feature, lavishly furnishing it with lots of details and explanations. They thought that such a technique only underlined the selling intent of the commercials even further. Their experience that the advertisers' claims do not always work allowed them to display a healthy degree of scepticism towards advertising to such an extent that M131, for example, did not believe even such trustful claims of the advertisers that lipstick makes one's lips redder:

M131: I think, all make-up, in general, they all say: 'Oh, it will do this and this', and it never does, it will be no different. All ads exaggerate like: 'It makes your lips look redder', and it never does.

M54: Everybody jumping about, like in the Maybelline ad, suggesting that if you bought that, you'll have wonderful eyes.

M129: In particular I don't like adverts that I think are trying to lie. I mean that obviously they can't lie in the sense that they're completely wrong. But, like the Maybelline advert, it kind of makes you wonder - why are they making a big fuss over her eyes?!? It puts you off.

As M131's statement illustrates, there was often an implicit accusation of deception here – that advertisements promise many things they do not deliver.

In conclusion, the respondents were able to demonstrate a good degree of critical thinking about commercials. Moreover, most of them did not limit themselves to the advertisements

shown, but talked about other advertisements they previously seen. The fact that participants were very keen to discuss not only the advertisements shown, but also their other favourite advertisements, provides evidence, which suggests that participants knew commercials very well and found them an interesting topic for discussion.

### Theme 3 What persuasive tactics and techniques were employed in the advertisements shown?

Information regarding the identified tactics was gathered in two ways. Firstly, the participants were invited to complete the handouts with their lists of tactics and secondly, their transcribed responses were reviewed with respect to the mention of any appropriate tactics.

Based on their responses to the advertisements, as detailed on the completed handouts, all participants were able to evaluate the advertisements effectively, identifying many persuasive tactics and techniques employed in them.

The majority of participants were able to see that advertisers commonly employ different images and meanings in their advertisements. However, of the 35 adolescents, who participated in these focus group discussions, only few of them were able to discuss the meanings encoded in advertisements and images used in them in great detail. It is possible that this lack of response may be attributable to the 'weakened position' referred to by O'Donohoe (1993), applied to those participants who are not able to offer an explanation or make sense of an advert.

Fortunately a sufficient number of participants remained quite vocal and, M36, for example, gave a very sophisticated answer to my question - 'which persuasive tactics were employed by the advertisers in the advertisements shown':

M36: Each advert's got hidden meanings like... this advert suggests that if you wear their clothing you'll probably get kissed and that one suggests that you'll probably have bigger breasts. If you just looked at them you probably wouldn't get it but if you look into it and read it then it probably inflicts thought in your mind.

The responses for the fifteen listed categories on the handouts were counted and are presented below as a table of percentages. This lists the responses against each advert and category for male, female and total responses. Each value has been divided by the number of participants (17, 18 & 35 respectively for male, female and total) to calculate the percentage. Overall average percentages are given at the bottom of the table to indicate which categories were the most/least recognised.



Table 7.36 Recognised tactics (from handouts)

	FCUK Hygiene			Daniel Christian			Wonderbra			Maybelline			Juice Up			FCUK Fashion		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Information	12%	11%	11%	18%	39%	29%	24%	39%	31%	65%	72%	69%	12%	6%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Visual Representation	82%	94%	89%	65%	89%	77%	65%	89%	77%	71%	94%	83%	76%	78%	77%	24%	11%	17%
Special effects	18%	17%	17%	24%	33%	29%	0%	0%	0%	24%	11%	17%	0%	0%	0%	24%	22%	23%
Humour	12%	11%	11%	35%	11%	23%	18%	22%	20%	12%	17%	14%	47%	22%	34%	88%	78%	83%
Music/Songs	0%	6%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	76%	78%	77%	0%	0%	0%	59%	72%	66%
Cute animals	6%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%	39%	34%	0%	0%	0%	18%	6%	11%
Worry	0%	6%	3%	0%	6%	3%	0%	6%	3%	6%	6%	6%	29%	28%	29%	6%	6%	6%
Sensual	71%	89%	80%	88%	100%	94%	71%	83%	77%	24%	28%	26%	0%	0%	0%	94%	78%	86%
Lifestyle	35%	28%	31%	12%	11%	11%	18%	11%	14%	35%	33%	34%	71%	50%	60%	29%	11%	20%
Celebrity	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	3%	18%	6%	11%	94%	89%	91%	0%	6%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Similar age	47%	56%	51%	47%	61%	54%	35%	56%	46%	88%	56%	71%	76%	72%	74%	47%	39%	43%
Slogan	65%	78%	71%	71%	72%	71%	29%	39%	34%	65%	78%	71%	24%	44%	34%	35%	44%	40%
Abbreviation	24%	44%	34%	12%	6%	9%	0%	17%	9%	6%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	12%	44%	29%
Wordplay	65%	72%	69%	29%	39%	34%	12%	28%	20%	24%	11%	17%	41%	22%	31%	41%	28%	34%
Linking images	24%	33%	29%	53%	50%	51%	59%	39%	49%	29%	33%	31%	0%	6%	3%	41%	11%	26%
No. of participants*	17	18	35	17	18	35	17	18	35	17	18	35	17	18	35	17	18	35
No. of responses	78	98	176	78	93	171	59	78	137	110	116	226	64	60	124	88	81	169

\* This figure is used to determine the column percentages

The table above presents a significant amount of data for which it would not be sensible to analyse every discrepancy between the tactics identified for each advertisement and also between genders. I therefore present a review of the most frequently recognised tactics and gender differences. For ease of analysis, I felt that it would be feasible to give consideration to those gender differences, which were greater than 25%.

My semiotic study identified that all advertisements except FCUK Fashion contained an obvious visual representation of the product, whereas the latter, although displaying clothing, did not make it clear to which brand the clothing belonged. From the data in Table 7.36 it appears that, in the participants' opinion, the most frequently used advertising tactic was a 'visual representation of the product'

The second category of images, most frequently identified, as being used in the advertisements shown, was the category of 'sensual/sexual' images. The participants readily identified advertisements, which contained the most obvious use of sex as a selling technique, i.e., FCUK Hygiene, Daniel Christian, Wonderbra and FCUK Fashion and, to a lesser extent, Maybelline.

From the questionnaire results, it was clear that participants were more likely to respond to an advertisement, if it contained people of similar age to themselves. In the case of the focus group advertisements, the respondents generally perceived the actors as being in their own age group. This slightly inaccurate perception is, to a certain extent, understandable as, in the case of Sarah Michelle Gellar, who, in real life is in her twenties, is most famous for playing an American high school student. However, all the advertisements used young people, albeit not as young as the respondents, and they may have considered themselves of roughly similar age, which explains the high number of responses, recorded for identification of this tactic.

FCUK Hygiene, Daniel Christian and Maybelline were identified by the highest percentage (71%) of participants as using a slogan in their advertisements. These were really only present in the Daniel Christian and Maybelline advertisements as making use of slogans. Indeed, all advertisements were credited by the participants, others to a lesser extent, with making use of slogans. It is possible here that the respondents may have



confused phrases, captions or puns, which appeared as part of the advertisement, to be a slogan.

Moving on to the gender related differences, it is evident from the Table 7.36 that 32% more male than female respondents considered themselves to be of a similar age to the actor in the Maybelline commercial. The use of abbreviation in the FCUK Fashion advertisement was identified by 33% more female than male respondents. This can be compared with the data from Table 7.37, where 10% more females than males made reference to the use of abbreviation. One possible explanation, which I can arrive at for this, is that females may have approached the task of decoding the advertisements with greater attention than males.

Some gender differences were present in the identification of such a persuasive tactic as humour. For example, approximately 25% more males than females perceived the Daniel Christian and Juice Up advertisements to be more humorous. Moreover, as is evident from Table 7.37, during the focus groups discussion, males made reference to humour significantly more often than females. Humour was not clearly evident in all the advertisements.

Similarly, I carried out an assessment of the recognised tactics from the actual transcripts of the interviews, reporting it in Table 7.37. Naturally, such an analysis produced a less structured range of tactics than those referred to above, and is of a more subjective nature. However, the tactics extracted from the transcripts were generally similar to those listed in the handouts. As with Table 7.36, percentage values were obtained by dividing the number of responses by the number of participants.

Table 7.37 Recognised tactics (from transcripts)

	Male	Female	Total
Celebrity	46%	38%	42%
Sex	46%	31%	38%
Thought Provoking	23%	31%	27%
Slogans	23%	15%	19%
Desirable Image	31%	8%	19%
Humour	31%	8%	19%
Exaggeration	15%	15%	15%
Relevance	0%	23%	12%
Wordplay/Abbreviation	6%	16%	11%
Catchy	8%	8%	8%
Stereotyping	0%	8%	4%
Attitude	0%	8%	4%
Abstract	0%	8%	4%
Simplicity	8%	0%	4%
N value (%total)	13(76%)	13(72%)	26(74%)
No. of responses	32	31	63

The most significant identified tactics will be discussed below, together with any observations on the differences between the responses of each gender where applicable.

Using the FCUK Hygiene advertisement as a reference point, I concluded that the majority of participants were able to perceive that the advertisers' intentions were to attach values to a product, through an attractive male. Those values, embodied in the man, have been linked with the use of the product. The participants, as is evident from their comments below, did not experience any difficulties in detecting this link:

- M78: I think they've got some kind of buff guy in the shower [French Connection Hygiene], so it makes people, like, associate with him, and every one wants to be a bit buff . . . like us, think he is buff, because he uses this, real men use FCUK.
- M36: Every time you use this product [French Connection Hygiene], your going to be in the shower, so your going to kind of feel refreshed. You can see he's having a good time in the shower; he's refreshed and happy.
- M94: I think this is very smart, really [French Connection Hygiene], they've got a well-formed guy, and people who see it, think if I buy that, I might be like him. And the woman, who is looking there for their boyfriend or something, they will see it and they think, maybe if I buy that my boyfriend might look more like him, or something like that...

The presentation of a desirable image did receive greater recognition amongst male respondents (23% difference). However, this could well be a result of their particular affinity to the images presented. The FCUK Hygiene advertisement could be seen as

presenting a desirable image, and this was popular amongst male respondents. Although for female respondents the Wonderbra advertisement should have presented a similarly desirable image, this advertisement was not popular amongst them.

According to Douglas and Isherwood (1979) and Ewen (1976), advertising employs such social values as prestige and beauty in order to appeal to the deepest human instincts, thus tricking people into consumption and making them buy something in order to gain or reaffirm status or position within society. Likewise, Kellner (1995a: 333) accuses advertising of tricking consumers into believing that their new purchases will make them happier and bring them desirable success by “creating associations between products and desired conditions, such as happiness and success”. According to Kellner (1995b), advertising creates an association “between the products offered and socially desirable and meaningful traits” (p.248) and provides “a utopian image of a new, more attractive, more successful, more prestigious ‘you’ through purchase of certain goods” (p.251).

The participants quoted below, perceived that many of the images used in advertisements were sexual, or hinted at some sort of sexual pleasure readily available, if the products were bought. Male respondents highlighted this tactic to a greater extent than females, which is in contrast with the handout responses, where females demonstrated greater recognition of this tactic.

According to Benady (1994) and Fry (1995), in order to appeal to adolescents, advertisers employ sexy images in their advertisements. Likewise, Solomon (1988) and Woodward et al. (1996) argue that this tactic is very popular among advertisers.

However, as is evident from Table 7.37, 15% more male than female respondents recognised that advertisers employed sexual images in their advertisements. This may well be that male respondents looked for those images more carefully than female respondents, which can be attributed to the important part that sex plays in the life of a young adult male (ref. Freud, 1920). This difference between genders is, however, different to that observed in the responses to the handouts, where more females made reference to the use of sexual images.

M94: The Wonderbra one, if a girl was looking, she might think, well, if I buy it, I'd have good breasts like her and look good as she does. They use sexual images, her breasts. If a guy was looking for something for his girlfriend, he wanted to buy something, he would think, oh, maybe, if I bought her that, she might have breasts like that.

F98: The Daniel Christian one makes it look as if you put those jeans on yourself, you will become really sexy, but if you're ugly and put them on, you're still gonna look sexy.

[Note: I have used this quote already, but do so again, as it illustrates the point perfectly]

M36: They are all very sexual...

Respondent M94 agreed with earlier comments about this advertisement by female members of the group, which suggested that this advertisement successfully attracts men to purchase the product for their girlfriends. He also identified positive selling qualities used in this advertisement. Respondent F98 imagines some magical transformation through the wearing of Daniel Christian Jeans whereby one instantly becomes sexy.

Those participants, quoted below, perceived that the advertisers were playing on the audiences' insecurities and desire to be successful and beautiful, while projecting images of beautiful and successful people, with flawless complexions and faultless figures. F139 and M36, for example, did not fail to understand that advertisers to create desires in their viewers' minds used these techniques:

M36: You can be kind of influenced by the product, which might not be as good as it looks but can be, kind of, glamorised.

Interviewer: Give me an example, please.

M36: That Wonderbra advert. She's, like, really nice looking, and I think that ladies would want to have busts like hers. Yeah, they probably would want to be like her and buy it.

F139: I think, the Wonderbra one might be persuasive, because if that's what you want to look like - and they show you what it does on the advert - so if it is what you want, you would go out and buy it.

Presentation of the products was of a high standard and had, to a certain extent, been glamorised. Respondents, in their comments above had identified, and were quite aware of this as a tactic used by advertisers.

F51 quite successfully explained how, in the FCUK Hygiene and the Daniel Christian advertisements; the visual images appeared to be more important than the products themselves. She was able to realise that these advertisements were selling the images, not the products as such:

F51: It's like the product, they've concentrated on the visual thing, e.g. in the FCUK the guy's the main thing and the product's in the corner, and in the jeans one [Daniel Christian], they're not really concentrating on the actual product, it's, like, mainly the visual part of it makes you relate to the product.

42% of participants displayed their knowledge that the advertisers in the Maybelline commercial were using such selling techniques as celebrity endorsement and the voice of authority or an expert. This tactic was discussed by a greater proportion of males than females, in agreement with its identification in the handouts. The fact that this particular commercial featured an attractive, young and popular celebrity could be a possible explanation why male participants were more readily able to recall her presence.

As F37 noted, teenagers see celebrities as 'good role models' and the advertisers perceive celebrity endorsement as a very profitable technique when targeting the young people's market.

For some participants, celebrity endorsement actually worked to the benefit of the advertisers - they liked the Maybelline commercial. Accordingly, Fox (1996:65) claims that the names and images of the celebrities 'make the product', arguing that many adolescents are tempted to buy the products, which are endorsed by celebrities.

As evident from the discussion below, respondents were able to understand that Sarah Michelle Gellar was employed by the advertisers in order to make their viewers to memorise the product and then purchase it. Moreover, they perceived the link between the product and Sarah Michelle Gellar, who is young, lovely, desirable and fashionable - characteristics that advertisers wanted to attach to the product and then to the person, who buys this product. This was clearly identified by the participants:

M52: The Maybelline one, they are trying to tell you, that if you use this product, then you can be as good as the person, who has one, and they deliberately use a very famous person, so they say, if you use this, you will be really famous, you'd look really good, or something. It stands out, because it's got a famous person on, she looks really good, so that, if you're watching TV and it comes on a lot, you can associate with it, like, you remember it easily. If it came on, I just might look at it, but it would not really influence me to go and buy anything.

M93: In other ones they use, em... they always use good-looking people to advertise their product, like they used Sarah Michelle Gellar. You know, like, people want to look like her, so they think, let's go out and buy Maybelline, so they can look like her. That might persuade people...

F85 identified that such commercials as Juice Up try to reflect teenage lifestyles, and position their product as an indispensable accessory to people leading this life-style. The teenage years are those of self-formation, self-doubt and therefore, frequent unhappiness (Harriott, 2000). F85 noticed how the Juice Up advertisers tried to establish a link between their product and the feeling of happiness:

F85: ...the Juice Up one, there they are using people of similar age to those, whom they want to use the product. They are trying to use the teenage life-style, because they use the teenager on it. It might be that teenagers are unhappy, so they might think that, if they drink this juice, it would make everyone happier. They [advertisers] are trying to say that, if they're [teenagers] down and they take the drink, they might feel happier.

F21 noticed that the advertisers were using young people and their life-style in their advertisements in order to attract the attentions of their intended target market, namely, young people:

F21: ...the Daniel Christian one, they've used a similar age target group. They are trying to get you to remember that.

There is, in this instance, a connection between the product (Juice Up) and an emotional value, i.e., happiness. The reversed brand name, for one, is indicative of it – 'Up Juice'! The 'Up' part of which indicates some form of ascent to a higher and better feeling, i.e., expression of happiness, well-being, and success. However, this connection is probably somewhat unsuccessful, because it failed to work for some students. F51, for example, while being able to identify this connection, did not understand why it has been used:

F51: I don't think that, on TV, that orange juice, I thought it was too boring; it wasn't really catching your thought. I mean, why link their life with... it didn't really go with the product [Juice Up].

19% of participants displayed an awareness of such selling techniques as abbreviations, slogans, puns, word-play and jingles. Particularly in the FCUK advertisements, the slogans were set out like a puzzle. F85 and F139 were very keen to demonstrate that they had solved this puzzle, and articulate their recognition of abbreviation as one of the persuasive techniques used by the advertisers:

F85: I like French Connection [Fashion]- I found every word they said added to FCUK, they were going through them. I liked French Connection [Hygiene] they're spelling the word again, it is clever word play.

[Note: I have used this quote already, but do so again, as it illustrates the point perfectly]

F139: I liked the FCUK adverts [Fashion and Hygiene], because I liked the word abbreviation they have, it is very good. I also liked this one [Daniel Christian Jeans], because I liked the slogan.

There was some gender difference here, as the use of such persuasive tactics as word-play and abbreviation was referred to by 15% more male than female respondents and the use of such persuasive tactic as slogans by 8% more males. This was in contrast to the handout results, which showed females as having a greater awareness of these tactics. Further investigation would be required, before any definite conclusions could be drawn from this difference.

For the Daniel Christian advertisement, there is obvious ambiguity over interpretations of the slogans used and how these could refer to the product. M94 also identified effectively how connections were made between the product and value (sex in this case) through word play and puns:

M94: Daniel Christian Jeans, they got some girl in those pants, quite good. More like taking notice of it, because, if you look at it, and you are trying to think, you might take more notice of the girl, but on the whole thing, you'd see it, and it just catches your eye, and they've done the word play, because, if everyone's getting into Daniel Christian, and then, she is like, getting into it.

M9 suspected FCUK of using their abbreviation to covertly mean 'something else'. M9's language, tone in the voice, behaviour and mimicry indicate that by 'something else' he meant a well known swear word. The background behind the FCUK name, and the controversy it sparked, is discussed in Chapter 6 "Semiotic study of advertisements", "French Connection UK Hygiene" and "French Connection UK Fashion":

M9: For example, the FCUK one, you know, these initials here, I don't know whether it's supposed to represent something else [giggles], apart from that word. I think, if people saw that, and then they had that ['fcuk'] printed on that [the product], some people may buy it to get some kind of attention. To make all of them [general public] a bit shocked. They use abbreviation and word play cleverly.

The use of the slogans selected for the Daniel Christian and Maybelline advertisements were intended to act as an aide-mémoire. Their use met with general success amongst the participants, who did admit to their behaviour being influenced by these slogans, and also the slogans from other advertisements, which they had previously seen, to such a point that they even reference them in their everyday conversation:

M129: Also, slogan throughout, it's not an advert without a slogan; you've got to have a jig.

F37: Yes, the Maybelline one, it's cheesy.

M129: Yeah, but everyone knows it. Yes it's cheesy, you walk around school and you shout: 'Maybelline!' and you get about 15 [people] just going: 'Isn't she gorgeous!'

F37: Or the L'Oreal one... it's like that.

M129: It's not that you want to hold on to it, it's that they blast it at you all the time so you remember it anyway and then, when you're out there, you'll just say it as a joke.

F43: Yeah, it just reinforces what they're trying to sell.

Participants, cited above, thought that advertisers use slogans in order to 'help you to remember the ad', and to persuade people to buy the product advertised. They also noticed that the FCUK Fashion advertisement was made in the soap-opera style. The commercial tells a story about two teenagers, who meet and fall in love, and it does it in a very light, humorous sort of way, to increase the viewer's enjoyment of commercial:

F98: I liked the FCUK [Fashion and Hygiene], because there is like a little story, using all the letters of the name.

F96: Sometimes there'll be like a series of them and they're, like, you'll get interested in the story and want to watch it, a bit like a soap opera. I want to see what's going to happen.

M77: People would buy it [FCUK Fashion] because of that comedy, all those different messages... But I do not think I will buy because it is better quality, I think it's all the persuasion.

F130: FCUK slogan helps you to remember the ad, but is not that pushy.

The use of such persuasive tactic as humour was referred to by 23% more male respondents than female. This is consistent with the handout results, in which male respondents also made greater reference to this particular persuasive tactic than their female counterparts.



Participants also suggested a number of other tactics, which they thought were being used by the advertisers. The most significant amongst these were the use of exaggeration and the relevance of the advertisement to the viewer.

Evidence of exaggeration, as expressed below by respondents F139 and M42 (these quotes have been previously cited), was treated with scepticism:

F139: [Speaking about Maybelline] ...there's always hope that they gonna make your lashes big, but then you, kind of, know, that they are not really, 'cos, most adverts don't really tell the truth

M42: I think, all make-up, in general, they all say, oh, it will do this and this, and it never does, it will be no different. All ads exaggerate like, 'it makes your lips look redder', and it never does.

[Note: I have used these quotes already, but do so again, as they illustrate the point perfectly].

Respondents F37 and F43 suggested that advertisements, which contained scenes of everyday life and which people could relate to, or may have experienced themselves, should have a good chance of success:

F37: And the other one, the Juice Up advert, where she's talking about her brother. People can relate to that, it's in their nature. Then you've got a pretty good chance of that product selling.

F43: There's an M&S one where everyone's normal. They're not using a blond blue-eyed person; they're using different people because that's what the world is like.

[Note: I have used these quotes already, but do so again, as they illustrate the point perfectly].

From their discourse, quoted above, the participants were able to identify many of the tactics, which were evident these advertisements. They were also able to offer explanations as to the motives behind these tactics, and make suggestions as to how they operate.

Theme 4 What effects were advertisers trying to achieve by employing the tactics, discussed above?

Here I reviewed the transcripts for instances where respondents either stated or commented upon the effects, which the aforementioned tactics were intended to achieve. The majority of participants, in this case, did make some comment on the effects of advertising.

The number of responses obtained was divided by the number of respondents who participated in this question (N value) to obtain the percentages. For reference the actual number of responses received is given at the bottom of the table.

Table 7.38 Recognised effects of advertising (from transcripts)

	Male	Female	Total
Initiate purchase	92%	79%	85%
Remember product	54%	57%	56%
Provoke thought	8%	36%	22%
Change image	0%	14%	7%
N Value(% total)	13(76%)	14(78%)	27(77%)
No. of responses	20	26	46

According to Liebert (1982:141), “a commercial is intended and specifically designed to produce an effect. They are intended to sell particular products or services; their effectiveness is ultimately measured in sales”.

This data shows that the majority of participants were well aware of the effects, which the advertisers are trying to achieve and were very keen to articulate their awareness.

Participants, particularly F43 quoted below, realised that one of the desirable effects was to establish the product or brand awareness among them, with an ultimate aim - impel them to change from a brand they already use to a new one:

F43: It's just a competition between brands or companies to see how many people they can get to buy their product.

As Gunter et al. (1990: 139) argue, “from the perspective of the advertisers, a successful advertising campaign is a memorable one because the opportunity to buy a product following its appearance on a television advertisement is usually delayed”. It is evident, from the responses below, that participants understood that it is the information, which they remembered, that will influence their purchasing decision. Participants intimated that advertisers were trying to make them recall the commercials, which they had seen, remind them about the products available, or make them aware of new brands/products on the market. Many participants here talked about advertisements in general as well as the commercials of the current study:

- F71: I think adverts don't persuade, they make you remember. If you see a food advert and you feel hungry, then you want to eat whatever's advertised.
- M54: Every time you see the product you associate it with the pictures - it sticks in your mind.
- F51: If you just have information it gets a bit boring so like, visually, you remember it, so, like, you get a picture in your head, and you would associate it with the product every time.
- M36: If they use beautiful people, you'll remember that more than you remember the product. They do it on purpose.

