

The Impact of a Firm-Originated Story on Brand Interest Group Members' Brand Experience

A Jonas Co. Case Study

Karoline Windhagauer



Type of Paper: Master Thesis
Program: MA in IBC - ICM
Hand-In Date: May 15, 2017
Supervisors: Anna Cabak Rédei
Wencke Gwozdz
Characters: 181,888 | 80 p.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the field of branding evolving from static to more dynamic approaches (Merz, He, & Vargo, 2009), and all stakeholders being considered as active participants in the creation of a fluctuating and ever changing brand related discourse (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008), storytelling as a way of retaining control and disseminating a firm's intended brand meaning has slowly found its way into the field of strategic branding (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012). However, only limited empirical evidence exists on the effects of storytelling on consumer brand experience (e.g. Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus, & van Riel, 2013). Thus, this thesis aimed to provide further insights into this field by exploring how a firm-originated brand story influences brand interest group members' brand experience.

Embedded in previous research on branding and storytelling, an exploratory, experimental case study of Jonas Co., a newly founded start-up in the field of interior design, was undertaken. Ten qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted, with half of the respondents exposed to the product, its brand story and different designs, whereas the other half did not receive the story. A critical discourse analysis of the brand story, and a hermeneutic examination of the interviews allowed rich insights into the brand story itself and respondent's experiences with the brand.

The results display that the brand story strongly influenced respondents's perceptions of the price of the product and their willingness to pay for it. The overall attractiveness was furthermore shown to be enhanced in the story group. First impressions of the brand, as well as its perceived core persona were revealed to be less influenced, while the perceived authenticity of the brand was shown to be increased in the story group.

This thesis provided additional empirical insights into a previously scarcely studied field and showed that the firm-originated brand story at-hand indeed led to more positive brand experiences in the story group. It thus supports previous literature on the importance of storytelling as a strategic branding tool.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
TABLE OF FIGURES	4
1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1. Background	5
1.2. Problem Statement	6
1.3. Structure	8
2. RESEARCH OVERVIEW	8
2.1. Branding Approaches	8
2.1.1. Goods-Focus	9
2.1.2. Value-Focus	9
2.1.3. Relationship-Focus	11
2.1.4. Stakeholder-Focus	13
2.1.5. Brands as Complex Social Phenomena	13
2.1.5.1. Brand Interest Group	14
2.1.5.2. Brand Manifestations	15
2.1.5.3. Brand Meaning	15
2.1.6. Brand Experience	16
2.1.7. Summary of Branding Approaches	17
2.2. Storytelling	17
2.2.1. The Power of Stories	18
2.2.2. The Essence of Firm-Originated Brand Stories	20
2.2.3. Brand Story Elements	22
2.2.3.1. Authenticity, Conciseness, Reversal, Humor	22
2.2.3.2. Story Objectives	25
2.2.3.3. Core Persona and Archetypes	27
2.2.4. Summary of Storytelling	28
3. METHODOLOGY.....	29
3.1. Philosophy of Science	29
3.2. Research Approach	31
3.3. Methodological Choice	32
3.4. Research Strategy	33
3.4.1. The Jonas Co. Case	34
3.5. Data Collection	36
3.5.1. Secondary Sources	36
3.5.2. Primary Data	37
3.5.3. Interview Sample	39
3.5.4. Interviewing Process	40

3.6. Data Analysis.....	42
3.6.1. Discourse Analysis	43
3.6.2. Hermeneutic Analysis	45
3.7. Research Quality	46
3.8. Research Ethics	48
4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION.....	49
4.1. Brand Story	50
4.1.1. Summary of Brand Story	56
4.2. First Impressions of and Associations with the Brand	57
4.2.1. Results	57
4.2.2. Discussion	59
4.2.3. Summary of First Impressions and Associations	63
4.3. Perceived Brand Personality	63
4.3.1. Brand Descriptions.....	64
4.3.1.1. Results	64
4.3.1.2. Discussion	65
4.3.2. Core Persona	66
4.3.2.1. Results	66
4.3.2.2. Discussion	67
4.3.3. Summary Brand Personality	69
4.4. Perceived Price and Willingness to Pay	69
4.4.1. Results	69
4.4.2. Discussion	70
4.4.3. Summary Perceived Price and Willingness to Pay	72
4.5. Overall Attractiveness	73
4.5.1. Results	73
4.5.2. Discussion	75
4.5.3. Summary Overall Attractiveness.....	77
5. CONCLUDING REMARKS	77
5.1. Conclusion.....	77
5.2. Managerial Implications.....	79
5.3. Limitations	80
5.4. Further Research	80
BIBLIOGRAPHY	81
Published Sources	81
Unpublished Sources.....	87
APPENDIX	88
Appendix 1 - Experiment Set-Up.....	88
Appendix 2 - Informed Consent Form	90
Appendix 3 - Interview Guide.....	92
Appendix 4 - Interview Transcripts.....	93

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: From goods-oriented to stakeholder-oriented branding approaches (Merz, He, & Vargo, 2009, p. 332)	9
Figure 2: A process model of brands (adapted from: Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008, p. 8)	14
Figure 3: Brand archetypes (Mark & Pearson, 2001, p. 18; Megehee & Woodside, 2010, pp. 607f)	28
Figure 4: Structure of methodology	29
Figure 5: Interview Sample	40
Figure 6: Brand descriptions	64
Figure 7: Perceived price vs. willingness to pay (in DKK).....	70
Figure 8: Overall attractiveness of the brand on a scale from 1-10	73

1. INTRODUCTION

Stories are an inherent part of human existence and have accompanied us for thousands of years ever since we first sat down around the warming heat of the open fire pit, keenly listening to the stories of our ancestors; They have given us guidance in times of joy and sorrow, in times of peace and war, and still do so today (Benjamin, 2006). Stories hold the power to make us escape reality, to transport us into the narrative (Escalas, 2004), to make us experience factual or fictional times long gone, be it through biblical texts, Jane Austen novels or travelogs of European conquerors exploring the New World. They also allow us to go on a mental time travel to the future, where flying cars and a vacation to the moon for spring break is commonplace and let us delve into fantasy worlds full of Quidditch and wizards, elves and hobbits. We deeply enjoyed and still recall the soothing bedtime stories we were told as a child, the first books we read ourselves, and until today, we are spellbound by every word of our grandparents when they tell us stories about their own childhood.

1.1. Background

The fact that stories not only help us understand the world and put order to our reality (Benjamin, 2006; Shankar, Elliott, & Goulding, 2001; Huang, 2010) but that they are also easier to recollect than pure facts (Woodside, 2010a) make them a widely used tool in the business world, mainly in the realm of advertising and communications (Fog, Budtz, Munch, & Blanchette, 2010; Iglesias & Bonet, 2012; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016). Still, marketing strategists have long discounted the value of storytelling as a strategic tool, dismissing it as meaningless and manipulative (Fog et al., 2010; Iglesias & Bonet, 2012; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016).

However, with the field of branding slowly evolving from static to more dynamic approaches during the last century (Merz, He, & Vargo, 2009), storytelling has recently been acknowledged as an important strategic tool in branding (Huang, 2010; Woodside, 2010a; Iglesias & Bonet, 2012; Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus, & van Riel, 2013). It allows managers to retain a certain sense of control over a brand, in a world in which all

stakeholders are now perceived as members of the brand interest group, holding the power to actively co-create a firm's intended brand meaning but also to negatively influence it through co-destruction (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008; Echeverri & Skålén, 2011).

Firm-originated stories help consumers and other stakeholders to make sense of a brand and hold the potential to influence consumers' brand experience (Lundqvist et al., 2013). While an increasing amount of research has been undertaken within the field of storytelling in general, only little attention has been paid to gaining empirical evidence of how firm-originated stories impact consumers' brand experiences (Lundqvist et al., 2013), an area this thesis aims to enrich. Notable exceptions include Lundqvist et al.'s (2013) and Merchant, Ford and Sargeant's (2010) studies: The former explored the effects of storytelling on brand experience in the context of a cosmetics brand and found that a brand story can indeed lead to enhanced positive associations with the brand and an increased willingness to pay for it (Lundqvist et al., 2013). The latter studied the effects of a firm-originated story in the context of charitable organizations and found that narratives which include a problem statement induce negative emotional responses, which are then rendered into positive emotions when the opportunity to help the person in need is provided (Merchant et al., 2010).

1.2. Problem Statement

While the two studies mentioned above — in particular Lundqvist et al.'s (2013) work — served as inspiration for this paper, this thesis aims to provide further empirical evidence on the effects of storytelling on brand experience by shedding light on the previously less researched area of interior design in the context of a start-up firm. In addition, the case company's products are argued to tell parts of their background stories themselves, due to their used and old-fashioned looks, which made the researcher even more curious as to how the brand story affects respondents' brand experience.

While those aspects regarding people's first impressions and associations with the brand and their perceived price and willingness to pay for it follow Lundqvist et al.'s (2013) research design, this thesis expands the authors' work by additionally examining how a brand story might influence people's perception of the brand's personality and by linking these

results to existing literature on archetypes (Mark & Pearson, 2001; Megehee & Woodside 2010). It also discusses the influence the story might wield on the overall attractiveness of the brand and provides an in-depth view on the brand story itself.

This paper is thus dedicated to explore in what sense a brand story influences respondents' brand experience. More specifically, the following research question will be answered:

How does a Firm-Originated Story Influence Brand Interest Group Members' Brand Experience in the Context of Jonas Co.?

To ensure a well-structured analysis and clear, detailed results, five subquestions will organize this thesis and assure that the main question is answered from various perspectives:

- ▶ What is the brand story at-hand composed of and which discourses does it address?
- ▶ How does the brand story influence brand interest group members' first impressions of and associations with the brand?
- ▶ How does the story impact respondents' perceptions of the brand's personality?
- ▶ In what sense does storytelling influence interviewees' perceptions of the product's price and their willingness to pay for it?
- ▶ How does the story affect respondents' rating of the overall attractiveness of the brand?

These questions are relevant because they permit profound and detailed insights into people's reasoning and the ways they approach and experience the brand. Furthermore, case studies were shown to be particularly suitable for answering *how*-questions (Meyer, 2001; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). An exploratory approach and qualitative, semi-structured interviewing allow for rich descriptions to evolve (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Paired with hermeneutic analysis, which facilitates an in-depth examination of meaning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and the context it was produced in (Tinggaard & Brinkmann, 2010), this study not only provides empirical evidence of how a brand story affects brand experience in a previously rarely studied context. A discourse analytical examination of the brand story itself

also provides an additional perspective on this subject by embedding the narrative in its discursive context and linking its individual elements to existing storytelling literature.

1.3. Structure

This thesis consists of five sections. The first deals with a brief introduction, outlining the background of the study and its purpose. The second chapter provides an overview over previously conducted research within the fields of branding and storytelling, in which this thesis is embedded. Section three outlines methodological considerations, followed by section four which is dedicated to the results and discussion of the empirical data. The thesis ends with section five, consisting of conclusions as well as managerial implications, limitations and suggestions for further research.

2. RESEARCH OVERVIEW

In order to approach the research questions outlined above, it is important to understand those fields of research in which this thesis is embedded first. Thus, an overview of the evolution of branding approaches will allow detailed insights into this field, and it makes it possible to fully understand and elaborate on the most recent approach of perceiving brands as complex social phenomena (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008), a stance which is adopted in this paper. Then, the importance of storytelling in branding is introduced and an overview of previously conducted research on storytelling is provided.

2.1. Branding Approaches

Branding as a means of communicating and creating value has been studied in literature ever since the beginning of the twentieth century. The following section will give a brief overview and timeline of the way branding research has developed, using Merz, He, and Vargo's (2009) framework of the evolution from static, goods-oriented branding approaches towards dynamic, stakeholder-oriented approaches as a guiding force (see Figure 1). This is crucial in

order to understand in what sort of environment brands exist today and how storytelling can be used as a powerful tool.

It is important to mention, however, that even though the different approaches are introduced in a chronological manner, this does not imply that firms today do not use earlier approaches to branding anymore. Later approaches should be perceived as a broadening of the horizon of previous literature.

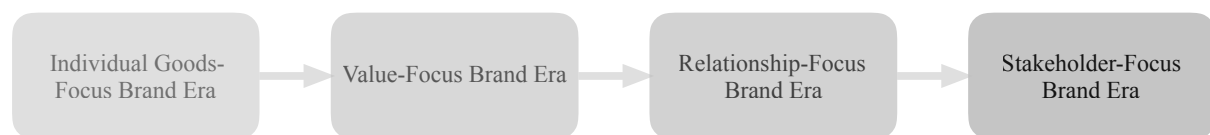


Figure 1: From goods-oriented to stakeholder-oriented branding approaches (Merz, He, & Vargo, 2009, p. 332)

2.1.1. Goods-Focus

In the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars concentrate mainly on defining brands as a means for customers to identify and recognize individual products upon sight, therefore acting as identifiers. In this process of value creation, which strongly focuses on the physical goods and with value being rooted in the products and primarily created when they are sold, consumers are considered as passive recipients of firm-originated branding efforts (Merz et al., 2009). Copeland (1923), for instance, focuses on the issue of different distribution channels in order for goods to be identifiable and recognizable by potential consumers. He defines a brand as “a means of identifying the product of an individual manufacturer or the merchandise purveyed by an individual wholesaler or retailer” (Copeland, 1923, p. 286) and understands brands primarily as a source of recognition in the maze of possible substitutes (Copeland, 1923).

2.1.2. Value-Focus

As the competitive environment increased over time, the creation of unique brand images became crucial with researchers acknowledging that customers choose brands to satisfy externally and internally triggered consumption needs (Merz et al., 2009). During this time, brands are first defined as mainly functional (satisfying external, utilitarian needs), later as

symbolic (satisfying internal needs) images (Gardner & Levy, 1955; White, 1959). Those who study brands as functional images consider them as part of the market offering by adding functional value to the product. De Chernatony and McWilliam (1989) for instance argue that consumers choose brands in order to align their externally created consumption needs with the brand's functional image associations. Additionally, Jacoby et al. (1971; 1977) claim that due to the functional benefit of brand names, they constitute the most important source of information when consumers decide on which good to buy.

As a succession of the focus on functional value, arguing that products are perceived as becoming more and more similar regarding the functional value they provide, those marketing researchers who consider brands as symbolic images assert that brands are independent of the market offering and therefore stand on their own (Merz et al., 2009). To further explain what is meant by a brand being independent of the good, an example similar to the one elucidated by Goffman (1959) will help clarify: The brand *Rolls Royce* has made a name of itself as pure luxury, quality and status in a way that even in a different context, detached from the product, one might find oneself saying that a *Rolex* watch is *the Rolls Royce* of watches. Returning to the symbolism of brands, Park, Jaworski and MacInnis (1986) define symbolic needs as “desires for products that fulfill internally generated needs for self-enhancement, role position, group membership, or ego-identification” (Park et al., 1986, p. 136). While several authors deal with the relationship between consumption and symbolic needs (e.g. Martineau, 1958; Nicosia & Mayer, 1976; Solomon, 1983), particularly Gardner and Levy (1955) ask for “*a greater awareness of the social and psychological nature of “products”* — whether brands, media, companies, institutional figures, services, industries, or ideas” (Gardner & Levy, 1955, p. 34, emphasis in original). On a similar note, Levy (1959) calls for more understanding of how products “turn people's thoughts and feelings toward symbolic implications, whether this is intended by the manufacturer or not” (Levy, 1959, p. 124). He argues that if marketers understand that they sell both symbols and goods, they will be able to look at the product in a more complete manner, because “[p]eople buy things not only for what they can do, but also for what they mean” (Levy, 1959, p. 118, emphasis in

original). Both approaches, the functional and the symbolic value approach, however, remain to perceive the customers as passive in the process of brand value creation.

2.1.3. Relationship-Focus

Starting in the 1990s until approximately 2000, customers are for the first time acknowledged as actively participating in the brand co-creation. Researchers now turn away from the assumption that the brand image is the crucial aspect in creating brand value towards shedding light on the active role of the consumer (Merz et al., 2009). Merz et al. (2009) refer to three areas which have evolved within this era: “Customer-Firm Relationship Focus” (Merz et al., 2009, p. 331), “Customer-Brand Relationship Focus” (Merz et al., 2009, p. 331) and “Firm-Brand Relationship Focus” (Merz et al., 2009, p. 331). The following paragraphs shall elucidate on these areas individually.

Further developing the idea of brands as images, which hold both functional and symbolic value for consumers, and acknowledging the latter's active role, research in the 1990s started to focus more on the relationship between the customer and the firm and on the question of *how* brand value is created instead of *what kind* of value (Merz et al., 2009). Scholars in this field conclude that value is no longer determined by customers' perception of products' “value-in-exchange” (Merz et al., 2009, p. 334) but by their “value-in-use” (Merz et al., 2009, p. 334), a shift becoming most visible in the introduction of the concept of customer equity. Researchers such as Keller (1993) and Kapferer (1992) also deal with the issue of how brand information is internalized by consumers: Keller (1993) for example argues that the knowledge consumers have of a brand, comprising of both brand awareness and brand image, bears a differential effect on the way customers perceive a product and that it is therefore crucial for marketers to create a positive brand image and a familiar brand name in order to achieve a competitive advantage. From this point of view, brand value is considered to be created in the minds of customers. A slightly different, yet connected approach is that of perceiving brands as identities: Kapferer (1992; 2004) for instance, with his “brand-identity prism” (Kapferer, 2004, p. 158) argues that brand identity, by default

linked to the firm's identity, not only communicates the sender's identity but also aids the consumers in forming their very own identities.

In the late 1990s, scholars such as Fournier (1998) and Aaker (1997) get underway to move from looking at the relationship between customer and the firm towards a focus on the relationship between customers and the brand. They start perceiving brands as relationship partners and as entities owning their own personalities which customers build an affective relationship with, thus moving towards a more process-oriented rather than output-oriented perspective of branding (Aaker, 1997; Fournier, 1998; Merz et al., 2009). This relationship is perceived crucial in the brand value creation process and is "determined through direct (i.e., through usage or consumption) or indirect (i.e., through pure perception) contact with the brand" (Merz et al., 2009, p. 335). An important contribution to this movement stems from Aaker (1997) who developed her brand personality construct (later extended by Fournier, 1998), underlining the assumption that brands have human-like characteristics and that consumers tend to instill human-like character traits to brands. She further acknowledges that the perception of brand personalities by consumers hinges on any kind of contact with a brand, may it be directly or indirectly, and that the creation of value does not necessarily depend on the consumption of a good (Aaker, 1997). Malhotra (1988) adds that consumers tend to pick brands that are deemed most suitable and most similar to one's own identity.

During the last movement within this era, several scholars recognize that not only external customers, but also employees within the firm take part in the co-creation of a brand (Merz et al., 2009). King (1991) for instance argues that "virtually everything we buy is a combination of product and service [...] and that, for a brand to be successful, the service element is going to have to become more dominant" (King, 1991, p. 6). He points at the importance of employees as being crucial constituents in the value-creation process and the sustenance of competitive advantage (King, 1991; de Chernatony, 1999; Berry, 2000). In summary, it can be said that for the first time, the consumer enters the stage in the discussion of brand value creation, and the idea of a relationship between the customer and the firm replaces the previous notion of brand value as situated in the goods themselves.

2.1.4. Stakeholder-Focus

From 2000 onwards, brands start to be approached as dynamic and social processes. This era encompasses previous developments and highlights the assumption that not only individuals engage in the co-creation of brand value, but that brand communities and all stakeholders play a vital role as well, forming constantly changing, dynamic networks and ecosystems by socially acting and interacting with each other (Muniz, Albert & O'Guinn, 2001; Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Merz et al., 2009). As such, brand value is created in dynamic, ongoing social processes with the firm being only one constituent of many in the brand value creation process (Muniz et al., 2001). Brand communities move into the center of academic research and are defined as “specialized, non-geographically bound communit[ies], based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand” (Muniz et al., 2001, p. 412). This shift towards paying attention to all stakeholders and the way they form communities sheds more light on the way they interact with the brand, the presence of rituals and customs shared by community members, their feeling of intrinsic connection towards each other and a sense of moral responsibility (Muniz et al., 2001). As a result, the field of activities the firm needs to consider when positioning itself on the market becomes distinctly larger, therefore adding crucial activities to traditional ones such as communication and advertising (Frow & Payne, 2007).