22% of participants thought that advertisers were trying to get them to spend some time thinking about their advertisements, and, consequently, about the products advertised. A greater proportion of females (26% more) considered advertising to be more thought provoking than their male counterparts, which could indicate that they felt more challenged by the advertisements presented. My semiotic study showed that there were varying levels of complexity amongst the advertisements presented. F72 thought that the FCUK Fashion advertisement was created to be a little complex, sophisticated and thought provoking, like a crossword puzzle:

- F72: The French Connection [Fashion], I think, because it's different, I suppose with the other once you might be quite bored, and theirs are, you kind of get confused when they pull up all the things, all the objects, so you might stop, thinking, what's that about? You might start looking up for the adverts, so you can figure out what they talking about. So, it does get you thinking. And, it is pretty good, it would appeal to me, I would, like, stop and look at it.

An overwhelming majority (85%) of the respondents were recorded as being under no illusion as to the persuasive intentions of advertising or about the economic factors involved, with regard to initiating purchase. According to F96, ‘...the whole point of the

advert is to sell the product'. Male respondents (13% more) displayed slightly greater recognition of this tactic than female respondents did. However, I felt that this difference should not be considered as significant.

Some participants, who are quoted below, admitted that they could be persuaded by advertisements to actually go and buy the product advertised. However, as already discussed, they generally tried to describe the effects of the advertisements in the second person 'you', thus somewhat distancing themselves from the topic. This provides further evidence to Fox (1996:63), who argued "students, who effectively analysed commercials, imposed a sense of 'distance' or objectivity upon them, clearly separating themselves from the commercial and/or product". Fox tried to explain this phenomenon thus: "...distancing means knowing why you respond in a certain way, as well as seeing from afar – describing and evaluating commercials as if you were looking down upon them and could exercise control over them" (Fox, 1996:63).

M129: It's, like, sub-conscious. It's like thinking in your head - I must go out and buy that Robinson's Juice Up. You walk along the aisle you see it and think.

F37: I think, the adverts are the last kind of thing, when you see the advert then you decide that I'm going to get that for real. It just reminds you that you want something like that so you might as well go out and buy it from them because it just....

F120: Like, on the radio, you hear an advert that's very catchy, you might see the name and think of something you've not seen before, but, like, the tune or even the jingle might come back into your head and you might think, yeah, I'll try that, but you might not have seen the product beforehand.

As is evident from the responses above, these participants were well aware of the persuasive functions of advertising.

Theme 5 Do you consider advertising to be persuasive enough for you to go out and buy a product advertised based on advertising alone, or do you need other forms of stimulation to make the purchase?

I carried out an analysis on the factors, which would either persuade or dissuade participants from purchasing any particular product. To obtain these factors, the transcripts were reviewed for instances where the respondents indicated that they might buy, or not buy, a product, and the reasons associated with this were recorded. The results of this analysis are listed in the two tables below, which have been split into a series of positive and negative purchasing factors. The values in this table, and Table 7.40, were obtained using the same method as for Table 7.38.

Table 7.39 Positive purchasing factors (from transcripts)

Factor	Male	Female	Total
Friends	54%	80%	68%
Advertising	46%	27%	36%
Product appearance	23%	20%	21%
Desire to own	23%	20%	21%
Good value	23%	20%	21%
Reputation of product	15%	27%	21%
Regularity of advert	8%	20%	14%
Use of celebrities	15%	13%	14%
Trustworthy	15%	13%	14%
Style	0%	20%	11%
Relate to product	0%	20%	11%
Improves Image	23%	0%	11%
Routine	23%	0%	11%
Quality	8%	13%	11%
Brand loyalty	15%	0%	7%
Change of routine	8%	7%	7%
Used by professionals	8%	7%	7%
Makes a difference	8%	7%	7%
Want better	0%	7%	4%
Parental advice	0%	7%	4%
N value(% total)	13(76%)	15(83%)	28(80%)
No. of responses	41	49	90

Table 7.40 Negative purchasing factors (from transcripts)

Factor	Male	Female	Total
Lack of Individuality	31%	27%	29%
Misleading adverts	23%	20%	21%
Boring adverts	8%	13%	11%
Brainwashing	8%	13%	11%
Family pressure	0%	13%	7%
Bad reputation	0%	7%	4%
N value (100%)	13(76%)	15(83%)	28(80%)
No. of responses	9	14	23

Not all respondents made comments on this particular subject; hence the N values quoted in Table 7.39 & Table 7.40, which represent the number of respondents, who answered this question, have been adjusted accordingly.

The majority of participants eagerly responded to this subject. Their discourse revealed that there are many factors that influence their purchase, naming advertising as one, but not the most important, of them:

M129: It's gone pear-shaped really, because, you started off, well I've seen this on TV and I want to buy it, but now it's, sort of, I saw it on TV and it's just another advert. Like the Budweiser advert. I'm convinced that no one will go out and buy Budweiser just because - it's just to make people laugh. You think, oh well, I'll buy that because I like the advert - it's not completely just because it's the advert.

Other factors named were friends, family, schools, price, brand, quality, style, fashion, personal preferences (affinities), product need and habit.

The opinion of friends was particularly important, when it came to purchasing clothing and beauty products. As evident from the discussion below, peer pressure can greatly effect what make of clothes/trainers participants buy:

F55: There's reputation, as well, and all your friends, what they think, as well. There's the quality of the products.

Interviewer: Any social pressure?

F51: Yeah, a bit. If it's something that's popular with people our age, then you're more likely to buy it, than if it's not popular.

M36: Like Gola [make of trainers]... Gola's good.

- F51: What's that one with that Hi something. Hi-tech trainers. In a way, yeah, no matter how good Hi-tech trainers made out in their ads, I'm not going to go out and buy them, because it's not a very good name. Well, it's not a popular name.
- F96: Each advert is trying to make the product look good and it's only if all your friends think that it is good that you would go out and buy it.
- F139: I think that you have to [fit in with your friends] because, sometimes, when you get a new thing, new clothes, if it's not what your friends like, your friends, kind of, mock you for it and they laugh at you, so you stop wearing it. So, I think, you are very influenced by what your friends say.

68% of participants agreed that the most important positive factor was peer pressure. This provides further evidence to Ault's (1983) argument that adolescence is a period of time in young people's lives, when parental values are replaced with peer values. Accordingly, Fry (1995:3) argues that "while mum's taste in clothes... seems fine and dandy to any toddler, just wait until it's time to buy a first pair of grown-up trainers". Such arguments are supported by the comments of respondents F130 and F98, below, who actively oppose suggestions, which come from their parents. The subject of adolescents and fashion was discussed in Chapter 4, and these responses echo the findings of that discussion. Here, the respondents are affirming their authority, and that of their peers, over their parents as to what is the appropriate fashion:

- F130: You rely more on what your friends do, than your family. If you buy something and your friends did not like it, you're more likely not to wear it, than if your mum, or someone in your family said that they don't like it, because they are from a different age group. I would not listen to what my mum says about my clothes.
- F98: You are more likely to rely on your friends' opinions, because they matter to you more, because they are same age as you. With your family, if your mum says she does not like it, you think she is just being annoying, and you probably buy it just to annoy her.

According to Henriksson (1983), advertisers attempt to influence adolescents through their peer groups, because they are aware of the latter's high status among young people.

As is evident from Table 7.39, female respondents were more influenced (26% more) by their friends than their male counterparts were. However, many male participants, while admitting that peer pressure was present, did not want to admit that they themselves were subject to it. For example, M131 describes the effects of the peer pressure in the third person plural 'they', thus distancing himself from the topic:

M131: I think, most people would not say that they are influenced [by their friends], but subconsciously they actually are. If all their friends had one particular product, I think, they'd go out and get that product as well.

According to M129, advertising has to do something with influencing him and his friends' purchasing decisions, even if he claims to make his own decisions at the end of the process. M129 also used the second person 'you' in his discourse:

M129: You walk down the aisle, and you just look at what is aesthetically pleasing, go for it, and buy it. If you like it, you can tell your friends about it, if they like it, they buy it. It goes like that, so it could be started off by an advert.

36% of participants believed advertising to be one of the factors, which influence their purchasing decisions (ref. Table 7.39). Male participants made more references (19% more) than females to being influenced by advertising. Such a result is somewhat surprising, given that, in the questionnaire, a greater number of female than male respondents (9% more) admitted to having made an advertisement related product purchase (ref. Table 7.7) and 26% more females have used a money-off coupon (ref. Table 7.9). This may be because the focus group scenario allows "...the researcher a potentially much richer and more sensitive data on the dynamics of audiences and their relation to media, than the survey" (Hansen et al., 1998:258). In other words, it may be that focus group discussion allowed the male respondents to express their feelings about being influenced by advertising more freely, than they did in the questionnaire.

Although, as with peer pressure, some participants were reluctant to admit to having been influenced by advertising, those participants, quoted below, honestly admitted that advertising did influence them:

M129: E-banking system has become very strong now. Most people buy small items like books and CDs, few clothes. And now it's spread into banks, houses. Short sharp ads... One that sticks in my mind is the Smile Banking Co-operative. Most people just smiling, and then you get to the end, and it stops. It makes you ask questions, so you think. What is it? I'll go and have a look, and then, when you get on the site, you're there, and you're caught. It doesn't apply very much to us but... I don't know... you think about it...you actually wanted to go there, instead of being fed it on a spoon.

M129: [continues] ...it just makes you feel, like, we'll go out there and buy a product, and then you see it and say: 'Well, did you buy this product because of the TV' and we'll sit here and say: 'No, no, we're not such suckers'. We know that we do sometimes, but I don't think it's a nice feeling to know that you've been had.



M140: I know for one that, when the adverts come on, I get up and get a drink, but you can see what they're doing to you ... quite cheesy.

F37: Some of the adverts work, you know, when you see an ad for a film. I've just seen one and I really want to see the film now... so some kind of adverts work.

M140: Like the ones, where they advertise the programmes.

F37: Like the music ones, where they play all the latest singles coming out.

Interviewer: Did they influence you?

All: Yeah!

On the whole, when speaking about the advertisements, participants distanced themselves from the conversation by speaking about 'people' in general or 'other people', who were usually 'younger kids' and members of the family. Further evidence of this is given in the comments below. It appears to be much easier for them to admit that other people have been influenced, rather than themselves:

M77: However, many people can be influenced. For example, little kids programmes, like Pokemon. Million of kids just go out and buy it, because it's there, on TV.

F130: The younger kids, if they saw Sarah Michelle Gellar on TV, they might take note, they might go out and buy it.

F71: Little kids get persuaded more by adverts, because they'll see it and they'll want it straight away, like every toy they see on adverts. Adults think more about quality and price.

M89: I think, when you get older, they [adverts] start to become less persuasive. But when you are younger, you might be persuaded.

M36: I think, that it's related to if you've got a need for a product, and you've seen it on TV, you'll probably go ahead and buy it, like Mr. Sheen. Like my mum was doing the polishing, and she saw it on TV, and she went out and bought it. It came at the right time.

Only one participant said that the price was a very important factor, when making his purchasing decisions. Such an attitude, however, was more evident in the questionnaire, where participants were shown as value seeking:

M77: I think, it depends on the person. Personally, I'd go into shop, and if I like it, I buy it. It is mostly to do with price. I would not buy any of this just because they've naked person on them...

For F71 and M36 the quality of the product was paramount:

F71: I probably would go and buy French Connection stuff. I've got more knowledge of it, and I know where they stand in quality, like.

M36: Well, their image isn't really great but they're actually a good company [talking about the Cold Seal]. I've bought windows from them and they work. I've even bought some new ones.

As already discussed, when making their purchasing decision, 21% of participants admitted that the brand name, or rather the reputation of that particular brand, was an important factor for them.

F51: ...If it's a big name then you might buy the name, but not the actual product, if you know what I mean. If all your friends have got one product, then it might get a bit too much, if you get the same product as well, but the name might affect you to buy something else in that range.

The evidence from Table 7.39 suggests that, with 12% more responses, female respondents placed greater importance on the reputation of the brand, than their male counterparts. F37, for example, stated that she would consider the brand name as the main influencing factor, when she had to buy big and long lasting items, such as furniture, for example:

F37: If it's got a good name, then you might as well go to one shop, than go to the other. You think that you can trust them. Yes, because you'd rather go, like if you're going to buy a settee or something, you'd rather go to a well known store and know that you're getting your money's worth, than go to a little known corner-village-store kind of thing.

11% of participants also named style as one of the factors, influencing their purchasing decisions. These participants were exclusively female as no males made reference to style in the context of making a purchase. This should not be taken as an indication that males are not interested in style, as the results from the questionnaire, as shown in the Appendix (p. 321), demonstrate that style is important to them. However, according to the data from this same table, 6% more females than males said that style was important, when considering a purchase.

However, this factor ultimately depended on another factor, namely 'peer pressure'. This is evident from the comments below:

F139: I think, with clothes, you have to ask your friends opinion about it. It would depend, if that was your style of clothing and that's what you would want to wear, because, some people

don't like to wear designer makes, they all have their individual styles, so it would not really appeal to you, if you don't dress that way.

F97: I think that everyone is influenced by their friends. Like fashion - no one goes out and buys anything old fashioned, because of what everyone else would say.

M129 mentions that fashion is what "everybody buys" at the moment. This can also be called a 'craze'. M129 however, is well aware that many crazes are initiated by advertising, which is in accordance with Kellner's (1995a) argument that advertising has a lot to do with what is in fashion.

However, such factors as brand loyalty, personal routine and preferences were also referred to in participants' discussion:

M52: ...but I won't necessarily ask people in my family if I could go and buy it, or get someone else to tell me. I make my own decisions, because it matters what I think about the products, so I just go and buy it, if I wanted it.

M129: Regularity. After school I would go and buy a two-litre bottle of economy coke from Sainsbury's. It's not because I like the advert or that Sainsbury's have better stickers.

M140: It's the thing that tips the balance, like you'll normally stick to one product, and buy your clothes from the same shop, eat at the same restaurant, use ASDA or Sainsbury's all the time. So people, who want to change, will go and buy a Wonderbra instead of a normal bra, and say that they liked it, and carry on buying Wonderbra. If they saw a Sainsbury's advert, and they shopped at ASDA, and they went to Sainsbury's and they liked it, then they might start shopping at Sainsbury's. It's to try and get people out of their routine.

Here, M140 recognised that such types of commercials as the Sainsbury's advertisement try to persuade viewers to swap brands.

According to the quotes below, whilst respondents admitted to being influenced by peer pressure, they also wanted to be perceived as desiring a sense of individuality, when choosing and wearing their clothes:

F30: I wouldn't buy a thing, if my friends have got it, 'cos it will all look stupid, wearing the same stuff. But I listen to my friends more than anyone else.

M94: If everyone has got the same one [Nikes], and I would not like them, I would not go out and buy them, just 'cos everybody got similar, because, if I did not like them, there would not be any point for me buying them. I would not worry about fitting in with the group.

M78: If everybody got the same make of shoes, I think, it looks stupid, because you don't stand out, you have to stand out, as yourself, so buy stuff that you like, but you actually know that nobody has got that. I try to, anyway. It really stands out.

- F85: I would not necessary go and buy it [the same stuff], I would not worry about fitting in with a group.
- M135: No, I don't think I do [take my peer's group opinion into the account]. I never copy everyone else. If everyone in my class had Nikes, I would not want one of them, unless I saw Nikes I liked.
- M52: I don't think that it matters to fit into a group, but if some people really want to be in a group, they probably will buy it [the same stuff]. But I would not buy the stuff that everyone else has, because, not everyone has the same taste.

As already discussed whilst analysing responses on the trustworthiness of advertisements, some participants (21%) stated that they were suspicious of advertisements, which, in their opinion, lied or gave misleading information:

- M129: In particular, I don't like adverts that I think are trying to lie. I mean, obviously they can't lie in the sense that they're completely wrong. But, like the Maybelline advert, it kind of makes me wonder why they are making a big fuss over her eyes?!? It puts you off.
- [Note: I have used this quote already, but do so again, as it illustrates the point perfectly].
- M94: I am not really sure, because I don't trust much things on TV, because most of them are lying or may just not work, or something like that, because, usually, what they want me to do, it's just buy, that's what they really want - the money, they must just be trying lying to you, and just getting money, so you buy it, and they are happy, 'cos they've got the money.
- [Note: I have used this quote already, but do so again, as it illustrates the point perfectly].
- M52: I don't think that the Maybelline one was very good, they are just trying to get Sarah Michelle on it to promote their product, but it does not seem very genuine.

As discussed above, respondents felt that boring advertisements negatively influenced their purchasing decisions. In this instance, 11% of respondents made reference to this negative purchasing factor:

- M89: I didn't like the Juice Up one, because it's really boring.
- F51: I don't think that on TV, that orange juice, I thought it was too boring; it wasn't really catching your thought. I mean, why link their life with... it didn't really go with the product.
- [Note: I have used this quote already, but do so again, as it illustrates the point perfectly].
- F51: Yeah, it's got to get my attention straight away, like if they're really catchy, you might want to look into them in detail, like on TV, if there was a catchy ad on TV, you'd want to carry on watching it, and if it started off with something really boring, then you'd just switch off.
- [Note: I have used this quote already, but do so again, as it illustrates the point perfectly].

Remarkably, only female respondents made reference to family pressure as a negative purchasing factor. Male respondents either did not mention this or did not consider it to be a negative factor.

F130: You more rely on what your friends do, than your family. If you'd buy something, and your friends did not like it, you more likely not to wear it then if your mum, or someone in your family, said that they don't like it, because they are from a different age group. I would not listen to what my mum says about my clothes.

F98: You are more likely to rely on friends' opinions, because they matter to you more, because they are same age with you. With your family, if you mum says she does not like it, you think she is just being annoying, and you probably buy it just to annoy her.

[Note: I have used these quotes already, but do so again, as they illustrate the point perfectly].

#### Theme 6 Do you consider advertising to be persuasive in general?

Table 7.41 Persuasive capability of advertising

	Male	Female	Total
Persuasive	63%	60%	61%
Not Persuasive	37%	40%	39%
N Value (% total)	8(47%)	10(56%)	18(51%)
No. of responses	8	10	18

61% of participants thought that advertising was persuasive. However, as discussed above, they were not altogether comfortable admitting that it is they who were influenced, preferring to speak about other people instead:

F97: I think, they could be persuasive to some people, but in general, I think, most of the people would want to see the product, before they bought it. I would need to look at it before.

M9: If one particular advert was shown enough times in magazines and TV, that would stick in their [people's] heads, and then they would probably go back on that and think, oh, perhaps if it's on TV and magazines, it is really worth going out and buying it.

M9 thought that because the FCUK Fashion commercial is controversial, it may persuade 'some people' to buy their products out of protest against the society of 'the grown-ups'. It is likely, however, that he was speaking about himself or his friends, as this sort of rebellion is widespread in youth culture (see Chapter 3, the section "Youth culture and media").

F139 has shown awareness that in the Wonderbra commercial, there is an image, projected to persuade young female viewers that this is what they should look like (as discussed in my semiotic study of advertisements); and M77 has shown himself to be aware that, in the case of FCUK Fashion, humour was employed as one of the persuasive tactics:

F139: I think, the Wonderbra one might be persuasive, because if that's what you want to look like - and they show you what it does on the advert - so if it's what you want, you would go out and buy it.

[Note: I have used this quote already, but do so again, as it illustrates the point perfectly].

M77: People would buy it [FCUK Fashion] because of that comedy, all those different messages. But I do not think I will buy, because it is better quality. I think it's all the persuasion.

Respondent F37, whilst realising that advertising has some persuasive power, believes that it only extends as far as persuading consumers to swap the brand, they already use, for something new. She also shows awareness of such persuasive techniques as repetition, which was also mentioned by M9, above.

F37: They don't exactly push you into buying it, but when you queue, it's like - different, I want to change... But it has to be shown really regularly, before you can actually... If you haven't seen it for a while, then I think that, maybe, it won't make you go straight out and buy that thing. It has to be regular to make you buy something.

M36 actually went so far as to criticise advertising for being persuasive. He thought that advertising can influence people somewhat against their will, and may be untruthful:

M36: QVC, for example. I had it on for about 1 hour, and I already ordered something, and that's why advertising's bad. It persuades you. There was this carpet cleaner, right, and you put mud all over your white carpet, and it's meant to clean it. My uncle went and bought one, and it didn't work, and you can't get your money back.

F43 however, was rather dismissive of advertising in general, or did not want to admit that advertising is persuasive:

F43: People don't really take much notice of adverts anyway, do they? They're just like, in between the programmes.

On the whole, participants displayed a mixed set of reactions when considering the persuasive power of advertising. However, whilst not necessarily admitting to

experiencing the effects of this power themselves, they did cite a number of examples, showing their belief in advertising's persuasive power.

Theme 7 What do you know about different economic functions of advertising? What do you think about advertising in general?

In the table below I considered and reported participants' responses on the economic-related issues, associated with advertising. Not all respondents made comments on this particular subject, hence the N values, which represent the number of respondents, who answer this question, have been adjusted accordingly.

Table 7.42 Economic functions of advertising (from transcripts)

Function	Male	Female	Total
Information	56%	50%	52%
Wasteful	33%	50%	43%
Stimulates progress	22%	33%	29%
Creates demand	33%	8%	19%
Unnecessary business cost	11%	25%	19%
Brand changing	22%	8%	14%
Spurs production	11%	8%	10%
Creates image	11%	0%	5%
N value(% total)	9(52%)	12(67%)	21(60%)
No. of responses	18	22	40

From the table above, it appears that 17% more females characterised advertising as wasteful and an inefficient business tool, and 14% more females thought that advertising resulted in unnecessary business cost. On the other hand, 11% more females thought that it stimulates progress.

Males were more positive about the economic functions of advertising, compared to female respondents. 25% more males than females considered that it creates demand, and a further 3% more that it spurs production. Furthermore, 14% more males than females thought that the main economic function of advertising is to swap brands.

According to such scholars as Norris (1966), Schudson (1984) and Carey, the main function of advertising is to provide information about the market place. I found that 52% of participants responded in line with their arguments:

- M89: I think, it's [advertising] good, 'cos then you know that the product is there, and you might go out and buy it, because you might need that. But if it were not there, then you'd not really know what's the product.
- F98: I think, it's a good way of getting information out, because lots of people watch TV, read magazines, and stuff like that. Not everyone is going to buy the product, but they still will know that it is there and if they need it, they will remember the advert.
- F14: It makes you recognise their product. If you wanted it, then you'd buy it; you don't need an advert to tell you.
- F120: It gives the information that you need. I think it does well, and that the girls would want to buy the product [Maybelline].
- F51: Some of the products give you their info, put it in such a way that you have space for your own view, so if you do get it wrong, then it's your own fault. [already used]
- F120: They help us. Information - what's there and what's out - without actually going out there and having a look. The information's there in front of your eyes.

It is clear from the responses that participants, quoted above, considered the provision of product information to be an important function of advertising. They appear to be of the opinion that this information simply assists one in making appropriate judgements, i.e., it is a straightforward and factual function, which simply increases product knowledge or makes the consumer aware of a product.

As F51's statement illustrates, some participants thought that responsibility for purchasing a product, because it was advertised, lies not only with the advertiser, but also with the viewer. This proves that participants were capable of exercising the critical judgement of 'wise consumers'.

Scholars such as Norris (1996) and Ewen (1976) claim that advertising is a waste of money, because considerable sums of money are spent on packaging, promotion and advertising of the goods. 19% participants responded in line with their claims. It is clear from the comments below that these participants clearly understood that packaging adds cost to the products concerned, and viewed packaging as an unnecessary business cost:



- F71: Some people buy the product based on the packaging. They see what it's packed, like. If it was just, like, all loose, and then people would not really buy it. I mind to pay extra for the packaging, because it is, like, waste.
- M52: It is wasteful; some products advertised excessively on TV, some companies spend too much on packaging and promotion.

F139 extended this criticism to the advertisements themselves. For her the production of expensive advertisements was a waste, because of the unnecessary use of costly models and celebrities:

- F139: I think, in a way it's good, because you see what is out there, but then it is wasteful, because, they do spend a lot of money on some of the adverts, like, I bet they spend a lot of money getting Sarah Michelle Gellar to do the mascara advert. So, in a way, it is wasteful, when it could be just a normal person. Also, the models... In a way, it does not make you believe it as much, because they are not like normal people. I would believe them [adverts] more, if they used normal people, but they only like to pick pretty people, and so, it is obviously going to look good on them.

However, at the same time, packaging influenced participants. This influence appears to operate in a direct manner at the time of purchase, when making the choice between similarly functioning products:

- F97: I think, it [advertising] does raise your awareness of the product, but it is a bit of a waste of money. I don't think that the majority of people really run out and buy any of the products, just because an advert says that it's good. However, if I had to choose between identical products in the shop, I would choose the one with nicer packaging.
- F130: I think, it works. Like, if you have the same products, I think I'd buy the one with better packaging.
- F72: I would pay extra for packaging; I don't think it [packaging] is total waste of time. If you get a perfume and get a box, with the designer's name on it, some people do think, oh, I want that box, with the designer's name on it. So people do pay for packaging, I suppose. I think, that the advertising is good for the country, because the country gets richer.
- F98: I think, I would buy a product with better packaging, because it looks better, it would appeal to me.

From the discourse above, it appears to me that the appearance of the packaging is extremely important for some of the respondents, and can act like a persuasive tactic, actually, in certain cases, initiating purchase of a particular product.

In summary, participants showed an awareness that advertising can have an effect on various economic issues, such as pricing. Although some respondents criticised it for

being wasteful, there was an appreciation for the product information, which advertising provided, claiming that it aided them in their purchasing decisions.

According to such scholars as Rotzoll et al. (1996) and Potter (1954), advertising had to be viewed as a creator of demand and a progress-maker. 29% of participants responded in line with this statement:

M94: I think, overall, it's [advertising] good, the companies can show the products to people, who want to buy them, and so if it is on TV, people are going to hear about it, because everyone watches TV.

Many participants recognised the fact that advertising helps to create demand, and hence, give rise to economic progress. They have, therefore, responded in line with the defenders of advertising.

However, the participants quoted below, saw advertising as an intrusion and preferred to see their programmes uninterrupted. As their discussion revealed, none of them seemed to be aware that in the case of commercial television no programmes would be made, were it not for the revenue from advertising:

F85: ...it is good for the country in moderation, because, if it is too much, you get annoyed with them [adverts]. Sometimes it [advertising] can be wasteful.

M129: I think, the generation we're in, it's very, sort of, over your head. We sit down and watch TV, because we want to watch the programmes. We've been blasted with this since we were small - it's a comical thing!

F51: It's a pain that, when you watch a TV programme, ads pop up every few minutes.

M93: It's good for the advertiser - they can show their product, but it's not good for the viewers, who just want to see the programmes.

Scholars such as Williamson (1978), Ewen (1976) and Norris (1966) have blamed advertising for creating desirable images and assisting producers to manipulate the price of goods. M131 was especially keen to try and articulate his opinion, concerning this argument:

M131: I think, advertising is quite bad. It creates an image of the products, like Nike - being really cool for everyone to have - so everyone goes and gets Nike. If there are people who can't afford it, they get looked down upon by the rest of their peers. They [Nike] can afford to charge so much for it, because they're advertising it for months.

Interviewer: Do you think advertising promotes the upper class life-style?

M131: They don't necessarily promote the upper class life-style, but they charge for that sort of range.

M131 recognised that advertising can actually influence fashions and trends. He also showed some awareness that the use of upper and middle class people in advertising marginalises those with less money, who cannot afford to keep up with, or achieve the image portrayed by the advertisements. According to Unnikrishnan (1996) and Williamson (1978), advertising creates a system of class differences, by portraying only people from the upper and upper-middle class of society in their messages. Moreover, they claim that advertising imposes gender, occupation and racial stereotyping.

F37 responded in line with Ewen's (1976), Jhally's (1978), Williamson's (1978) and Galbraith's (1969) argument that advertising creates artificial, false wants:

F37: When we were kids and they showed dolls, it, kind of, makes you automatically want one. But now that we're older, you think you can see what they're trying to do, like, brainwash you to go, and buy the product. But now that we're older, we've got our own mind, and we can decide without some advert telling us stuff.

F37 displayed awareness of the fact that advertising has, in certain cases, created demand by fabrication of false wants and needs, i.e., by making consumers want something they did not want previously. According to the critics of advertising, mentioned above, its prime function is to create 'fancied' needs.

Ogilvy (1963) wrote that advertising tries to persuade consumers to swap brands. M140 responded in line with his argument:

M140: It's the thing that tips the balance, like you'll normally stick to one product, and buy your clothes from the same shop, eat at the same restaurant, use ASDA or Sainsbury's all the time. So people, who want to change, will go and buy a Wonderbra instead of a normal bra, and say that they liked it, and carry on buying Wonderbra. If they saw a Sainsbury's advert, and they shopped at ASDA, and they went to Sainsbury's and they liked it, then they might start shopping at Sainsbury's. It's to try and get people out of their routine.

[Note: I have used this quote already, but do so again, as it illustrates the point perfectly].

F43 was especially keen to try and articulate her opinion that, in certain cases, the purpose of advertising is simply one of competitiveness - to cause a change from two virtually indistinguishable products or brands:

F43: It's just a competition between brands or companies to see how many people they can get to buy their product.

[Note: I have used this quote already, but do so again, as it illustrates the point perfectly].

## **Conclusion for Focus groups findings**

The findings of this research show that participants, in general, remembered single elements and product related information for the advertisements shown to them. Moreover, they were keen to articulate their knowledge of other advertisements, which they had previously seen. The majority of participants voiced their opinions about many advertisements and demonstrated an ability to justify their answers. They particularly enjoyed discussing the advertisements they liked, whilst limiting themselves to a few words, when talking about an advertisement they disliked.

Those participants, who were most able to demonstrate awareness of advertising regulatory bodies, products, stores and brands, demonstrated their ability to make an effective analysis of advertisements. The participants were very vocal about their views on such advertising selling techniques as abbreviations, slogans, jigs, celebrity endorsements, and the use of beautiful models and people of similar ages. In many cases, they were able to recognise that one of the advertiser's chief intentions was the attachment of a value to a product advertised. They therefore claimed, that such values as prestige, status, youth and beauty were employed by advertisers in order to appeal to their vanities and insecurities, convincing them that the products advertised would make them happier and more beautiful – all in the sake of persuading them to make a purchase.

Participants were very forthcoming about the issue of sex in advertising. Their discourse revealed their understanding of the reason why advertisers employ sexual images. They were critical of the fact that advertisers sell these images to their viewers, in the hope of establishing a connection between sex and the product. This, they said, was in order to appeal to their insecurities and initiate purchase.

Within the context of the focus group interviews, there was evidence of some gender-related differences in participants' responses. More males than females were noted to be attracted by, and trusted in, advertisements, which used female models, such as Wonderbra. However, female respondents displayed negative attitudes towards the Wonderbra advertisement, which they considered more appropriate for males than for themselves, and positive attitudes towards advertisements, which used male models, such

as FCUK Hygiene. Moreover, although questionnaire responses showed clearly that female respondents were more influenced by advertising than males, the focus group discussions revealed that 19% more males than females were influenced by advertising (ref. Table 7.39).

This research shows that participants were able to identify the majority of persuasive tactics, employed in advertisements. Throughout their discussion, they ventured witty and often cynical remarks about advertising in general, regarding it as persuasive, and at times deceptive. In particular, they did not trust advertisements, which employed celebrity endorsement as their persuasive tactic. Some participants condemned this tactic, claiming that for them it only served to emphasise the persuasive intent of advertising.

Consequently, they distrusted advertising because they were able to perceive its principal purpose - to initiate a purchase. The majority of participants were keen to use the opportunity provided, and accused advertising of being misinformative, exaggerative and, at times, blatantly deceptive. Hence, the findings of this research provide some evidence that participants possessed a healthy degree of scepticism towards advertising. They also possessed a considerable knowledge of products and brands available in the marketplace, which was, as is evident from the questionnaire, acquired through television and magazines. This, these findings support the argument that Mangleburg et al. (1999) proposed, namely, adolescents' marketplace knowledge is related positively to scepticism. This is because, they argue, "greater knowledge appears to give teens a basis by which to evaluate the motives of and claims made by advertisers and provides an information foundation for scepticism" (Mangleburg et al., 1999:40).

The findings of this research also provide some evidence of advertising affecting participants' consumer behaviour. Throughout discussion, many of them expressed their confidence in well-known, respectable brand names. This confidence was often carried through onto advertising. Their experience of these products and their knowledge of the marketplace (as discussed earlier) allowed them to assert that brand often equals quality, and hence, advertising for quality brands is to be trusted. Although participants appeared to be under no illusion as to such persuasive tactics as celebrity endorsement, a few of them reluctantly admitted to being influenced by it. These participants said that they were more likely to make a purchase, if their favourite celebrity endorsed the product.

Many participants admitted to discussing advertisements and making jokes about them with their friends. They effortlessly recalled their favourite slogans, jigs and songs from advertisements, and wilfully participated in the discussion about these persuasive tactics. Although participants appeared to enjoy this discussion, they were critical towards advertising employing these tactics, and understood that their reaction to them was in accordance with the advertiser's wishes. These participants admitted (however, reluctantly) to being persuaded by advertising, which provides further evidence to the questionnaire findings, indicating that a very high percentage of respondents used money-off coupons to purchase a product advertised. These participants blamed advertising for 'blasting it' at them all the time and tapping their sub-conscious in order to persuade them to buy.

This research shows that there are many factors that affect participants' consumer behaviour, and advertising has been proved to be one of them. However, this research demonstrates that the effect of advertising on participants should not be analysed in isolation from the other factors, namely peer pressure, brand, price, style, fashion and affinity. By far, the most important of these factors was peer pressure.

Throughout discussion, participants were very keen to express their opinions concerning this issue. Many agreed that they come under strong pressure from their friends, when it comes to making a purchasing decision. However, as discussed earlier, participants preferred to keep some distance from this topic, using third person plural pronoun 'they'. It is evident from this research that participants were more likely to purchase a product, if it was popular with their friends. Their discourse indicated that they feared that their friends would 'give [them] a really hard time', 'laugh at' them and 'mock' them if they did not fit in.

Two other important factors, capable of influencing participants' consumer behaviour emerged from this study, namely brand and price. Many participants said that 'the name' affected their purchasing decisions, which is consistent with the questionnaire findings.

This research also shows that participants were able to demonstrate a good degree of critical thinking as to the positive and negative economic functions of advertising. Their

comments demonstrated that the information function for them was the most obvious function of advertising. Nevertheless, some participants thought that advertising was a wasteful, inefficient business tool, and that it caused increases in prices. Although they were under no illusion that packaging adds cost to a product, many of them were clearly influenced by aesthetically attractive packaging, claiming that they would definitely prefer decorously packed products to similar products without such packaging.

To summarise, participants demonstrated a good knowledge of advertising's persuasive tactics and effects, of its economic functions and of the marketplace in general. However, despite possessing this knowledge, many of them were influenced by advertising. These findings, therefore, show that knowledge of advertising's persuasive tactics was insufficient for enabling participants' cognitive defences against advertising's persuasive influence.



## **Conclusion for the Findings of this study**

### **(General observations and comparisons between the responses, resulting from the questionnaire and focus groups)**

As mentioned during the focus group analysis, two of my concerns with regard to the participants were their being influenced by the responses of other students, and also whether their overall behaviour was altered as a result of the focus group situation. To this end I carried out a brief review of the responses given by the focus group participants for question 18 of the questionnaire. By reviewing these I was hoping to assess their general attitudes towards advertising, whether they showed signs of being influenced, and their apparent abilities to interpret the advertising presented to them.

As a result of the analysis it did indeed appear that a few respondents had altered their responses or attitudes from those, apparent in their questionnaire answers. This alteration took on varying degrees but, in some cases, the change was quite significant. This influence appeared to act both ways, i.e., some, who were positive about advertising in the questionnaire, came across as negative in the focus groups, and vice-versa.

Approximately one-quarter of the participants altered their attitudes in some fashion. I initially reviewed the general attitude of the participants towards advertising and found that, generally, the majority were positive and had not altered their attitudes between the questionnaire and the focus group. However, a couple of respondents, who seemed to be sceptical and negative towards advertising in their questionnaire responses, actually came across as interested and positive during the focus group discussions, and had a considerable amount to say on the subject of advertising.

Many participants came across as being influenced by well-known brand names in their questionnaire responses, and this characteristic was generally noticeable in their focus group dialogue.

A review of the participants' capacity to be influenced, by the advertisements presented, demonstrated that, generally, this remained unaltered. Although there were a few instances where participants showed that they could be influenced in the focus groups, but not in the

questionnaire. It may be possible that the focus group situation could elucidate a more honest response from the participants, as they were generally having to think and respond much quicker, than during the questionnaire.

Their ability to decode and comment on the messages contained within the advertisements did not change significantly. I would expect that this is a more objective ability and is, therefore, unlikely to undergo a forced change on the part of the participants.

Therefore, while a small number did appear to change their attitude significantly between the two sets of responses, it does appear that the majority of respondents generally remained true to their attitudes between the questionnaire and the focus groups. Hence, I conclude that the situation of the focus group discussions did not have a negative effect on them and cause them to behave out of character.

## **Chapter 8 Discussion: Consideration of the findings in light of existing research studies**

As referenced often throughout this text, many methods and tactics are utilised by the advertising industry as a way of influencing the consumer. This final chapter will concentrate on illustrating the concurrences and differences between the existing research, its established theories (i.e., numerous advertising theories, discussed in Chapter 2 “Theoretical Framework. Advertising: definition, criticism, defences and analysis”; theories of communication and youth culture theories) and findings arising as a result of my research. I chose to give prominence to semiology, as a means of deconstructing the advertisements used in this study and to provide a background for the subsequent analysis by the participants, which I consider to represent a more impulsive analysis. Hence, this more considered assessment highlights to the reader the range of influences and tactics to which the participants could be subjected.

Arguments put forward by Ewen (1976), Jhally (1987) and Williamson (1978) intimate that advertising causes consumers to want something, which they did not want before. The purpose and thrust of advertising was, in this respect, referred to by some of the participants, thus demonstrating their awareness of advertising’s purpose. Within the target group, the majority took at least a passing interest in advertising and, on the whole, I consider that, from the responses and comments made, advertising was favourably received. In the opinion of the participants, its positive qualities were generally seen to outweigh its negative ones.

Although this study is directed towards the interaction between adolescents and advertising, it was recognised in this study that advertising itself is only one of the factors, which can influence their attitudes and behaviour. Socialisation theory, for example, claims that friends, school and parents are the most important agents of influence. It is reputedly from these that young people acquire their norms and values and, as a result of the research carried out, I would agree with this. Focus groups discussions revealed that the opinion of friends was particularly important, when it came to purchasing clothing and beauty products – 68% of the respondents named friends as one of the factors, which they thought influenced their purchasing decisions. As was evident from the participants’

discussion, peer pressure greatly effected which brands of clothing/trainers participants favoured.

However, that is not to say that these agents diminish advertising's role. On the contrary, advertising often acts to reinforce such agents. Although focus group discussions revealed that participants were influenced by what their friends were wearing when pushed to consider what the original source of influence was, they responded with advertising. This, in a sense, creates a circular chain with neither advertising nor 'friends' being able to claim the initiation of stereotypes.

This study has provided some evidence that, although teenagers are knowledgeable and sceptical towards advertising, they can still be influenced by it. In response to the questionnaire, 74% of participants said that they had purchased a product in conjunction with an advert. There are a number of roles, which the advert could, conceivably, have played in this instance, however, the majority of respondents cited an affinity to the product as being the most likely influence. This was followed, at some distance, by peer pressure, showing the important role of socialisation as discussed previously. The quality of the advert itself was recognised by some participants as having influenced them in the matter of purchase.

Therefore, from this we can gather that the advert can operate in a number of different ways. For influences apart from advert quality, the advert is providing an information or prompting service. It may well be that an intention to purchase the product already existed, as is most likely in the case of peer pressure or family recommendation. Thus the level of influence can vary significantly depending on circumstances.

Although some participants seemed to indicate that they could be prone to impulsive buying after having been influenced by an advertisement, many adopted a more cautious approach and, maybe as a result of their scepticism, appeared careful about what they would buy. That is not to say that they could not be influenced, but rather that they would not purchase something against their will. Indeed, as discussed later, many respondents displayed good knowledge of the tactics used by advertisers and, hence, were well aware of the advertisers' intentions. Although 12.5% of the questionnaire respondents and 36%

of those focus groups participants had been influenced by advertisements, other factors played an important part.

When considering the traditional mediums through which advertising is conveyed, such as magazines and television, the study indicated that increased exposure itself did not lead to a greater desire to purchase. This was concluded from having obtained significance values in excess of 0.05, when testing this link. Indeed, when considering the various purchasing influences reported by the respondents, the quality of an advert as an initiator of purchase ranked fourth. In light of this, it can be considered that the findings of my study do not support arguments put forward by Unnikrishnan (1996), Jhally (1987) and Ewen (1976) who said that advertising invariably makes consumers buy products against their will. Although some respondents were influenced directly by the advertisements, there were other more prominent factors, which influenced their purchasing decisions. The focus groups discussions gave a slightly different picture to the questionnaire by rating peer pressure (68%) as the most influential factor followed by product appearance (21%); desire to own the product (21%), good value (21%) and reputation of the product/brand (21%). Such statistics demonstrate that they are not making a purchase simply because the advertisement told them to.

It is clear from consideration of the findings that attributing influence specifically to the advert itself is not a simple process. The overall motivation to purchase is driven by a number of factors, of which advertising certainly is one but not necessarily the most prominent.

The exploitation of social values by advertising is considered to figure prominently in advertising. Indeed, from the advertisements, employed as part of this study, the values of belonging, friendship and love were most frequently identified as being present both during my semiotic analysis and, more importantly, by the respondents during their discourse. They successfully made the link between such values and the idea that purchasing the portrayed products would help them gain or re-affirm their position within their peer group and find new friends or lovers. Participants were influenced by advertisements, which linked their products to a complete lifestyle, such as Hilfiger Athletics, Maybelline and FCUK Fashion. The semiotic study also highlighted the 'lifestyle' content of these adverts, demonstrating the tactic of making consumers believe

that they too can obtain such a lifestyle. From the focus groups discussions, it does appear that such a tactic has achieved a degree of success.

These values of belonging, friendship and love are portrayed in many different ways, but the use of young people in advertisements directed at the same age group appears to be a particularly effective method, certainly when exploiting the value of belonging. Analysis of the advertisements, used as part of my study, showed that such images were present, at least in some form, in all the advertisements. The use of such images was well remarked upon by the participants and they successfully perceived the purpose of their presence. The values imbued in the models used were identified with by the participants as values, which they themselves would want to possess. Hence, in this respect, the tactic of exploiting these values was successful and, generally, not seen in a negative way by the participants.

The issue of gender has featured quite prominently in this study. During the analysis of the questionnaire and focus groups the gendered responses of the participants were considered and any gender-related bias tested for using Chi-squared analysis. Such analysis was considered necessary after its importance has been highlighted in the investigation of advertising theory. As discussed before, many of the so-called gender stereotypes play a prominent part in advertising, which seeks to exploit them.

My study has provided some evidence that programmes, enjoyed by men, are somewhat different to those, enjoyed by women - male participants preferred sport and adventure programmes, whereas females were more interested in soap operas. This gender split did not stop at programmes but was carried over to the advertisements themselves. A low significance ( $< .001$ ) and, therefore high dependency was obtained in connection with the types of both magazine and television adverts, which were of interest to the respondents. In these the male respondents favoured computer games advertisements and female respondents showed a marked interest in cosmetic and hygiene products. Logically, the interest shown by the participants in an advertisement is a function of their interest in that particular product type in general. Therefore, taking this into consideration, it is evident that many of the traditional gender stereotypes are still in existence. Although equality in advertisements is making ground, the arguments put forward by Winship (1987) still hold great relevance and are a good reflection of the society of which participants in this study

are members. It is sensible to assume that, owing to socialisation of the sexes, there will always be some form of gender gap in existence, however, the findings of my study, in this respect, show that such a gap has changed little since studies carried out over a decade ago. Moreover, according to Fowles (1996), children start to seek role models for their behaviour very early in life and their family is, initially, the environment where they are most likely to find them.

There is scope for further research on the subject of gender and advertising. The similarities and differences in the attitudes to advertising of the different genders and the issue of how important gender is in the development of these attitudes warrants further investigation. Also, we have already seen that advertising makes considerable use of gender stereotyping and so it would be useful to investigate the effect that this has on the formation of adolescents' ideas about gender.

The awareness of advertising amongst the participants is an area, which has shown itself vividly during analysis of the findings of this research. Schudson (1984) put forward the argument that people, in general, do not pay much attention to advertising. This study provides evidence that this generalisation does not apply to the target group with the participants demonstrating, at times, not only an active interest, but also quite an in-depth knowledge of the range of advertisements in circulation at the time of the study. Such evidence was more prevalent during the focus group discussion, where the respondents were more able to express themselves freely than in the questionnaire. In such instances, they showed not only an awareness of the products advertised, but sometimes enthusiastically cited other advertisements in which they were interested. For example:

"E-banking system has become very strong now. Most people buy small items like books and CDs, few clothes. And now it's spread into banks, houses. Short sharp ads... One that sticks in my mind is the Smile Banking Co-operative. Most people just smiling, and then you get to the end, and it stops. It makes you ask questions, so you think. What is it? I'll go and have a look, and then, when you get on the site, you're there, and you're caught. It doesn't apply very much to us but... I don't know... you think about it...you actually wanted to go there, instead of being fed it on a spoon." (M129)

Such an interest plays into the hands of advertisers. If we remember that one of the functions of advertising is to induce product recall amongst its audience then this is exactly the response, which advertisers desire. From the responses obtained, it was noted

that there was generally a positive correlation between advert familiarity and willingness to purchase the product presented, i.e. responses to three of the Q18 adverts gave significances  $< .001$  for familiarity/purchase. Equating product recall, in this instance, to advert familiarity does suggest that this particular function of advertising is working. However, more rigorous testing would be required to confirm this.

Tactics, employed in the advertisements presented, were extracted by the semiotic study, which provided a careful and considered reading of the advertisements used. The analysis showed that these advertisements did employ a wide range of tactics as part of their presentation, many of which were recognised by the participants in the course of the discussions. In this respect, therefore, participants can be considered as independent, able decoders of the meanings and symbols encoded in advertising. At the same time though, McQuail's (1983) argument that members of the audience should not be treated as equal, as some are more capable and experienced than others, can be partially supported insofar as different interpretations were offered by different participants. However conditions were such that it was not possible to objectively test individual's decoding ability or knowledge of tactics. The study has shown that there is never really only one reading of a media text, but that there were nearly as many different readings as there were participants.

Participants identified with such tactics as special effects and the use of celebrities. For example, the Maybelline advertisement, used as part of the focus group study, was quite popular amongst the respondents, who readily recognised the link between the beautiful, fashionable and popular celebrity featured, and the implied capabilities of the product. The celebrity in this particular advertisement was chosen because of her obvious beauty and high popularity amongst teenagers. The use of beauty was also apparent in many other advertisements, featured in my study. Its use was readily identified by a large number of the respondents, who correctly decoded the presence of a beautiful person as a sign that the product can make this person more beautiful and that they also can become like this person. Therefore, whilst demonstrating a good understanding of this tactic, participants were, based on their responses, prepared to see the endorsement as increasing the credibility of the product.



The use of beauty as a selling tactic can be further enhanced by the introduction of sex. Beautiful models not only portray beauty; they can also be construed as representing sex – particularly to members of the opposite gender (ref. Chapter 6 “Semiotic study of advertisements”). Certainly, this is an interpretation, which was made by many of the respondents. Two of the advertisements, namely Daniel Christian and Ellesse Watch, openly used scenes of a sexual nature to enhance the desire for their products. This tactic was used, to a lesser degree, in the Wonderbra and FCUK advertisements. Again, participants recognised the existence of this tactic within these advertisements, but were still, nevertheless, influenced. This may well be attributed to the important part the sex plays in the life of a young adult male (ref. Freud, 1920). For example, 46% of male and 31% of female respondents made reference to the use of sex, as a tactic, during their focus group discourse.

Whilst magazine advertisements act as a purely visual medium, television, on the other hand, must provide both audio and visual components. Hence, if the visual component is not accompanied by dialogue then some form of music will almost certainly be present. The section on “Youth culture and media” (see Chapter 3 “Theories of communication as related to young people”) alluded to the importance of music in a teenager’s life and, as such, it is open to exploitation by advertisers. The use of popular music to create an association between the product and the music is very common. Such tactics were identified by the focus group participants, who referenced the use of catchy slogans or jingles within an advertisement as a means of helping one remember the product. However, the music is often geared to suit the mood of the advertisement and to create an overall impression. Taking the FCUK Fashion advertisement as an example, a happy bouncy melody was chosen to match the scene. This advertisement was popular amongst participants, and many of them indicated an awareness of the music in this particular advertisement.