2.1.5. Brands as Complex Social Phenomena

Mühlbacher and Hemetsberger (2008) argue that while previous approaches provide rich insights into the understanding of brands, they run the risk of being too restrictive in a branding reality of increased complexity. Thus, they aim at integrating these different approaches into their process model of brands (see Figure 2). They call for an integrative perspective encompassing the brand interest group which constantly co-generates brand manifestations and co-creates brand meaning in a fluctuating social discourse, which involves all sorts of brand-related action and interaction, practice and communication (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008). A brand, within this integrative perspective can thus be defined as

(1) a system of interrelated brand meanings, brand manifestations, and individuals as well as organizations interested in a brand, and (2) the processes underlying the dynamic development of those meanings, manifestations, interested individuals and organizations. That is, brands can be conceived as comprising three closely interrelated concepts: brand manifestations, brand meaning, and a brand interest group. (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008, p. 7)

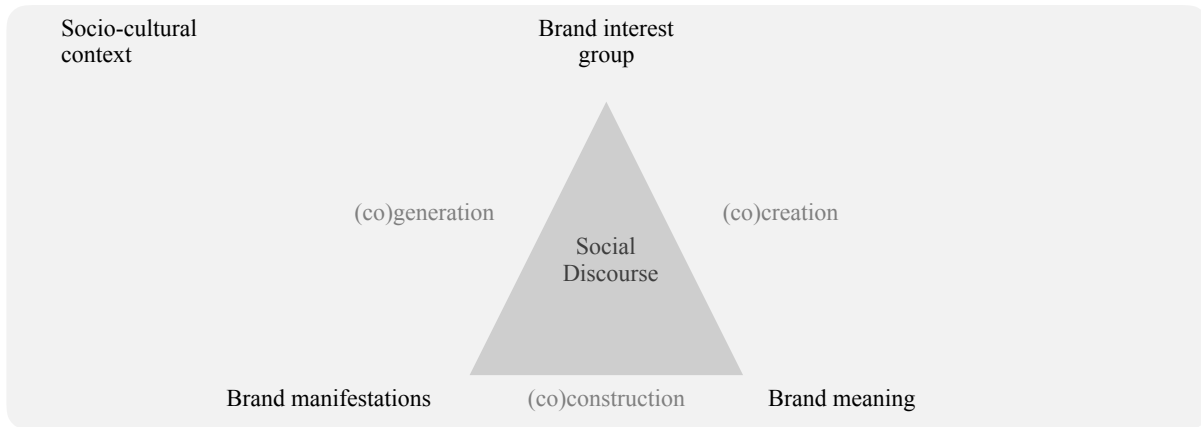


Figure 2: A process model of brands (adapted from: Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008, p. 8)

2.1.5.1. Brand Interest Group

The brand interest group is composed of all individuals, institutions and organizations who physically or virtually act and interact with others and share their beliefs, experiences and opinions regarding a specific brand (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008). Their interactions result in the dynamic co-creation of brand meaning (e.g. via engagement practices with the brand or impression management) and the co-generation of brand manifestations (e.g. via brand use, collaborative or collective co-production) (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008). This newly acknowledged power of brand interest group members other than the firm, and their fluctuating and ever-changing co-creation via experiences and interactions (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008), necessitate brand managers to create brand touchpoints; They guide group members' experiences into desired directions and hence hold the potential to influence the way they interact with the brand (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012). Put into context with this thesis, individuals are rendered brand interest group members by the researcher who confronts them with the Jonas Co. brand, encouraging them to share their opinions on the brand and as a result engaging in brand-related discourse.

While the brand interest group represents a valuable resource for the co-creation of a brand and its meaning by actively engaging in brand related discourse, members might also use their power to diminish brand value and participate in brand co-destruction, which was previously characterized as a similarly integral part of the ongoing brand discourse as co-construction (Echeverri & Skålén, 2011). Other scholars, however, only implicitly acknowledge the phenomenon of co-destruction by arguing that in some situations, a firm should better not engage in value co-creation with consumers because this would lead to suboptimal outcomes for both (Jaworski & Kohli, 2015).

Value co-destruction can happen both intentionally and unintentionally by misusing the value proposition of a firm. Such misuse might happen, for instance, when a consumer buys a car but does not sufficiently maintain it. As a result, he/she not only destroys value for him-/herself, but might also be inclined to blame the company for the issues he/she experiences and, if communicated to others, this might harm the firm's image. (Plé & Chumpitaz Cáceres, 2010)

2.1.5.2. Brand Manifestations

Brand touchpoints may be created in form of brand manifestations which are “tangible and intangible objectifications of the meaning of a brand” (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008, p. 10) enabling both groups and individuals to sensually experience brand meaning. In the context of this thesis, brand interest group members for instance are able to experience the brand by visually taking in the lamp and other stimuli available or haptically touching them. Brand manifestations, similar to the brand interest group and brand meaning, are in constant flux: Each action or interaction of any stakeholder involved, influences brand-related discourse and as a result brand manifestations, meanings and interest group members (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008).

2.1.5.3. Brand Meaning

According to Mühlbacher and Hemetsberger (2008), brand meaning can be defined as “a dynamic collective system of knowledge and evaluations continually emerging from social discourse among the members of a brand interest group” (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger,

2008, p. 9). Some scholars argue that brand meaning is purely subjective — for example within the field of pragmatics — and that as a result brand managers have to be aware that multiple meanings are likely to evolve due to individual experiences with a brand (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012). In their model of brands as social processes, Mühlbacher and Hemetsberger (2008) further develop this idea by arguing that brand meaning is first determined by the individual who sensually experiences the stimuli, and that it is then, if deemed socially relevant, incorporated into social brand discourse.

2.1.6. Brand Experience

On the basis of perceiving brands as complex social processes, it is argued that brand experience happens when people are confronted with brand meaning and brand manifestations (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008). Iglesias and Bonet (2012) define brand experience in a similar way, as “a takeaway impression formed in the mind of individuals as a result of their contacts with the overall touchpoints and interfaces of a given brand” (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012, p. 252) and Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) conceptualize brand experience as “sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand’s design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments” (Brakus et al., 2009, p. 52).

As a result, brand managers have to create touchpoints (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012), or what Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger (2008) refer to as stimuli, which are in line with the brand’s intended meaning in order to create favorable experiences in customers. Storytelling is one powerful tool to create such touchpoints and retain a certain sense of control over brand meaning in a complex world where the brand interest group, brand manifestations and brand meaning are closely intertwined to form the social discourse around a brand (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012).

2.1.7. Summary of Branding Approaches

While the field of branding has been studied ever since the beginning of the twentieth century, the role of the consumer and all other stakeholders has come into the limelight only gradually (Merz et al., 2009). The previous sub-sections provided an overview of these developments in order to understand how branding evolved and how it became what it is today. Mühlbacher and Hemetsberger (2008) have subsumed many of the previous movements within the field of branding into their process model of brands, where they claim that brand discourse, which is embedded in the socio-cultural context, revolves around the brand interest group, brand manifestations and brand meaning in an ever fluent way. Brand interest group members actively co-create brand meaning and brand manifestations (Mühlbacher and Hemetsberger, 2008). By accepting and embracing the newly acknowledged power of the interest group, brand managers need to be aware of the advantages such co-creation brings, but also of the dangers it entails (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008; Echeverri & Skålén, 2011; Iglesias & Bonet, 2012; Jaworski & Kohli, 2015). To sum up, companies need to constantly create brand touchpoints to guide brand meaning into a desired direction (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008; Iglesias & Bonet, 2012) and influence customer's brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009; Iglesias & Bonet, 2012), while at the same time carefully monitoring and engaging in brand-related discourse with all stakeholders (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008).

2.2. Storytelling

The previous section outlined that the world of branding has become more complex with all stakeholders being considered members of the brand interest group, who engage in an ever changing, brand related discourse (Merz et al., 2009; Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008). As a result, firms run the risk of losing control over their intended brand meaning (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012; Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008; Echeverri & Skålén, 2011). In this context, Iglesias and Bonet (2012) argue that stories provide powerful resources to guide brand meaning into a firm's desired direction.

However, companies have only recently discovered storytelling as a significant strategic marketing tool and have only now started to embrace it as a means of brand building (Huang, 2010; Iglesias & Bonet, 2012; Lundqvist et al., 2013; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016). Storytelling was for a long time limited to the area of advertising (Fog et al., 2010; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016) and for many years, stories and the role of rhetoric have been dismissed as meaningless, often even as manipulative (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012). They have been neglected within the field of management and strategy formation because rational management was the prevailing point of departure in theory-building (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012).

The following section provides an overview of previously conducted research within the field of storytelling, elaborating on the question of why stories are powerful branding tools, how brand stories can be defined and what scholars conceive as the elements of a good brand story. While there has been increased interest in storytelling research, there are only few studies investigating empirical evidence on the impact stories have on consumer responses (Lundqvist et al., 2013). Among them, Lundqvist et al.'s (2013) study on how consumers' responses differ when being exposed to a firm-originated story in the context of cosmetics, and Merchant et al.'s (2010) study on storytelling in charitable organizations.

2.2.1. The Power of Stories

The term story derives from the Indo-European language group and originally carried the meaning of *to look, to see*; Later on, it shaped into *knowledge, ideal, or form* (Benjamin, 2006). As such, stories have from the beginning of mankind on been associated with the transfer of knowledge from one person to another, supporting people to make sense of their reality and ideas and ensuring their survival (Benjamin, 2006). Now, thousands of years later, storytelling still plays a crucial role in helping individuals understand the world they live in and to make sense of their experiences and surroundings as well as to put order to the complexities around them (Shankar et al., 2001; Huang, 2010). Brand stories, often fictions about mainly machine-made objects, are in this sense also imperative to the creation of

community (Twitchell, 2004), as stories are easier to pass on than mere facts (Lundqvist et al., 2013).

Stories or narratives are powerful because people can better recollect them than facts, since information is “indexed, stored, and retrieved in the form of stories” (Woodside, 2010a, p. 532). Every story comes with so-called indices, which represent points of contact to the life of the person on the receiving end. Such touchpoints can lead to automatic awareness, empathy and positive connections within the mind of the viewer/listener and hence represent a powerful tool to reach people on an emotional level. (Woodside, 2010a)

In this vein, Jensen (1999) argues that “the major portion of consumer purchases are made for emotional, nonmaterialistic reasons” (Jensen, 1999, p. vii). Similarly, Twitchell (2004) explains the surge of storytelling in branding with the following words: “We desperately want meaning, things cannot supply it, and so we install it. That is why branding [...] works” (Twitchell, 2004, p. 487). On this note, it is argued to be critical for firms to instill emotional value to their offerings in order to reach customers and stay competitive in a market environment where the simple differentiation of products or services on the functional level is either impossible due to the vast amount of offerings on the market, or insufficient (Jensen, 1999).

In addition, Jensen (1999) claims that for an increasing part of the population, materialistic needs have been satisfied, and pure utilitarian needs are giving way to emotional, self-identifying desires. One way to work towards self-fulfillment is to surround oneself with symbols which represent and communicate a person’s individual way of life and the values he or she adheres to; Such symbols include, amongst others, brands and products (Fog et al., 2010). To sum up, stories play such a significant part in human existence

[f]or we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative. In order really to live, we make up stories about ourselves and others, about the personal as well as the social past and future. (Hardy, 1968, p. 5)

From the quote above, it can be derived that consumers look for experiences which are in line with their ambitions and emotions, and stories are a powerful way to support the creation of such experiences (Fog et al., 2010; Lundqvist et al., 2013). In addition, stories can improve

brand perceptions by transforming employees, customers, or the brand into heroes (Guber, 2007; Lundqvist et al., 2013). Stories evoke interest and can persuade through narrative transportation, which is characterized by a certain sense of becoming *lost* in the story, leaving the audience in an altered state (Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004; Lundqvist et al., 2013). The audience is more easily persuaded when it is transported, and stories with a classic structure including a challenge which needs to be overcome, are reported as particularly transporting (Green & Brock, 2000). Greater transportation has further been linked to increased positive evaluations of the story and its characters and decreased negative or critical responses (Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004). Furthermore, firm-originated brand stories were shown to increase customers' willingness to pay (Lundqvist et al., 2013). Another advantage of using stories as a way to disseminate brand meaning is that good brand stories are not primarily perceived as commercial, while still conveying positive attributes of a good or brand (Lundqvist et al., 2013).

2.2.2. The Essence of Firm-Originated Brand Stories

Brand stories have been defined in several ways throughout academic literature. Before elaborating on how the term *brand story* may be defined, an often occurring disagreement as to the difference of the terms *story* and *narrative* shall be elucidated. Some scholars use the terms *narrative* and *story* interchangeably (Stern, 1998; Shankar et al., 2001; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016) while others argue that stories and narratives differ: “[T]he existence of a plot and a chronological time sequence that ties all the different stories is what distinguishes a narrative from a story” (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012, p. 257). However, since most authors agree to use the same definition for stories and narratives, this thesis adopts the same stance and claims that the two terms may be used interchangeably in this paper.

Brand stories or narratives can be characterized very broadly as a succession of events, structured by a clear beginning, middle and end (Bennet & Royle, 2004). However, they have also been defined as “oral or written performance[s] involving two or more people interpreting past or anticipated experiences” (Boje, 1995, p. 1000) and which do not

necessarily follow a specific structure (Boje, 1995). Other scholars claim that stories need to feature both causality and chronology in order to be viewed as such (Woodside, Sood, & Miller, 2008). A narrower definition of brand stories is provided by Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, and Wiertz (2013), who argue that brand stories “contain a plot, characters playing a role in the plot, a climax, and an outcome that causes empathy in listeners and helps them to remember the story” (Gensler et al., 2013, p. 242). Twitchell (2004) adds, that stories are fictions which, in addition to a plot, characters and points of view, also carry an implied purpose, a meaning which aims at generating emotional responses in the receiver. Good stories can easily be summarized in one or two sentences with the gist circulating around a central idea, comparable to traditional sagas or fairy tales (Twitchell, 2004) and should therefore only carry one clear message (Fog et al., 2010). They are fluid and often happen on the visual or the auditive level with the brand logo as a crucial tool in telling a brand’s story (Twitchell, 2004). In order to be successful, brand stories need to be well-executed and have to come across as credible and authentic (Lundqvist et al., 2013). In a nutshell, a brand story “comprises a realistic or fictional framework in which brand can be embedded to convey something about the brand’s heritage, founder, highlights and crises, mission and values, and functional and emotional benefits” (Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016, p. 117).

While much literature deals with storytelling and brand stories, only very few scholars offer a definitive clarification of the term *storytelling* itself. In relation to marketing, Salzer-Mörling and Strannegård (2004) suggest the following: “Marketing as story-telling is a form of narration where the company relates what it is and what it stands for; thereby making sense of activities and products” (Salzer-Mörling, & Strannegård, 2004, p. 229).

In broader terms, and in summarizing the previous paragraphs, storytelling may be defined as an inherently human, ever evolving, interactive activity which primarily aims at supporting individuals (or firms) in making sense of the world they operate in by eliciting emotions in the mind of the audience and putting order to the complexity of the environment people live in. (Jensen, 1999; Green & Brock, 2000; Shankar et al., 2001; Twitchell, 2004; Escalas, 2004; Benjamin, 2006; Huang, 2010; Lundqvist et al., 2013)

2.2.3. Brand Story Elements

The previous sections made clear that stories are valuable assets to a firm which can lead to added value, increased customer engagement and tighter bonds between the firm and other stakeholders. But what does a good brand story encompass? This section is dedicated to the different elements of brand stories and it gives an overview of what academic research has previously defined as a *good* brand story. It is important, however, to mention that there is not one single right way to create a brand story, since the narrative depends on the firm's objectives which clearly differ from one company to the other (Denning, 2006; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016).

Much literature on brand stories has revolved around four key elements: authenticity, conciseness, reversal and humor (Chiu, Hsieh, & Kuo, 2012). In the following, these elements will be elaborated on in more detail.

2.2.3.1. Authenticity, Conciseness, Reversal, Humor

First and foremost, brand stories have to come across as authentic and genuine in order to be accepted by consumers. In the interconnected world of today, consumers are more critical of advertising and the truthfulness of information disseminated by firms. This also derives from technological development which allows them to use their endless possibilities to collect information about a firm and its products, making authenticity one of the most essential elements for companies to be aware of. Authenticity is sometimes also referred to as believability, "defined as the extent to which advertising evokes sufficient confidence in its truthfulness to make it acceptable to consumers" (Chiu et al., 2012, p. 265). What consumers consider to be authentic, however, depends in large parts on an individual's personal experiences and knowledge. In this vein, research suggests that consumers perceive brand stories as authentic, if they carry information which resembles reality, therefore supporting consumers to understand and make sense of a product. When consumers perceive a story as authentic, they are more likely to feel connected to the context, which might lead to more positive attitudes towards a product or brand. (Chiu et al., 2012)

Authenticity has also been understood as uniqueness, with the goal of being perceived as *the original* by consumers (Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003; Chiu et al., 2012). It has further been noted, that even though authenticity is a central piece of contemporary marketing, it is difficult to achieve, as mass marketing is often considered to be undermining claims of authenticity (Beverland, Lindgreen, & Vink, 2008). Authenticity, for example, has been shown to be diminished by direct selling, mainstream advertising and segmentation techniques (Beverland et al., 2008). In the context of advertising, Stern (1994) further notes that “an authentic advertisement is one that conveys the illusion of the reality of ordinary life in reference to a consumption context” (Stern, 1994, p. 388) and underlines the context-dependence of authenticity.

“[G]reat storytelling does not conflict with truth” (Guber, 2007, p. 55). By recognizing storytelling as one of the strongest tools to captivate and influence an audience, Guber (2007) claims that a storyteller not only needs to be true to him-/herself in order to engage the audience and alter its psychological state, but that storytelling always involves a promise to the audience that their expectations will be fulfilled as well. As was shown, authenticity is often considered as the essence of each brand story, without which a brand will be less likely to be accepted by the brand interest group.

Authenticity alone, however, does not make a good brand story. If it is not concise, by clearly bringing the main point across, people will not pay attention, because customers have only little time to attend to the endless offerings, advertisements and stories they are exposed to on a daily basis (Boozer, Wyld, & Grant, 1990; Chiu et al., 2012). A brand story is thus concise, when it “presents complete thoughts in as few words as possible, while still covering important points adequately” (Chiu et al., 2012, p. 265). Conciseness is therefore a crucial element of brand stories, because it improves information processing by omitting unnecessary details which could divert customer’s attention and therefore their ability to remember the gist (Chiu et al., 2012). In addition, longer texts have been shown to reduce a person’s motivation to process them (Huhmann, Mothersbaugh, & Franke, 2002). On this note, research shows that longer texts and the concomitant multiple repetition of information can lead to negative responses like boredom on the part of the audience (Cacioppo, & Petty,

1979) and can thus negatively affect people's perception of the story, and consequently of the brand itself.

Many stories follow a similar structure: They begin with a starting event, then build up a problem or obstacle which the main characters must overcome. The suspense builds up to the highest point, the climax, at which a solution is found at the last minute by the characters themselves or by the aid of a causal agent who provides a solution. As a result, the problem is solved and the suspense yields to relief on behalf of the audience. In advertising, it is usually the product which acts as the external agent who rushes to help when consumers are in despair and fixes whichever problems they encounter. (Chiu et al., 2012)

Reversal can thus be defined as entailing “a climax and a turning point in a story” (Chiu et al., 2012, p. 265). A strong conflict between the main character and the events leads to a more intense suspense, thus motivating the audience to deploy cognitive capacity and engage in wondering how the story might end (Fog et al., 2010; Chiu et al., 2012). One reason for this is that people instinctively long for balance and harmony; This sense of harmony is disrupted by the conflict in the story which causes a steady build-up of suspense (Fog et al., 2010). Since humans naturally avoid unpleasant feelings or situations, they instinctively attempt to find a solution (Fog et al., 2010). Conflict thus activates our need to bring order to chaotic situations (Fog et al., 2010). Hence, reversal is a powerful tool to engage customers on an emotional level.