The FCUK advertisements were a good example of a brand, which appears to be generally popular amongst the participants, more so amongst females than males, according to the questionnaire results. Evidence of the importance of brand names for the respondents is widespread. It is clear from the results of my study that, not only is branding important for the respondents, but they also possess a good awareness of all brands, knowing what is ‘cool’ and what is not. As a result of this knowledge, a few brands were in much greater

favour than others were and, therefore, it is noteworthy to consider the possible social sources from which their current popularity is derived.

Respondents were questioned explicitly on the brands currently in their possession and also on the brands, which they desire the most, and the reasons why they desire them. The influences, operating on the respondents, in this respect, were investigated during the focus group discussions. Questioning the respondents revealed that they were influenced heavily by their friends when it came to deciding the current fashion. The effect of seeing one's friends wearing a brand such as Nike, rated as the most popular, and also seeing such advertisements on television was certain to hold great sway over many of the respondents. Fox (1996) and Kellner (1995) did argue that it is advertising that sets the trends for what is and what is not in fashion. However, I believe that this is not entirely true and, according to my data, advertising alone is not responsible for setting these trends. Data from the focus groups showed that 68% of respondents considered the influence of their friends to be a positive purchasing factor with advertising being considered as such by 36% of respondents.

The influence of the participants by their friends is one subject, which has appeared consistently throughout the results in the form of peer pressure. My study demonstrates the susceptibility of the respondents to their peers' influence when it comes to making purchasing decisions. According to the focus group discussions, respondents actively sought the advice and assurance of their friends when making a purchase.

The idea of belonging to a crowd is closely linked to peer pressure and was exploited by the Hilfiger Athletics advert, used as part of the questionnaire. Advertisements often exploit the fear that young people generally experience being ostracised and criticised by their peers, in other words, not being accepted into the crowd. In my semiotic study I assessed that such advertisements as Hilfiger Athletics and Sunny Delight can indeed play on their fear of loneliness. These advertisements portray groups of people who enjoy doing something together, with this 'something' invariably involving the product advertised. These advertisements appear to send the message that, to be in the crowd, i.e., to be accepted by one's peers, one needs to drink Sunny Delight or use Hilfiger Athletic. Participants, although they did not have any problems understanding that these tactics

were used, and to what effect, and actively voiced their criticism of these tactics, appeared to be influenced by them

The influence of peer pressure was most noticeable in the area of such consumer products as shoes and clothing. According to the findings of my study, appearance is a high priority amongst the respondents and, hence, looking good is very critical. Such an influence, when it comes to clothing, plays on the so-called 'crowd mentality' as discussed by Head (1997), Coleman (1980) and Grinder (1973).

The tactics and influence discussed previously can, according to numerous scholars, have a direct effect on the development of a child through to the adolescent. Evidence for the development of materialistic attitudes was provided by the results of my study, which showed participants claiming to have many expensive brands in their wardrobes. They emphasised that the brand names provided them with credibility, and also had a preference for more beautifully packaged products. However, given the other influences discussed above, it is unlikely that advertising alone is to blame for the creation of such materialistic values. The influence of peer pressure, according to my study, plays a significant role in the development of a materialistic attitude.

The second part of my hypothesis concerns the ability of adolescents to understand the persuasive effects and tactics. Whilst discussing the abilities of advertising to influence the participants, their ability to recognise the tactics used within advertisements has already been mentioned, however, their reaction to these identified tactics gives an indication of their overall attitude towards advertising.

Approaching this ability from a more theoretical point of view we discover that, according to Piaget (1964), children who are in the formal-operational stage of development should be capable of sophisticated logical thinking and able to 'de-centre' themselves from their surroundings. Such an observation was consistent with the reactions displayed by the participants in this study, who were able to perform some analysis on the advertisements presented, and at the same time create a barrier between themselves and advertising, disclaiming its influence over them.

This barrier was suggestive of a general scepticism towards advertising, which many of the respondents appeared to possess. In considering their reactions to the advertisements presented, there emerged a set of general characteristics within the advertisements, which were likely to meet with their approval. Similarly, there existed a corresponding set of negative characteristics likely to meet with their disapproval. Hence, evidence exists to show that they possess a certain level of scepticism towards advertising and have a well-developed set of standards, to which they expect an advert to conform. To support this, my study provided some evidence that advertisements, which were not colourful, did not portray young people, who were of an equivalent age to the participants, lacked action and were not exciting, met with general disapproval. Advertisements, which contained these characteristics, were generally popular amongst the participants.

The link between the images and tactics used within the advertisements be they liked or disliked, and the product, was generally well perceived by the participants. Their responses demonstrated that they, for example, understood that these links were intended to promote positive values associated with the product such as love and romance in the Ellesse Watch advertisement.

Evidence to support that children are knowledgeable about advertisers' intentions towards their audiences, can be seen in my study from those participants who were keen to speculate about the assumptions that advertisers made in this respect. In my Semiotic study, it was recognised that the advertisers concerned had employed young actors because this was the audience they were targeting. Such a tactic was commented upon by the majority of participants.

Although the majority of participants were sceptical of advertising, some of them did appear to be a little too trusting of the advertiser's claims. These respondents seemed to extract their knowledge about the product solely from advertisements. However, the majority of respondents were able to evaluate the claims of advertisers' analytically and did not rely solely on the advertisement to obtain information about the product.

According to the theoretical framework, there are many factors that influence participants' attitudes to advertisements. In general it is argued that they like and are influenced by advertisements, which are not patronising and not extremely adult-like, but focused on

such fundamental values of youth culture, which belong to their generation, as friends, love, and having fun.

Knowledge, or recognition, of the selling intent of advertising figured prominently throughout the participants' responses – 85% of the participants said that the purpose of an advertisement is to sell a product. Thus, they demonstrated their awareness of the advertisement as a commercial message. Such knowledge and scepticism counter the arguments of Unnikrishnan (1996), Packard (1960) and Kellner (1995a), who claimed that young people are mindlessly manipulated by advertising. Advertisements of sugary food attracted particularly fierce criticism, because they were perceived to be harmful to children's health. A typical example of such a product in my study is Sunny Delight, where respondents displayed some knowledge about the ingredients of this drink and were aware, and indeed criticised, its unhealthy contents. Packard (1960) and Kellner (1995a) claimed that advertising manipulates consumers at a subconscious level. According to Packard (1960), the consumer is a defenceless victim of advertising, shamelessly manipulated by the advertising practitioners to their own ends. Contrary to this claim, my study shows that participants possessed a wide knowledge of advertising and the marketplace; and in some instances were strongly critical of advertising. They could judge, with some sophistication, the advertisers' tactics and techniques, and the desired effects, and could cleverly decode advertising messages and images. If advertising influenced them, they generally were well aware of it. The participants of my study emerged as 'wise consumers', capable of making rational decisions and choices, who relied on many different sources for their information about the product.

To summarise, I would argue that critics of advertising, quoted above, have labelled the consumer as a powerless victim, without even assuming that this same consumer might be able to defend him/herself from advertising's influence. My study, although indicating that adolescents are prone to influence from advertising, also demonstrates that they do have the ability to process and evaluate advertisements in an intelligent fashion. From their responses it appears that participants were treating advertising as a source of useful information about the products available on the market place. They claimed that if they liked, and had a need for the product advertised, then they would go out and buy it, and if they did not like it, they would not. However, from their responses it also became apparent that they tended to dislike the advertisement if they disliked the product, and

vice-versa, if they liked the product they liked the advertisement (this however, did not apply to all the advertisements shown).

The research has provided some evidence to support the first hypothesis, however, in gathering the data it has become evident that advertising is only one of a number of factors, which influence adolescents' attitudes and reported behaviour. Also, limitations on methodology may have prevented a wholly rigorous determination of advertising's influence in this respect. Therefore, I feel the evidence is not sufficiently conclusive to state that this hypothesis is proved.

Moving on to the second hypothesis, I feel that there is good evidence to show that this holds true. The middle-class participants demonstrated a good aptitude for not only recognising the tactics used by the advertisers but also, in many cases, were able to comment on the reasons behind the use of these tactics. They were able to assess the quality of the advertisements and showed a certain level of scepticism, questioning the authenticity of the advertisements and the claims they were making. Their scepticism balanced the influence of the advertising such that they would not make a purchase unless certain criteria were met, such as them liking the product or it being recommended by a friend.

## Appendices

### A. Letters to request assistance of Beauchamp College

#### 1. Letter to Mrs. Maureen Cruickshank, Principal of Beauchamp College.

Mrs. Maureen Cruickshank  
Principal  
Beauchamp College  
The Ridgeway  
Oadby  
LEICESTER

15 February 1999

Dear Mrs. Cruickshank,

I am writing to you, because I would like to ask your permission to conduct a survey related to advertising with a group of your students. As you will see from the hypotheses for my thesis below, I am investigating specifically the attitudes of adolescents, who come from the middle-class environment, and, therefore, your school is ideally suited to helping me with my research.

I am a PhD student at the University of Leicester. The purpose of my PhD thesis is to investigate two important hypotheses, relating to the subject area of advertising and adolescents, namely that advertising and advertising images do influence middle-class adolescents' attitudes and reported behaviour; and that middle-class adolescents are able to understand the persuasive effects and tactics, employed by advertisers, and, on the whole, are capable of making sound judgements about advertising.

I am intending to develop a questionnaire, which will test the hypotheses described above, for which I need a sample size of approximately 150, in order to obtain a good set of results. However, initially I need to perform a pilot study with a much smaller group in order to assess the suitability of the questions and the time for completion.

I am, therefore, asking for your permission to allow a group, of say 25-30 year 10 students, to participate in my pilot study. I would anticipate this procedure to take no longer than one hour.

I will appreciate it very much if you would consent to this survey, taking place sometime in March.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

Marina Payton.

**2. Letter to Mrs. Maureen Cruickshank, Principal of Beauchamp College.**

Mrs. Maureen Cruickshank  
Principal  
Beauchamp College  
The Ridgeway  
Oadby  
LEICESTER

17 September 1999

Dear Mrs. Cruickshank,

Earlier this year you kindly agreed to my carrying out a pilot study relating to advertising, with a group of year 10 students, for which I was extremely grateful. In my previous letter I indicated that for the full study I would hope to use a group of approximately 150 students.

The pilot study was very useful and, as a result, I have now revised the questionnaire ensuring that it should take less than one hour to complete. I would, therefore, like to ask your permission, and co-operation, to return to the college to perform this survey. As I mentioned above, I need approximately 150 students with roughly equal numbers of males



and females. I would ideally like to carry this out in November, however, I am flexible and would be available any time between now and Christmas.

I very much look forward to hearing from you and hope that you will be able to help me in performing this important research. Also, once the research is completed, I would be very happy to give a presentation to any of your staff and students who may be interested in the work, which I have been carrying out.

Yours sincerely,

Marina Payton.

**3. Letter to Mrs. Maureen Cruickshank, Principal of Beauchamp College.**

Mrs Maureen Cruickshank  
Principal  
Beauchamp College  
The Ridgeway  
Oadby  
LEICESTER

6 September 2000

Dear Mrs Cruickshank,

You may remember that, late last year, I conducted a survey, related to advertising, with a group of 150 year 10 students. I have now analysed the questionnaires, and am very grateful to you and your students for participating in it.

I now need to follow up this survey with a deeper discussion, which will involve a number of focus groups, and again I am asking for your assistance. My requirement is to have 4 groups, consisting of 9 students each. Ideally, these would be selected from the group of 150 students, who participated in the original survey. These group interviews would last about 30 minutes and, with the help of an assistant, I would hope to be able to conduct two at a time, so as to minimise disruption.

I do hope that you will be able to assist me in conducting my research. I would ideally like to perform these interviews in October, and am flexible as to their timing, so as to effect a minimum of disruption.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

Marina Payton.

## **B. Pilot Study**

### **B1. Questionnaire**

#### **1. Are you:**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

#### **2. How often do you read magazines?**

- ☐ Every day
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ More than once a week
- ☐ Twice a month
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Less than once a month
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Other

#### **3. How often do you buy magazines?**

- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ More than once a week
- ☐ Twice a month
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Less than once a month
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Other

#### **4. Which of the following magazines do you read regularly (i.e. most times they come out)? Please, indicate as many as you read:**

- ☐ Loaded
- ☐ FHM
- ☐ Maxim
- ☐ Specialist magazines:
- ☐ 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Cosmopolitan
- ☐ Company
- ☐ More
- ☐ Smash Hits
- ☐ Big
- ☐ Just 17
- ☐ Looks
- ☐ TV Hits
- ☐ 19
- ☐ Shout
- ☐ Live and Kicking
- ☐ Bliss
- ☐ Sugar
- ☐ Attic Futura
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Do you pay attention to advertisements in the magazines?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Other

**6. What types of advertisements are of particular interest to you? Please write down the names of those which you can remember, for the different categories listed:**

- ☐ cosmetic and hygiene products \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ clothes \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ footwear \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ computer games \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ cars \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ food and drinks \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Have you ever used a money-off coupon or discount card from a magazine?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Do you have access to Satellite or Cable TV?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**9. If you have access to Satellite or Cable TV, what programmes do you watch?  
Please write down your favourite programmes up to a maximum of 10:**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**10. How often do you watch TV?**

- ☐ More than 20 hours per week
- ☐ 10-20 hours per week
- ☐ 5-10 hours per week
- ☐ Less than 5 hours per week
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Which TV programmes do you watch? Please, list up to a maximum of 10:**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**12. Do you pay attention to advertisements on TV?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**13. What types of advertisements are of particular interest to you? Please write down names of those which you can remember, for the different categories listed:**

- ☐ cosmetic and hygiene products \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ clothes \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ footwear \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ computer games \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ cars \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ food and drinks \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

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**14. Have you ever gone out and bought a product on the basis of an ad?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**15. If you answered 'Yes' to Q14, what influenced you:**

- ☐ you liked the product
- ☐ you generally like the brand
- ☐ you liked the quality of the ad (the ad looked trustworthy)
- ☐ your friend already bought it and advised you to do so
- ☐ your parents advised you to do so
- ☐ other: \_\_\_\_\_

**16. Thinking about your wardrobe, what clothes do you wear? Tick the brands you wear and indicate the items of clothing you have in your wardrobe. Please, select from the list below or/and add your own:**

- ☐ Kangol \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Faith \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Kickers \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Miss Selfridge \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Top Shop \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ French Connection \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ New Look \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Soochi \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Next \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ C&A \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Debenhams \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Nike \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Reebok \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ D&G \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Adidas \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Armani \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Calvin Klein \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Caterpillar \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Dockers \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Levi's \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Lee \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Gap \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Ellesse \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Others \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**17. If you had as much money as necessary, what outfits would you buy and why?**  
**Indicate your favourite brands (please, briefly explain why they are your favourites), up to a maximum of 5:**

BRAND	WHY DO YOU CHOOSE IT

**18. Analysing advertisements:**

**18.1. SUNNY DELIGHT**



Look at the advert 18.1 at the back of this questionnaire.

1) Are you familiar with this advertisement?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2) Does this advertisement appeal to you? Write down your answer and briefly explain why:

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3) Why do you think the advertisers chose these particular people to advertise their product?

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---

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---

4) Would you buy this product? Briefly explain your answer:

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---

---

## **18.2. HILFIGER ATHLETICS**

Look at the advert 18.2 at the back of this questionnaire.

1) Are you familiar with this advertisement?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2) Does this advertisement appeal to you? Write down your answer and a brief explanation to it:

---

---

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3) Why do you think the advertiser chose these people to advertise this particular product?

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4) Would you buy the product advertised? Briefly explain your answer:

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### **18.3. ELLESSE WATCH**

Look at the advert 18.3 at the back of this questionnaire.

1) Are you familiar with this advertisement?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2) Does this advertisement appeal to you? Write down your answer and a brief explanation to it:

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---

3) Why do you think the advertiser chose these people to advertise their products?

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4) Would you buy ELLESSE WATCH? Briefly explain your answer:

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**18.4. TOMMY HILFIGER**

Look at the advert 18.4 at the back of this questionnaire.

1) Are you familiar with this advertisement?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

2) What product does it advertise?

---

3) Does this advertisement appeal to you? Write down your answer and a brief explanation to it:

4) Why do you think the advertiser chose this man to advertise this particular product?

19. Please, answer “Sugar’s Catalogue of Cool”:



**Sugar's Catalogue of cool**

Place your votes and give your coolest faves some credit...

**Fashion**  
The coolest shop is...  
designer label is...  
jeans are...  
sneakers are...  
watched on...

**Beauty**  
The coolest hair colour is...  
perfume is...  
haircut is...  
hair product is...

**TV**  
The coolest TV programme is...  
boy on TV is...  
girl on TV is...

**Film**  
The coolest film is...  
boy actor is...  
girl actress is...

**Music**  
The coolest band is...  
album is...  
song is...  
music event is...  
pop video is...

**Words**  
The coolest insult is...  
word/saying is...

**Food and drink**  
The coolest drink is...  
chocolate is...  
sandwich filling is...

**Other stuff**  
The coolest sports star is...  
book is...  
computer game is...  
planet/size is...  
crisis is...  
job/career is...  
favourite adult is...

Send your coupon to: Sugar's Catalogue of cool, 17-18 Berners Street, London W1P 3DD.

20. Please, indicate:

20.1 Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

20.2 Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your help.

## **B2. Pilot Study Data**

Q.2 How often do you read magazines?

	Male	Female	Total
Every day	27%	0%	12%
Once a week	55%	36%	44%
More than once a week	9%	29%	20%
Twice a month	0%	14%	8%
Once a month	9%	21%	16%
Less than once a month	0%	0%	0%
Never	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%
N value	11	14	25

Q.3 How often do you buy magazines?

	Male	Female	Total
Every day	0%	0%	0%
Once a week	27%	14%	20%
More than once a week	9%	14%	12%
Twice a month	27%	36%	32%
Once a month	27%	21%	24%
Less than once a month	0%	7%	4%
Once to twice a month	0%	7%	4%
Never	9%	0%	4%
N value	11	14	25

Q.4 Which of the following magazines do you read regularly (i.e., most times they come out)? Please, indicate as many as you read:

	Male	Female	Total
Sugar	9%	79%	48%
FHM	100%	0%	44%
Bliss	0%	64%	36%
Loaded	64%	0%	28%
19	0%	43%	24%

More	0%	43%	24%
Just 17	9%	14%	12%
Cosmopolitan	0%	21%	12%
Company	0%	14%	8%
Computer mag	18%	0%	8%
Elle	0%	14%	8%
Looks	0%	14%	8%
Marie Claire	0%	14%	8%
Match	18%	0%	8%
Maxim	18%	0%	8%
Smash Hits	9%	7%	8%
TV Hits	9%	7%	8%
Big	9%	0%	4%
Dolls House World	0%	7%	4%
Guitar Techniques	9%	0%	4%
H.H.C.	9%	0%	4%
Max Power	9%	0%	4%
Shoot	9%	0%	4%
Source sports	9%	0%	4%
Sports	9%	0%	4%
The source	9%	0%	4%
Top Gear	9%	0%	4%
TV Guide	0%	7%	4%
Vogue	0%	7%	4%
What hi-fi	9%	0%	4%
Attic Futura	0%	0%	0%
Live and Kicking	0%	0%	0%
Shout	0%	0%	0%
N Value	11	14	25
No. of responses	38	50	88

Q.5 Do you pay attention to advertisements in magazines?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	55%	21%	36%
No	0%	0%	0%
Sometimes	45%	79%	64%
Other	0%	0%	0%
N value	11	14	25

Q.6 What types of ads are of particular interest to you? Please, write down the names of those, which you can remember, for the different categories listed:

	Male	Female	Total
Cosmetic and hygiene products	18%	79%	52%
Clothes	73%	86%	80%
Footwear	45%	50%	48%
Computer games	36%	0%	16%
Cars	27%	14%	20%
Food and drinks	0%	21%	12%
Music	0%	7%	4%
Phones	18%	0%	8%
Watches	9%	0%	4%
Guitar ads	9%	0%	4%
Catalogues	9%	0%	4%
N Value	11	14	25
No. of responses	27	36	63

Q.7 Have you ever used a money-off coupon or discount card from a magazine?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	45%	50%	48%
No	55%	43%	48%
Other	0%	7%	4%
N Value	11	14	25

Q.8 Do you have access to Satellite or Cable TV?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	64%	50%	56%
No	36%	50%	44%
Other	0%	0%	0%
N Value	11	14	25

Q.9 If you have access to Satellite or Cable TV, what programmes do you watch? Please, write down your favourite programmes up to a maximum of 10:

	Male	Female	Total
Simpsons	45%	21%	32%
MTV	9%	50%	32%
Moviemax	18%	29%	24%
Nickolodeon	9%	29%	20%
Eastenders	18%	7%	12%
Friends	18%	7%	12%
Sky Sports 1	27%	0%	12%
Sky Sports 2	27%	0%	12%
UK living	0%	14%	8%
WCW	18%	0%	8%
Moesha	0%	14%	8%
Sunset Beach	0%	14%	8%
Fresh Prince of Bel-Air	9%	7%	8%
J.Jones Show	0%	14%	8%
Sally Jessy Raphael	0%	14%	8%
City guys	9%	7%	8%
Cartoon Network	18%	0%	8%
Sky premier	0%	7%	4%
Trouble	0%	7%	4%
Sabrina	0%	7%	4%
In the house	0%	7%	4%
Top of the Pops	0%	7%	4%
Hollyoaks	0%	7%	4%
Dishes	0%	7%	4%
Dawsons Creek	0%	7%	4%
Buffy	0%	7%	4%
Xena	0%	7%	4%
Hercules	0%	7%	4%
Fantasy Channel	9%	0%	4%
Adult Channel	9%	0%	4%
Music Box	9%	0%	4%
EuroSport	9%	0%	4%
DreamTeam	9%	0%	4%
N Value	11	14	25
No. of responses	30	43	73



Q.10 How often do you watch TV?

	Male	Female	Total
20+	27%	21%	24%
10-20	36%	29%	32%
5-10	18%	36%	28%
<5	18%	14%	16%
Never	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%
N Value	11	14	25

Q.11 Which TV programmes do you watch? Please, list up to a maximum of 10:

	Male	Female	Total
Eastenders	73%	86%	80%
Neighbours	27%	57%	44%
Home & Away	18%	57%	40%
Sunset Beach	18%	50%	36%
Hearbreak High	0%	50%	28%
Simpsons	36%	14%	24%
Dawson's Creek	0%	43%	24%
Coronation Street	0%	36%	20%
The Bill	36%	7%	20%
Hollyoaks	9%	29%	20%
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	0%	29%	16%
Ricky Lake	0%	29%	16%
Live & Kicking	18%	14%	16%
TOTP	9%	21%	16%
Friends	18%	14%	16%
Sabrina the teenage witch	0%	21%	12%
Casualty	0%	21%	12%
Top Gear	27%	0%	12%
Changing rooms	0%	14%	8%
Ally McBeal	0%	14%	8%
Emmerdale	0%	14%	8%
Brookside	9%	7%	8%
Movies	18%	0%	8%
Deep Space Nine	0%	7%	4%
Who wants to be a millionaire	0%	7%	4%
The Big Breakfast	0%	7%	4%
Springer	0%	7%	4%
The O Zone	0%	7%	4%
SMTV	0%	7%	4%
Holby City	0%	7%	4%

USA High	0%	7%	4%
Murder most horrid	0%	7%	4%
News	0%	7%	4%
Dishes	0%	7%	4%
Sister-Sister	0%	7%	4%
Moesha	0%	7%	4%
Xena	0%	7%	4%
Hercules	0%	7%	4%
Match of the day	9%	0%	4%
Blue Peters	9%	0%	4%
Pepsi Chart	9%	0%	4%
WCW	9%	0%	4%
Inspector Frost	9%	0%	4%
Playing the field	9%	0%	4%
X-files	9%	0%	4%
Red dwarf	9%	0%	4%
The young ones	9%	0%	4%
N Value	11	14	25
No. of Responses	71	137	208

Q.12 Do you pay attention to advertisements on TV?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	36%	14%	24%
No	18%	0%	8%
Sometimes	45%	86%	68%
Other	0%	0%	0%
N Value	11	14	25

Q.13 What types of ads are of particular interest to you? Please, write down names of those, which you can remember, for the different categories listed:

	Male	Female	Total
Clothes	55%	79%	68%
Cosmetic and hygiene	9%	100%	60%
Footwear	45%	29%	36%
Cars	55%	14%	32%
Food and drinks	9%	43%	28%
Other	18%	29%	24%
Computer games	27%	7%	16%
N Value	11	14	25
No. of responses	24	42	66

Q.14 Have you ever gone out and bought a product on the basis of an ad?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	45%	79%	64%
No	45%	21%	32%
Other	9%	0%	4%
N Value	11	14	25

Q.15 If you answered 'yes' to Q.14, what influenced you?

	Male	Female	Total
Liked product	76%	78%	77%
Friend bought it	31%	30%	31%
Liked brand	24%	27%	25%
Liked ad quality	14%	23%	19%
Parents advised	4%	2%	3%
Needed product	4%	2%	3%
Special offer	0%	3%	2%
N value	51	60	111

Q.16 Thinking about your wardrobe, what clothes do you wear? Tick the brands you wear and indicate items of clothing you have in your wardrobe. Please, select from the list below or/and add your own:

	Male	Female	Total
Nike	73%	71%	72%
Reebok	55%	79%	68%
Adidas	64%	64%	64%
Top Shop	0%	93%	52%
New Look	0%	86%	48%
Next	55%	43%	48%
CK	45%	43%	44%
Levi's	36%	50%	44%
Kickers	27%	50%	40%
Selfridge	0%	64%	36%
46 other brands	10%	10%	10%
N Value	11	14	25
No. of response	91	157	248

Q.17a If you had as much money as necessary, what outfits would you buy and why?  
Indicate your favourite brands.

	Male	Female	Total
Armani	64%	36%	48%
Top Shop	0%	64%	36%
Adidas	36%	29%	32%
D&G	36%	7%	20%
Versace	9%	29%	20%
Levis	36%	0%	16%
Reebok	18%	14%	16%
Kickers	36%	0%	16%
Tommy Hilfiger	27%	7%	16%
Nike	18%	14%	16%
Calvin Klein	27%	7%	16%
DKNY	27%	7%	16%
25 other brands	7%	5%	6%
N Value	11	14	25
No. of responses	56	47	103

Q.17b Please, briefly explain why they are your favourites:

	Male	Female	Total
Quality	23%	26%	24%
Looks	14%	19%	17%
Comfort	16%	13%	15%
Brand	7%	9%	8%
Style	11%	2%	7%
Designer	7%	4%	6%
Fashion	4%	4%	4%
Range	0%	9%	4%
Cool	4%	2%	3%
Price	0%	4%	2%
Classy	4%	0%	2%
Trendy	4%	0%	2%
Starwear	0%	4%	2%
Necessity	2%	0%	1%
Unique	0%	2%	1%
Nice-fitting	2%	0%	1%
Eyecatching	2%	0%	1%
Casual	2%	0%	1%
Smart	0%	2%	1%
N value	56	47	103
No. of participants	11	14	25

### Q.18.1 Sunny Delight

#### Q.18.1.1. Are you familiar with this advert?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	82%	64%	72%
No	18%	36%	28%
N value	11	14	25

#### Q.18.1.2 Does this advert appeal to you?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	36%	58%	48%
No	64%	42%	52%
N value	11	12	23

#### Q.18.1.3 Would you buy this product? Briefly explain why?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	40%	69%	57%
No	60%	31%	43%
Maybe	0%	0%	0%
N value	10	13	23

### Q.18.2 Hilfiger Athletics

#### Q.18.2.1 Are you familiar with this advert?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	91%	50%	68%
No	9%	50%	32%
N value	11	14	25

#### Q.18.2.2 Does this advert appeal to you?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	45%	85%	67%
No	55%	15%	33%
N value	11	13	24

Q.18.2.3 Would you buy this product? Briefly explain why?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	27%	54%	42%
No	64%	38%	50%
Maybe	9%	8%	8%
N value	11	13	24

Q.18.3 Ellesse Watch

Q.18.3.1 Are you familiar with this advert?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	45%	36%	40%
No	55%	64%	60%
N value	11	14	25

Q.18.3.2 Does this advert appeal to you?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	56%	69%	64%
No	44%	31%	36%
N value	9	13	22

Q.18.3.3 Would you buy this product? Briefly explain why?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	40%	46%	43%
No	60%	46%	52%
Maybe	0%	8%	4%
N value	10	13	23

Q.18.4 Tommy Hilfiger

Q.18.4.1 Are you familiar with this advert?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	82%	57%	68%
No	18%	43%	32%
N value	11	14	25

Q.18.4.2 Does this advert appeal to you?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	13%	46%	33%
No	88%	54%	67%
N value	8	13	21

Q.18.4.3 Would you buy the product advertised?

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	13%	15%	14%
No	88%	85%	86%
Maybe	0%	0%	0%
N value	8	13	21

Q.18.4.4 What product does it advertise?

	Male	Female	Total
Correct	77%	62%	70%
Incorrect	22%	34%	28%
N value	73	74	147

## **C. Main Questionnaire**

### **C1. Questionnaire Format**

#### **1. Are you:**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

#### **2. How often do you read magazines?**

- ☐ Every day
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ More than once a week
- ☐ Twice a month
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Less than once a month
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Other

#### **3. How often do you buy magazines?**

- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ More than once a week
- ☐ Twice a month
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Less than once a month
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Other

#### **4. Which of the following magazines do you read regularly (i.e. most times they come out)? Please, indicate as many as you read:**

- ☐ Loaded



- ☐ FHM
- ☐ Maxim
- ☐ Specialist magazines:
  - ☐ 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ 3) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Cosmopolitan
- ☐ Company
- ☐ More
- ☐ Smash Hits
- ☐ Big
- ☐ Just 17
- ☐ Looks
- ☐ TV Hits
- ☐ 19
- ☐ Shout
- ☐ Live and Kicking
- ☐ Bliss
- ☐ Sugar
- ☐ Attic Futura
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Do you pay attention to advertisements in the magazines?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Other

**6. What types of magazine advertisements are of particular interest to you? Please write down the names of those which you can remember, for the different categories listed:**

- ☐ cosmetic and hygiene products \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ clothes \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ footwear \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ computer games \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ cars \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ food and drinks \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Have you ever used a money-off coupon or discount card from a magazine?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Do you have access to Satellite or Cable TV?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Which TV programmes do you watch? Please, list up to a maximum of 10:**

_____	_____
_____	_____

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**10. If you have access to Satellite or Cable TV, what programmes do you watch?**

**Please write down your favourite programmes up to a maximum of 10:**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**11. How often do you watch TV?**

- ☐ More than 20 hours per week
- ☐ 10-20 hours per week
- ☐ 5-10 hours per week
- ☐ Less than 5 hours per week
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Do you pay attention to advertisements on TV?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**13. What types of TV advertisements are of particular interest to you? Please write down names of those which you can remember, for the different categories listed:**

- ☐ cosmetic and hygiene products \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ clothes \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ footwear \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ computer games \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ cars \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ food and drinks \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**14. Have you ever gone out and bought a product on the basis of an ad?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**15. If you answered 'Yes' to Q14, what influenced you:**

- ☐ you liked the product
- ☐ you generally like the brand
- ☐ you liked the quality of the ad (the ad looked trustworthy)
- ☐ your friend already bought it and advised you to do so
- ☐ your parents advised you to do so
- ☐ other: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**16. Thinking about your wardrobe, what clothes do you wear? Please, select from the**

**list below or/and add your own:**

- ☐ Kangol \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Faith \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Kickers \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Miss Selfridge \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Top Shop \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ French Connection \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ New Look \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Next \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ C&A \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Debenhams \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Nike \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Reebok \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ D&G \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Adidas \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Armani \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Calvin Klein \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Caterpillar \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Levi's \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Lee \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Gap \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Ellesse \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Others \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**17. If you had as much money as necessary, what outfits would you buy and why?**

**Indicate your favourite brands (please, briefly explain why they are your favourites), up to a maximum of 5:**

BRAND	WHY DO YOU CHOOSE IT

## 18. Analysing advertisements:

### 18.1. SUNNY DELIGHT

Look at the advert 18.1 at the back of this questionnaire.

1) Are you familiar with this advertisement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2) Does this advertisement appeal to you? Write down your answer and briefly explain why:

---



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3) Why do you think the advertisers chose these particular people to advertise their product?

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---

---

4) Would you buy this product? Briefly explain your answer:

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---

5) What message the advertiser is trying to send across to you (please, write down what *you* think):

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---

6) When you look at the picture, what images come to your mind immediately? Write down as many as you could think of:

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## **18.2. HILFIGER ATHLETICS**

Look at the advert 18.2 at the back of this questionnaire.

1) Are you familiar with this advertisement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2) Does this advertisement appeal to you? Write down your answer and a brief explanation to it:

---

---

---

---

3) Why do you think the advertiser chose these people to advertise this particular product?

---

---

---

---

4) Would you buy the product advertised? Briefly explain your answer:

---

---

---

---

5) What message the advertiser is trying to send across to you (please, write down what *you* think):

---

---

---

---

6) When you look at the picture, what images come to your mind immediately? Write down as many as you could think of:



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### **18.3. ELLESSE WATCH**

Look at the advert 18.3 at the back of this questionnaire.

1) Are you familiar with this advertisement?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2) Does this advertisement appeal to you? Write down your answer and a brief explanation to it:

---

---

---

---

3) Why do you think the advertiser chose these people to advertise their products?

---

---

---

---

4) Would you buy ELLESSE WATCH? Briefly explain your answer:

---

---

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---

5) What message the advertiser is trying to send across to you (please, write down what *you* think):

---

---

---

---

6) When you look at the picture, what images come to your mind immediately? Write down as many as you could think of:

---

---

---

---

#### **18.4. TOMMY HILFIGER**

Look at the advert 18.4 at the back of this questionnaire.

1) Are you familiar with this advertisement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2) What product does it advertise?

---

3) Does this advertisement appeal to you? Write down your answer and a brief explanation to it:

---

---

---

---

4) Why do you think the advertiser chose this man to advertise this particular product?

---

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---

---

5) Would you buy the product advertised? Please, briefly explain your answer:

---

---

---

6) What message the advertiser is trying to send across to you (please, write down what *you* think):

---

---

---

---

7) When you look at the picture, what images come to your mind immediately? Write down as many as you could think of:

---

---

---

---

**19. Please, indicate:**

**19.1 Your age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**19.2 Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your help.**

## **C2. Questionnaire Data**

This section contains additional information from the questionnaire, which has not been included in the main body of the text.

Table 0.1 Titles of magazines

	Male	Female	Total
Bliss	0%	72%	38%
Sugar	0%	69%	37%
Just17	0%	55%	30%
Sport	31%	5%	17%
Computer Games	36%	0%	17%
FHM	34%	0%	16%
More	2%	26%	14%
Smash Hits	5%	23%	14%
19	0%	20%	11%
Live and Kicking	8%	12%	10%
TV Hits	5%	12%	9%
Loaded	16%	0%	7%
Big	0%	14%	7%
Shout	2%	11%	7%
Cars	14%	0%	7%
Looks	0%	9%	5%
TV	6%	3%	4%
Computer Products	9%	0%	4%
Company	3%	3%	3%
Musical Instruments	5%	1%	3%
Mizz	0%	5%	3%
Cosmopolitan	0%	4%	2%
Maxim	3%	0%	1%
Health	2%	1%	1%
Comics	2%	0%	1%
Science & Nature	2%	1%	1%
Ethnic	2%	1%	1%
Modelling	2%	0%	1%
Elle	0%	3%	1%
Celebrity	0%	1%	1%
N Value(% total) (No people participating)	64(86%)	74(96%)	138(91%)
No. of responses	119	261	380

Table 0.2 Terrestrial television programmes

	Male	Female	Total
Eastenders	43%	77%	61%
Neighbours	39%	66%	53%
Friends	25%	39%	32%
Simpsons	32%	18%	24%
Home & Away	16%	31%	24%
Children's	19%	24%	22%
Drama	17%	24%	21%
Sport	41%	3%	21%
Coronation Street	9%	31%	20%
Game Show	19%	20%	20%
Comedy	22%	18%	20%
Documentary	20%	18%	19%
South Park	22%	15%	18%
Music	19%	18%	18%
Hollyoaks	6%	23%	15%
The Bill	14%	12%	13%
Sitcom	12%	15%	13%
Lifestyle	9%	15%	12%
Brookside	1%	15%	8%
Sunset Beach	3%	14%	8%
Current Affairs	12%	4%	8%
Soap	4%	9%	7%
Sci-Fi	13%	1%	7%
Teenage	4%	9%	7%
Motoring	13%	0%	6%
Average of 14 other programmes	3%	3%	3%
N Value(% total) (No people participating)	69(93%)	74(96%)	143(95%)
No. of responses	326	418	744

Table 0.3 Satellite &amp; Cable programmes

	Male	Female	Total
MTV	28%	67%	48%
Sitcom	33%	47%	40%
Music	19%	47%	33%
Simpsons	42%	22%	32%
Children's'	12%	42%	27%
Documentary	37%	13%	25%
Movies	23%	27%	25%
Cartoons - Child	23%	27%	25%
Family	21%	27%	24%
Sport	23%	20%	22%
Friends	16%	22%	19%
Science fiction	9%	27%	18%
Comedy	14%	16%	15%
Drama	9%	18%	14%
South Park	16%	9%	13%
Teenage	7%	16%	11%
Buffy	9%	7%	8%
Ethnic	7%	7%	7%
Motoring	9%	0%	5%
Current Affairs	7%	0%	3%
Game shows	5%	2%	3%
Talkshows	5%	2%	3%
Eastenders	2%	2%	2%
Neighbours	5%	0%	2%
Soap	0%	4%	2%
Lifestyle	0%	4%	2%
Hollyoaks	0%	2%	1%
Cartoon - adult	2%	0%	1%
King of the Hill	0%	2%	1%
Action	0%	0%	0%
N Value(% total) (No people participating)	43(58%)	45(58%)	88(58%)
No. of responses	165	215	380

Table 0.4 Clothing brands worn by respondents

	Male	Female	Total
Adidas	72%	78%	75%
Nike	76%	70%	73%
Reebok	64%	51%	57%
Top Shop	20%	88%	55%
Next	53%	57%	55%
CK	55%	49%	52%
Ellesse	36%	49%	43%
Kickers	43%	40%	42%
Levi's	51%	32%	42%
Miss Selfridge	0%	78%	40%
New Look	0%	77%	39%
Gap	34%	39%	36%
Debenhams	19%	43%	31%
Kangol	20%	38%	29%
Lee	38%	17%	27%
D&G	18%	23%	21%
C&A	15%	25%	20%
Armani	23%	13%	18%
Caterpillar	26%	10%	18%
FCUK	8%	25%	17%
Faith	0%	19%	10%
Average of 45 other brands	2%	2%	2%
N Value(% total) (No people participating)	74 (100%)	77 (100%)	151 (100%)
No. of responses	555	770	1325

Table 0.5 What outfits would you buy?

	Male	Female	Total
Nike	50%	19%	34%
Adidas	34%	19%	26%
Calvin Klein	31%	17%	24%
Top Shop	9%	36%	23%
Gap	23%	19%	21%
Armani	27%	13%	20%
Next	11%	13%	12%
Levi's	14%	7%	11%

Reebok	19%	3%	11%
D&G	6%	13%	10%
Miss Selfridge	0%	19%	10%
FCUK	11%	9%	10%
Ellesse	9%	7%	8%
New Look	0%	14%	8%
Kangol	5%	7%	6%
Kickers	8%	4%	6%
Ralph Lauren	8%	3%	5%
Hilfiger	6%	4%	5%
Quiksilver	8%	3%	5%
Average of 29 other brands	2%	1%	2%
N Value(% total) (№ people participating)	64(86%)	69(90%)	133(80%)
No. of responses	200	180	380

Table 0.6 Reasons for purchasing

	Male	Female	Total
Style	34%	40%	37%
Quality	21%	22%	22%
Name	22%	16%	19%
Fashion	10%	9%	9%
Comfort	10%	4%	7%
Affinity	3%	4%	4%
Price	1%	4%	2%
N Value(№ of responses)	200	180	380
№ of people participating (%total)	64(86%)	69(90%)	133(80%)



### **C3. Additional Cross-tabulations**

These tables are the cross-tabulations performed on the responses obtained for Question 18.

Sunny Delight

Appeal	Male			Female			All		
Purch	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	19	17	36	24	17	41	43	34	77
No	7	23	30	10	23	33	17	46	63
Maybe	2	6	8		2	2	2	8	10
Total	28	46	74	34	42	76	62	88	150
$\chi^2$	6.7			6.7			13.9		
Signif.	0.036			0.036			< 0.001		

Fam	Male			Female			All		
Appeal	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	24	4	28	31	3	34	55	7	62
No	36	10	46	34	9	43	70	19	89
Total	60	14	74	65	12	77	125	26	151
$\chi^2$	0.63			1.6			2.2		
Signif.	0.43			0.21			0.14		

Fam	Male			Female			All		
Purch	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	30	6	36	35	6	41	65	12	77
No	23	7	30	28	6	34	51	13	64
Maybe	7	1	8	2		2	9	1	10
Total	60	14	74	65	12	77	125	26	151
$\chi^2$	0.72			0.062			0.64		
Signif.	0.70			0.97			0.73		

## Hilfiger Athletics

Appeal	Male			Female			All		
Purch	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	21	6	27	31	2	33	52	8	60
No	10	27	37	11	16	27	21	43	64
Maybe	5	5	10	10	4	14	15	9	24
Total	36	38	74	52	22	74	88	60	148
$\chi^2$	16.1			20.1			37.4		
Signif.	< 0.001			< 0.001			< 0.001		

Fam	Male			Female			All		
Appeal	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	25	11	36	39	14	53	64	25	89
No	13	25	38	10	13	23	23	38	61
Total	38	36	74	49	27	76	87	63	150
$\chi^2$	9.2			6.3			17.4		
Signif.	0.002			0.012			< 0.001		

Fam	Male			Female			All		
Purch	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	17	10	27	27	6	33	44	16	60
No	14	23	37	14	13	27	28	36	64
Maybe	7	3	10	7	7	14	14	10	24
Total	38	36	74	48	26	74	86	62	148
$\chi^2$	5.6			7.5			11.1		
Signif.	0.062			0.023			0.004		

# Ellesse Watch

Appeal	Male			Female			All		
Purch	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	32	3	35	19	10	29	51	13	64
No	3	36	39	6	38	44	9	74	83
Total	35	39	74	25	48	73	60	87	147
$\chi^2$	51.2			24.4			71.0		
Signif.	<0.001			<0.001			<0.001		

Fam	Male			Female			All		
Appeal	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	20	15	35	8	18	26	28	33	61
No	8	31	39	8	40	48	16	71	87
Total	28	46	74	16	58	74	44	104	148
$\chi^2$	10.5			2.0			13.0		
Signif.	0.001			0.16			< 0.001		

Fam	Male			Female			All		
Purch	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	19	16	35	11	18	29	30	34	64
No	9	30	39	5	39	44	14	69	83
Total	28	46	74	16	57	73	44	103	147
$\chi^2$	7.6			7.2			15.5		
Signif.	0.006			0.007			< 0.001		

Appeal	Male			Female			All		
Purch	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	16	9	25	16	7	23	32	16	48
No	7	39	46	9	40	49	16	79	95
Total	23	48	71	25	47	72	48	95	143
$\chi^2$	17.6			18.1			35.5		
Signif.	< 0.001			< 0.001			< 0.001		

Fam	Male			Female			All		
Appeal	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	14	12	26	18	15	33	32	27	59
No	9	36	45	8	33	41	17	69	86
Total	23	48	71	26	48	74	49	96	145
$\chi^2$	8.7			9.8			18.6		
Signif.	0.003			0.002			< 0.001		

Fam	Male			Female			All		
Purch	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	19	8	27	15	17	32	34	25	59
No	7	38	45	8	32	40	15	70	85
Total	26	46	72	23	49	72	49	95	144
$\chi^2$	21.8			5.9			26.4		
Signif.	< 0.001			0.015			< 0.001		

## **D. Focus Groups**

### **D1. Interview guide for Focus Groups discussions**

- 1) Ask the participants to articulate their general attitudes to the advertisements shown, e.g., whether they liked or disliked them, what was their reason for it, and what in particular they liked and disliked. Encourage participants to talk about advertising in general.
- 2) Ask the participants to express their views as to trustworthiness of the advertisements, e.g., whether they trusted or distrusted the information, which the advertisements presented, and what were their reasons for it? Encourage participants to talk about advertising in general.
- 3) Ask them to identify different persuasive tactics, employed in the advertisements, e.g., involvement of celebrities, jokes, songs, eye-catching colours, computer graphics, magic and so on. Encourage participants to talk about advertising in general.
- 4) Invite the participants to discuss what the advertisers are trying to achieve by employing these tactics, e.g., grab their attention, make them to want the product, make them to remember or/and like the advertisement, make them to stop and think about the product, simply provide information about the product.
- 5) Invite the participants to imagine that they liked the products, presented by the advertisements, they had enough money and they thought the advertisements trustworthy. Ask them, taking into the consideration all the factors above, were the advertisements alone stimulating enough to go out and purchase the product or they had to rely on other sources as well, e.g., family, friends, school knowledge, and so on. Also, ask them if they can, while making purchasing decisions, be guided by price or/and brand alone.
- 6) Invite participants to discuss the persuasive power of the advertisements, shown to them and advertising in general. E.g., to what extent they thought the advertisements, and the advertisements shown to them in particular, can influence consumers purchasing decisions. The probe is: 'Do you know of any examples of influence from your or your friends or relatives lives?'
- 7) Invite the participants to discuss the sensibility of advertising in the market place, e.g., whether they thought advertising is a useful business tool or wasteful inefficient

business tool? The probe is: 'What do you know about different economic functions of advertising? Is it good or bad for your country?'.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: M / F

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

17/10/00

For each advert, tick the box if you feel that persuasive tactics corresponding to the words listed are being used in these adverts.

Magazine advert 1 (from FHM)

**French Connection Hygiene Products for Men**

1. Information\*
2. Visual representation of the product
3. Special effects/Computer graphics
4. Humour/Laughter
5. Music/Songs
6. Cute Animals
7. Worry/Anxiety
8. Sensual/Sexual
9. Lifestyle/Values/Attitudes
10. Celebrity presence
11. Use people of similar age to the target market
12. Headline/Message/Slogan
13. Abbreviation
14. Word play
15. Linking words and pictures

Magazine advert 2 (from FHM)

**Daniel Christian Jeans**

1. Information\*
2. Visual representation of the product
3. Special effects/Computer graphics
4. Humour/Laughter
5. Music/Songs
6. Cute Animals
7. Worry/Anxiety
8. Sensual/Sexual
9. Lifestyle/Values/Attitudes
10. Celebrity presence
11. Use people of similar age to the target market
12. Headline/Message/Slogan
13. Abbreviation
14. Word play
15. Linking words and pictures

Magazine advert 3 (from Bliss)

**French Connection Hygiene Products for Men**

1. Information\*
2. Visual representation of the product
3. Special effects/Computer graphics
4. Humour/Laughter
5. Music/Songs
6. Cute Animals
7. Worry/Anxiety
8. Sensual/Sexual
9. Lifestyle/Values/Attitudes
10. Celebrity presence
11. Use people of similar age to the target market
12. Headline/Message/Slogan
13. Abbreviation
14. Word play
15. Linking words and pictures

\*Information, e.g. talking about product's benefits and qualities, price, comparison with other products

TV advert 1  
**Maybelline cosmetics**

1. Information\*
2. Visual representation of the product
3. Special effects/Computer graphics
4. Humour/Laughter
5. Music/Songs
6. Cute Animals
7. Worry/Anxiety
8. Sensual/Sexual
9. Lifestyle/Values/Attitudes
10. Celebrity presence
11. Use people of similar age to the target market
12. Headline/Message/Slogan
13. Abbreviation
14. Word play
15. Linking words and pictures

TV advert 2  
**Juice Up**

1. Information\*
2. Visual representation of the product
3. Special effects/Computer graphics
4. Humour/Laughter
5. Music/Songs
6. Cute Animals
7. Worry/Anxiety
8. Sensual/Sexual
9. Lifestyle/Values/Attitudes
10. Celebrity presence
11. Use people of similar age to the target market
12. Headline/Message/Slogan
13. Abbreviation
14. Word play
15. Linking words and pictures

TV advert 3  
**Fruk – French Connection**

16. Information\*
17. Visual representation of the product
18. Special effects/Computer graphics
19. Humour/Laughter
20. Music/Songs
21. Cute Animals
22. Worry/Anxiety
23. Sensual/Sexual
24. Lifestyle/Values/Attitudes
25. Celebrity presence
26. Use people of similar age to the target market
27. Headline/Message/Slogan
28. Abbreviation
29. Word play
30. Linking words and pictures

\*Information, e.g. talking about product's benefits and qualities, price, comparison with other products



### **D3. Full transcript of the Focus groups discussions**

#### **Focus Group 1**

##### **Theme1 Why do you like/dislike the advertisements shown? What about advertisements in general?**

F139: I disliked the Wonderbra one, because it's bit too raunchy for being on, just like in articles and stuff. I liked the FCUK one [Hygiene and Fashion], because I liked the word abbreviation they have, it is very good. I also liked this one [Daniel Christian], because I liked the slogan.