Lastly, humor is a major element in brand stories, and one of the most used strategies in the realm of advertising (Chiu et al., 2012). Humor may be defined in different ways: It can be viewed as the properties of stimuli, with humor depending on the use of jokes, puns, understatements or similar methods. Humor can also be defined as the reaction certain stimuli elicit in the audience, such as smiles or laughter. A third way to characterize humor is to look at a receiver's perceptual responses to the message or stimulus. When adopting the latter point of view, humor can be a powerful element of brand stories, as it can lead to increased brand liking. (Chiu et al., 2012)

While humor has been shown to “enhance attention, credibility, recall, evaluation and purchase intention” (Alden, Mukherjee, & Hoyer, 2000, p. 1) as well as to reduce counter argumentation and push comprehension, it can only do so when applied in an appropriate manner. The latter depends on the product category and the target audience. That is to say that humorous effects can vary significantly, depending, for instance, on ethnicity or gender of the target audience. In addition, humor has been shown to be more effective for products which demand low involvement and humorous stories might only be more successful than non-humorous messages when the audience already holds a positive stance towards a brand. (Alden et al., 2000)

2.2.3.2. Story Objectives

As mentioned earlier, the type of brand story a company chooses highly depends on the strategic objective the firm decides to communicate. This section will therefore briefly introduce various story objectives. (Denning, 2006; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016)

First, storytelling is often employed to spark action. It encourages customers to understand and approve of new ways of doing things. Such narratives illustrate a past successful implementation of change and, without providing too many details, allow the recipients to imagine how such a change could have an impact in their situations. (Denning, 2006; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016)

Second, stories can focus on communicating who the sender is. Often, a strength or past vulnerability is shown in order to engage the recipients and inspire them. Self-disclosure, especially when disseminating vulnerable sides or failures on part of the sender, often triggers a certain sense of discomfort. However, it is a powerful tool to engage with others. When communicating who the brand is, usually with the aim to enhance it, references to the brand or the product are often made. Positive word-of-mouth by a third party or consumer stories also prove suitable and can enhance perceived credibility. (Denning, 2006; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016)

Third, a story which offers insight into mistakes and explains in detail how they were solved, aims at communicating knowledge and eliciting understanding, rather than action in the mind of the target group. Such stories, however, run the risk of not being considered as compelling enough to the wider audience and thus might need to be transformed into a more traditional story with characters, a plot and a turning point. (Denning, 2006; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016)

Communicating a company's values proves to be one of the biggest challenges to traditional management approaches, because it is often done in a very abstract way, which people have trouble relating to. It is therefore important to encourage a discussion on the matters which arise when promoting certain values. (Denning, 2006; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016)

Furthermore, stories can be useful to attend to and dismantle a rumor. A story can address certain aspects that reveal the rumor to be incorrect or unreasonable, often in a mildly humorous or satirical way. (Denning, 2006; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016)

In addition, a brand story's objective might be to lead the audience into the future by preparing them for what is about to come. However, since the future is unforeseeable, this type of story is difficult to tell and should not contain too many details which might not happen or might not be achievable after all. (Denning, 2006; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016)

Lastly, brand stories can aim at encouraging consumers to engage in brand related discourse. This is often achieved by telling about a situation that the consumers have experienced as well, encouraging them to share their own experiences with the brand community. However, a company has to be aware of the possibility of being flooded with customer accounts and should therefore have a plan on how to deal with such chain reactions. (Denning, 2006; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016)

2.2.3.3. Core Persona and Archetypes

Much has been written about the seven basic plots, storylines which recur in storytelling, appearing throughout different cultures and eras (Booker, 2004; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016). Examples of these plots include for instance the story of renewal or rebirth, of a journey and subsequent return, or of the development from rags to riches (Booker, 2004). These seven plots are rather specific, structuring individual stories into a clear beginning, middle and end. They also help to put order to experiences and give stories a logical sequence (Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016). However, instead of going into detail on those seven plots, the more general notion of core persona shall be elaborated on below.

Similar to what Aaker (1997) mentions in her brand personality scale, a brand's core persona can be defined as “the articulated form of the brand's character and personality” (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010, p. 21). Strong brand personae are stable over time and are easy to relate to. As such, consumers should be able to easily recognize and remember them. Thus, brand personae hold the power to create long-lasting bonds with the audience. Regardless of the specific story or plot, a brand persona creates continuity of the brand message at large. While brand personae possess “human traits, such as imagination, persistence, or courage, which are tied to a clear intention or purpose” (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010, p. 21), only few brands use actual human or human-like spokespeople or icons as representatives (e.g., the Michelin Man; Aunt Jemima; Uncle Ben's). In most cases, a company's logo or its name — or any other graphic elements — remind consumers of what the brand stands for and as such of the brand persona (e.g., Apple's apple, Nike's swoosh). (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010)

Since brand personae need to be easily recognizable, they often portray a specific archetype. Archetypes are “forms or images of a collective nature that represent a typical human experience (e.g., acts of heroism) and define the personality of a brand and give it a voice to express its story to the consumer” (Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016, p. 117). Mark and Pearson (2001) claim that in order to be successful, brands need to design, nourish and continuously reinterpret a distinctive and enthralling identity, distinguishing them

from their competitors by giving them difficult-to-imitate meaning. The most successful stories or brands embody an archetype (Mark & Pearson, 2001). Mark and Pearson (2001) propose twelve archetypes, which they arrange in four groups (see Figure 3). Other authors follow different classifications: Megehee and Woodside (2010), for instance, propose a slightly altered list (see Figure 3). All of these categorizations, however, serve the same purpose: to provide orientation by reflecting people's typical

<i>Mark & Pearson (2001)</i>		<i>Megehee & Woodside (2010)</i>
<i>Stability & Control</i>	Creator	Creator
	Caregiver	Mother of Goodness
	Ruler	Powerbroker
<i>Belonging & Enjoyment</i>	Jester	Little Trickster
	Regular Guy/Gal	Wise Old Man
	Lover	Siren
<i>Risk & Mastery</i>	Hero	Hero
	Outlaw	Antihero
	Magician	Change Master
<i>Independence & Fulfillment</i>	Innocent	Loyalist
	Explorer	Ultimate Strength
	Sage	Enigma

Figure 3: Brand archetypes (Mark & Pearson, 2001, p. 18; Megehee & Woodside, 2010, pp. 607f)

experiences and thus enabling customers to easily recognize and remember the core persona of a brand (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016). Mark and Pearson's (2001) list, which provides a more in-depth elaboration than Megehee and Woodside's (2010), will be drawn on further below when answering the question of how the brand story influences respondents' perceptions of the Jonas Co. brand persona.

2.2.4. Summary of Storytelling

The previous section provided an overview over the field of storytelling, focusing on firm-originated stories rather than consumer-stories. Storytelling is an inherent part of human existence, helping people to make sense of their experiences and putting the world's complexity to order (Hardy, 1968; Shankar et al., 2001; Benjamin, 2006; Huang, 2010). In the branding context, stories were shown not only to improve overall brand perceptions via transportation (Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004; Lundqvist et al., 2013) but also to add emotional value to market offerings (Jensen, 1999; Twitchell, 2004) as well as to create long-lasting, emotional relationships between customers and the brand (Woodside, 2010a). Furthermore, four main elements of a good brand story were outlined (Chiu et al., 2012). Brand stories differ in regard to a firm's strategic goals, therefore an overview of such

objectives was given (Denning, 2006; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016). Lastly, the importance of a core persona was elucidated as a major element in brand building (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016). It was shown that brand stories have begun to be perceived as crucial strategic branding tools (Huang, 2010; Iglesias & Bonet, 2012; Lundqvist et al., 2013; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016), creating brand meaning and nourishing brand attractiveness without appearing too commercial (Lundqvist et al., 2013).

3. METHODOLOGY

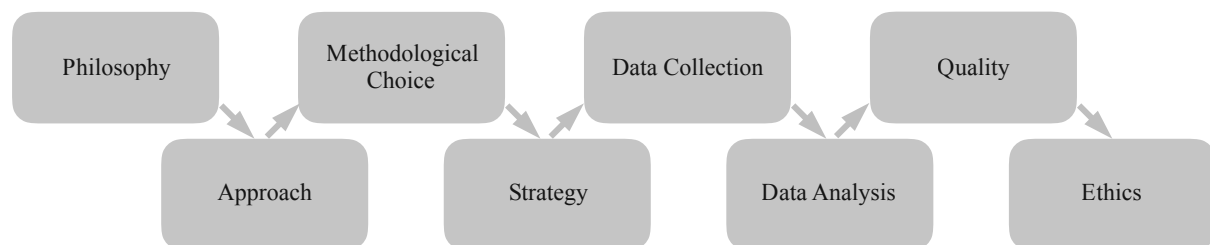


Figure 4: Structure of methodology

The following section is dedicated to outlining the methodological approach the author has adopted for this thesis. Being guided by Saunders et al.'s (2012) research 'onion' model, the author first states the research philosophy which was adopted by the researcher, followed by the research approach, methodological choice, strategy and an elaboration on the techniques and procedures of data collection and data analysis. This section concludes with an elaboration on research quality and ethical considerations.

3.1. Philosophy of Science

Before engaging in scientific research, which aims at creating and developing new knowledge within a certain field of study, it is important for the author to clarify the manner she perceives the general nature of knowledge and the means by which it is being developed. The view the researcher holds on the world inevitably influences her perception and approach towards the research question, chosen methods and interpretation of findings. Being able to

critically reflect upon such attitudes and defending them in light of the chosen context of the study is a crucial endeavor when doing research. (Saunders et al., 2012)

There are three major ways to approach research philosophy: *ontology*, *epistemology* and *axiology* (Saunders et al., 2012). Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality, thus questioning the researcher's assumptions of how the world operates. Literature suggests the distinction between *subjectivism* and *objectivism*; The objectivist researcher assumes that social existence happens in a reality separate of independent actors, while subjectivist researchers believe that the creation of social phenomena hinges on perceptions and resulting actions of social actors (Saunders et al., 2012). Also referred to as social constructivism, the latter assumes that reality is being constructed by social actors and their diverse interpretations, perceptions and own world views (Bryman, 2012). These two distinctions should be seen as the two opposing ends of a continuum (Saunders et al., 2012) and this thesis is embedded in the middle, following the paradigm of hermeneutics. This paradigm assumes that while objects of study shall be understood in the context of people's understanding thereof, these objects are not directly constructed by social actors, thus acknowledging the importance of interpreting people's understanding of reality (Nygaard, 2012). The hermeneutic paradigm further claims that "[h]uman beings are self-interpreting, historical creatures, whose means of understanding are provided by tradition and historical life" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 51). This underlines the importance of context in people's interpretations of the world (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). As this study aims at gaining insights into the ways consumers perceive, interpret and act on brand stories, it is crucial to understand the consumers' understanding of the world they act and interact in.

Hermeneutics has been prominent in the formulation of the epistemological stance of interpretivism (Bryman, 2012) which is adopted in this thesis. Researchers acting from this perspective — often working within the field of business, marketing or HR — actively embrace the world's complexity which cannot be approached by positing definite laws similar to what is being done in natural sciences (Saunders et al., 2012). In this context, the interviewees taking part in this study are considered as *people* who interpret the world from their subjective points of view, rather than as sole *research objects* (Saunders et al., 2012).

Similarly, the researcher herself is embedded in her own social context and thus has to be aware of her own pre-understandings at every stage of the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This process of interpretation encompasses both oral and written texts, which are manifestations of a person's interpretation of the world (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). From an *axiological* point of view, the interpretivist researcher takes an empathetic stance and is aware that her own experiences and interpretations of the world will likely inhibit a completely objective study (Saunders et al., 2012). This means that researchers who take on another approach will likely interpret things differently (Saunders et al., 2012). Knowledge is thus always bound to an individual's understanding of the world (Nygaard, 2012). To avoid obvious bias, the author has taken several steps to ensure that this study has been conducted in a reliable and valid way. A more detailed elaboration will follow in the subsection on research quality.

3.2. Research Approach

Depending on where the focus of a certain study lies, a *deductive*, *inductive* or a combination of the two research approaches might be adopted. While the deductive approach is often linked to quantitative studies, where theory is tested via the collected data, the inductive approach is frequently associated with qualitative studies, with observations resulting in the building of theory (Bryman, 2012). However, it has also been criticized that a lot of qualitative research undertaken does not result in the generation of theory (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, it has been noted that there do not exist any rigid divisions between the inductive and the deductive approach, and it is possible to combine both in one research paper (Saunders et al., 2012; Bryman, 2012). Bryman (2012) for instance argues that “just as deduction entails an element of induction, the inductive process is likely to entail a modicum of deduction” (Bryman, 2012, p. 26). Some studies might also adopt a deductive approach using qualitative data or an inductive approach using quantitative research designs (Saunders et al., 2012). This thesis is dedicated to generating empirical evidence within the area of storytelling and the way a firm-originated story influences respondents' brand experience. It therefore takes a mainly inductive stance where collected data is used to examine the effects

the brand story has, and subsequently to generate new insights in the field of storytelling, with a small deductive part of doing a preliminary literature review to get an overview of the field of study.

3.3. Methodological Choice

In line with the epistemological stance of interpretivism, a qualitative research design was chosen. Qualitative and quantitative methods are often distinguished by either using non-numeric data, such as words, videos or images, or by working with numerical data (Saunders et al., 2012). As this thesis aims at exploring how brand interest group members' brand experience differs when being exposed either to a brand story or to no story at all, a qualitative, exploratory research design was considered most suitable. It allows for associations, feelings and opinions to emerge and be elaborated on to gain an in-depth understanding of the research participants as well as to obtain new insights in the context of a case which has not been studied before (Saunders et al., 2012). However, a strict line between qualitative and quantitative methods is sometimes difficult to draw as some quantitative methods, such as surveys, might also allow for qualitative elements such as open questions; Similarly, interviews might also contain some closed questions (Saunders et al., 2012), as is the case in this study.

The exploratory study approach allows the author to gain insights into the way a brand-originated story alters people's brand experience by asking a mix of open and closed interview questions and understanding the nature of the issue at-hand in a rather flexible manner, paired with a description of how brand experience differs between the two groups of respondents (Saunders et al., 2012). This approach was chosen as the research question touches upon an area where ample empirical evidence does not exist yet, therefore needing to explore, and to some extent describe, how respondents are affected by storytelling and how they perceive the brand at-hand.

3.4. Research Strategy

The empirical part of this thesis follows a cross-sectional, experimental case study approach where Jonas Co., a Swedish start-up which is about to launch on the European market, serves as the case. Case studies have been shown to be useful in answering *why*, *how* or *what* questions and are therefore most often conducted in exploratory or explanatory research (Meyer, 2001; Saunders et al., 2012). A case study allows the researcher to investigate a topic in-depth within its context (Saunders et al., 2012). Case studies have been defined in different ways throughout literature (Ragin & Becker, 1992); In this thesis, a case is characterized as the „object of study“ (Johansson, 2003, p. 2). A case study, thus, can be defined as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, p. xi) or as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon or setting” (Wang & Groat, 2013, p. 418). In particular, this study can be further defined as an “*instrumental case study*” (Stake, 1995, p. 3, emphasis in original) because it does not focus on understanding the Jonas Co. brand per se, but rather on the way respondents experience the brand and the role storytelling plays in this process. Furthermore, this case study is *experimental* in nature, because the researcher decided to randomly allocate respondents into two groups: one is subjected to a short background story, written on a tag which is attached to the product, while the other group is only exposed to a tag bearing the company logo. The aim of manipulating the independent variable — in this case adding or removing the story — is to gain insights into how the dependent variable — the brand experience — might differ when respondents are exposed to the story as compared to no story. Such differences might arise in the themes and topics respondents raise during the interview and in general, how they perceive the brand. The data collected will thus be analyzed in a qualitative manner. A more detailed elaboration on data collection and data analysis will follow further below.

There do not exist any particular requirements guiding case study research which, on the positive side, allows the researcher to tailor data collection and study design to the problem statement (Meyer, 2001). At the same time, such lack of prerequisites can also result in poor studies, often criticized by scholars working in the quantitative field (Meyer, 2001).

Furthermore, while some scholars claim that case study findings cannot be directly generalized to other cases (Stake, 1995), others are of the opposite opinion (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Woodside, 2010b). But, either way, this study is primarily dedicated to understanding brand experience and the way it is influenced by storytelling within the context of Jonas Co., rather than generating generalizable results. Furthermore the author decided on a small-scale case study because it allows for a very detailed discussion of a narrow topic, which was deemed crucial in this case.

The choice of the Jonas Co. brand as the case for this thesis was made out of an intrinsic interest in learning more about storytelling in the context of a newly founded business. While previous research was conducted with already established brands (Lundqvist et al., 2013), the author has not come across any studies on the effects of storytelling on brand experience in the context of start-ups and has thus chosen to delve into this topic. In addition, and to the author's knowledge, storytelling in the area of interior design has not been observed yet either, thus sparking her interest to further explore this topic.

3.4.1. The Jonas Co. Case

Jonas Co. is a young start-up, founded by three students at Lund University in Sweden which is soon to officially launch on the European market (Jonas Co., 2017a). According to the founders, the mission of Jonas Co. is to bring unique, high-quality design collections from all over the globe to its customers, focusing on and communicating the products' origins and the stories behind the products (Jonas Co., 2017a). The main target group can be defined as young professionals and millennials (Jonas Co., 2017a). The latter are often referred to as a group of consumers who demand more from the products they buy than simple functionality; They are argued to be more interested in making a positive difference in the world and want companies to do the same (IKEA, 2014). This is where Jonas Co. positions itself with its up-cycled, repurposed products. On a more general level, however, the firm targets anyone passionate for unique interior design (Jonas Co., 2017a).

The company's first market offerings are up-cycled, old Chinese cookie boxes from the 1960s and 1970s, which are being repurposed into unique table lamps (Jonas Co., 2017a). The designer of the lamps is a Swiss expat who has previously worked on prosthetic limbs for Paralympic athletes in North Korea and who is now living in Shanghai where he is crafting each product by hand (Jonas Co., 2017a). The lamp is turned on by touching the box, and it has a dimmer function with three different levels of brightness, which is dependent on touch as well. Until now, the designer was selling his products in China only (Jonas Co., 2017a). Two of the founders of Jonas Co. have previously met him in Shanghai in early 2016, and have now decided to bring the lamps as their first collection to Europe (Jonas Co., 2017a). While their main distribution channel will be the internet, selling their products over the Jonas Co. website, the start-up is planning to collaborate with several design shops in Copenhagen to showcase its products (one store in the city center already displays several lamps) (Jonas Co., 2017a). The final price of the lamps is not agreed on yet, but they will likely be offered at around DKK 1,500 in the Jonas Co. online-store. This study also serves to provide the company with additional information on this issue, by exploring respondents' estimations of the price and their willingness to pay.

The Jonas Co. brand is suitable for this research due to several reasons. One major argument is the novelty of the brand on the market. It could therefore be assumed that none of the interviewees had formerly been in contact with neither the brand nor the product itself, thus the possibility of preconceived opinions and biased attitudes which could have resulted from earlier exposure to the brand was deemed negligible. Furthermore, the extensive literature research on storytelling and branding has not revealed any empirical studies on the effects of storytelling in the context of start-ups. Especially within interior design, storytelling as a way of engaging customers emotionally does not seem to be a widely used practice, at least in a number of design shops in the center of Copenhagen the researcher visited. This fueled the researcher's interest to explore further. Another reason for using Jonas Co. is the company's strategic interest in telling stories, both implicitly through the products themselves and explicitly by providing customers with the lamps' background stories. While the author acknowledges these two ways of storytelling, she will — unless stated otherwise — mainly

refer to the provided written text as *the story*, which one of the two groups of respondents is exposed to.

3.5. Data Collection

In order to answer the research questions, both secondary and primary data are being used and analyzed. This section provides an overview of how secondary sources were obtained, and why, what kind of and how primary data were collected.

3.5.1. Secondary Sources

While the main focus of analysis lies on the collected primary data, secondary sources provide important additional information on the study field and allow the researcher “to extract new findings and insights from existing data” (McGivern, 2009, p. 149). Such secondary sources can contain both raw data and publicized synopses and may provide additional insights, knowledge or interpretations (Saunders et al., 2012).

To approach the field of storytelling and branding, an extensive literature review was first undertaken to gain an overview of the current state of research and to understand how storytelling and branding have previously been employed and understood. For this purpose, the researcher has reviewed articles covered throughout her studies and then delved deeper into the subject matter by critically reviewing and evaluating the material and seeking authors, papers and books cited in these papers. This process of searching, obtaining and evaluating secondary sources is crucial for any type of research (Saunders et al., 2012) and has therefore been repeated several times until the author has reached the point of having gained a broad overview of the field of branding. Secondary sources on storytelling were mostly retrieved through an extensive online research, using databases and libraries as a starting point to identify material on the subject matter, which was then evaluated in a similar manner as the literature on branding. These sources are relevant because they allow the researcher to gain an overview of the current research status and to identify relevant areas for this thesis. Furthermore, understanding how branding has evolved during the years and defining what is considered as a brand in this thesis is of utmost importance to set the stage

and to be able to embed the case of Jonas Co. into existing research. In addition, it allows to link branding to storytelling and to comprehend the evolution of storytelling as a strategic branding tool.

A crucial piece of secondary data is the brand story, which was made available by Jonas Co. (see Appendix 1). It is subject to analysis itself, adding a supplementary aspect to the collection and analysis of the primary data, and its analysis allows the researcher to examine and link the elements of the story to what has previously been discussed in literature. A critical discourse analysis allows for a detailed description and interpretation of the story, a method which is often applied when seeking in-depth understanding of oral or written texts and their embeddedness in social contexts (Jäger, 2009). As such, it provides an additional perspective onto the topic, allows for a more complete analysis of the case and permits a more comprehensive view on brand experience and how it is linked to a firm-originated story.