F97: I liked the FCUK [Hygiene & Fashion] one & the Daniel Christian one. Again, I disliked the Wonderbra one, which would probably appeal to men more than women.

M131: I thought they were all [magazine advertisements] good, catchy.

M77: I think they all [TV and magazine advertisements] work apart from the Wonderbra one, it is really appealing to men, but men don't buy it. I liked the Wonderbra one.

F98: I liked the FCUK [Hygiene & Fashion], because there is like a little story, using all the letters of the name.

F98: I liked the FCUK one, and I thought that the Wonderbra one was OK, made me buy it. I disliked Juice Up; it is really annoying, all the time on TV. People who drink the juice can get what they want. They have a clever attitude, which I liked.

##### **Theme 2 Why do you trust/distrust the advertisements shown? What about advertisements in general?**

F130: Looks like it is worth trying it [Maybelline]. The Maybelline one makes you believe it, but so many of them [advertisements] lie. You kind of know that it is not going to be any better than any other mascara, but because it's says that, you might as well try it.

F139: I agree with F130, that you think, it could work, so there's always hope that they're gonna make your lashes big, but then you, kind of, know, that they are not really, 'cos , most adverts don't really tell the truth.

M89: I didn't like the Juice Up one, because it's really boring. Some [advertisements] tell the truth, and some don't. I believed the Maybelline one.

M9: If I was a girl, then I think the presence of Sarah Michelle Gellar would mean that a girl would wanna buy it. 'Cos if she's got it, everyone'd buy, really. Without her, I don't really think people will be that persuaded, to actually buy the product.

M131: I think, all make-up, in general, they all say, oh, it will do this and this, and it never does, it will be no different. All ads exaggerate like, 'it makes your lips look redder', and it never does.

M77: People would buy it [FCUK Fashion] because of that comedy, all those different messages. But I do not think I will buy, because it is better quality, I think it's all the persuasion.

F98: The Daniel Christian one makes it look as if you put those jeans on yourself, you will become really sexy, but if you're ugly and put them on, you're still gonna look sexy.

Theme 3 and Theme 4 What persuasive tactics and techniques were employed in the advertisements shown? What effects were advertisers trying to achieve by employing the tactics, discussed previously?

M77: The Juice Up advert on TV plays a lot, so probably sticks in your head as being annoying, but then you remember the juice. The advert is really playing and then, just has the juice in the middle. You will probably just remember that, stick in your mind.

F97: FCUK [Fashion] you don't really think about the product, I don't think it makes you run out and buy anything, because it doesn't show any of the product. But it does make you think of FCUK.

F98: The Juice Up one, you'd remember it, because the advert has not really got anything to do with the actual drink, the drink is just coming there. You remember it, because it was different, it stood out.

M9: Personally, I don't really buy any of it [FCUK Hygiene]. They are trying to say: you will smell better and women will love you. If I look at that advert [FCUK Hygiene], the first

thing I'd remember is the words [text], bloke does nothing, really. I think they've done that with the FCUK TV advert as well.

F130: I think that the FCUK [Fashion] one was good, it stands out, it is not trying to say how much better it is, where the Maybelline one is trying to say how much better it is, but French Connection is leaving it up to you. FCUK slogan helps you to remember the ad, but is not that pushy.

M89: I think it doesn't stick in you head, because it is just a man having a shower [talking about FCUK Hygiene], and does not really make you buy it.

Theme 5 Do you consider the advertisements to be persuasive enough for you to go out and buy a product advertised, based on advertising alone, or do you need to rely on other sources as well, e.g., family, friends, etc.?

F139: I think the clothes, you have to ask your friends opinion about it. It would depend, if that was your style of clothing, and that's what you would want to wear, because, some people don't like to wear designer makes, they all have their individual styles, so would not really appeal to you, if you don't dress that way [the way your friends do].

M131: I do not think any of the adverts, especially, would make me go out and buy that product. If I saw a product in the shops and liked it, then I'd buy, not because of the advert, but because I liked it when I saw it.

F139: I think you have to [fit in with your friends], because, sometimes, when you get new thing, new clothes, you friends can, if it's not what your friends like, your friends, kind of, mock you for it and they laugh at you, so you stop wearing it. So, I think, you are very influenced by what your friends say. For example, if someone bought something themselves, e.g., mascara, and it actually did work, you friends would say, oh, yes, it does work, go out and buy it.

M131: I think most people would not say that are influenced [by their friends], but subconsciously they actually would. If all their friends had one particular product, I think you'd go out and get that product as well.

F97: I think that everyone is influenced by their friends. Like fashion - no one goes out and buys anything old-fashioned, because of what everyone else would say.

M89: I think, the closer you are to your friends, the less it matters. But in a general group of people, you want to be like them.

M77: It depends on the product, I think, if it was a group of girls, wearing the same coats, you would feel like wearing the same coat. But with a shower gel, only because all of your mates got a particular shower gel, you would not want the same one.

F130: You more rely on what your friends do, than your family. If you'd buy something and your friends did not like it, you more likely not to wear it, than if your mum, or someone in your family said that they don't like it, it's because they are from a different age group. I would not listen to what my mum says about my clothes.

F98: You are more likely to rely on friends' opinions, because they matter to you more, because they are same age with you. With your family, if you mum says she does not like it, you think she is just being annoying and you probably buy it just to annoy her.

F30: I wouldn't buy a thing if my friends have got it, 'cos it will all look stupid wearing the same stuff. But I listen to my friends more, than anyone else.

Theme 6 Do you consider the advertisements shown to be persuasive? What about advertising in general?

F130: I do not think any of them are that persuasive, it's just if you like them [advertisements] or if you think you need them [the products]. The younger kids, if they saw Sarah Michelle Gellar on TV, they might take note, they might go out and buy it.

F139: I think the Wonderbra one might be persuasive, because if that's what you want to look like and they show you what it does on advert. So if it is what you want, you would go out and buy it.

F97: I think they could be persuasive to some people, but in general, I think most of the people'd want to see the product, before they bought it. I would need to look at it before.

M89: I think, when you get older, they start to become less persuasive. But when you are younger, you might be persuaded.

M77: I think, it depends on the person. Personally, I'd go into shop and if I like it, then I buy it. It is mostly to do with price. I would not buy any of this, because they've naked person on them. However, many people can be influenced. For example, little kids progs, like Pokemon, million of kids just go out and buy it, because it's there, on TV.

M9: For example, FCUK one, you know, these initials here, I don't know whether it's supposed to represent something else, apart from that word. I think, if people saw that and then they had that [FCUK] printed on that, some people may buy it to get some kind of attention or something. To make all of them [general public] a bit shocked. They use abbreviation and word play cleverly.

Theme 7 What do you know about different economic functions of advertising? Is advertising a useful business tool, or a wasteful and inefficient business tool?

M89: I think it's [advertising] good, 'cos then you know, the product is there, and you might go out and buy it, because you might need that. But if it was not there, then you'd not really know what's the product.

F98: I think it's a good way of getting information out, because lots of people watch TV, read magazines and stuff like that. Not everyone is going to buy the product, but they still will know that it is there, and if they need it, they will remember the advert.

M9: If one particular advert was shown enough times in magazines and TV, that would stick in their [people's] head and then they would probably go back on that and think, oh, perhaps if it's on TV and magazines, it is really worth going out and buying it. I think general people do not really bother to pay extra for packaging if it [the product] is worth buying. I think it [advertising] helps a country to prosper.

F139: I think, in a way, I think it's good, because you see what is out there, but then, it is wasteful, because, they do spend a lot of money on some of the adverts, like, I bet they spent a lot of money getting Sarah Michelle Gellar to do the mascara advert. So, in a way, it is wasteful, when it could be just a normal person. Also, the models. In a way, it does not make you believe it as much, because they are not like normal people. I would believe adverts more, if they used normal people, but they only like to pick pretty people, and so, it is obviously going to look good on them.

F97: I think it does raise your awareness of the product, but it is a bit of a waste of money. I don't think that majority of people really run out any buy the products, just because an advert says it's good. However, if I had to choose between identical products in the shop, I would choose the one with nicer packaging.

M131: I think, advertising is quite bad. It creates an image of the products, like Nike - being really cool for everyone to have, so everyone goes and gets Nike. If there is people who can't afford it, they get looked down upon by the rest of their peers. They [Nike] can afford to charge so much for it, because they're advertising it for months.

Interviewer: Do you think that advertising promotes the upper-class life style?

M131: They don't necessarily promote the upper-class life style, but they charge for that sort of range.

F30: I think it is not wasteful and good for economy.

F130: I think it works, like if you have the same products, I think I'd buy the one with better packaging. But I think it's waste of money.

F98: I think would buy a product with the better packaging, because it looks better, it would appeal to me.

## **Focus Group 2**

### Theme 1 Why do you like/dislike the advertisements shown? What about advertisements in general?

M129: Don't really catch my eye but remind me of things that I see everyday. I was actually at my girlfriend's house and she pulled this one up [Wonderbra]

F43: It's like trying it on, when you see it.

M129: It makes me laugh, because that's never really going to happen. They've all created them like that, they're not going to put people off because they want them to buy the product.

Theme 2 Why do you trust/distrust the advertisements shown? What about advertisements in general?

M129: The only one which catches my eye is the Juice up advert because it's very sort of simple, straightforward, you don't have all the people prancing about.

F37: It's not like reminding you every 5 seconds, buy this mascara, you only see the Juice packet a couple of times, it's not in your face much.

F43: Yes, it's different [Juice Up], it catches your attention more than the others, but you don't really know what they are selling.

M129: It's gone pear-shaped really, because you started off, well I've seen this on TV and I want to buy it. But now it's, sort of, I saw it on TV and it's just another advert. Like the Budweiser advert. I'm convinced that no one will go out and buy Budweiser just because - it's just to make people laugh. You think, oh well, I'll buy that because I like the advert - it's not completely just because it's the advert

Theme 3 What persuasive tactics and techniques were employed in the advertisements shown?

F37: They, like, have roles with people. The Maybelline and the Wonderbra one, it's all beautiful blondes and stuff, whereas you won't see, like, very ugly people it's all very... Like the bloke in the picture is good looking, so they're using stereotypical roles and stuff.

F43: Yes, or something.

F37: Celebrities, yeah, because celebrities are like a good role model in people's lives, if you see them using it then, OK, she used, I'll go and buy it now.

M129: Also, slogan throughout, it's not an advert without a slogan - you've got to have a jig!

F37: Yes, the Maybelline one, it's cheesy.

M129: Yeah, but everyone knows it. Yes, it's cheesy, you walk around school and you shout Maybelline and you get about 15 [people] just going: 'Isn't she gorgeous'.

F37: Or the L'Oreal one...it's like that.

M129: It's not that you want to hold on to it, it's that they blast it at you all the time so you remember it anyway and then, when you're out there, you'll just say it as a joke.

F43: Yeah, it just reinforces what they're trying to sell.

#### Theme 4 What effects were advertisers trying to achieve?

F37: I think the adverts are the last kind of thing, when you see the advert then you decide that I'm going to get that for real. It just reminds you that you want something like that, so you might as well go out and buy it from them, because it just....

M129: I think the main point is that no one wants to be blasted with ads like the Maybelline advert. It's just mascara, you don't really care if it's going to make you longer or softer or whatever. You want to know that it works and you can only prove that to yourself if you actually went out and bought it.

F43: It's just a competition between brands or companies to see how many people they can get to buy their product.

Interviewer: What drives your purchasing decisions then?

M129: Regularity: after school I would go and buy a 2-litre bottle of economy Coke from Sainsbury's. It's not because I like the advert or that Sainsbury's have better stickers...

#### Theme 5 Do you consider the advertisements to be persuasive enough for you to go out and buy a product advertised, based on advertising alone, or do you need to rely on other sources as well, e.g., family, friends, etc.?

F43: In a way, yes. If your friends have got something, then sometimes you want to have the same or go even better.

F14: I think they influence you...



M140: It's the thing that tips the balance, yeah, like you'll normally stick to one product and buy your clothes from the same shop, eat at the same restaurant, use ASDA or Sainsbury's all the time. So people, who want to change, will go and buy a Wonderbra instead of a normal bra and say they liked it and carry on buying Wonderbra. If they saw a Sainsbury's advert and they shopped at ASDA, and they want to Sainsbury's and they liked it, then they might start shopping at Sainsbury's. It's to try and get people out of their routine.

Interviewer: So you think it can influence you?

F43: People don't really take much notice of adverts anyway do they? They're just like, in between the programmes...

M129: It's, like, sub-conscious. It's like thinking in your head - I must go out and buy that Robinson's Juice Up. You walk along the aisle you see it and think...

F37: They don't exactly push you into buying it, but when you queue, it's like different, I want to change... But it has to be shown really regular before you can actually... If you haven't seen it for a while, then I think that maybe it won't make you go straight out and buy that thing. It has to be regular to make you buy something.

M129: In particular I don't like adverts that I think are trying to lie. I mean, obviously they can't lie in the sense that they're completely wrong. But, like the Maybelline advert, it kind of makes me wonder - why they are making a big fuss over her eyes?!? It puts you off.

F6: In the Maybelline one, they say: used by professionals, film stars, and so if it can work for them...

F37: They also say, it's used by make-up artists, you think that, if it's used by professional actors, it's got to be good.

Interviewer: Any examples of wanting to buy the product having seen the ad?

M140: Playstation games.

M129: Little short quick adverts that don't say much, like Playstation - you see a hedgehog running around.

F37: I really like that Coke one, as well. I like that one. It was set in an office and shows normal day, like, and you know that the product can make a bit of a difference.

M129: Normal people walking around, touching hedges saying: I don't like this.... You've just got to have some contrast to your daily life. It's like the juice-up advert - you can see yourself sitting there telling someone what you've done today.

F37: And the other one, the Juice Up advert, where she's talking about her brother. People can relate to that, it's in their nature. Then you've got a pretty good chance of that product selling.

Interviewer: So what can they do to make you relate even more?

F43: There's an M&S one, where everyone's normal. They're not using a blond blue-eyed person, they're using different people, because that's what the world is like.

Theme 6 Do you consider the advertisements shown to be persuasive? What about advertising in general?

M140: Most probably your mates saying: that's nice, go and get it.

Interviewer: But where do you think they got that from?

M140: The adverts, I suppose.

M129: You walk down the aisle and you just look at what is aesthetically pleasing, go for it and buy it. If you like it you can tell your friends about it, if they like it, they buy it. It goes like that, so it could be started off by the advert.

Interviewer: What about the branding?

M129: It depends how far you go - there's a bit of an example about sweets. Everyone buys Haribo, because that's what they like. There's the bit in the middle about cakes and stuff. Then you get up to the clothing stuff, where everyone will buy the same stuff again.

F37: There are adverts like the Coldseal one, like for windows and the insurance ones. They're really boring... especially the ones on channel 5, they're all: phone this 0800 number, where we will help you with this, and so, so and so, but so, it's really like they are relating to people, who are experienced.

Theme 7 What do you know about different economic functions of advertising? Is advertising a useful business tool or a wasteful and inefficient business tool?

F14: It makes you recognise their product. If you wanted it, then you'd buy it, you don't need an advert to tell you.

F37: If it's got a good name, then you might as well go to one shop, than go to the other. You think that you can trust them. Yes, because you'd rather go, like if you're going to buy a settee or something, you'd rather go to a well known store and know that you're getting your money's worth, than go to a little known corner-village-store kind of thing.

M129: I don't know. It's coming over the Internet as well, they're advertising banks.

M140: More and more advertising around because of the Internet. It's always going to be here wherever you go.

M129: E-banking system has become very strong now. Most people buy small items like books and CDs, few clothes. And now it's spread into banks, houses. Short sharp ads. One that sticks in my mind, is the Smile banking co-operative. Most people just smiling and then you get the end and it stops. It makes you ask questions so you think: what is it? I'll go and have a look... And then, when you get on the site, you're there, you're caught. It doesn't apply very much to us but... I don't know... you think about it... you actually wanted to go there instead of being fed it on a spoon.

Interviewer: What about the applicability of the advert shown to this age group?

M129: The Juice-up advert was OK.

M140: These aren't things you go and buy regularly, unlike juice, where you can go down to Sainsbury's every day and buy it.

Interviewer: What about FCUK?

M129: I think the generation we're in, it's very, sort of, over your head. We sit down and watch TV, because we want to watch the programmes. We've been blasted with this, since we were small, it's a comical thing.

F37: When we were kids, and they showed dolls, it, kind of, made you automatically want one. But now that we're older, you think, you can see what they're trying to do, like, brainwash you to go and buy the product. But now that we're older, we've got our own mind and we can decide without some advert telling us stuff.

M140: I know for one that, when the adverts come on, I get up and get a drink, but you can see what they're doing to you, quite cheesy.

M129: It just makes you feel, like, we'll go out there and buy a product and then you see it and say: well, did you buy this product because of the TV, and we'll sit here and say: no, no, we're not such suckers. We know that we do sometimes, but I don't think it's a nice feeling, to know you've been had.

F37: Some of the adverts work, you know, when you see an ad for a film. I've just seen one and I really want to see the film now. So some kind of adverts works.

M140: Like the ones where they advertise the programmes.

F37: Like the music ones, where they play all the latest singles coming out.

M129: It's very difficult, you can't say or know if it's going to work until it's out there. In the Maybelline ad, you can see that they've put a hell of a lot of effort in with digital graphics.

F37: I like the Gap adverts.

### **Focus Group 3**

Theme1 Why do you like/dislike the advertisements shown? What about advertisements in general?

M94: I liked Wonderbra, it has got a nice girl on it, not that I wear a bra, but it gets my attention, if I wore a bra and I looked like that, I would be happy. I liked the Maybelline

one, because it has got Michelle Gellar on, as well, she is pretty nice. I liked French Connection [Fashion], it was quite funny, I think, I understood that she was supposed to work in the kitchen at the party, they talked about pants, pretty funny that!

M135: I liked Wonderbra, it has got quite a nice woman on it. I did not like any TV ads, none of them caught my attention, I would not go out and buy one of those things.

M78: I liked Daniel Christian jeans, because it has got some nice woman, pulling his jeans down. I liked the Wonderbra one, she is pretty nice. Juice Up, it is a bit stupid, because you don't know what he is going on about, he is going on about his private life and he's got a drink in his hand. Because it is, like, stupid, people will think about it when, like, buying the drink, so it makes you to remember it.

M84: I liked the French Connection [Fashion] one, it just, probably caught my attention, but I did not understand what it was about.

F21: I did not like the Juice Up ad - boring, I did not understand it. I liked the FCUK [Fashion] one, it catches your attention, and it is different from the rest. I did not know what were they trying to achieve, I did not understand it.

F71: liked French Connection [Fashion] ad, because it was linked, they shared some interest, like a book. Juice Up was boring, there was no connection.

F72: I did not like Juice Up - boring, does not appeal to anybody, I liked FCUK [Fashion], but I did not understand the link or anything, the thing that caught me, was her coat, it was nice, but you do not really think about all the words, linked to it, you do not seat there, thinking: oh, that links to that. You do not want to think about it, it does not come to me to think about it.

F85: I did not like the Juice Up one, again it was boring, it did not really appeal to me.

Interviewer: What do you think were advertisers trying to tell you?

F85: They were trying to tell you, that if you are, like, down, just use this and it will make you feel happy. I like FCUK [Fashion] - I found every word they said added to FCUK, they were going through them. I also liked FCUK [Hygiene], they're spelling the word again, it is clever word play.

M52: I like the FCUK [Fashion] one, because it was funny, because I think they met before, when they popped into each other, they met before and, they like each other. I did not like the Juice Up one, it did not make any sense, and was boring. The Maybelline, I thought, it is quite good, because they had Michelle Gellar in it, but it is nothing that appeals to me.

Theme 2 Why do you trust/distrust the advertisements shown? What about advertisements in general?

M84: Maybelline, I would buy, if I was buying for someone else, because, it is a trustworthy company and have got someone famous on this, they have got money to spend, so it must be good.

M94: I am not really sure, because I don't trust much things on TV, because most of them are lying, or may just not work, or something like that, because usually what they want me to do, it's just buy, that's what they really want - the money. They must just be trying lying to you and just getting money, so you buy it, and they are happy, 'cos they've got the money.

F21: I would not buy it [Maybelline], because, see, they put Sarah on, because they want people to be persuaded by her to buy the product, because she is a celebrity, she is pretty, they think: oh, I like her lashes, I buy it. I don't know whether she is telling the truth.

F71: I do not trust that product [Maybelline], I think they put her on it to make it look good and, like, people think that if they use that product, they will be like her, or they will be pretty like her, but that does not work. I trust FCUK [Fashion and Hygiene] ones. The one FCUK [Fashion] is just clothes, the other is just guys' products and stuff, because they're not, like, saying all good stuff about it, they just selling it, they are not just cute, saying: oh, it is like this, or it is like that, it is good because of this. They're just selling it. I have bought something from them before, and I know what they're like, style's like - it is good.

F72: The Maybelline one, I thought, I do not think that was totally true, but I think some of what they saying is true, because they can't just come out with her [Michelle Gellar] little lies, because, probably it is illegal or something. I would not buy it, because, just I would not. The FCUK [Fashion and Hygiene] ones, I think, their adverts are a little more clever,

more thought about. I have been to FCUK, so I know what is like, and that's why I would think that it's true what's being written in FCUK.

F85: The FCUK one, I think, like, sounds better, because it does not push the product too much in your face, it sort of, discreetly saying: well, this is the product. The Maybelline one, I think, they are trying to push the product in your face. The Juice Up one, I think, they do not really tell you much about it, they're saying: here is this product. I have never bought it.

M94: I have bought it [Juice Up], it tastes like piss. I did not like it.

M52: I don't think that the Maybelline one was very good, they are just trying to get Sarah Michelle on it to promote their product, but it does not seem very genuine. I would buy FCUK T-shirt, because FCUK is quite large company, reliable, I know about them. Daniel Christian Jeans look all right, but I am not really sure about them, never bought them before.

Theme 3 and Theme 4 What persuasive tactics and techniques were employed in the advertisements shown? What effects were advertisers trying to achieve?

M135: I would not go out and buy shower gel [FCUK Hygiene]. Anyway, I get my mum to do that for me. I don't mind what brand she buys.

M78: I think they've got some kind of buff guy in the shower [FCUK Hygiene], so it makes people, like, associate with him, and every one wants to be a bit buff - like us, we think he is buff, because he uses this, real men use FCUK. They link the man and product.

M94: I think this is very smart, really [FCUK Hygiene]. They've got a well-formed guy, and people who see it, think, if I buy that, I might be like him, I might have his... And women, who are looking there for their boyfriend or something, they will see it and they think: maybe, if I buy that, my boyfriend might look more like him or something like that. Daniel Christian Jeans, they've got some girl in those pants, quite good. More like taking notice of it, because, if you look at it, and you are trying to think, you might take more notice of the girl. But, on the whole thing, you'd see it, and it just catches your eye, and they've done the word play, because, if everyone's getting into Daniel Christian, and then, she is like, getting into it. The Wonderbra one, if the girl was looking, she might think, well, if I buy it, I'd have good breasts like her, and look good as she does. This uses sexual

images, her breasts. If a guy was looking for something for his girlfriend, he wanted to buy something, he would think: oh, maybe, if I bought her that, she might have breasts like that.

F21: The Daniel Christian one, they've used a similar age target group.

Interviewer: Why?

F21: They are trying to get you to remember that.

F71: I think that all of that adverts just got nice people, like other people, the public, want to be like, so people think, if they buy that product, they will be more like that. If I looked at the Wonderbra one, it would stand out, because she is half-naked.

F72: The FCUK [Fashion], I think, because it's different, I suppose with the other ones, you might be quite bored, and theirs are - you kind of get confused when they pull up all the things, all the objects - so you might stop, thinking: what's that about? You might start looking up for the adverts, so you can figure out what they're talking about. So, it does get you thinking. And, it is pretty good, it would appeal to me, I would, like, stop and look at it.

F85: the Juice Up one, there they are using people of similar age to those, whom they want to use the product. They are trying to use the teenage life-style, because they use the teenager on it. It might be that teenagers are unhappy, so they might think that, if they drink this juice, it would make everyone happier. They [advertisers] are trying to say that, if they're [teenagers] down, and they take the drink, they might feel happier. They are trying to get you to think about it.

M52: The Maybelline one, they are trying to tell you, that if you use this product, then you can be as good as the person, who has one, and they deliberately use a very famous person, so they say, if you use this, you will be really famous, you'd look really good, or something. It stands out, because it's got a famous person on, she looks really good, so that, if you're watching TV and it comes on a lot, so you can associate with it, like, you remember it easily. If it came on, I'd just might look at it, but it would not really influence me to go and buy anything.



Theme 5 Do you consider the advertisements to be persuasive enough for you to go out and buy a product advertised based on advertising alone, or do you need to rely on other sources as well, e.g., family, friends, etc.

M52: If I was going to buy something, I would probably buy FCUK men's products, because they look really good and, again, FCUK is a big company, but I won't necessarily ask people in my family, if I could go and buy it, or get someone else to tell me. I make my own decisions, because it matters what I think about the products, so I just go and buy it, if I wanted it. But, then, sometimes, if your friends really don't like it and give you a really hard time about it, then you probably wouldn't buy, but it's usually up to you, what you want.

F85: I think for clothes, I'd ask my friends what they thought, and then look around for everything else, if there is something you like, it might be just a similar product, but cheaper, than the brand name. I would listen to my mum's opinion, but in the end, I'd decide, what I'd liked to do.

M135: No, I don't think I do [take my peer's group opinion into the account]. I never copy everyone else. If everyone in my class had Nikes, I would not have them, unless I saw Nikes I liked.

M94: If everyone has got the same one, and I would not like them, I would not go out and buy them, just 'cos everybody got similar, because if I did not like them, there would not be any point for me buying them. I would not worry about fitting in with the group.

M78: If everybody got the same make of shoes, I think it looks stupid, because you don't stand out, you have to stand out, as yourself. So, you buy stuff that you like, but you actually know that nobody has got that - I try to, anyway. It really stands out.

F21: I would not buy the same stuff, because it's already been...

M52: I don't think that it matters to fit into a group, but if some people really want to be in a group, they, probably will buy it [the same stuff]. But I would not buy the stuff that everyone else has, because, not everyone has the same taste.

F85: I would not, necessary, go and buy it [the same stuff], I would not worry about fitting in with the group.

F72: I buy stuff from FCUK anyway, if I had the money, I would go and buy stuff from there. But I don't think that advert makes me any more stronger in my passion to buy FCUK.

F71: I probably would go and buy FCUK stuff, I've got more knowledge of it, I know where they stand in quality like. I would not buy the Wonderbra thing, 'cos the women looks a bit tacky, I think that they want the men to buy for their partners or whatever. I would ask my mum's and my friends' advice, I would value my mum's advice here.

F21: I would buy FCUK stuff, 'cos I've seen these as well, it looks really good, but the advert does not really show the clothes, it just represents FCUK. The advert alone was not stimulating enough for me to go out and buy it. I would not buy Wonderbra one. I ask my friends' opinions, if I want to buy something.

M84: I buy FCUK stuff, I won't buy it because of the ad, because the ad does not show anything about their products. I buy FCUK because it's a trustworthy company, a lot of other people buy stuff from there, so you can trust them. My friends' opinion is also valid on this matter.

M94: I'd buy the grooming stuff, FCUK men's products, but it's not much to do with the advert, it's just, if I had the money and I knew about it, I'd probably buy it. But I would not really ask my parents or my mates, whether I shall buy it or not, because I'd not really care what they said, I would probably just buy it, anyway. If my mate told me that it [Juice Up] was not very nice, I probably would not buy it, but I bought it and I would not buy it again and I would tell everyone not to buy it. If I was in town with my mates, I would ask how I look in them [Daniel Christian jeans], 'cos if I look like a div in them, I would not wear them, I would not buy them. So if my mates said: don't be stupid, then I won't buy it. But if I am with my mum, she just says anything looks good, so she does not really mind what she says. But if I went to school wearing them and my mates said: you look stupid, I probably won't wear them again. But if I liked them, I probably would, though.

Theme 6 Do you consider the advertisements shown to be persuasive? What about advertising in general?

M52: If you are really desperate for a product, like, if you have low self-esteem, or something like that, and you see something on TV, or something that influences you,

alcohol and that... So, teenagers growing up, they like really drinking alcohol, or something, and they see it on TV and they see that they can do so. Adverts do influence quite a few people, who really want to buy something that they think will help.

M135: No one really cares about the adverts, they just waiting for a TV programme to get back on. I am not influenced, but younger kids probably are.

M78: Some of them I like, I probably look at it and if I had the money, I probably go out and buy it, but it depends how much money I've got, 'cos I am always skint. Most of the time, the adverts block your viewing, I think, it's a bit annoying when I am watching something good. If you're watching a film on ITV and the adverts come on, you just turn off and put it back on when the film's going to come back on. I am not sure if she [mum] does. There is this advert [Describes Sainsbury's advert - a guy walks in and he buys food for himself to make and food for everybody, he tastes little food, takes bites of the food and gives it all to his mates and he gets his free dinner] she might be interested in it, because it is a promotion.

M94: I bet, you can get persuaded by TV adverts. The younger kids are really easy to persuade, so if there is, a Barbie doll or a car, or something, some little kid of around 8 or something, who is going to see it, and they've got to think: oh, I want this, moans to their mum and dad and they feel pressurised. Some of the older people are more hard to persuade, because they are used to the same product, or something pretty like it, and they know that that was good and there is no point changing it, there is nothing wrong with it, so they just stick with it.

F21: I think that the Maybelline advert could persuade some people, not many people, because they've got a celebrity on it, they think: oh, her lashes are nicer than others, I'd buy that. But I think, some people try it and they think: oh, it does not work, so they tell other people. The younger people get more persuaded.

F71: I think adverts don't persuade, they make you remember. If you see a food advert and you feel hungry, then you want to eat whatever's advertised. Little kids get persuaded more by adverts, because they'll see it and they'll want it straight away, like every toy they see on adverts. Adults think more about quality and price.

F85: I think, children are more persuaded, more influenced, they put more pressure on their parents. Adults are more resilient to adverts, because they know what the adverts are trying to do.

Theme 7 What do you know about different economic functions of advertising? Is advertising a useful business tool or a wasteful and inefficient business tool?

M94: I think, overall, it's [advertising] good, the companies can show the products to people who want to buy them, so if it is on TV, people are going to hear about it, because everyone watches TV, so it's good for them [for people], it's good business as well. If more people buy that [the products advertised], then the company gets richer.

F71: Some people buy the product, based on the packaging, they see what it's packed like, if it was just, like, all loose, then people would not really buy it. I mind to pay extra for the packaging, because it is, like, waste.

F85: It is good for the country in moderation, because if it is too much, you get annoyed with them [adverts]. Sometimes it [advertising] can be wasteful.

M52: It is wasteful, some products advertised excessively on TV, some companies spend too much money on packaging and promotion.

F72: I would pay extra for packaging, I don't think it [packaging] is total waste of time. If you get a perfume and get a box, with the designer's name on it, some people do think: oh, I want that box, with the designer's name on it. So people do pay for packaging, I suppose. I think that the advertising is good for the country, because the country gets richer.

**Focus Group 4**

Theme 1 Why do you like/dislike the advertisements shown? What about advertisements in general?

M93: I don't think there's enough information about the product that they're trying to sell. They're telling us about their life.

F120: Sometimes, you, like, are more willing to watch them than other adverts but they're not really very clear about what they're trying to sell.

M93: Maybelline - that worked for me!

F120: It gives the information that you need. I think, it does well and that the girls would want to buy the product.

M36: They are all very sexual.

F55: Well, during daytime they can't put much on.

M36: I didn't like the adverts really.

M93: I liked the FCUK.

F51: It was quite funny, makes you more interested.

Theme 2 Why do you trust/distrust the advertisements shown? What about advertisement in general?

F55: Sometimes the information won't be exactly given so you don't really have a view, if you know what I mean.

M36: You've got to trust them because the ITC ensures, like, tells them what they can and can't do.

Interviewer: That means they can't lie, but what else can they do?

M36: You can be kind of influenced by the product, which might not be as good as it looks, but can be, kind of, glamorised, but most of the reputable companies wouldn't do that.

F51: Some of the products give you their info, put it in such a way that you have space for your own view, so if you do get it wrong, then it's your own fault.

F96: Sometimes they hint at things, but they don't say it, so you have to make things up. But at the same time, they're actually coming out and saying it.

Theme 3 and 4 What persuasive tactics and techniques were employed in the advertisements shown? What effects were advertisers trying to achieve?

M93: In other ones they use, em... they always use good looking people to advertise their product, like they used Sarah Michelle Gellar. You know, like, people want to look like her, so they think... let's go out and buy Maybelline, so they can look like her, that might persuade people.

F120: I think some of them have sexual things. I don't think that there's really that much need for it all the time, and it's kind of in every one.

M36: Each advert's got hidden meanings like... this advert suggests that, if you wear their clothing you'll probably get a bird, and that one suggests the same thing, that you'll probably get kissed, and that one suggests that you'll have bigger breasts. If you just looked at them, you probably wouldn't get it, but if you look into it and read it, then it probably inflicts thought in your mind.

F51: I think they try to give you a choice.

M93: I think if you buy their product, then it's a successful advert.

Interviewer: Are they thought provoking in any sense?

F120: Yes, because they don't give too much away.

M54: Every time you see the product you associate it with the pictures - it sticks in your mind.

F51: If you just have information it gets a bit boring so, like, visually, you remember it, so, like, you get a picture in your head and you would associate it with the product every time.

M36: If they use beautiful people, you'll remember that more, than you remember the product. They do it on purpose.

M95: They use, like, slogans and various images.

F96: FCUK was quite effective.

F120: Like, on the radio, you hear an advert that's very catchy, you might see the name and think of something you've not seen before, but like the tune or even the jingle might come back into your head and you might think: yeah, I'll try that... But you might not have seen the product beforehand.

Interviewer: Is that one of the persuasive tactics?

M36: Like Coldseal...

Interviewer: What do you remember about that?

M36: Well, their image isn't really great, but they're actually a good company. I've bought windows from them and they work. I've even bought some new ones.

Theme 5 Do you consider the advertisements to be persuasive enough for you to go out and buy a product advertised based on advertising alone, or do you need to rely on other sources as well, e.g., family, friends, etc.?

F51: I don't think that, on TV, that orange juice... I thought it was too boring, it wasn't really catching your thought. I mean, why link their life with... It didn't really go with the product.

F96: It didn't show how it was different from any other orange juice.

F120: If you remember it, if it's a well-known name, you're more likely to go and buy it.

F55: There's reputation as well, and all of our friends, what they think as well. There's the quality of the products.

Interviewer: Any social pressures?

F51: Yeah, a bit. If it's something that's popular with people our age, then you're more likely to buy it than if it's not popular.

F120: I think, yeah, but to a lesser extent. You have your own opinion as well.

F51: The name I like. If it's a big name, then you might buy the name, but not the actual product, if you know what I mean. If all your friends have got one product, then it might get a bit too much, if you get the same product as well, but the name might affect you to buy something else in that range.

F51: I think the TV ones, they've got more time to go through the whole product, whereas on the magazines they have to do it all in one picture. So, like, it's got to grab your attention straightaway. But the TV ones, they try to make you carry on watching, but have got more time to explain and go through the product with you, and give more detail, whereas here they've got to do it straightaway.

M36: Like Gola... Gola's good.

F51: What's that one with that 'Hi' something... Hi-tech trainers! In a way, yeah, no matter how good Hi-tech trainers make their ads, I'm not going to go out and buy them, because it's not a very good name. Well, it's not a popular name.

F96: Each advert is trying to make the product look good and it's only if all your friends think that it is good that you would go out and buy it.

M54: Everybody jumping about, like in the Maybelline ad, suggesting that if you bought that, you'd have wonderful eyes...

Theme 6 Do you consider the advertisements shown to be persuasive? What about advertising in general?

M36: I think that it's related to... If you've got a need for a product and you've seen it on TV, you'll probably go ahead and buy it, like Mr. Sheen. Like, my mum was doing the polishing and she saw it on TV, and she went out and bought it. It came at the right time.

F96: If you recognise the name of anything like...



F120: They help us. Information, what's there, and what's out, without actually going out there and having a look. The information's there in front of your eyes.

F51: You can tell what type of product it is by the advert. If it's a good quality advert, then you think it's a good quality product as well.

M36: FCUK actually represented the product nicely and it looks quite impressive, it reveals, like, the quality kind of item that people might want to go out and buy.

F51: Yeah, and the jeans. It's kind of blurred in the background and stuff.

M36: That Wonderbra advert. She's like, really nice looking, and I think that ladies would want to have busts like hers. Yeah, they probably want to be like her and buy it.

F51: It's like the product, they've concentrated on the visual thing, e.g., in the FCUK the guy's the main thing and the product's in the corner... And in the jeans' one, they're not really concentrating on the actual product, it's, like, mainly the visual part of it makes you relate to the product.

M36: They're all young people.

Theme 7 What do you know about different economic functions of advertising? Is advertising a useful business tool or a wasteful and inefficient business tool?

All: Yes, it's worth the money.

M36: I think they're quite reputable companies and they're very high-class companies, top of the range. So advertising definitely works for them.

F96: You might look at it [Juice up] and in a few minutes understand the advert and remember it, but you couldn't really remember the product, because it doesn't relate to it. People start talking about it and say: what was that advertising anyway, and you won't actually remember the whole point of the advert, which is to sell the product.

Interviewer: Are you generally able to understand the adverts?

F51: Yes, the majority of them, but that Juice UP one, it's not related to the actual product in a way, like, indirectly, I guess, it is but, when you think about it, you want to know straight away what they're talking about - it hides too much of the detail.

M36: It does kind of suggest that, if you drink this juice your girlfriend will give you whatever you want.

Interviewer: What about advertising in general?

M36: I think it's evil. QVC advertises things as well and anyone, who watches QVC, believe me, you'll want to buy something. They're not lying, but they're leaving the audience to think - it's too open-ended. They, kind of, get you to think about the advert afterwards and that you're going to want to buy it. QVC, I had it on for about 1 hour and I already ordered something and that's why advertising's bad. It persuades you. There was this carpet cleaner, right, and you put mud all over your white carpet, and it's meant to clean it. My uncle went and bought one and it didn't work and you can't get your money back.

M93: I think, a lot of times, actually showing what the product can do, if you keep showing it... And that, like, that carpet cleaner....

F51: Yeah, it's got to get my attention straight away, like, if they're really catchy, you might want to look into them in detail, like on TV, if there was a catchy ad on TV, you'd want to carry on watching it, if it started off with something really boring, then you'd just switch off.

F120: I think that sometimes the music helps as well.

F96: Sometimes there'll be like a series of them, and they're, like, you'll get interested in the story and want to watch it, a bit like a soap opera. I want to see what's going to happen.

F120: I think, you can forget about it but, if it's got a story and it's good, it dominates it, you remember the ad, but you don't start saying: I'll go and get that, it's just that you like watching it.

M36: Did you not watch the windscreen advert? I like that one. You've got no windscreen on your car and the guy comes to wash your windscreen and there's no window there and he throws the bucket of water onto the car. That's using humour.

M36: [On FCUK hygiene] Every time you use this product, you're going to be in the shower, so you're going to, kind of, feel refreshed. You can see, he's having a good time in the shower, he's refreshed and happy.

F120: I think the Juice Up advert was a failure - it didn't work.

M36: It could work in opposite ways though, that could stick in our minds as a really rubbish advert. It was all grey and the product, like, shined out.

F51: They recall your memory to that ad.

F120: It draws your attention to it.

M36: I saw that Flat TV advertised went out and saw it.

Interviewer: Did you buy one?

M36: No, it cost £9000. They didn't mention that in the advert.

F96: If it's something really expensive, they won't put the price on, but if it's really cheap, then they'll throw it in and say: yeah, buy one get one free!

F51: If it's expensive, you know from the advert like the French Connection, it looks all good quality, so you expect to pay a bit more for it, whereas low cost or sale ones, like, you can never say how much it's going to cost you.

M36: Stuff that's expensive can appeal to higher classes, but stuff that's cheap can appeal to middle and working class. These ads are directed at middle class, but can appeal to low classes as well, if they want to, but there's a financial issue. They probably don't earn that much.

F51: It's a pain that when you watch a TV programme ads pop up every few minutes.

M93: It's good for the advertiser - they can show their product, but it's not good for the viewers, who just want to see the programmes. If it's a long drawn out advert and it's not very exciting and there are no special effects - it won't work.

F120: If it's short, it flashes in your memory, if it's too long, it bores you.

Interviewer: The FCUK advert was quite long...

F51: It didn't drag, it had lots of humour.



F120: But if you saw it again and again it would probably bore you.

## E. Photographic Representations of adverts

Sunny Delight



Hilfiger Athletics

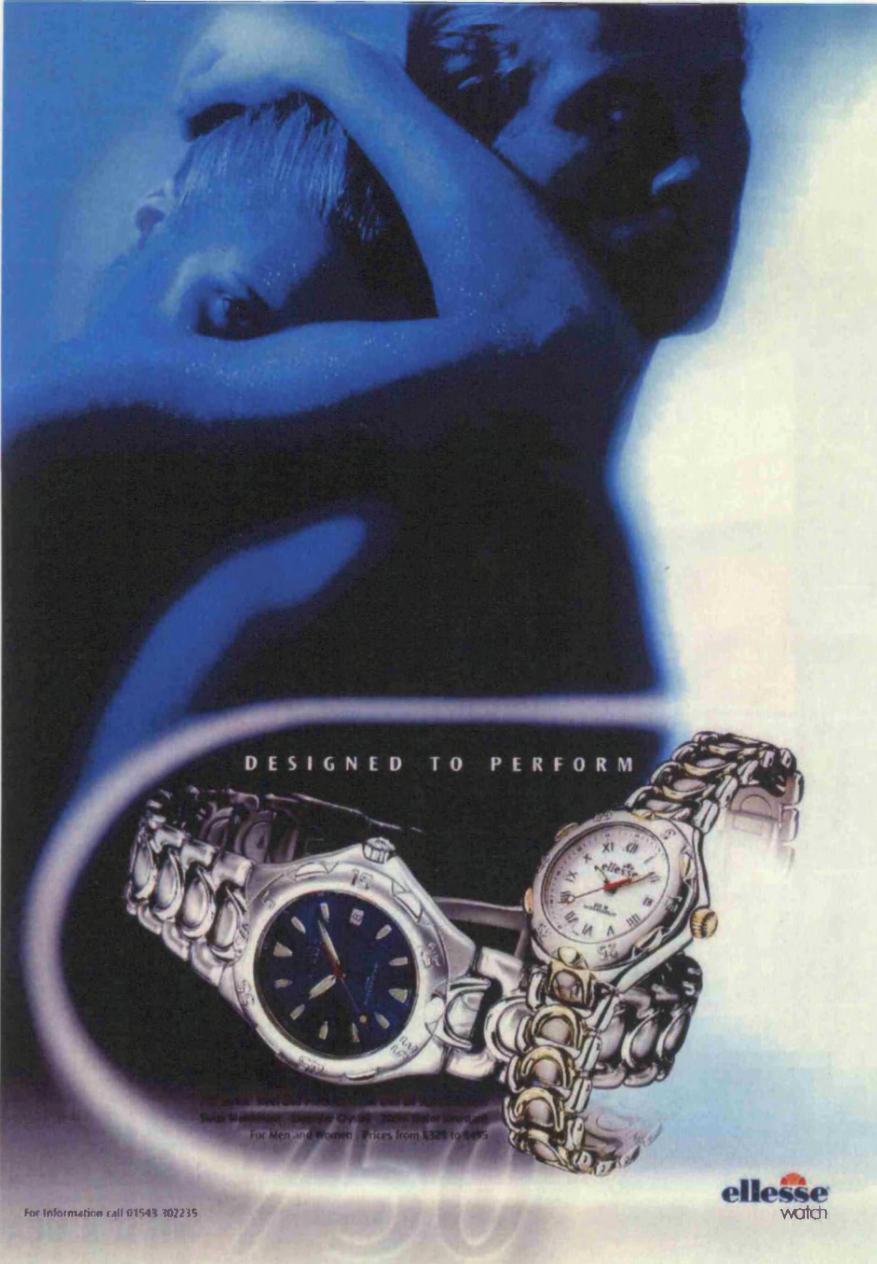


 **HILFIGER**  
ATHLETICS

the new fragrance by tommy hilfiger



## Ellesse Watch



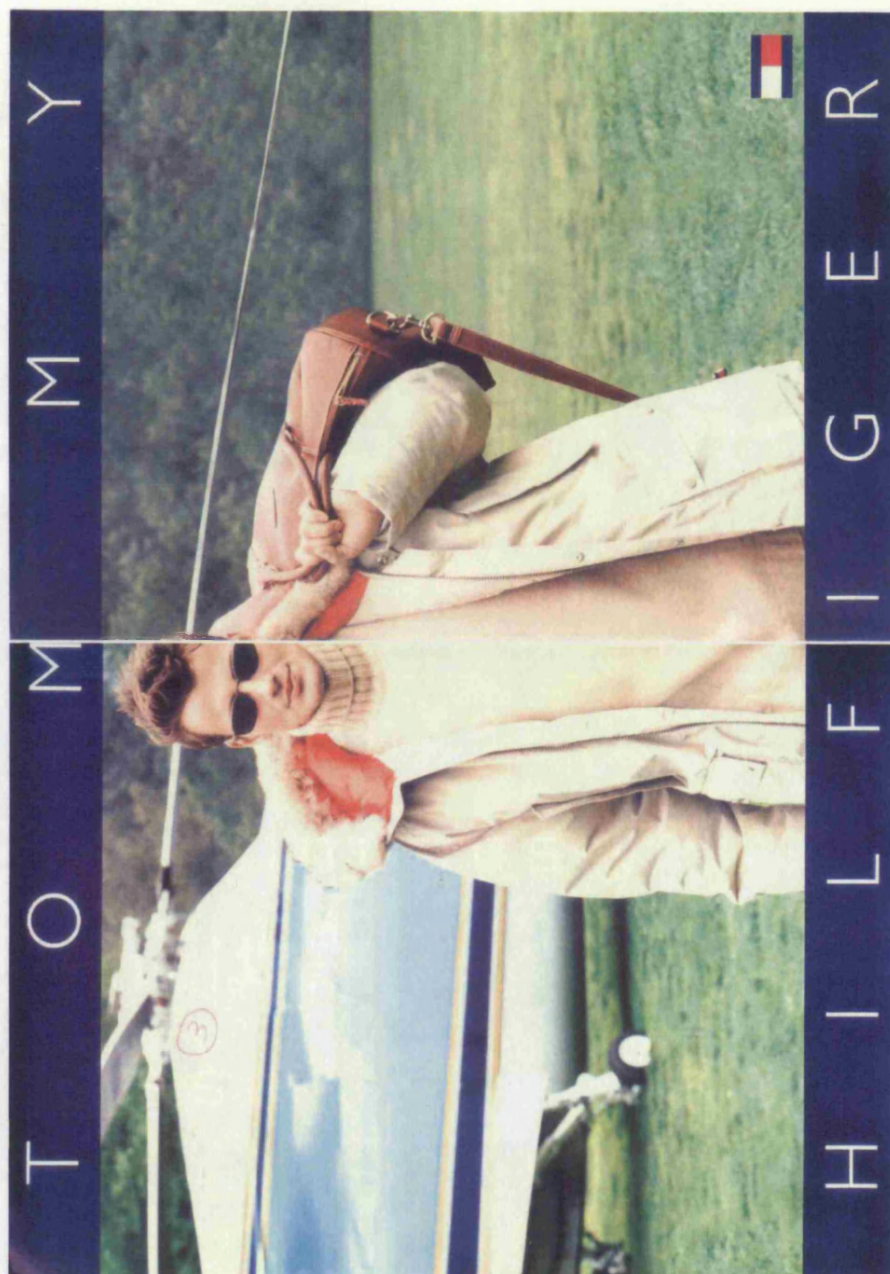
DESIGNED TO PERFORM

Ellesse Watch is a registered trademark of the Ellesse Group. All rights reserved.  
Ellesse Watch is a registered trademark of the Ellesse Group. All rights reserved.  
For Men and Women. Prices from £325 to £495.