3.5.2. Primary Data

While secondary sources were important to gain an overview of previously conducted research in the preliminary phase of this thesis, and while secondary data such as the written story used in this experimental case study allow for an additional perspective for answering the overall research question, the main focus of this work lies on the interpretation and analysis of primary data.

These primary data were collected by conducting ten qualitative, semi-structured interviews over the course of three weeks in March and April 2017. Qualitative interviews are considered a crucial tool to learn about how people understand the world they live in, not least because “[c]onversation is a basic mode of human interaction” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. xvii). Since the main goal of this thesis is to explore the influence of a firm-originated story on brand experience, qualitative interviews are deemed suitable because they represent an important way to “get to know other people, learn about their experiences, feelings, attitudes, and the world they live in” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. xvii). A research interview differs from day-to-day conversations in the sense that it involves the careful questioning, listening and following-up on questions to obtain information and knowledge in

a situation which is being controlled by the researcher. The knowledge produced through the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee is always contextual and this approach, embedded in the hermeneutic paradigm, stands in contrast to the philosophic notion of positivism which assumes knowledge as quantifiable facts. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)

Data collection through qualitative interviewing has regularly been criticized by advocates of methodological positivism who dismiss this approach as unscientific, arguing that “[s]cientific facts [are] to be unambiguous, intra-subjectively and inter-subjectively reproducible, objective, and quantifiable” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 58) and claiming that facts and science should be separated from values, ethics and politics (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, the production of quantifiable knowledge is not the aim of qualitative interviewing; On the contrary, it embraces the at times ambiguous and contradictory findings, representing the complexity of the world we live in (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Recapitulating what was said above, it can be stated that “in contrast to methodological positivism, knowledge is not obtained in qualitative research by following value- and interest-free methods, for the subjectivities of human beings play an irreducible role in qualitative knowledge production” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 60). Thus, the interviews conducted in this thesis aim at gaining detailed insights into respondents’ feelings, opinions and attitudes towards the Jonas Co. brand by which the researcher attempts to explore the influence of a firm-originated story on brand experience.

In contrast to other research methods such as structured interviewing, survey questionnaires or participant observation, qualitative interviewing allows the researcher to gain in-depth insights into people’s minds and the way they live and interpret their experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Thus, the author decided to primarily work with qualitative interviews, meeting with one respondent at a time, a method which is frequently applied in case studies (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and which has been previously used in similar study designs (Lundqvist et al., 2013).

3.5.3. Interview Sample

While it might be possible for some studies to obtain data from every group or case member, most often, time and budget constraints or the nature of the research question necessitates sampling (Saunders et al., 2012). Working with a sample size was deemed necessary and beneficial for this thesis due to several reasons: First, Jonas Co. and its lamp collection are aimed at a very large audience, targeting anyone interested in interior design with a special focus on millennials. As such, it would be unrewarding and basically impossible to conduct interviews with each member of the target group. Secondly, as the interviews conducted in this study are aimed at gaining deep insights into how people experience the brand, and following the tradition of working with fewer accounts in an in-depth manner (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2010), a total of ten interviews was considered suitable for this study. In addition, analyzing fewer interviews in an orderly and in-depth manner was deemed more important than running the risk of hasty analyses when working with more interviews (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2010).

In general, there are two ways to select samples: probability and non-probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2012). Probability sampling, also referred to as representative sampling, is mainly associated with surveys and experimental research designs and is characterized by the aim to make inferences from the sample to the population which is being studied (Saunders et al., 2012). As such, probability sampling has been argued to be suitable only when the sample size contains at least 50 cases (Saunders et al., 2012). In contrast, non-probability sampling is characterized by the researcher not knowing the probability of each case being selected thus preventing the researcher from making generalizations on the basis of statistical inferences (Saunders et al., 2012).

In the context of this thesis, non-probability, volunteer, self-selection sampling (Saunders et al., 2012) was chosen because it allows for people to actively decide to take part in the study. To do so, the researcher has publicized her need for cases on various social media platforms and in her immediate surroundings, asking for interviewees currently residing in Copenhagen and interested in interior design to take part in an interview. This way, she could make sure that the sample size fits into the overall target group of Jonas Co.

and that it is geographically bound to the Copenhagen area. This was deemed crucial because it allows the researcher to assume that all respondents have, at least to some extent, an idea of the market. Furthermore, since the researcher herself is situated in the city, and Jonas Co. particularly focuses on the Danish and Swedish market in the early stages, a location-bound sample size was considered important.

Furthermore, due to the fact that Jonas Co. is a new brand about to launch on the market, it could be assumed that the respondents have never been in contact with the brand and its products before. This ensured that all participants shared the same knowledge base. People who have previously been told about the brand by the researcher, such as family or close friends, were explicitly excluded from participation.

<i>Group A (non-story)</i>				<i>Group B (story)</i>			
<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Profession</i>	<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Profession</i>
A1 ♀	26	Danish	Student	B1 ♀	28	Danish	Student & part-time job
A2 ♀	25	Italian	Student	B2 ♀	33	Portuguese	Chemical Researcher
A3 ♀	33	Dutch	Assistant Professor	B3 ♀	25	Danish	Student
A4 ♂	28	German/Italian	Chemist	B4 ♂	70	Danish	Lawyer
A5 ♀	23	Danish	Student	B5 ♀	24	Dutch	Student & part-time job
<i>mean age: 31.5 years</i>							

Figure 5: Interview Sample

3.5.4. Interviewing Process

As elaborated on in the previous section, a total of ten semi-structured interviews were conducted. Of those ten respondents, five are Danish citizens, one is Italian, two are Dutch, one is Portuguese and one is both German and Italian. Ages ranged between 23 and 70 years, with the majority at age 23 to 33. This age group also reflects Jonas Co.'s main target group. Eighty percent of the respondents are women. Six of the respondents are students, two of whom pursue a part-time job on the side. One respondent is an assistant professor, two are chemical researchers and one is a lawyer. Figure 5 provides an overview of the interview sample. The duration of the interviews ranged between 12 and 48 minutes.

After having conducted several interviews, the researcher noted some correlation between Danish and international respondents, which led to the decision to ask all interviewees for permission to use their nationalities, which everyone agreed to. All interviews were conducted in English.

In line with the ethical code of non-maleficence, the researcher made sure to reduce participants' stress by conducting the interviews in an atmosphere which is familiar to the respondents. Interviews were thus conducted at the respondents' university, their workplace or their home. Before starting, all respondents were given an informed consent form (see Appendix 2), providing them with an overview of the purpose of the research, the procedures and explanations on their rights to confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw from the interview at any time.

The interviews started off with an introduction in which the researcher briefly talked about the purpose of the study and the use of a voice recorder. This stage is considered crucial, as it gives the interviewee an idea of who the interviewer is and whom they are asked to open up to (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Furthermore, an interview guide (see Appendix 3) provided the researcher with a red thread, consisting of some leading questions covering the following four topic areas, which correspond to the problem statement outlined in section 1.2:

- ▶ Overall perception of and associations with the brand
- ▶ Perceived brand personality
- ▶ Perceived price of the product and willingness to pay for it
- ▶ Overall attractiveness of the brand

These topics served as an overall orientation for the researcher while still allowing her to adapt to each individual conversation. As mentioned in the introduction, Lundqvist et al.'s (2013) study served as a source of inspiration and the topic areas of *perceptions and associations* and *perceived price and willingness* follow their research design. The author has complemented this with the themes of *perceived brand personality* and *overall attractiveness*

to achieve a more diverse view on the effects a brand story can have on people's brand experience.

Most questions were posed in an open manner, a strategy which often yields rich descriptions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Follow-up questions and probing questions were then posed to gain a more in-depth understanding of the interviewee's responses. In addition, some questions were asked in a closed manner which allows for a better comparison between the two groups of respondents.

As mentioned before, all respondents were randomly allocated to one of two groups, which differed in the way the interview was set up as follows (see Appendix 1):

- ▶ *Group A*: setting consisted of lamp, five pictures of other lamp designs, paper tag exhibiting the company logo attached to the lamp
- ▶ *Group B*: setting consisted of lamp, five pictures of other lamp designs, paper tag exhibiting the company logo and a short story about the history of the product

At the beginning of the interviews, all respondents, regardless of their group, were told that Jonas Co. is a new brand which is about to enter the European market. The researcher has purposefully not specifically pointed towards the story in group B, because she wanted to learn if respondents are at all inclined to read it. If necessary, she then pointed to the story later on in the interview and asked the respondents to read it. One interviewee (B2) read the story at the very beginning, three respondents (B1, B4, B5) during the course of sharing their impressions and associations and all respondents have read the story before moving on to perceived price and people's willingness to pay.

3.6. Data Analysis

The conducted interviews provided the researcher with rich insights into the respondents' experience with the Jonas Co. brand. All interviews were fully transcribed (see Appendix 4) and then coded in NVivo (QSR. International Pty Ltd., 1999-2016), in order to facilitate the subsequent analysis. The coding of data is a central part of a hermeneutic approach, as the latter focuses on narratives and opinions of interviewees (Tinggaard & Brinkmann, 2010). It

allows the researcher to put order to the vast amount of data and the many pages of transcripts and helps to identify similarities and dissimilarities throughout the compiled data (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2010).

While there are several different ways to transcribe interviews, with some being more detailed than others, there are no stringent rules, and the decision is highly dependent on the research objectives, the way the data will be analyzed and the time and resources available (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2010). When transcribing, the author focused on both *what* was being said and *how* it was said, thus including pauses (marked as "...") and additional words such as *uh* or *err* where it was deemed beneficial for the subsequent analysis. While including these elements took additional time, it was deemed necessary in order to fully grasp people's responses and their individual understanding of and experience with the brand. Such seemingly unimportant words still carry important information for the process of interpretation of people's points of view. Additional information, such as changes in the tone of voice or other non-verbal elements crucial for understanding of what was being said were included in double parentheses. Unintelligible words were marked in empty parentheses. It is important to note that the process of analyzing already starts during the interview and continues when it is being transcribed, as the translation of oral language into written language always entails the process of interpretation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2010).

3.6.1. Discourse Analysis

The term *discourse* has been interpreted in different ways by various authors working in several fields of research and thus needs to be thoroughly defined before engaging in a discussion on what discourse analysis entails and why it is being applied in this case (Bryman, 2012). This thesis adopts the definition brought forward by Phillips and Hardy (2002), who define a discourse as

an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being. [...] In other words, social reality is produced and made real through discourses, and social interactions cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning. As discourse analysts, then, our task is to explore the relationship between discourse and reality. (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 3)

Texts, in this context can be defined as written or oral accounts, symbols, pictures or artifacts (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). While Phillips and Hardy (2002) argue that the social world is constructed through discourses, thus in line with the ontological stance of social constructivism, they acknowledge that not everyone has the luxury of choosing their own reality, identity or truth and that much of our experience is influenced, if not predetermined, by the abundance of conflicting discourses around us, which we are part of. Thus, the definition of discourse in this thesis follows a broader definition than some of the rather narrow approaches to discourse analysis (Bryman, 2012). Discourse exists beyond individual texts, and texts act only as single pieces of a bigger puzzle, linked via intertextuality, which contends that all texts refer to and are influenced by others (Grant, Hardy, Oswick, & Putnam, 2004).

Similar to Phillips and Hardy (2002), Mills (2007) defines a discourse as a grouping of expressions, statements and sentences which take place in social contexts, and which are influenced by them, while at the same time contributing to the maintenance thereof. Social actors from this perspective perceive reality via discourses and discursive structures (Mills, 2007). Institutions and social contexts play a crucial part in the maintenance, dissemination and development of discourses; Thus, discourses can be seen as socially accepted norms or ideas within a society which guide people's behavior (Mills, 2007). Such a socially widely accepted discourse can be referred to as a mainstream discourse, while discursive practices deviating from such discourses, which can occur both intentionally and accidentally, are defined as counter discourses (Jäger, 2009).

Discourse analysis was chosen in this thesis because it allows to disentangle and analyze the interplay of those discourses manifested in the Jonas Co. brand story. It aims at interpreting and understanding the text and its impact and allows the researcher to conceive it in the context of a historic and societal mainstream discourse (Jäger, 2009). In this case, it is important to first discuss the story on the tag in detail in order to be able to put it in relation to people's reactions and their overall brand experience.

Following Jäger's (2009) framework of critical discourse analysis, the first step is to determine the institutional context in which the text is embedded. This includes the definition of the medium, the text type, the author and the reason for the creation of the text. In a second step, an analysis of the macro structure is conducted, which deals with the structure, the graphic design and the topics of the text, followed by an analysis of the micro structure and textual elements. An overall interpretation of the previous steps builds the final step of the discourse analysis in this thesis. (Jäger, 2009)

3.6.2. Hermeneutic Analysis

Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation which focuses on the analysis of meaning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and is concerned with embedding individual elements of a text into a broader context (Tinggaard & Brinkmann, 2010). The hermeneutic researcher often starts off with a rather hazy understanding of a text as a whole, in this case the ten interviews. Consequently, she engages in a detailed interpretation of the different parts which are then related to the whole again (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). As a result, she engages in a constant "back-and-forth process" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 210) between individual statements and the interviews as a whole, similar to what is done in critical discourse analysis. This process of interpretation stops when the researcher has reached a state of internal harmony of the text, free from logical inconsistencies (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Another hermeneutic principle contends that the researcher cannot work without presuppositions, a topic which was already elaborated on in section 3.1. A researcher should critically reflect on her own pre-understandings and embeddedness in the social world in order to be able to better comprehend and analyze other people's understanding of the world (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). When analyzing the data, the author of this thesis has constantly engaged in this self-scrutinizing process before writing down her results. In this context, Gadamer (1986) talks about the convergence or in the best case fusion of two horizons of understanding: one of the object of understanding and one of the recipient who tries to make sense of it; The more the interpreter is able to broaden her own horizon to think outside her immediate context, the easier it is to discern the horizon of, and empathize with the sender of a text.

Hermeneutics does not provide any step-by-step instructions of how to do hermeneutic analysis, but rather “is an explication of general principles found useful in a long tradition of interpreting texts” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 211). As a scientific method to analyze interviews, it has been criticized in several ways (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Some argue, for instance, that the varying interpretations of different researchers render the hermeneutic approach unscientific and demand objectivity, whereas advocates of postmodern and hermeneutic thought counter that a text never only has one true and objective meaning and therefore embrace the wide variety of interpretations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This, however, does not mean that scholars do not acknowledge the difference between biased and perspectival subjectivity, with the latter being applied in this thesis; The first simply implies careless and unreliable work, where researchers focus only on those elements which support their personal opinions, while the latter emerges when they adopt various perspectives on the same text, which lead to different interpretations of meaning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Subjectivity therefore is not seen as a weakness, but embraces that different interpretations “testify to the fruitfulness and vigor of interview research” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Hermeneutics provides a suitable framework for analyzing the interviews at-hand, because it allows the researcher to interpret people’s feelings, attitudes and opinions on the Jonas Co. brand, thus enabling her to dig deep into the way the respondents experience the brand.

3.7. Research Quality

In quantitative studies, research quality is measured through reliability and validity, which provide important and widely accepted criteria: Reliability in this context is characterized by the replicability of findings, while validity is concerned with the accuracy thereof (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982).

In qualitative research, however, several differing viewpoints exist regarding the approach to these two concepts: Some researchers reject the importance of reliability and validity in qualitative research as a whole, and argue that these concepts are valid solely for positivist research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) due to the assumption that a different type of

knowledge is obtained in qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). Others propose variations to the traditional ideas of reliability and validity, such as *trustworthiness*, *authenticity*, *credibility* of *transferability*, and claim that the concepts of reliability and validity cannot be as easily separated in qualitative research as it is being done in quantitative research (Golafshani, 2003; Bryman, 2012). However, no matter how authors approach this topic, both quantitative and qualitative researchers need to argue for the credibility of their findings (Golafshani, 2003).

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), reliability is concerned with the „consistency and trustworthiness of research findings“ (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 245) which pertains the question whether they can be replicated and reproduced at some other point in time and by other researchers; They thus address the crucial issue of bias (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In order to avoid bias both in data collection and data analysis, the above-mentioned perspectival subjectivity was adopted. It pertains to hermeneutics, but also to discourse analysis, and allows the author to conduct interviews and the subsequent analysis from various perspectives, hence improving the reliability of this work. Furthermore, she has enhanced the reliability of the findings by using triangulation, which includes the use of different sources of data (secondary: brand story; primary: interviews) and different methods of analysis (critical discourse analysis and hermeneutic analysis) (Golafshani, 2003). If the concept of reliability was approached in a more traditional way, however, it would be deemed to be problematic in qualitative research in general, as “it is impossible to ‘freeze‘ a social setting and the circumstances of an initial study to make it replicable in the sense in which the term is usually employed” (Bryman, 2012, p. 390, emphasis in original).

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) furthermore engage in a critical discussion on the traditional notion of validity. They criticize the latter as being limited to measurement and argue that in a postmodern era, “valid knowledge claims emerge as conflicting interpretations” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 247). Thus, they state that the search for “absolute, certain knowledge is replaced by a conception of defensible knowledge claims” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 247) and stress the dependence of validation on the

“quality of craftsmanship” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 247). This approach towards validity is adopted in this thesis and the author has taken several steps throughout the research process to render this thesis valid: She has regularly performed checks, posed questions and theoretically interpreted her findings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). As a result, it is argued that this thesis indeed provides defensible knowledge.

3.8. Research Ethics

Research ethics are mainly concerned with the way people, who participate in a research, are treated (Bryman, 2012) and are critical to the success of any project (Saunders et al., 2012). Even though the main elements regarding ethical procedures have not changed much over the decades, the consideration of ethical issues seem to be more important to discussions about good research than ever (Bryman, 2012). While some research methods tend to be linked more often to ethical concerns, such as disguised observation, other methods are not immune to such concerns either (Bryman, 2012). Scholars furthermore do not seem to completely agree as to what is ethically acceptable and what is not and authors take different stances on social research ethics (Bryman, 2012): Universalists, for instance, take the position that ethical principles should never be broken as this would result in a damage to social research and it would be considered wrong from a moral stance (Bryman, 2012). In contrast, some scholars contend that ethical considerations should depend on the case itself, and that some cases necessitate breaking some ethical rules in order to learn about social phenomena (Bryman, 2012). Saunders et al. (2012) distinguish two stances in a similar manner, opposing the “deontological view” (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 227), which corresponds to what Bryman (2012) refers to as *universalists*, with the “teleological view” (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 227) according to which an act should not be dependent on stringent rules but should rather be dependent on the consequences a certain act pertains.

The author of this thesis takes a more universalist stance and underlines that any type of research should make sure that participants are not harmed, which not only refers to physical harm, but also includes emotional harm such as stress, loss of self-confidence or threats to confidentiality and privacy (Bryman, 2012). This is also referred to as the principle

of non-maleficence (Saunders et al., 2012). While theorists argue that it is not always possible to identify all threats to respondents' well-being (Bryman, 2012), the author of this thesis has taken several steps to ensure their safety.

In order to secure data protection, confidentiality and privacy, the author neither mentions the respondents' names in this thesis, nor do they appear in the transcripts, and there is no personal information stored on any hard drives. The only personal information sought during the interview was the respondents' year of birth, their profession and their nationality. This was done for demographic reasons and it is argued that this information alone, without any names or information on the exact place of work attached, does not pose a serious threat to people's anonymity. Furthermore, the interviews were conducted in an environment familiar to participants, in order to reduce the danger of stress.

All respondents have signed an informed consent form (see Appendix 2), which provided them with information on the purpose of the research, the type of intervention and duration of the interviews. In addition, it provides insight into the procedures of conducting the interviews and explains respondents' rights to confidentiality and their right to refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the interview at any time. All interviews were further offered a copy of the informed consent form. All forms are securely stored and will be safely disposed of once this thesis is published.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This section is dedicated to the analysis of both the brand story itself and the conducted interviews. It aims at answering the research questions set out in the very beginning of this thesis and at discussing the results of the data collection. First, the brand story is analyzed by means of a critical discourse analysis. This provides the author with an in-depth understanding of the story and its embeddedness in various discourses and allows to draw on those findings in those sections following later-on. The subsequent sections are structured as follows: The overall perception of and associations with the brand is elaborated on, providing better insights into how and if the brand story at hand influences on people's first

impressions. Afterwards, respondents' ideas regarding the brand personality are analyzed and potential differences between the groups are elucidated. Then, the author moves on to people's perception of the cost of the products and their willingness to pay, followed by a comparison and discussion of respondents' perceived overall attractiveness of the brand.

4.1. Brand Story

Before engaging in the analysis and discussion of the conducted interviews, it is important to understand the brand story. This is crucial in order to be able to relate people's reactions to the story and their interpretations thereof to their overall brand experience. Thus, this section is dedicated to answering the question of what the brand story is composed of and which discourses it addresses, as laid out in the problem formulation. This step also makes it possible to put the story at-hand in relation to what has previously been written about good brand stories (e.g. Twitchell, 2004; Fog et al., 2010; Chiu et al., 2012; Lundqvist et al., 2013) and to analyze which brand story elements this example carries. Following Jäger's (2009) framework of critical discourse analysis, this section will be structured as follows: First the institutional context and the textual components, including linguistic and rhetorical elements will be touched upon, followed by a comprehensive interpretation thereof. Furthermore, the preliminary analysis allows the author to put the story into the context of existing brand story literature.

The story at-hand was written and made available by the founders of Jonas Co. As mentioned before, Jonas Co. is a young start-up based in Sweden which is about to enter the European market by selling their products mainly via an online shop but also by collaborating with design stores in the Copenhagen and Malmö area (Jonas Co., 2017a). It was founded by three Master program students, one German and two British in their late twenties studying Entrepreneurship: Two of them are enrolled at Lund University and one at KTH in Stockholm. Jonas Co.'s first collection is composed of hand-made lamps, designed by Jonas, a Swiss designer living and working in Shanghai, China (Jonas Co., 2017a). The products are made of up-cycled Asian biscuit boxes from the 1960s and 1970s, combined with modern Edison light bulbs on top (Jonas Co., 2017a). Even though the name of the designer of this

first collection was adopted as a company name, the start-up plans to bring several other collections from different parts of the world and various designers to the market once the lamp collection has successfully taken off (Jonas Co., 2017a). How this expansion will affect the firm's branding strategy as a whole, since the company name is inherently connected to their first collection, is yet to be determined. The start-up describes itself as young and modern, with the mission of bringing distinctive design collections to the market, while emphasizing the products' origins and stories (Jonas Co., 2017a). Jonas Co. approaches branding, similar to Mühlbacher and Hemetsberger's (2008) understanding thereof, as a constantly evolving interplay of all stakeholders, and embraces an open discourse with its customers. Thus, storytelling is approached as a strategic tool, with both the products themselves and the additional narratives in textual form being part of the narrative. The company's vision is to become a well-known and global brand which stands for distinctive and high-quality designs in the areas of living, lifestyle and fashion (Jonas Co., 2017a).

The story is aimed at potential customers. Its objectives, in line with what Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote (2016) and Denning (2006) propose, can be defined as conveying additional information about the brand and the product and communicating the company's values, aiming at achieving a positive emotional response on the side of the brand interest group and building an emotional connection with the potential customer. Keeping in mind that the brand has only unofficially launched at this point, the company is mainly concerned with creating, what Mühlbacher and Hemetsberger (2008) and Iglesias and Bonet (2012) refer to as brand touchpoints or indices to disseminate brand meaning, which in turn enable the creation and co-creation of brand related discourse.

The story is printed in black-and-white letters on a white cardboard tag measuring 9x10 cm (see Appendix 1). It is attached to the lamp with a white silk bow, creating a high-quality, modern look which stands in contrast to the more old-fashioned, colorful biscuit box. The company logo is printed in big letters on top, followed by an 11-line, 100 word justified text in a clean, modern, sans serif font.

The text starts off by claiming that the box at-hand was once forgotten in the corner of an antique shop in Shanghai and that it stands as a symbol "for the rebellion against today's

world of mindless mass-consumption” (Jonas Co., 2017b). It then goes on by stating that the box has been repurposed and up-cycled by the designer, Jonas, who is a Swiss expat working and living in Shanghai. His story of having been employed in North Korea, producing prosthetic limbs, is briefly introduced, then the narrative returns to the box which has been transformed by Jonas into a unique piece of art. In the following, the history of the box is briefly touched upon, stating that it has been used to store medicine during the Vietnam War and that it has been passed down several generations before ending up where it is today. The story ends with a rhetoric question, touching on the chances of such an ancient box from a faraway country ending up with the potential consumer. The full story can be found in Appendix 1.

When studying the text, it becomes apparent that there are two dominant storylines: one about the box and its history and one about the designer and his past. This allows for the reader to contextualize the product, and it instills additional meaning to it. Thereby it facilitates the reader to make sense of the product, since it in itself could raise questions of what it is, where it comes from and why it is built the way it is. This is also in line with Shankar et al.’s (2001) and Benjamin’s (2006) discussion on the sense-making function stories hold.

Apart from the logo, the company itself is not directly mentioned in the text, yet its values of cherishing up-cycling and repurposing old materials into design pieces are conveyed through the background story of the lamp and its designer. By putting the lamp and its history into the limelight and not the firm itself, the story could, as proposed by Lundqvist et al. (2013), lead to being perceived as less commercial and could therefore, as Chiu et al. (2012) argue, enhance the perception of authenticity. The story allows the readers to mentally put order to their visual experience by connecting the product to a specific region of the world and by mentioning the age of the tin and linking it to real historic events such as the Vietnam War. As Chiu et al. (2012) propose, readers could, as a result, be inclined to be more easily persuaded of the authenticity of the boxes. Without those references, and as Beverland et al. (2008) caution, some readers might think that the tins are a product of mass marketing, being machine-produced nowadays and that they are simply being made to look rusty and

antique to appeal to people's wish for vintage things. As will be shown later-on, respondent A4 perceived the product in a similar manner.

While a more detailed discussion of the brand story elements will follow further below, the different discourses touched upon in this story shall be made visible at this point, in line with Jäger's (2009) framework of discourse analysis. Possibly the two most obvious discursive streams are those of mass-consumption and the fast-paced nature of today's Western world, and its, what Jäger (2009) defines as counter discourse. The latter calls for a critical reconsideration of, or even a rebellion against our society's consumption practices. This counter-discourse advocates the repurposing and up-cycling of old things which are not in use anymore. The opposition of old and new is depicted in a descriptive, flowery way which allows the reader to be transported and made part of the story (Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004; Lundqvist et al., 2013). One can clearly imagine the old, dusty box sitting in the back of a small shop, the time in which the box has been used to store medicine or a family of several generations in which the box has been passed down over the period of many years. By stating that the box "stands as a symbol for the rebellion against today's world of mindless mass-consumption," (Jonas Co., 2017b) the authors of the story clearly position the brand as part of this counter discourse against the mainstream idea of mass-consumption and throwaway society and advocate the use of up-cycled, handmade and unique goods instead. However, the notion of the biscuit box as a symbol against mass-consumption, as was also mentioned by respondent B4, is unclear, since the box itself most likely was mass-produced back in the days. The author assumes that the creators of the story wanted to refer to the product as it is today instead, the lamp made out of an old biscuit box, which stands as a symbol against today's fast-paced consumption patterns.

Apart from the discourses related to consumption, a third one is clearly visible: the discourse of charity. By stating that Jonas previously worked on prosthetic limbs for Paralympic athletes, the company communicates its values of caring for the world, in addition to reusing unused materials, even though Jonas Co. had nothing to do with the designer's previous endeavors in North Korea. The firm is, in fact, adorning itself with borrowed plumes. However, it skillfully intertwines Jonas's history with the history of the

box and the product, and simply reading the words “prosthetic limbs for Paralympic athletes” (Jonas Co., 2017b) can lead to automatic positive brand associations regarding a good cause and giving an impression of authenticity and sincerity, sparking interest in the reader (Escalas, 2004). In this context, several respondents seized this idea when stating that the things the designer has done in North Korea “obviously are very important” (B2), or when saying that what Jonas has done in North Korea is “pretty cool” (B1).

The structure of the story is in line with some of the broader definitions of brand stories, for instance Bennet and Royle's (2004) conception thereof, featuring a clear beginning (old, forgotten lamp), middle (repurposed and up-cycled by Jonas) and end (ending up where it is today). It can further be argued that it is also in line with Fog et al's (2010) and Twitchell's (2004) idea that a brand story should only contain one clear message: The gist circulates around the rebirth of a forgotten biscuit box into a unique, hand-made design piece. However, since the story includes a rather large amount of information, touching upon both the history of the box, the making of the lamp and the background of the designer, it is important to remember that different people might interpret the key message differently.

As previously mentioned, several story elements enhance the perception of authenticity: First, by not directly praising the brand, but instead focusing on the story of the product, the brand story does not seem too commercial and can thus enhance authenticity (Lundqvist et al., 2013). Second, the background information on the designer, especially the part about his occupation as a prosthetist, adds to an authentic feel as this can be perceived as being not a mainstream advertising strategy. However, it should be kept in mind that, as Chiu et al. (2012) note, the perception of authenticity always hinges on an individual's personal experiences and knowledge. When understanding authenticity as uniqueness (Brown et al., 2003), as *the original*, Jonas Co. enjoys the advantage of selling products which are difficult to compare to other market offerings, at least on the Scandinavian market. In the words of some of the respondents, the products are perceived as “untraditional” (B1), “unique” (B1), “unexpected [...] surprising” (B2), or as something they have not seen before (B3, A3). Three out of the five respondents in group B actually used the word *authentic* in their description of the brand and its product (B2, B4, B5). Several others perceived the box as being old and

reused too (A5, A2, B1, B3), thus, the idea of authenticity, while being reinforced by the written text, seems to be elicited by the product on its own as well.

Chiu et al. (2012) state that a brand story is considered concise when it is able to communicate the main points in as few words as possible. The story at-hand is only 100 words long, but does it qualify as being concise? It is composed of only four sentences, three long ones and the final, short question. However, the individual sentences are rather long, consisting of a total of 24 to 37 words. In addition, the content jumps from the past to the present, back to the past and again to the present. While this allows for very flowery storytelling and might aid the mental transportation of the reader (Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004; Lundqvist et al., 2013), the combination of long sentences and jumps in the chronology of events could also be perceived as too complex for a reader who might just want to quickly scan the text as part of his or her retail experience. Furthermore, this could also lead to people needing to read the text more than once in order to fully understand it, especially those who are not native English speakers. In this context, it was interesting to see that only one of the five respondents in group B read the text at the very beginning of the interview (B2), one took a look at it later-on (B5) and three needed to be actively pointed towards the text in the course of the interview. Thus, it could be argued that the story at hand is not prominent enough to immediately catch people's attention. However, several respondents expressed positive associations with the text and the way it is portrayed, for instance:

I think it's smart to kind of present the brand in a kind of hipster way, if I can call it that. Together with the vintage thing. Because if you would make this little presentation also as colorful and vintage, then it might not appeal anymore to the... more Scandinavian market. (B5)

Regarding the brand story element of reversal, as introduced by Chiu et al. (2012), it could be claimed that the story at-hand neither includes an obvious direct conflict or the building up of suspense, nor a climax or a turning point in the same sense many traditional brand stories do. More broadly speaking, however, the author argues that some form of reversal exists, in the sense that an old, dusty and forgotten box was salvaged by Jonas, the savior, who then gave it a new, glamorous life as a lamp. From this perspective, the conflict could be argued to be that such colorful biscuit boxes are forgotten in a dark corner, expelled by fast-paced mass-

consumers, with the turning point when Jonas walks into the old antique store, sees something other than old boxes and then transforms them into unique design pieces. The story thus depicts a reversal comparable to the fairy tale of the Ugly Duckling by H. C. Andersen (1843/2000).

Humor, which is being considered the fourth major element making up a good brand story according to Chiu et al. (2012), is not a predominant element. Only the last part of the third sentence — “finally ending up here with you” (Jonas Co., 2017b) — and the subsequent rhetoric question at the very end add some sort of minimally humorous remark which might elicit a smirk. The main purpose of these elements, the author of this thesis argues, however, is not to appear humorous, but rather to bring readers back from their mental journey by directly addressing them.

4.1.1. Summary of Brand Story

The previous paragraphs consist of a discourse analysis following Jäger (2009), combined with an analysis of the various brand story elements which were put into the context of existing brand story literature. The analysis disentangled and analyzed three major discourses manifested in this brand story: the discourse of mass-consumption, the rebellion against it, as well as the discourse of charitable work and caring for the world. In Jäger’s (2009) words, the first can be characterized as the prevailing mainstream discourse, while the rebellion against mass-consumption constitutes an intentional counter discourse, aiming at undermining the more dominant discourse of fast-paced consumerism in today's Western world.

Mainly based on Chiu et al.’s (2012) understanding of good brand stories, it was further shown that the text at-hand does indeed carry several elements of authenticity, which, as revealed, also led to an increased positive perception and description of the brand as authentic by several respondents in group B. Furthermore, while the story element of reversal might not be immediately apparent when looking at the textual level, it does exist when considering reversal from a more broad point of view. However, the text is not perfectly concise due to its rather long and nested sentences and the constant jumps between past and

present, even though the story itself is quite short. The story does not carry the element humor in an obvious manner.

These results were not used for the interview guide but will instead be drawn on when analyzing the interviews further down, thereby providing the researcher with an additional perspective on the brand story and supplementary explanations regarding the brand story and the effects it entails.

4.2. First Impressions of and Associations with the Brand

The following paragraphs are dedicated to answering the question of how the brand story influences respondent's first impressions of and associations with the brand. All interviews started off with only a brief introduction in which the researcher stated that Jonas Co. is a new brand which is about to enter the European market. This ensured the same point of departure for all ten respondents. All interviewees were then asked to take their time to have a look at and examine everything they see, including the product itself, the five pictures and the tag. Depending on the group respondents were allocated to, this tag contained either the company logo only (Group A), or the logo and the story (Group B). The interview guide is attached further below in Appendix 3. Group B, the story-group, was on purpose not specifically made aware of the story, since it was deemed important to explore if those five respondents were inclined to read the story at all. As it turns out, only respondent B2 took a look at the story at the very beginning. Respondents B1, B4 and B5 studied it in the course of sharing their impressions and associations and B3 read the story later-on, before discussing the perceived price and willingness to pay.

4.2.1. Results

“I’m actually getting associations to like old-time toys [...] Just really getting an old-fashioned vibe, really, something fifties.” (A1) — The majority of respondents, both from group A and group B, bespoke the old-fashioned, vintage impression the product leaves. Some talked about flea markets and that they would probably find products like the Jonas Co. lamp, or at least the box, there (A2, B3). Others contemplated that the biscuit box “could be

maybe older than that [*sic*] I am [...] it gives the suggestion, at least, that it is something that was already so old, and still is being used” (A3) whereas another respondent associated the brand “with a time long gone; when I was young. That is many years ago in the 60s and 70s” (B4). Several respondents from both groups and before having read the story felt that the box out of which the lamp was crafted is an original piece from back in the days (A1, A2, A3, B1), stating that “it’s different from making something new look old, I really feel like [...] the bottom thing is old and the lamp part is new [...] it’s worn and it’s a bit rusty, and you can’t really recreate that” (B5). Respondent A4, on the other hand, took a more doubtful and critical stance towards the authenticity of the product:

That kind of thing that one would expect to see made in a local workshop or something () combining an old box with () something that would be salvaged and kind of hand-made. But of course it is not hand-made, it is, factory-produced, I’d imagine. So, in that regard, I think my impression is that it is trying to be something that it isn’t. (A4)

Similarly, respondent B4, while stating that the tin box looks authentic, still did not seem fully convinced: “It seems very authentic, this one. But of course it would be possible with some sort of modern techniques to put something like this [the pictures] on it” (B4). Only after reading the story, he appeared to be more inclined to believe in the authenticity of the tin box, stating that “it delivers some thoughts or feelings of something authentic. And it, of course it renders some sort of character that has an impact on the way you look at it” (B4). Furthermore, while most respondents talked about the old-fashioned looks, several also acknowledged the existence of some modern element: “very modern, but also quite old-fashioned” (A1), “old somehow, but which is [...] innovative” (A2), “it’s trying to like, appeal to this look-old-style, [...] at the same time trying to be modern” (B2), “sort of retro, old-fashioned [...] with a modern touch” (B3).

“Something I would find at my grandmother’s apartment in the countryside.” (A2) — Another theme which was addressed by about half of the respondents, again, both from group A and B, was the association with their grandparents: “reminds me of some small boxes that my grandfather had to keep his [cufflinks]” (A1), “cookie tins that my grandmother used to have cookies in” (B2) or “memories of my grandma’s house (A5)”. These associations are again linked to those circulating around the idea that the products seem to have a history, as was mentioned beforehand.

Two respondents furthermore expressed some sort of confusion regarding the product, even though one of them was in group B and could have read the story to learn more: “I cannot look at it without thinking: What has been in it? [...] What has it been? [...] What has it been used for?” (B4). However, at that point, he did not make the impression as though he was about to turn to the story by himself to find answers to his questions but rather turned towards the researcher. Possible reasons for the lack of reading will be further elaborated on further below. In addition, respondent A2 voiced her confusion regarding the dimmer-function of the lamp: “I don't understand why I have to touch it ((touches the lamp)) for ((laughs))... for having a different light. Like it doesn't, the light doesn't stay fixed” (A2).

Other respondents talked about the uniqueness of the product: “I think I would know that no one else has this specific or the same lamp” (B1) or: “It's very, like, unique” (A5) and two interviewees touched upon the idea of creating such products on their own: “When we were young [...] we did our decorations [...] ourselves [...] Bottles, cans whatever you could find and lamps were quite often made by yourself (B4, after reading the story) or

something that [...] I would like to make on my own, but probably never would get around to. [...] This is kind of untraditional and could look like something that you could have made yourself, even though you didn't, you went for the easier way to buy it. (B1, before reading the story)

4.2.2. Discussion

The previous paragraphs show that there are no prominent differences in the two groups regarding their first impressions and associations with the brand. The rather similar answers are argued to be strongly influenced by the lack of acknowledging and reading the paper tag with the story printed on it. In fact, only one of the five respondents in group B took a look at the story at the very beginning. As mentioned earlier, this lack of reading the text could be due to the interview situation, in which many respondents started talking after only a few seconds, even though the researcher asked them to take their time to examine the several brand manifestations they were exposed to. In a real-life retail situation, where customers do not have a direct counterpart and where they might feel they have more time to take a good look at the product, they may be more inclined to pay attention to the text itself when examining the product for the first time.

On the other hand, the lack of being drawn to the card could also be caused by the tag not being eye-catching enough, maybe due to its modern and clean, understated black-and-white nature which sort of fades into the background. This element of clarity and modernity, however, which stands in stark contrast to the colorful and vivid product, was positively commented on by several respondents (B5, B4, B2). Thus, it could be argued to be more likely that some of the interviewees in group B were so eager to share their first impression that they overlooked the story, an idea which would be interesting to further test in an ethnographic setting. Respondent B3 underlines this assumption when being asked why she did not read the text earlier:

[W]hen you asked me your first question, I was like "Oh, it says something on this note, maybe I should read it", but then, I guess there was a meaning as well, with seeing the product as well, and maybe there was some kind of, but I did think about, maybe it says that there is some kind of history behind, or at least behind [...] the company, or the founder of the company. (B3)

Once every respondent in group B read the story, several of them revised or added on to their impressions of, and associations with the brand in a positive manner. This supports Woodside's (2010a) assumption that the various indices or touchpoints in a story can lead to increased positive responses in the minds of the reader. Respondent B1 for instance, who previously touched upon the uniqueness of the products, then reinforced this notion and argued that the story "puts more history into the box and the lamp" before elaborating on the uniqueness of the product and people's wish to differentiate themselves from others through unique pieces of design in their homes:

[S]o again, going back to my statement earlier where it's... you don't want the IKEA mass production, you want something that's unique and something that's your own, even though you may not have the time to build it. You may have thought of something similar, not similar, but building something ... creative and your own, and then you might not be that creative on your own ((laughs)). And then you, you opt for the buying version but it's still, yeah, reused products. (B1)

Thus, it is argued that the brand story is indeed perceived as authentic, which, as suggested by Chiu et al. (2012), did lead to more positive attitudes towards the brand. In a similar vein, and in line with Jensen's (1999) argument that it is important for a firm to instill emotional value to its products to achieve competitive advantage, respondent B2 touched upon the value-adding aspect of the brand story as follows:

[I]t's nice to have this kind of history on the label that you kind of appreciate better the product that's in front of you [...] I think it's always interesting that you are able to [...] take something that has been used for a certain purpose, and use it again with a different purpose, that maybe, is more reflective of the times you live in. (B2)

Similarly, interviewee B3 argued: “[I]t gives me more value, actually, reading this about the product. I think I would be, when reading this, I feel, I would be more willing to buy a product” (B3) and elaborated on this thought as follows:

'Cause I think, now I associate it with something meaningful and... actually, when I read this about, also ... recycled products and, uh... I ... I've been thinking about that more and more the last couple of years after you know, we need to take care of it more. Uh... and... this also makes for the decision of buying or purchasing old, older products, or reusing products. So this appeals to me that it's something that, the idea that it's been, it's part of a history somewhere. And it makes it kind of unique as well, I guess. (B3)

For this respondent, the story made her consider new aspects which she had not previously touched on, which is in line with Huang's (2010) argument that brand stories support people in the process of making sense of their experiences. While she earlier focused particularly on the design of the lamp, she now raised the more profound topic of sustainability and suddenly seemed to appreciate the idea of having a Jonas Co. lamp much more than before. In this context, by identifying herself more with the brand's values after having read the text, her statement can be linked to Lundqvist et al.'s (2013) notion that consumers look for experiences which are in line with their personal ambitions. Similarly, Fog et al. (2010) write that consumers want to surround themselves with symbols which support their own values. The same goes for respondent B2 who, too, elaborated on the idea of reusing and recycling older things. Even though the topic of sustainability was briefly touched upon by respondent A3 as well, it is argued that the story led to a much more detailed elaboration and thus deeper mental involvement on the side of the respondents in group B.