For information call 01543 302235


**ellesse**  
watch

Tommy Hilfiger






FCUK Hygiene



freshen  
continuously  
until  
kissed

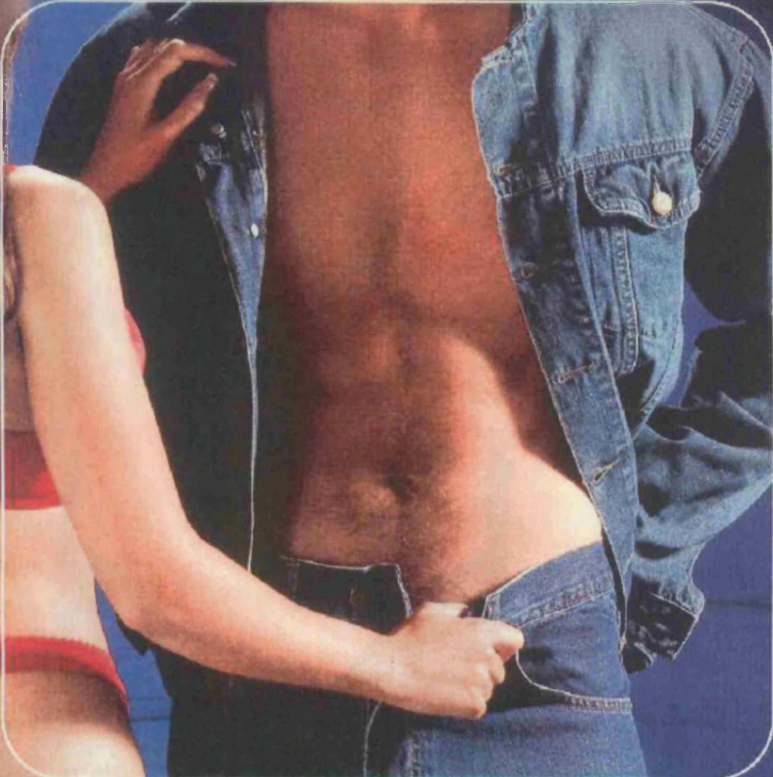


Available at selected doosie and Friends Connection stores.

fcuk' grooming

Daniel Christian

Everyone wants to get  
into Daniel Christian



CONTEMPORARY MENSWEAR  
SHIRTS TOPS JEANS SUITS ACCESSORIES


**Daniel Christian®**  
ANYTHING ELSE WOULD BE BLASPHEMOUS...

[www.danielchristian.co.uk](http://www.danielchristian.co.uk)




Wonderbra


—I pull the strings.




Pull the strings.



Select the effect



you want.



THE ONE AND ONLY  
**Wonderbra**  
new VARIABLE CLEAVAGE

[www.wonderbra.co.uk](http://www.wonderbra.co.uk)

**F. Harriott, S. (2000), *Media Packs: Insight to Sugar and Its Place In The Magazine Market*, personal letter from *Sugar's* editorial assistant to Payton, M.**

This section contains the information received from Sugar Magazine, which has been referenced within this thesis.

# Sugar

Sugar Attic Futura 17-18 Berners Street London W1P 3DD tel 020 7664 6400 fax 020 7636 5055

August 2000

Marina

Thank you for writing to Sugar.

I'm sorry we are unable to answer individual questions. As you can imagine, we get hundreds of letters every day!

I hope our media pack helps and gives you an insight to Sugar and its place in the magazine market.

Good luck with your studies.

Kind regards,

PP U. Burgeyle

Sharon Harriott  
Editorial Assistant

entertainment

# Sugar



## Sugar readers...

Sugar reaches more teenage girls...

- who have been to the cinema in the last year
- who go to the cinema about once a month
- who have a TV/VCR in their bedroom
- who buy pre-recorded video tapes
- who watch satellite/cable TV

...than any other magazine

## ...love TV & film

Source: youth tgi '99 (11-19)

music

Sugar



## Sugar readers...

Last year Sugar readers spent over £303 million on records, tapes and CD's - more than any other teenage magazine.

Sugar reaches more teenage girls...

- who always know what's in the Top Ten
- who can't live without music
- who believe music is a passion with them
- who believe music is a really important thing in life
- who love TOTP and whose favourite satellite/Cable channel is MTV
- who like listening to pop music on the radio
- who like TV programmes about pop music the best

...than any other magazine

## ...love music

Source: youth tgi '99 (11-19)

## mechanical data

### Sugar sizes

page sizes (mm)	trimmed	bleed	crop
Double Page Spread	275 X 420	285 X 430	265 X 410
Full Page	275 X 210	285 X 220	265 X 200
Half Page Horizontal	135 X 210	145 X 220	*125 X 200
Half Page Vertical	275 X 105	285 X 112	265 X *92
Quarter Page	135 X 105	145 X 112	*125 X *92

**Note:** Bleed on half and quarter pages is to be on the relevant edge according to placement on the page.

\*The Live Type Area size is as stated, please do not place live type within 5mm of the final trimmed edges, unless it is intended to trim

### film

Positives, right reading, emulsion side down. All film must be final contact, assuring a hard dot, on a dimensionally stable polyester base (0.1mm thick).

#### general film specifications:

- All films must have colour identification.
- Register and trim marks must appear on all films, located 6mm outside the trim area.
- No etching or hand corrections should be made on film positives.
- Film to be free from marks, kinks and scratches.
- Avoid running across the gutter on Double Page Spreads.
- All reverse lettering should be no less than 10pt type; small type with fine serifs should be avoided.

### colour proofs

total ink coverage should fall between 280% and 300%.

### colour proofs

- All advertisement copy supplied to Attic Futura must be accompanied by a colour proof produced from the final film. Attic Futura U.K. prefers a complete Cromalin proof made from final films supplied to print from. Each proof is to include a Control element which incorporates solid density, halftone and microline patches, proofed with the page submitted.
- Choose a base stock or receptor that closely matches the paper texture and colour and where possible, includes optical dot gain, that simulates the mechanical dot gain of web presses.
- Proofing Sequence: cyan, magenta, yellow black.
- Attic Futura accepts no responsibility for the colour quality of any advertisement supplied without a colour proof produced from the final film.

#### proof density targets:

Black 1.70 Cyan 1.30 Magenta 1.30 Yellow 0.90



circulation

**Sugar**



*the **biggest selling**  
**magazine** for teenage girls*

<b>Sugar</b>	<b>430,217</b>
<b>Bliss</b>	<b>287,796</b>
<b>J17</b>	<b>230,190</b>
<b>Mizz</b>	<b>160,426</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>126,606</b>

Source: abc Jul-Dec '99

## rates + dates

### Sugar colour rates

Page guaranteed position	£11,485
Page R.O.P.	£10,440
Outside Back Cover	£12,525
Inside Back Cover	£12,055
Double Page Spread	£20,870
DPS Inside Cover	£25,050
DPS Front Half	£22,960
Half Page	£5,220
Half Page Special Position	£5,790
Third Page Strip	£3,860
Quarter Page	£2,880

Special Positions 10% extra

### insert rates

Loose single inserts	£35
Bound or folded inserts	£55
Tip Ons	£45
Hand Tip Ons	£55
Scent Strips	£40

(Subject to approval/based on full print run only)

### cancellation deadline

3 months prior to publication

### on sale dates

Issue No.	Issue Date	Copy deadline	On Sale (Week commencing)
70	august 2000	02 06 00	30 06 00
71	september 2000	30 06 00	28 07 00
72	october 2000	27 07 00	25 08 00
73	november 2000	01 09 00	29 09 00
74	december 2000	29 09 00	27 10 00
75	january 2001	27 10 00	24 11 00
76	february 2001	27 11 00	29 12 00

nb: this schedule may be subject to change, so should only be used as a guideline

beauty

Sugar



## *make-up and* *fragrances are essential...*

Young people tend to socialise a lot and use make-up and fragrances as part of their overall grooming routine

- 83% of all Sugar readers agree "I go out a lot"
- 90% of all Sugar readers use make-up

**Sugar** readers spend over £5.5 million per week on toiletries and cosmetics-more per week than any other teenage magazine

- Sugar readers are responsible for almost £1 spent in every £3 on toiletries and cosmetics by teenagers

## *...to the Sugar reader*

Source: youth tgi '99

fashion

# Sugar



## Sugar reaches *more regular shoppers...*

there are more regular shoppers for new clothes reading Sugar than any other teenage magazine, spending over £12 million on clothes a week

In fact Sugar reaches...

- more teenagers with a clothing allowance
- more than a million teenagers who have a lot of say in choice of clothes they buy
- more teenager girls with a stylish, fashionable, trendy and innovative lifestyle
- more teenagers who look at magazines for what's in fashion

*...than any other*  
*teenage magazine*

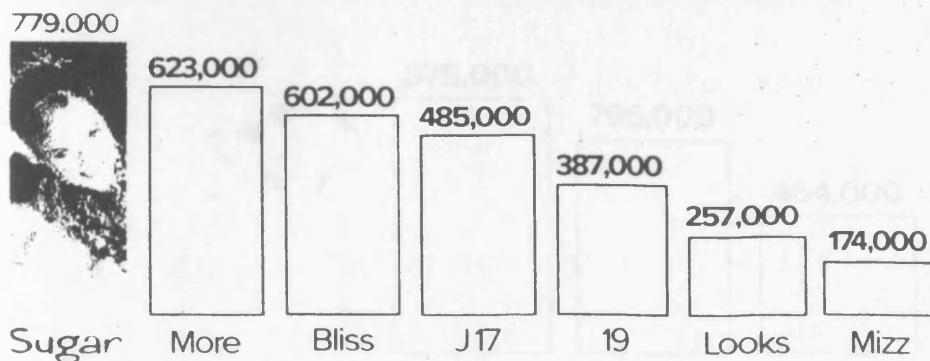
Source: youth tgi '99 (11-19)

readership 15-24 year old girls

# Sugar



**Sugar offers**  
*you the maturity...*



**...that no other teenage**  
*girls magazine can*

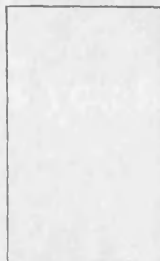
Source: NRS Jul-June '99

readership 11-19 year olds

Sugar

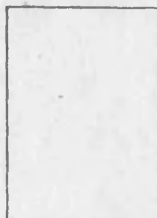


875,000



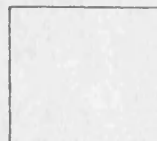
J17

796,000



Bliss

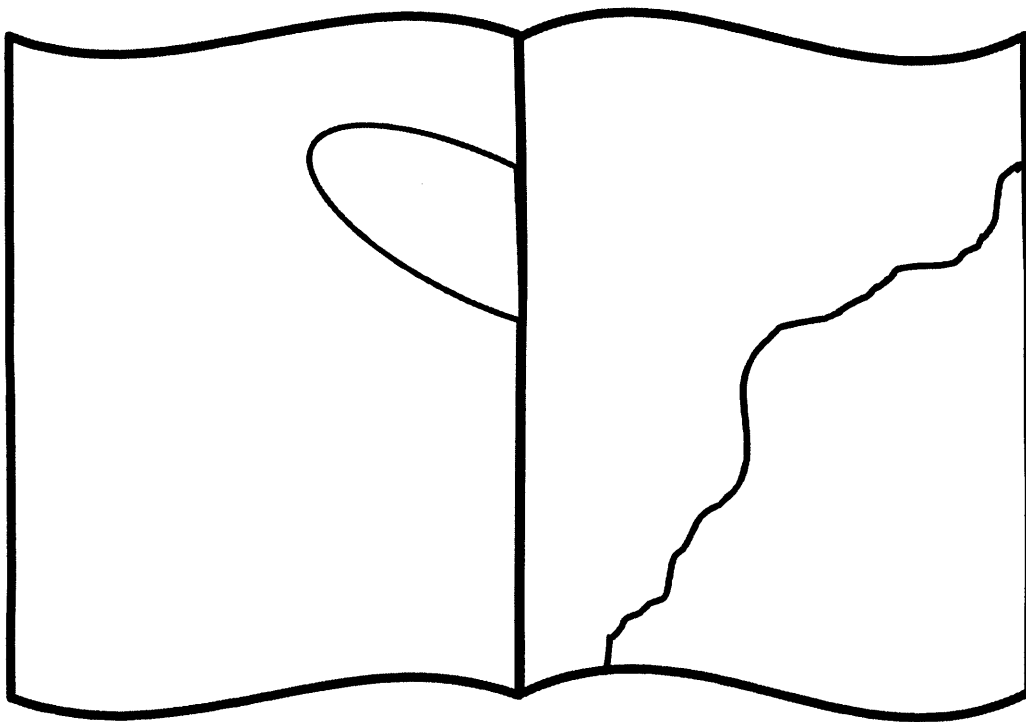
464,000



Mizz

Source: youth tgi '99

# **SPECIAL NOTICE**



**DAMAGED TEXT - INCOMPLETE IMAGE**

BRITAIN'S FAVORITE GIRLS MAG

# Sugar

it's your  
media  
pack!

abc

REAL LIFE STORIES

"I'm a  
shopaholic

"I can't stop  
spending money

"I believe  
everything  
my magazine  
tells me

"I hate  
staying in

take over  
your schedule!

GET THE ENVIRONMENT AND COVERAGE YOU WANT

stand out  
from the rest

our creative team shows you how

all your

problems answered!

WINE! WINE! it's a no-lose  
proposition





# where does

***Sugar is brought to you by  
the joint venture partnership of  
Attic Futura and North South  
who, between them, publish a  
range of wildly successful youth  
and mass market magazines  
around the world***

**a**ttic Futura is a division of PMP Communications and publishes magazines in Australia, Germany and the UK.

*Sugar*, launched in 1994, shook up the teenage magazine market with its style, humour and high production values. Three years later *Sugar* is the UK's number one teenage magazine brand - by miles! Its January - June 1997 ABC is 474,104, which places it among the top 10 selling consumer monthly magazines in this country.

Our other success stories include *TV Hits*, the UK's biggest selling all round entertainment magazine for teenagers, and *B* which was successfully launched into the young women's market in May, 1997. And *B* certainly won't be the last...

We have a reputation for unrivalled creativity and for producing exciting magazines that surpass anything the competition has to offer.



# Sugar come from?



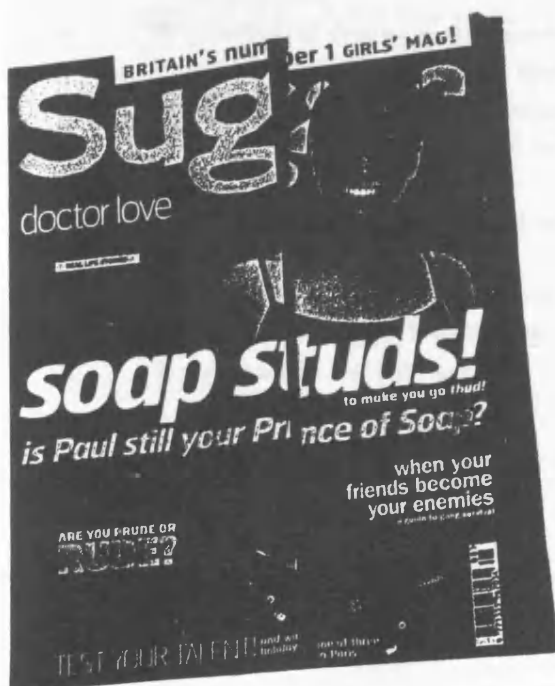
# why use teenage

**C**opy sales of youth magazines have grown a staggering 73% over the past five years. Now 93% of all teenagers read magazines.

Simultaneously, TV viewing by teenagers is in decline and it is becoming increasingly difficult to target teenagers via TV. For advertisers wishing to target teenage girls it is now essential that magazines are part of the media mix.

## The unique relationship between a teenage girl and her magazine

More than at any other time in her life a teenager will have an exceptionally close relationship with her magazine. Her teenage years are traumatic, and as her body changes she is faced with life choices. She is desperate for a trusted source of advice. She wants her questions answered (how to look cool and feel great, how to be popular with her mates, how to snog boys, sussing out when



Source: ABC Jan-Jun '92/Jan-Jun '97

Youth TGI '97

# girls' magazine

she's ready for sex, coping with periods...) and it's unlikely she'll be able to discuss her concerns with her parents or teachers. Her magazine is her trusted source of information and relaxation. She can read about embarrassing subjects in the privacy of her own bedroom. And she can laugh with her friends over the funny features and feel instantly reassured.

## What do teenage girls' magazines add to the media mix?

More and more dedicated TV advertisers are allocating an increasing share of their advertising budget to girls' magazines. Why?

### Because magazines offer:

- A very close personal relationship between reader and magazine
- An exceptional degree of trust which rubs off on the advertiser
- A medium of choice – girls choose to buy their magazine and therefore give it thorough attention
- Perceived endorsement of the editor
- An interactive medium – readers do quizzes, enter competitions, etc
- A wealth of opportunities to get your message across creatively
- The chance to convey detailed information that cannot be seen in a TV commercial
- Low wastage and tight targeting









# Sugar

The Sugar reader is an ordinary teenager. She is changing physically and growing emotionally. She is developing a sense of her own identity and forming her own opinions for the first time. She loves being young but can't wait until she's older. Most of all she wants to have fun!

The Sugar reader's favourite activity is hanging out with her friends discussing the latest gossip. She is mainly interested in boys, the latest fashions, new make-up looks and celebrities.

A typical Sugar reader is living at home with her parents (and probably arguing with them). She is studying at school and has ambitions to go to university and have a career. While she gets pocket money, she wants to be independent so she has a part time job. As a result she is a surprisingly powerful consumer with an annual disposable income of £1.2 billion. She is an avid purchaser of make-up, toiletries, fashion, CD's, videos... you name it, if it's new and cool, she wants it! She is undoubtedly an irresistible advertiser proposition.

Sugar - youth tjr '97

**Sam** age: 14

star sign: Virgo

lives: Eire

studying: "10 GCSE's but I keep changing my mind about what I want to do."

favourite shop: TopShop

favourite music type: Boy bands

the worst ever record is: Ant and Dec's 'Let's Get Ready To Rumble'

chilling out is:

"Chocolate, mates and getting ready to go out to parties."

I wish I had the guts to:

"Talk to more people I don't know."

**Jo** age: 15

star sign: Virgo

lives: London

studying: "GCSE's. I would like to be a vet."

favourite shop: Warehouse

favourite music type: Boy bands and Indie

the worst ever record is:

'Spice Up Your Life'

chilling out is: "Doing

my nails and trying out new make-up with my friends."

I wish I had the guts to:

"Ask someone out."

**Emily** age: 16

star sign: Scorpio

lives: Manchester

studying: "Art and design because I want to be a graphic designer."

favourite shop: Benetton

favourite music type:

Dance

the worst ever record is:

'Macerena'

chilling out is:

"Mucking around with my decks - I'm really into DJ-ing."

I wish I had the guts to:

"Say the things I really mean."

**Caroline** age: 14

star sign: Cancer

lives: Avon

studying: "I'm going for GCSE's and I'm quite interested in sociology."

favourite shop: Miss Selfridge

favourite music type: Indie

the worst ever record is: 'Itsy Bitsy

Teeny Weeny Yellow

Polka Dot Bikini'

chilling out is: "A girls'

night in watching videos and having a laugh with my mates."

I wish I had the guts to:

"Tell my friend Tim I think he's gorgeous."





advertorials

# promotional

we can produce stunning, eye-catching visuals

front cover  
barn door



poster rollfold



# opportunities

that create enormous impact and awareness for your brand

12-page sponsored  
sealed section



# client magazines



inside  
front  
cover  
rollfold

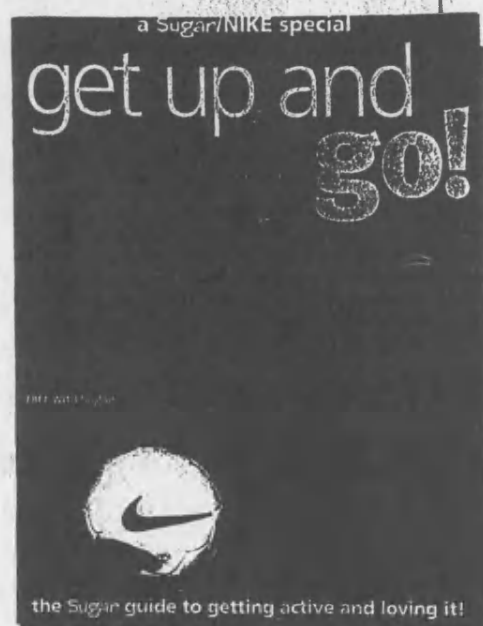


call us on 0171 664 6400

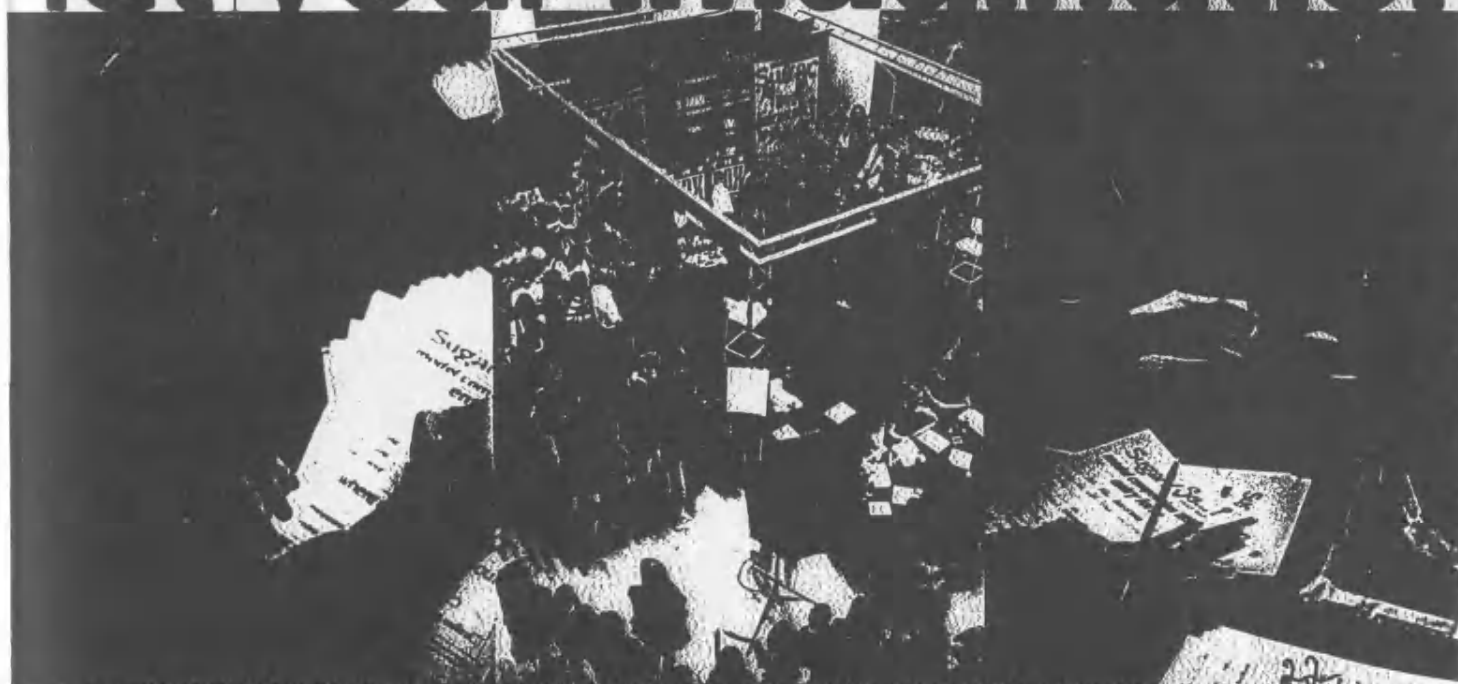
**reversed  
cover**



**roadshow  
sponsorship**



# let your imagination



to discuss ideas which are specifically tailored to your brand, please

# Sugar is unique...

## peer pressure

word of mouth from friends and the presence of older siblings can be instrumental in stimulating interest in products such as fragrances and make-up. Sugar reaches more teenagers who look to magazines for what's in fashion and the best new music around.

## brand loyal

over half of Sugar readers almost always read the magazine – that's a higher proportion than any other lifestyle magazine

## unique

Sugar also has the highest solus readership out of the lifestyle magazines...one in five readers only read Sugar

## sampling

Sugar reaches more teenagers who are always first to try new things than any other lifestyle magazine

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