Thus, in Mühlbacher and Hemetsberger's (2008) tradition of perceiving brands as complex social phenomena, it is contended that, as Iglesias and Bonet (2012) suggested, the story does influence people's associations and guide their attention towards the company's intended brand meaning. It provides them with selected information, leading respondents to consider aspects they might not have immediately thought of themselves which results in a brand related discourse more in line with the company's own values. As a consequence, brand meaning co-creation and thus a strengthening of brand related discourse happens.

A lack of information could, on the contrary, lead to what Echeverri and Skålén (2011) and Plé and Chumpitaz Cáceres (2010) refer to as co-destruction. Two sections taken from the interviews shall serve as examples: Respondent A4 believed that the brand “is trying to be something that it isn’t” (A4), referring to his perception that it tries to convey a sense of authenticity and uniqueness while really selling mass-produced products, leaving “an impression of hypocrisy” (A4). Such beliefs not only pertain to a negative brand experience for the respondent himself, but, if disseminated, can also be detrimental to the brand on a broader level, by, in the words of Mühlbacher and Hemetsberger (2008), negatively influencing brand related discourse and thus other people’s experience with the brand. Especially for a start-up, which is at this point mainly concerned with building a brand by spreading brand meaning through various brand manifestations, such strongly negative opinions must be avoided, if possible, even though co-destruction has previously been argued to be as inherent to a brand as co-creation (Echeverri & Skålén, 2011). By providing additional information, or, in Iglesias and Bonet’s (2012) words, touchpoints, for instance through a story like the one used in group B, the brand could try to mitigate such negative responses. Respondent A4 himself notes that, “a prominent ‘About Us’- section” (A4) on the company website would render the brand more authentic to him.

In addition, even though not directly linked to the brand story, respondent B2 did not understand that touching the lamp does not only turn the lamp on or off but also allows to dim the light in three different light intensities. Her comments on this matter were the following:

I touched it and actually, I don't know, it's like not really working very well... In my opinion. And so every time I touch it, the light kind of flickers [...] and it kind of bothers me that there's no [...] switch. And it seems to not be very well connected, I'd say. So in terms of quality, I'm not very impressed with it. (B2)

While all other nine respondents surely seemed surprised when touching the lamp for the first time, none of them appeared to experience troubles grasping that there are three light intensities to choose from. However, respondent B2 immediately felt like the lamp was of low quality due to the unstable, flickering light. When the researcher clarified this issue and explained how the lamp works, the respondent’s opinion immediately changed: “in that case, it's quite cool” (B2). She further added at the very end of the interview:

[O]ne thing I would like to comment is that yeah, maybe some small, like "touch" or like, you know, "three different dimmer positions", something like that, just to know that there is more value to the product than you see at first. (B2)

This again shows that small bits of information can lead to very different opinions on the brand and, if not clarified, such issues pose the threat of co-destruction of brand meaning.

4.2.3. Summary of First Impressions and Associations

In short, the brand story did not have any significant impact on people's first impressions. And while this seems to contradict Lundqvist et al.'s (2013) earlier findings, the reason for this lack of impact is argued to lie in the fact that only one out of five respondents in group B read the story at the beginning of the interview, the point when they shared their first impressions and spontaneous associations. It was suggested that this lack of reading the story is due to the interview situation where respondents did not take much time to look at the various brand manifestations before sharing their thoughts, even though they were encouraged to do so. In fact, several respondents positively acknowledged the presentation and the contents of the text after having read it. Furthermore, four out of five respondents in group B later on addressed the value-adding aspect of the brand story and overall exhibited a more positive brand attitude than they did earlier. This supports Huang's (2010) notion that brand stories support readers to make sense of the brand and Lundqvist et al.'s (2013), Escalas' (2004) and Green and Brock's (2000) idea that brand stories can enhance overall brand perceptions. Thus, the main issue was the lack of reading the story in the first place. Further research, for instance ethnographic participant observation in a retail shop, could provide further insights into this matter.

4.3. Perceived Brand Personality

The previous section dealt with the question of how the brand story influenced people's first impressions of and associations with the brand. This section will now be dedicated to finding answers to the questions of how the brand story influences respondents' brand descriptions and their perceptions of the brand's personality. At this point, four out of five interviewees in group B have studied the story.

4.3.1. Brand Descriptions

After sharing their first impressions and associations, likes and dislikes, the respondents were asked to describe the brand in three words. This closed question allowed the researcher to gain further accounts of the brand, enabling a direct comparison between the two groups possible and serving as an introduction to the subsequent question on brand personality.

4.3.1.1. Results

As Figure 6 shows, a number of attributes emerged in both groups, most of them referring to the products' optical appearance, such as *vintage/retro* (A1, A2, A3, B2, B3), *colorful/playful/funky* (A1, A2, B1, B3), *modern* (A3, B3) and *hipster* (A4, B2). Several respondents further described the brand as *creative/daring* (A5, B4, B5) and

<i>Group A (no story)</i>	<i>Group B (story)</i>
vintage (A1, A2, A3)	vintage/retro (B2, B3)
colorful (A1, A2)	colorful/playful/funky (B3, B1)
unique (A1, A5)	unique/authentic/original (B1, B3, B2, B4, B5)
innovative (A2, A5)	innovative (B1, B5)
modern (A3)	modern (B3)
hipster (A4)	hipster (B2)
creative (A5)	creative/daring (B4, B5)
	sustainable (B1)

Figure 6: Brand descriptions

innovative (A2, A5, B1, B5). Regarding these descriptions, no noticeable differences were found between group A and group B. However, while only two respondents (A1, A5) brought up the uniqueness of the brand in group A, all respondents in group B referred to the products and the brand as *unique*, *authentic* or *original* at some point. In addition, one respondent raised the topic of sustainability (B1), a subject which was not mentioned at all by those in group A when asked to describe the brand in three words. Thus, it is contended that the brand story does have a positive impact on how people describe the brand, especially when it comes to its perceived authenticity, an element which could be argued to go beyond the optical appearance of the product, instilling deeper meaning to the brand, or as one respondent put it: “[N]ow I associate it with something meaningful” (B3). Consequently, following Chiu et al.’s (2012) and Brown et al.’s (2003) understanding of authenticity and uniqueness, the brand

story seems to be perceived as authentic which in turn renders the brand as a whole more authentic.

4.3.1.2. Discussion

In line with Iglesias and Bonet's (2012) conception of brand stories, this narrative indeed guides brand meaning into the firm's desired direction, by stressing the uniqueness and authenticity of the products and elaborating on the background of both the cookie tin and the designer. These topics were then seized by the respondents, who, by sharing their thoughts with the researcher, engaged in what Mühlbacher and Hemetsberger (2008) refer to as brand related discourse and thus brand meaning co-creation themselves. While Beverland et al. (2008) argue that authenticity is difficult to achieve for companies, in group B, at least, Jonas Co. seems to have succeeded. It could be argued that compared to other products on the interior design market, the Jonas Co. lamp itself already conveys parts of its history with its old-fashioned, vintage, a bit rusty and seemingly unique tin boxes which elicit warm feelings of grandparents and nostalgic associations with the past. Put into Iglesias and Bonet's (2012) words, the product itself with its various touchpoints conveys brand meaning, even without the additional brand story. However, the story adds on to what the lamp itself tells the receiver by putting the product's past into words in a more detailed and targeted fashion, thus making it more apparent and accessible for the readers, and helping them to make sense of it. It instills deeper meaning into the product and, in Iglesias and Bonet's (2012) words, guides people's attention towards the firm's desired brand meaning of authenticity. But why is this such an important factor for Jonas Co.? The brand's authenticity and uniqueness serve not only as crucial elements to differentiate itself from competing brands by adding emotional value (Jensen, 1999), but in the same vein allow the company to charge a premium price because

if you spend an X amount of money on something interior design related, then you'd want to know that, hey not everyone can go out and spend, say, a lot of money, and have the exact same thing as I do. Uh.. It's nicer to spend a lot of money and know that you're the only one in possession of this specific lamp holder. (B5)

A more detailed discussion regarding the price and willingness to pay will follow further below.

4.3.2. Core Persona

Now that a brief overview of brand characteristics was given, the focus of the next paragraphs moves on to how respondents perceive the brand's core persona. Since people tend to instill human-like characteristics into brands (Aaker, 1997), this question was deemed interesting to learn how respondents characterize Jonas Co.

4.3.2.1. Results

I'm getting like two different persons, actually ((laughs)). One is [...] a young person from Nørrebro, or something very edgy, very... go to flea markets and find their clothes... That's a one, and the other one is ... maybe a person a bit older than my mom who thinks this is funny because [...] it gets associations from childhood. So, but still colorful, and... [...] flamboyant is maybe a big word, but you know, [...] clothes is very big and [...] The whole artsy... artsy glasses, and yeah, maybe a turban or something. (A1)

What respondent A1 mentioned here is a stance which was taken by several other interviewees as well: The brand personality is mainly either associated with a young person in his or her twenties or thirties (A1, A3, A5, B1, B2, B4) or with an older figure (A1, A2, B1), but not so much in the “mid-section” (B1) as one respondent put it. Three interviewees did not comment on the age of the brand persona (A4, B3, B5). This tendency to either associate the persona with a young or an older individual is present in both groups, and a total of six out of the ten respondents — three from each group — imagined the brand persona to be young, *edgy* (A2) or *hipster* (A5, B2), “a grand-child of someone that lived when they had these tins where their grandma and grandpa, someone had these... tins standing at home and thinking ‘Oh, they're really cool!’ and started looking into it” (B1). Other descriptions of this young persona include *extrovert* (A3), *expressive* (A3), *daring* (A3) and *funny* (A3), a person who is *creative* (B1), but also “not too clean [...] [with] a beard that doesn't grow too well” (B4).

Several others describe the brand persona as someone who is a little different than the mainstream, “very cool [but] a bit hard to grasp” (B5), a “well-travelled friend [...] always on the move and you always feel like, ‘I wanna live this life’, [...] [someone] you want to follow [...] and be in [his or her] proximity but then also a bit, maybe a bit too much” (B5), someone who is a “little skinny [...] [t]hinking philosophical thoughts” (B4). Others describe the person as *open-minded* (B3), “flamboyant [with] artsy glasses and yeah, maybe a

turban” (A1), as someone *bohemian* (B3) and *colorful* both in the clothes he/she wears (A1, B3) and the way he/she decorates his/her home (B3).

The three interviewees who associated the brand persona with an older person explained that it would be somebody experiencing a direct emotional connection to the biscuit box, someone who “gets associations from childhood” (A1), “[s]omeone where these tins actually mean something to them [...] who had a relationship with the tins” (B1). Another respondent thought of an old “funny and friendly” (A2) man she would likely see on flea markets, someone who “know[s] a lot of things about, like, old times and, like about books [...] someone you could like really have a funny conversation with” (A2), but who at the same time is also *lonely* (A2) and *melancholic* (A2).

4.3.2.2. Discussion

As the previous paragraphs show, both groups described the brand persona in a similar manner, mainly as someone modern and young, a bit edgy and hipster or as an older person who is funny and friendly and who has a personal connection to the biscuit tins. In addition, and not specifically bound to a certain age group, the core persona was perceived as someone colorful and expressive, flamboyant and bohemian. Only one respondent, who clearly associated the brand with his own youth in the sixties, sees the person as a more introvert and philosophical being. Those descriptions are predominantly of a positive nature, and while they are very similar in both groups, implying that the brand story did not have a significant impact on people's perceptions of the brand persona, the prevailing idea of a young person who is a bit out of the ordinary due to his or her colorful, artsy and bohemian, extrovert, well-travelled and daring, hipster and open-minded nature is very much in line with the way Jonas Co. wishes to be perceived by the brand interest group (Jonas Co., personal conversation, April 27, 2017). Thus, contrasting Twitchell's (2004) argument that things cannot supply meaning, the product seems to already elicit perceptions and convey meaning which are in line with those intended by the company, thus telling its story on its own.

When putting these results into context with literature on archetypes and brand personae, the descriptions above most strongly match two archetypes as proposed by Mark and Pearson (2001): the *Explorer* and the *Creator*. The Explorer is suitable, since Jonas Co. was several times linked to traveling, and it was mainly characterized as a young person who is a bit odd or out of the ordinary. This is in line with Mark and Pearson's (2001) idea that Explorers often identify with outsiders and set out to “experience a better, more authentic, more fulfilling life” (Mark & Pearson, 2001, p. 72), to find a place “where they can be completely true to who they are” (Mark & Pearson, 2001, p. 82). Furthermore, and as mentioned above, archetypical Explorers provide customers with a feeling of traveling, even though they are in fact not taking a trip themselves (Mark & Pearson, 2001). Not only the story, but also the lamp on its own transports the audience to a far away place and time and lets them experience the freedom they are seeking. This transportation was previously discussed in Lundqvist et al.'s (2013), Escalas' (2004) and Green and Brock's (2000) work. Explorers, just as Jonas Co. does, tend to express a sense of dissatisfaction with the establishment (Mark & Pearson, 2001), which, in this case, is made explicit in the notion that the lamp stands as a “symbol against today's world of mindless mass-consumption” (Jonas Co., 2017b).

Just like Explorers do not conform to their surroundings, the archetypical Creator is inherently non-conformist as well, someone who seeks self-expression through, for instance, artsy clothing or artful homes (Mark & Pearson, 2001), a point touched upon by several respondents. The Creator is “intolerant of shoddy, mass-produced merchandise” (Mark & Pearson, 2001, p. 229). Similarly, Jonas Co. as a Creator brand does not strive to fit in, but instead promotes self-expression and authenticity — both extremely essential to the Creator — as an answer to today's consumerism.

The fact that most respondents seem to agree on these two archetypes when discussing the brand's persona, regardless of the group they were allocated to, points towards the previously suggested assumption that the — in Mühlbacher and Hemetsberger's (2008) words — brand manifestations of the lamp and the story are disseminating the same brand meaning which is then also interpreted in a similar manner and as intended by the company.

4.3.3. Summary Brand Personality

To sum up, respondents in both groups characterized the brand and its core persona in a similar fashion. Put into the context of Mark and Pearson's (2001) conception of archetypes, the respondent's perceptions of Jonas Co. were found to correlate mainly with the archetypical Explorer and Creator. The brand story did, however, have a positive impact on the perception of the brand's authenticity in group B compared to the non-story group. Thus, it is argued that the story does add a deeper meaning of authenticity to the brand, providing value which goes beyond the simple looks of the product. As Woodside (2010a) suggested, the various indices which are inherent to brand stories did lead to positive connections within the mind of the readers. Since people yearn for authentic brands (Brown et al., 2003), it seems as if the Jonas Co. brand story successfully influenced people's perceptions of authenticity. At the same time, the story did not have any effects on how the core persona was described. The reasons for the lack of differences were proposed to lie in the product itself, which, when put into the context of Iglesias and Bonet's (2012) work, is argued to carry similar touchpoints as the brand story.

4.4. Perceived Price and Willingness to Pay

While the previous parts mainly dealt with respondents' spontaneous and creative associations, this section sets out to answer the question of how the brand story wields influence on respondents' perceptions of the price of the product and their willingness to pay for it. It also provides Jonas Co. with additional information which will support the company in setting the final price of the products. At this point, all respondents in group B have read the brand story.

4.4.1. Results

One glance at Figure 7 shows that respondents' perceptions of the price of the Jonas Co. lamps and their willingness to pay for the product strikingly differed between the two groups. While the estimates regarding the retail price of the products varied between 30 and 1000 Danish kroner in group A, group B's evaluations ranged from 560 up to 2000 kroner, one

respondent even stated that the price “could be anything between [DKK] 500 and 5000” (B1). On average, group B estimated the product’s price to be more than twice as high as group A, and their willingness to pay was almost three times higher than in the non-story group.

<i>Group A (no story)</i>	<i>Group B (story)</i>
400-500 / 100-500 (A1, Danish)	1500 / 1000-1500 (B1, Danish)
450-600 / 220-300 (A2, Italian)	560 / 350 (B2, Portuguese)
400 / 200 (A3, Dutch)	2000 / 1000 (B3, Danish)
30-100+ / 40 (A4, German/Italian)	600 / would not buy it (B4, Danish)
1000 / 500 (A5, Danish)	700-800 / 400-500 (B5, Dutch)
<i>mean: ~ 490 / 260</i>	<i>mean: ~ 1080 / ~ 760</i>

Figure 7: Perceived price vs. willingness to pay (in DKK)

While price perceptions are argued to very much depend on an individual's personal background and experiences, especially keeping in mind that the ten respondents are of various European nationalities, the calculated averages are nonetheless of significance since the different nationalities were represented in a similar manner in both groups. In addition, the respondents’ occupations allowed the assumption that no significant differences in the educational and professional levels heavily distorted the results. In both groups, the Danish respondents rated the price of the products and their willingness to pay the highest, while the other five interviewees estimated lower.

4.4.2. Discussion

The results clearly show a variation between the two groups, but how did this difference come to be? To approach this question, a more detailed look into respondents' reasoning shall be taken. Respondent A2 for instance elaborated on her guess of DKK 450 to 600 by linking the price to the Scandinavian nature of the brand: “Ok, it's a Scandinavian brand, so it's not cheap. And... uh, it's design, so it's not cheap,” thereby touching upon the popularity of Scandinavian design and the widely held belief that Scandinavian products are usually charged at a higher price than similar items in the rest of Europe. Thus, this interviewee's background as a Southern-European citizen serves as a good example of how price perceptions and the ideas of what is considered *cheap* and *expensive* very much hinge on a person's individual background and previous experiences.

In addition, one of the Danish participants in group A who estimated the price the highest in her group argued that it is “this element of, like, uniqueness, and [...] creativeness” (A5) which led her to believe that the product costs around DKK 1000, maybe even more. This notion, again, connects to the issue of authenticity (Chiu et al., 2012) which was discussed in much detail in section 2.2.3.1.

One topic which was brought up by several respondents from both groups was the production cost which was thought to be rather low. Respondent A3, for instance, took these costs as well as the value-adding aspect of the lamps' designs into consideration and explained her estimation as follows: “I'm just going higher than I would actually think the... the ... I don't [think] that it costs much to make this... But it's of course still the design that adds in the value” (A3). In a similar vein, interviewee A4 fully focused on the production costs and stated that “[t]he cost of making this is extremely small. So, with a mark-up I would expect this not to cost more than ... 30, 40 kroner, [...] if it was made artisanally” (A4). In addition, two respondents in group B touched upon these costs in a similar manner, one of them stating that it would be difficult to charge more than DKK 600 because “the material expenses with producing it [...] would be quite low” (B4) and because the production of such a lamp likely would not take longer than “an hour or something like that” (B4). Another respondent, while also noting that “material-wise I think it's relatively cheap” (A5) took the importance of fair remuneration of the designer into consideration as well. She explained her estimation of the price as follows:

I can see it's design, it's probably not made in big quantities [...] which makes it more expensive to produce and then I think, I can sense that there is like some creativity behind it, you would want to get money for your creative endeavors and investments [...] I think artists also need some appreciation through monetary means. (A5)

It could be argued that the brand story which provides the reader with additional brand touchpoints regarding the designer, made her more aware of him and the hand-crafted nature of the products than she might have been without the story, thus, making her consider not only the product itself but also the person behind it. This, again, supports Iglesias and Bonet's (2012) conception of brand stories as powerful tools to guide brand meaning as well as their ability to help people make sense of their experiences (Shankar et al., 2001; Benjamin, 2006).

The most visible impact the story had on the readers becomes apparent when taking a look at two text passages where respondents specifically referred to the value-adding element of the narrative: “[B]ecause of the tin, that I read about this sort of that it's been [...] repurposed or recycled, up-cycled. Uh... and that it has this kind of history, I think that adds a lot of value to a product” (B3).

Because of the history and ... people tend to be willing to pay more for history, because if IKEA just reproduced these tins and stuff, then it would probably be 150 kroner, but... because of the history and the gathering of the tins, and also the fact that it has this function ((refers to dimmer)) makes it ... more expensive. (B1)

Again, these aspects link to the perceived authenticity of the brand and underline the utmost importance for the brand to be recognized as authentic and unique, elements which are made more accessible to the reader through the written text.

While these results are contended not to be generalizable due to the limited number of participants and their different backgrounds and personal experiences, it is evident that there are striking differences between the non-story and the story group. Furthermore, these results support Lundqvist et al.'s (2013) findings that brand stories do increase people's willingness to pay, even if they do not completely qualify as what, for instance, Chiu et al. (2012) consider a good brand story.

4.4.3. Summary Perceived Price and Willingness to Pay

To sum up, Figure 7 clearly shows that respondents in group B estimated the perceived price more than twice as high as people in group A. Furthermore, their willingness to pay was almost three times higher compared to the non-story group. While these differences could simply be due to the various personal backgrounds of the respondents, and while their increased willingness to pay does not automatically imply an increase in their willingness to buy, it is contended that there is a clear indication that the brand story exerted significant influence on people's perceptions of the products' retail price and their inclination to pay for a Jonas Co. lamp. These results are further in line with Lundqvist et al.'s (2013) findings and thus support the assumption that brand stories can increase people's willingness to pay. In addition, these results were linked back to the pervious discussion on the importance of the brand's perceived authenticity which was shown to be enhanced in the brand story group.

4.5. Overall Attractiveness

This subsection sets out to answer the question of how the brand story influences people's perceived overall attractiveness of the brand. At the end of each interview, respondents were asked to sum up their final rating of the attractiveness of the brand on a scale from one to ten, with one representing the lowest and ten the highest level of attractiveness. This question allowed them to reconsider what has been discussed during the course of the interview and share their final overall perceptions of the brand.

4.5.1. Results

Four respondents rated the overall attractiveness with a six (A1, A2, A5, B3), two interviewees evaluated it lower (A4, B4) and four above that number (A3, B1, B2, B5) (see Figure 8). The average rating in group A amounted to 5.7, whereas group B found it to be, on average, worth a 6.4. Thus, while the difference is less apparent than with the previously discussed perceived price and willingness to pay, there is indeed a tendency towards a higher rating in the group which was exposed to the brand story.

<i>Group A (no story)</i>	<i>Group B (story)</i>
6 (A1)	8 (B1)
6 (A2)	6-7 (B2)
7-8 (A3)	6 (B3)
3 (A4)	2-3 (B4)
6 (A5)	9 (B5)
<i>mean: 5.7</i>	<i>mean: 6.4</i>

Figure 8: Overall attractiveness of the brand on a scale from 1-10

The two respondents who rated the brand the lowest, and who were, in fact, the only male respondents in this study, elaborated on their decision as follows, each focusing on different aspects: Interviewee B4 referred to his own personal taste which does not match with the lamp and stated that “it's for younger people I suppose” (B4), since “there is this rebellion idea in the whole thing. And it [...] has got something to do with youth” (B4). And while his personal style might be different, he positively acknowledged the brand story, stating that “the text is fine” (B4) and that the products “should be sold of course with some sort of explanation and background” (B4). This supports previous research on the sense-making function of brand stories (Shankar et al., 2001; Benjamin, 2006; Huang, 2010; Chiu et al., 2012). Whilst respondent B4 was not convinced of the lamp, the mental connection he made, linking the products to a younger audience “in the age 25 or something like that” (B4)

is, in fact, in line with Jonas Co.'s strategic decision to mainly target millennials. Thus, those touchpoints, which are disseminated through the product and the brand story, did result in interpretations which are intended by the firm.

Respondent A4, on the other hand, held a very critical stance towards the brand and its authenticity, stating that the, what he called, *trend* of selling something that looks authentic but really is mass-produced "in an overpriced fashion" (A4) did not appeal to him. He clearly distanced himself from those people who

care more about the perception of authenticity than about authenticity. Because I think almost anyone could actually build something of this sort very cheaply. The fact that someone would buy it [...] means that they [...] genuinely care more about the perception of authenticity than authenticity. (A4)

Various other respondents stated that while they were indeed intrigued by the product, touching upon its *interesting* (A1) and unusual looks, they would not give the brand a higher rating than six or seven, because they were not *completely sold* (A1). Others said that the product did not match their personal style (A5), they would not want to spend money on a lamp at this point (A2) or that it's "not the best thing I've ever seen in terms of a lamp" (B2).

Two respondents in group B, however, openly stated that the story did have an impact on them with one of them going from a three before having read the story to rating the brand as a six afterwards:

[B]ased on my first impression [...] I would have to say... 3 [...] But if I had to evaluate it after I got the story and read this information about the tins, I might say [...] 6 [...] I think for this product it means a lot to tell the story behind, and I would imagine on a website as well, or selling these products that it would make a lot of sense if you made like an introduction or something for the customers [...] to tell them, this product actually has a history [...] it makes you curious. [...] I think first [...] I judged the product because I thought it... maybe the looks or the esthetics of it was not really in my taste, or... so I judged it by the looks, and... suddenly, it was more attractive to me, because I knew the history behind. I think, it gave it a lot more value. (B3)

Another interviewee rated the product as an eight or nine and linked the brand's identity to her own: "I am really into, like all these sustainable ways of using things, and the history, so I think it all combined, it generates a really good story and... I could reflect my own stories on the products as well" (B1).

4.5.2. Discussion

The results above show that respondents in group B on average gave the brand a better rating than those in group A. They also make visible the various aspects of a brand which are taken into consideration when different people rate the attractiveness thereof, a topic which shall be discussed at this point.

A total of six respondents, four from group A (A1, A2, A3, A5) and two from group B (B2, B4) mainly focused on the physical appearance of the brand. They stated that they thought that Jonas Co.'s concept was interesting and they largely positively acknowledged the different nature of the lamps compared to what they have previously seen. However, they also argued that they would not give the brand a better rating than they did due to their personal taste which they said did not match the lamps. Since most respondents belonging to the non-story group brought up these arguments, it is claimed that, in Mühlbacher and Hemetsberger's (2008) terminology, additional brand meaning in the form of manifestations such as the brand story did induce those in group B to consider a more diverse set of evaluation criteria. Respondent B3 serves as a good example: While she said that the lamps did not particularly match her own style and that she first thought of it as a three on a scale of ten, she clearly stated that the story instilled additional meaning to the brand causing her to give it a higher overall rating and rendering her more likely to buy a Jonas Co. lamp. Thus, these results do reflect previous research on the value-adding aspect of brand stories (Jensen, 1999; Twitchell, 2004) and their positive effects on people's overall brand experience (e.g. Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004; Woodside, 2010a; Lundqvist et al., 2013).

As previously discussed, stories hold the power of instilling additional meaning and emotional value to the brand (Jensen, 1999; Twitchell, 2004; Woodside, 2010a; Iglesias & Bonet, 2012), which is especially important in this case, given the novelty of the company. Jonas Co. is currently trying to enter the European interior design market and their products, particularly those which are sold in physical design stores, face strong and direct competition of established and well-known brands. Thus, in order to differentiate itself from its competitors, it is crucial to offer potential customers concise brand touchpoints. The latter

address people's innermost wishes and own identities since people are more inclined to buy products which are in line with their own self (Malhotra, 1988).

In our Western society, materialistic needs have been satisfied for most people, who as a result do not strive to satisfy pure utilitarian needs when buying things (Jensen, 1999); They primarily do so in order to further their quest of self-fulfillment, especially when buying interior design, a market which is assumed to almost exclusively target people's wish to communicate their identity to the outside world. This idea was consistently touched upon in the interviews when people elaborated on why they liked or disliked the products. Thus, we all tend to surround ourselves with things which mirror our own identity (Malhotra, 1988; Fog et al., 2010), an issue which respondent B1 revisited when stating that up-cycling is important for her and that she would be able to reflect her own stories on the products. Thus, for this interviewee, but also for the previously discussed respondent B3, the brand story directly appealed to her perception of herself as a sustainable and caring human being. In the course of their interviews, several other respondents briefly touched upon the importance of reconsidering today's consumption patterns, which in turn allows for the assumption that this is a topic which, at least superficially, bothers many people, especially the younger generation. Thus, telling the brand story is deemed to be important in order to provide potential customers with these additional brand touchpoints (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008; Iglesias & Bonet, 2012) which can activate their innermost wishes to be a certain kind of person (Jensen, 1999; Fog et al., 2010). Respondents B1 and B3 are good examples of how the brand story influenced their perception of the overall attractiveness of the brand in a positive manner. However, the story can only have an impact insofar as there is a more or less hidden wish to be a specific person. Thus, as is the case with every brand, a company will be most successful in those groups of people who share the same or at least similar values. The issue for Jonas Co. is to reach as many potential customers as possible on an emotional level, which is, as was shown, significantly aided by the use of the brand story compared to no brand story.

4.5.3. Summary Overall Attractiveness

In a nutshell, respondents in group B, when asked to rate the overall attractiveness of the brand on a scale from one to ten, rated it on average as a 6.4 compared to a 5.7 in the non-story group. Thus, the brand story did seem to influence people's perception regarding the overall attractiveness of the brand, which supports previous storytelling literature (Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004; Guber, 2007; Woodside, 2010a; Fog et al, 2010; Lundqvist et al., 2013). It is argued that the value-adding element of the brand story did not only provide factual value by providing information on the products but most of all emotional value (Jensen, 1999; Twitchell, 2004; Woodside, 2010a). This led to a broadening of respondents' pools of evaluation criteria which they drew on when rating the brand. It is further contended that the story appealed to respondents' own identity creation processes as was elaborated on in the case of respondents B1 and B3, which is in line with Jensen's (1999) notion that customers are mainly drawn to products which support them in their self-fulfillment.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This final section will wrap up this thesis by presenting its findings, as well as by touching upon limitations, managerial implications and opportunities for further research.

5.1. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore how a firm-originated brand story influences brand interest group members' brand experience. This overall research question was subdivided into five subquestions, dedicated to (1) an analysis of the brand story itself, and the influence it wields on respondents' (2) first impressions and associations, their (3) perceptions of the brand's personality, their (4) price perceptions and willingness to pay, and the (5) overall attractiveness of the brand.

The thesis enriches previous research on storytelling as a strategic branding tool by providing empirical evidence on the effects of a brand story on brand experience, an area which has previously only been researched to a very limited extent. Exceptions include

Lundqvist et al.'s (2013) and Merchant et al.'s (2010) work who, compared to this thesis, worked with already established brands. A preliminary discourse analysis following Jäger's (2009) approach showed that the brand story makes use of three major discourses: the mainstream discourse of mass-consumption, its counter-discourse aiming at intentionally undermining the former, and the discourse of charity. Furthermore, it was shown that the brand story does not carry all elements of what Chiu et al. (2012) conceive as a good brand story.

The story was shown to have most impact on respondents' estimations of the product's price and their willingness to pay for it: On average, the price was set more than twice as high as in the non-story group and their willingness to pay for the product was almost three times higher. These results also support Lundqvist et al.'s (2013) findings that brand stories can have a positive impact on the way consumers perceive a product's price and the overall value of a brand. Furthermore, in line with previous storytelling literature suggesting that brand stories add emotional value to a brand (Jensen, 1999; Twitchell, 2004; Woodside, 2010a) and that they can thus lead to increased positive perceptions thereof (Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004; Guber, 2007; Woodside, 2010a; Fog et al., 2010; Lundqvist et al., 2013), this thesis showed that the brand story did indeed lead to an increased overall attractiveness of the brand in the story group.

Regarding respondent's first impressions and associations, no significant differences between the two groups were found. The main reason for this was ascribed to the lack of respondents reading the story in the first place. However, several interviewees revised or added on to their first impressions in a more positive fashion after having read the story. Thus, it is claimed that, in line with what other researchers have previously suggested, the brand story did indeed have a positive impact on people's associations with the brand (Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004; Lundqvist et al., 2013). In addition, respondents in both groups described the brand's core persona in a similar manner, which, when put into Mark and Pearson's (2001) list of brand archetypes, corresponds to both the Explorer and the Creator. It was shown that the story did not have an impact in this regard. However, the story rendered the brand more authentic to those respondents exposed to the narrative. Thus it was

argued that the product itself, with its various touchpoints (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008; Iglesias & Bonet, 2012) already conveys a very distinct personality and brand meaning (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008).

When understanding brands as complex social phenomena, where the brand interest group exerts considerable control over brand meaning with the firm running the risk of losing control over brand discourse (Mühlbacher & Hemetsberger, 2008), storytelling, as proposed by Iglesias and Bonet (2012) and as empirically shown in this thesis, does indeed guide brand meaning into a firm's intended direction. It positively influences what Brakus et al. (2009) refer to as brand experience, an idea which was previously discussed by various authors (Jensen, 1999; Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004; Denning, 2006; Guber, 2007; Woodside, 2010a; Fog et al., 2010; Lundqvist et al., 2013; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016), even though the story at-hand does not feature all elements of what Chiu et al. (2012) consider a good brand story.

5.2. Managerial Implications

This thesis provided crucial insights into the way people experience the Jonas Co. brand. And while it was argued that the brand story does guide their experience into the firm's overall direction, Jonas Co. itself now needs take in those results to detect possible contradictions with its brand strategy. On a micro-level, it is suggested to make the brand story more concise by shortening the sentences and limiting jumps between the present and the past as much as possible, as well as to exchange the notion of the *box* as a rebellion against mass-consumption to the *product*. After having made those changes, it is recommended to add the brand story both to those products which are being sold in physical stores, as well as to their web-shop. In addition, it is suggested to provide salespeople in physical stores with detailed information on the brand and its story in order for them to be able to properly convey it to potential customers. Furthermore, on the macro-level, the company is advised to take a more in-depth look into the archetypes of the Explorer and the Creator, to discuss if both of them match their identity or if they rather prefer to fully concentrate on one distinctive core persona. In addition, it is suggested to add a prominent *About Us*-section on their website in

order to render the brand more authentic. Last, the firm might want to reconsider the products' current price, since DKK 1,500 seems rather high in comparison to what the respondents of this study estimated.

5.3. Limitations

Some readers might criticize the small scope of this thesis. However, its intent was not to generate generalizable results but rather to provide an in-depth understanding of how a total of ten respondents perceived the brand. A major limitation lies in the different points at which respondents in group B read the story during their interviews. In addition, since only two out of ten respondents were male, a bias towards women was detected which could have an influence on the overall results. However, since volunteer, self-selection sampling was used, this could also indicate that females are in general more interested in interior design and thus could also make up a larger proportion of the brand interest group. Furthermore, there is a bias regarding age with most respondents being in their twenties and thirties and only one respondent in his seventies. While a more detailed elaboration on the seven basic plots according to Booker (2004) would have been of value, time and space restraints prevented the author to do so.

5.4. Further Research

Since most respondents in group B did not read the story at the beginning of the interview, it would make sense to see how potential customers approach the brand story in a retail setting. Ethnographic participant observation could provide further insights into this matter. Furthermore, the results this thesis provides could be further tested in a large-scale, quantitative study which could lead to more generalizable results. In addition, further research could look into the extent to which various products already tell their own story and draw a comparison to existing research in the area of storytelling.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Published Sources

- Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of Brand Personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), pp. 347–356.
- Andersen, H. C. (2000). *The ugly duckling*. Klippinge: K. Hagerup. (Original work published 1843)
- Alden, D. L., Mukherjee, A., & Hoyer, W. D. (2000). The Effects of Incongruity, Surprise, and Positive Moderators on Perceived Humor in Television Advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 29 (2), pp. 1-15.
- Benjamin, B. (2006). The case study: storytelling in the industrial age and beyond. *On the Horizon*, 14 (4), pp. 159-164.
- Bennet, A., & Royle, N. (2004). *An introduction to literature, criticism and theory*. United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited.
- Berry, L. L. (2000). Cultivating Service Brand Equity. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28(1), pp. 128–137.
- Beverland, M. B., Lindgreen, A., & Vink, M. W. (2008). Projecting authenticity through advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 37 (1), pp. 5-15.
- Boje, D. M. (1995). Stories of the storytelling organization: a postmodern analysis of Disney as "Tamara-Land". *Academy of Management Journal*, 38 (4), pp. 997-1035.
- Booker, C. (2004). *The seven basic plots. Why we tell stories*. London/New York: Continuum.
- Boozer, R. W., Wyld, D. C., & Grant, J. (1990). Using metaphor to create more effective sales messages. *The Journal of Services Marketing*, 4 (3), pp. 63-71.
- Brakus, J. J., Schmitt, B. H., & Zarantonello, L. (2009). Brand experience. What is it? How is it measured? Does it affect loyalty? *Journal of Marketing*, 73 (3), pp. 52-68.
- Brown, S., Kozinets, R. V., & Sherry, J. F. Jr. (2003). Teaching Old Brands New Tricks: Retro Branding and the Revival of Brand Meaning. *Journal of Marketing*, 67, pp. 19-33.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cacioppo, J. T., & Petty, R. E. (1979). Effects of Message Repetition and Position on Cognitive Response, Recall, and Persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37 (1), pp. 97-109.

- Chiu, H.-C., Hsieh, Y.-C., & Kuo, Y.-C. (2012). How to Align your Brand Stories with Your Products. *Journal of Retailing*, 88 (2), pp. 262-275.
- Copeland, M. T. (1923). Relation of Consumers' Buying Habits to Marketing Methods. *Harvard Business Review*, 1(3), pp. 282–289.
- de Chernatony, L., & McWilliam, G. (1989). The Strategic Implications of Clarifying How Marketers Interpret 'Brands'. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 5(2), pp. 153–171.
- de Chernatony, L. (1999). Brand Management Through Narrowing the Gap Between Brand Identity and Brand Reputation. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 15, pp. 157–179.
- Delgado-Ballester, E. & Fernández-Sabiote, E. (2016). "Once upon a brand": Storytelling practices by Spanish brands. *Spanish Journal of Marketing - ESIC*, 20, pp. 115-131.
- Denning, S. (2006). Effective storytelling: strategic business narrative techniques. *Strategy & Leadership*, 34 (1), pp. 42 - 48.
- Echeverri, P., & Skålén, P. (2011). Co-creation and co-destruction: A practice-theory based study of interactive value formation. *Marketing Theory*, 11 (3), pp. 351-373.
- Escalas, J. E. (2004). Imagine Yourself in the Product. Mental Stimulation, Narrative Transportation, and Persuasion. *Journal of Advertising*, 33 (2), pp. 37-48.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12 (2), pp. 219-245.
- Fog, K., Budtz, C., Munch, P., & Blanchette, S. (2010). Storytelling. Branding in Practice (2nd ed.). Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag.
- Fournier, S. M. (1998). Consumers and their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research. *The Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4), pp. 343–374.
- Frow, P., & Payne, A. (2007), "Towards the perfect customer experience", *Journal of Brand Management*, 15 (2), pp. 89-101.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1986). *Wahrheit und Methode*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Gardner, B. B., & Levy, S. J. (1955). The Product and the Brand. *Harvard Business Review*, 33 (2), pp. 33–39.
- Gensler, S., Völckner, F., Liu-Thompkins, Y., & Wiertz, C. (2013). Managing Brands in the Social Media Environment. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 27, pp. 242-256.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc.

- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8 (4), pp. 597-606.
- Grant, D., Hardy, C., Osrick, C., & Putnam, L. L. (2004). Introduction: Organizational Discourse: Exploring the Field. In D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Osrick & L. Putnam (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse* (pp. 1-37). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The Role of Transportation in the Persuasiveness of Public Narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79 (5), pp. 701-721.
- Guber, P. (2007). The Four Truths of the Storyteller. *Harvard Business Review*, 85 (12), pp. 52-59.
- Hardy, B. (1968). Towards a Poetics of Fiction. *Novel*, 2 (1), pp. 5-14.
- Herskovitz, S., & Crystal, M. (2010). The essential brand persona: storytelling and branding. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 31 (3), pp. 21-28.
- Huang, W. (2010). Brand Story and perceived Brand Image: Evidence from Taiwan. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 31 (3), pp. 307-317.
- Huhmann, B. A., Mothersbaugh, D. L., & Franke, G. R. (2002). Rhetorical Figures in Headings and Their Effect on Text Processing: The Moderating Role of Information Relevance and Text Length. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 45 (3), pp. 157-169.
- Iglesias, O., & Bonet, E. (2012). Persuasive brand management. How managers can influence brand meaning when they are losing control over it. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 25 (2), pp. 251-64.
- IKEA (2014). *IKEA Trend Report*. Retrieved on April 1, 2017 from http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_US/pressroom/press_materials/IKEA_Trend_FALL_2014.pdf.
- Jacoby, J., Olsen, J. C., & Haddock, R. A. (1971). Price, Brand Name and Product Composition Characteristics as Determinants of Perceived Quality. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 55(6), pp. 570-579.
- Jacoby, J., Szybillo, G. J., & Busato-Schach, J. (1977). Information Acquisition Behavior in Brand Choice Situations. *The Journal of Consumer Research*, 3(4), pp. 209-216.
- Jaworski, B., & Kohli, A. K. (2015). Co-creating the voice of the customer. In Lusch, R. F., & Vargo, S. L. (Eds.), *The Service-dominant Logic of Marketing: Dialog, Debate and Directions* (pp. 109-117). London/New York: Routledge.
- Jäger, S. (2009). *Kritische Diskursanalyse*. Eine Einführung. Münster: Unrast.

- Jensen, R. (1999). *The Dream Society. How the Coming Shift from Information to Imagination Will Transform Your Business*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Johansson, R. (2003, September). Case study methodology. In *the International Conference on Methodologies in Housing Research*, Stockholm, pp. 1-14.
- Kapferer, J.-N. (1992). *Strategic Brand Management: New Approaches to Creating and Evaluating Brand Equity*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Kapferer, J.-N. (2004). *The New Strategic Brand Management: Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity Long Term*. London: Kogan Page Limited.
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), pp. 1– 22.
- King, S. (1991). Brand-Building in the 1990s. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 7(1), pp. 3–13.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews. Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- LeCompte, M. D., & Goetz, J. P. (1982). Problems of Reliability and Validity in Ethnographic Research. *Review of Educational Research*, 52 (1), pp. 31-60.
- Levy, S. J. (1959). Symbols for Sale. *Harvard Business Review*, 37 (4), pp. 117-124.
- Louro, M. J., & Cunha, P. V. (2001). Brand Management Paradigms. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 17, pp. 849-875.
- Lundqvist, A., Liljander, V., Gummerus, J., & van Riel, A. (2013). The impact of storytelling on the consumer brand experience: The case of a firm-originated story. *Journal of Brand Management*, 20, pp. 283-297.
- Madden, T. J., Fehle, F., & Fournier, S. (2006). Brands Matter: An Empirical Demonstration of the Creation of Shareholder Value Through Branding. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 34, pp. 224-235.
- Malhotra, N. K. (1988). Self Concept and Product Choice: An Integrated Perspective. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 9, pp. 1– 28.
- Mark, M., & Pearson, C. S. (2001). *The Hero and the Outlaw. Building Extraordinary Brands Through the Power of Archetypes*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Martineau, P. (1958). Social Class and Spending Behavior. *Journal of Marketing*, 23(2), pp. 121–130.
- McGivern, Y. (2009). *The Practice of Market Research*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

- Megehee, C. M., & Woodside, A. G. (2010). Creating Visual Narrative Art for Decoding Stories That Consumers and Brands Tell. *Psychology and Marketing*, 27 (6), pp. 603-622.
- Merchant, A., Ford, J. B., & Sargeant, A. (2010). Charitable organizations' storytelling influence on donors' emotions and intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, 63, pp. 754-762.
- Merz, M. A., He, Y., & Vargo, S. L. (2009). The evolving brand logic: a service-dominant logic perspective. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 37, pp. 328-344.
- Meyer, C. B. (2001). A Case in Case Study Methodology. *Field Methods*, 13 (4), pp. 329-352.
- Mills, S. (2007). *Der Diskurs. Begriff. Theorie. Praxis*. Tübingen: Francke.
- Muniz, A. M., Albert, M., & O'Guinn, T. C. (2001). Brand Community. *The Journal of Consumer Research*, 27(4), pp. 412– 432.
- Mühlbacher, H. & Hemetsberger, A. (2008), What the Heck is a Brand? An Attempt of Integration and its Consequences for Research and Management. *Proceedings of the 7th International Congress Marketing Trends*, Venice 2008, pp. 1-19.
- Nicosia, F., & Mayer, R. N. (1976). Toward a Sociology of Consumption. *The Journal of Consumer Research*, 3, pp. 65–75.
- Nygaard, C. (2012). *Samfundsvideenskabelige analysemetoder* (2nd ed.). Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.
- Park, C. W., Jaworski, B. J., & MacInnis, D. J. (1986). Strategic Brand Concept-Image Management. *Journal of Marketing*, 50(4), pp. 135– 145.
- Phillips, N., & Hardy, C. (2002). *Discourse Analysis. Investigating Processes of Social Construction*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Plé, L., & Chumpitaz Cáceres, R. (2010). Not always co-creation: introducing interactional co-destruction of value in service-dominant logic. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 24 (6), pp. 430-437.
- QSR. International Pty Ltd. (1999-2016). NVivo for Mac (Version 11.4.0.) [Computer Software]. Retrieved from <http://www.cbs.dk/en/library/databases/nvivo>.
- Ragin, C. C., & Becker, H. S. (1992). *What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Salzer-Mörling, M., & Strannegård, L. (2004). Silence of the brands. *European Journal of Marketing*, 38 (1/2), pp. 224-238.

- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2012). *Research Methods for Business Students* (6th ed.). Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Shankar, A., Elliott, R., & Goulding, C. (2001). Understanding Consumption: Contributions from a Narrative Perspective. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 17, pp. 429-453.
- Solomon, M. R. (1983). The Role of Products as Social Stimuli: A Symbolic Interactionism Perspective. *The Journal of Consumer Research*, 10 (3), pp. 319-329.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks/London/New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- Stern, B. (1994). Authenticity and the textual persona: postmodern paradoxes in advertising narrative. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 11 (4), pp. 387-400.
- Stern, B. B. (1998). Introduction: The problematic of representation. In B. B. Stern (Ed.), *Representing consumers: Voices, views and visions* (pp. 1-23). London and New York: Routledge.
- Tinggaard, L., & Brinkmann, S. (2010). Interviewet: samtalen som forskningsmetode. In S. Brinkmann & L. Tinggaard (Eds.), *Kvalitative metoder. En grundbog* (pp. 29-54). Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag.
- Twitchell, J. B. (2004). An English Teacher Looks at Branding. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (2), pp. 484-489.
- Vargo, St. L., & Lusch, R.F. (2004). 'Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing', *Journal of Marketing*, 68 (January), pp. 1-17.
- Wang, D., & Groat, L. N. (2013). *Architectural Research Methods* (2nd. ed.). Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- White, I. S. (1959). The Functions of Advertising in Our Culture. *Journal of Marketing*, 23, pp. 8-14.
- Woodside, A. G. (2010a). Brand-Consumer Storytelling Theory and Research: Introduction to a *Psychology & Marketing* Special Issue. *Psychology and Marketing*, 27 (6), pp. 531-540.
- Woodside, A. G. (2010b). *Case Study Research. Theory, Methods, Practice*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Woodside, A. G., Sood, S., & Miller, K. E. (2008). When Consumers and Brands Talk: Storytelling Theory and Research in Psychology and Marketing. *Psychology & Marketing*, 25(2), pp. 97-145.

Unpublished Sources

Jonas Co. (2017a). *Business Plan* [work in progress].

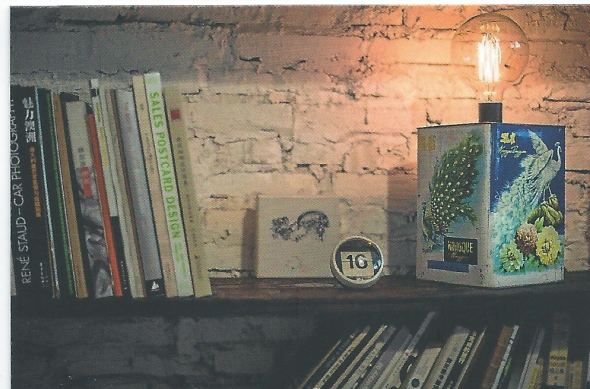
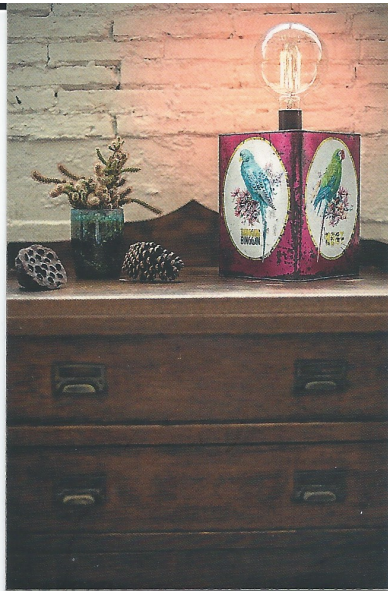
Jonas Co. (2017b). *Brand Story* [see Appendix 1]

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 - Experiment Set-Up

Group A (non-story) & Group B (story):

- ▶ Jonas Co. lamp (see front page)
- ▶ Pictures of five different lamp designs (© Jonas Co., 2017)



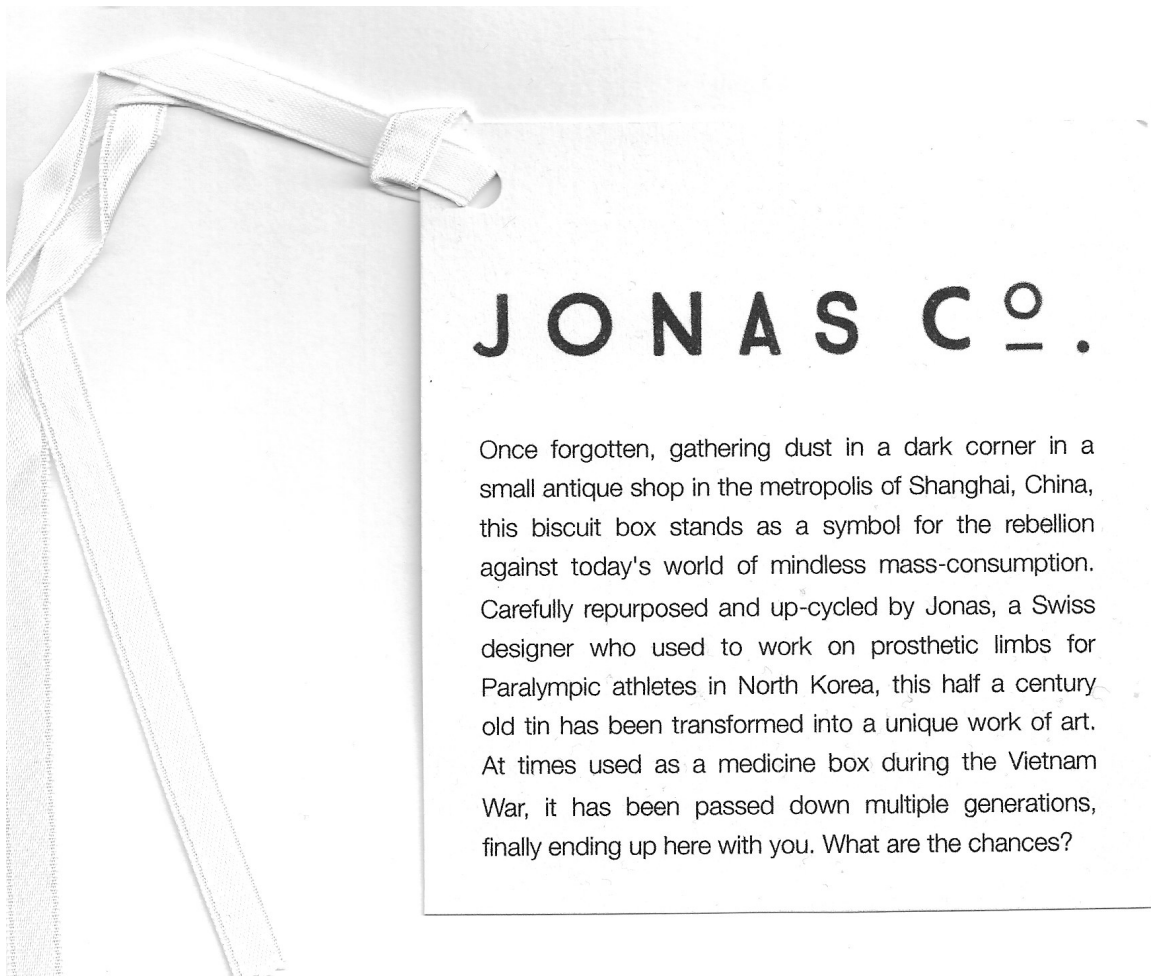
Group A (non-story) only:

- ▶ Paper tag with company logo (attached to the lamp with a white silk bow)



Group B (story) only:

- ▶ Paper tag with company logo and brand story (attached to the lamp with a white silk bow)



Appendix 2 - Informed Consent Form

Karoline Windhagauer
kawi15ad@student.cbs.dk

Informed Consent Form for _____

This informed consent form is for anyone living in the Copenhagen area with enthusiasm for interior design who has expressed interest to participate in a study for a Master thesis on brand experience.

Investigator: Karoline Windhagauer
Organization: Copenhagen Business School
Project: Master thesis project

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- Information Sheet
- Certificate of Consent

You will receive a copy of the full Informed Consent Form.

Part 1: Information Sheet

Introduction

I am a student at Copenhagen Business School, currently working on my Master's thesis. My research is on branding and brand experience and I am collaborating with a young design start-up about to enter the European market. Please take your time to reflect if you are willing to participate in an interview.

Purpose of the research

Branding approaches have changed from being solely focused on the product to acknowledging the power and influence of all stakeholders. This research will focus on a specific tool used in branding and will compare the brand experience of two groups of participants, each exposed to different stimuli. The study will include questions covering your opinion and associations on the brand at-hand.

Type of Research Intervention & Duration

This study will involve your participation in an interview that will take approximately 30 to 60 minutes.

Participant Selection

Participants are being selected on a voluntary, first-come basis. If you decide to take part in this study, you do so entirely out of your own will.

Procedures

You are asked to participate in an interview facilitated by the researcher. During this interview, you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions without any repercussions. No one else will be present except for the interviewer and you. The information recorded is confidential and nobody except for the researcher will access the information shared during this interview. The entire interview will be audio-recorded. Your anonymity will be maintained at any point during the process of handling the information and everything you say will be treated as confidential.

Benefits

There will not be any direct benefit for you, except for helping the researcher find out more about how certain stimuli influence brand experience.

Reimbursements

You will not be provided any reimbursements or incentives to take part in the research. However, you will be able to learn about a brand before being launched on the European market.

Confidentiality

Any information you will provide during the interview will be treated with confidentiality. You will remain anonymous at all times and no personal information except for your year of birth and your profession will be used in any way during this study. Only the researcher will know that you participated in this research. It will not be shared with anyone else.

Karoline Windhagauer
kawi15ad@student.cbs.dk

Sharing the Results

The information gained in this study will be used for a Master's thesis and the results will be made publicly available after passing the final exam. If you are interested in the results, please let the interviewer know and she will provide you with a web-address once the thesis is published.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

If you do not wish to partake in this study, you do not have to do so. If you do choose to participate, you do so out of your own will. You are, at any time, free to stop participating.

Who to Contact

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask them now or later. Please feel free to send me an e-mail should any questions arise later-on.

Part 2: Certificate of Consent

I have read and fully understand the information provided above. Any immediate questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Place & Date: _____

Appendix 3 - Interview Guide

Interview Guide - Jonas Co.

General Introduction:

- Thank for participation
- Audio-recording: ask for permission
- Ensure anonymity
- Offer to provide summary of the research findings
- Explain purpose of the study: to learn more about how people perceive the brand
- Explain that this interview is about respondents' associations, and ask participants to answer in as much detail as possible, be spontaneous; reiterate that there are no right or wrong answers
- Ask respondents to thoroughly examine the lamp, mention that they are allowed to turn it on/off, hold it, move it around, etc.

Introduction to brand and its product:

- Jonas Co. is new brand, soon to launch on the European market

Questions

Overall Perceptions and Associations

- Tell me about your first Impressions of the brand, based upon everything you see in front of you:
 - Which feelings does it elicit?
 - Which thoughts come to your mind?
- What do you associate with this product/brand?
- What does the brand remind you of?
 - Anything specific? (person, situation, etc.)
- What do you like about this lamp?
- What do you dislike?

Personality

- Please describe this brand in three adjectives or three concepts.
- If this brand was a person, what would he/she be like?
 - What would he or she look like?
 - How would he or she behave? What kind of character would it be?
 - How old would that person be?

Perceived Price and Willingness to Pay

- How important is it to you to buy products with a history?
- How much do you think this product costs on the Danish market?
- How much would you be willing to spend on this product?

Overall Attractiveness

- How would you rate the overall quality of this product on a scale from 1 to 10?

Closing Questions

- Is there anything else you would like to add?
- What are the three most significant things you will remember about the brand?

Demographic Questions

- Year of Birth
- Profession
- Nationality (only asked for in part of the interviews; the other respondents provided their nationality via e-mail)

Probing questions

- What do you mean by...?
- Why (not)?
- You mentioned XY, could you elaborate on that?
- Could you explain further?
- Please tell me more.

Appendix 4 - Interview Transcripts

Transcript A1

Group A (no story) - Respondent A1

Year of Birth: 1990

Profession: Student

Nationality: Danish

Gender: Female

[00:00:08] I: First of all, thank you for participating.

[00:00:11] A1: You're welcome.

[00:00:11] I: I just wanted to mention again that this is going to be audio-recorded and that your anonymity will be secured all the way through the process.

[00:00:23] A1: Sure.

[00:00:23] I: So this interview is basically about a new brand that is soon to launch on the European market...

[00:00:28] A1: Alright

[00:00:28] I: ... and what I'm looking for is just your spontaneous associations, your opinions on the brand and on the product, and I would ask you to answer in as much detail as possible, to just be spontaneous...

[00:00:42] A1: Yes

[00:00:42] I: ... and there are no right or wrong answers.

[00:00:44] A1: Sure

[00:00:44] I: So Jonas Co. is a new brand that is, as I said, soon to launch on the European market and I would just ask - you can touch it, you can move it around, you can turn it on, you can...

[00:00:57] A1: ((touches the lamp)) Uh! ((surprised)). Oh that's how it... Aaahh ((understands)). Is it a dimmer or is it a step? It's a step.

[00:01:05] I: Yes.

[00:01:07] A1: Ah, alright.

[00:01:07] I: Yeah, just let me know what your first impressions are, how you...

[00:01:10] A1: Ahhm, I'm actually getting associations to like ... old-time .. toys ((raises voice)). You know like, ahm ((gesticulates)), yeah...

[00:01:21] I: Yes ((understands))

[00:01:21] A1: ... how do you say, a play ... box ... or...

[00:01:23] I: Yeah...

[00:01:24] A1: () And, it's very... at the same time very modern, but also .. quite old-fashioned.... yeah

[00:01:37] I: What do you associate it with, what do you feel when you look at it or ... what are your thoughts?

[00:01:44] A1: Mhhh... Just a ... really getting a .. an old-fashioned vibe, really. Something fifties... or .. yeah ... very much in the toy ... range, really. Because of the doll over here, eating the biscuit and ... yeah, the flowers and everything, the patterns ... Is it a... where is the brand from?

[00:02:14] I: It's based in Sweden.

[00:02:15] A1: Alright, mhm.

[00:02:17] I: So it reminds you of old-fashioned .. toys.

[00:02:23] A1: Yeah, toys. Yeah, I think toys is probably ... what I associate it most with.

[00:02:29] I: Does it also remind you, I don't know, your childhood or a certain country, or a certain person, or a certain situation?

[00:02:36] A1: Uh... Maybe a little bit about Japan, because of the signs and all the colors, the yellow... uh... and if you go into .. like uh... a food store, a Japanese food store, sort of the whole packaging reminds me a bit of this as well.

[00:02:55] I: Mhm. They are actually, uh, I also brought...

[00:03:02] A1: Yeah ((raises voice))

[00:03:02] I: ... these other ((points to photographs)), because this is about the brand and also of course the product...

[00:03:04] A1: Sure.

[00:03:04] I: ... every product is a little different...

[00:03:06] A1: Mhm...

[00:03:06] I: ... So...

[00:03:04] A1: They find the boxes on flea markets? Or...

[00:03:10] I: Yeah, they actually did. ((laughs))

[00:03:11] A1: ((laughs))

[00:03:15] I: So, yeah, all of them are a little different...

[00:03:18] A1: Yeah.

[00:03:18] I: ... so the brand overall, how would you ... describe it?

[00:03:23] A1: Mhhh....

[00:03:25.05] I: You said, this specific product reminds you of Japanese food...

[00:03:29.29] A1: Food packaging, yeah ((laughs)). Because of the colors and... yeah, the patterns, really... But this one does, the one you brought here today, but the pictures... uhhh... are a lot different, this ((points at the black lamp with the flowers)) reminds me of some ... small boxes that my grandfather had to keep his... uhh... how do you say... the.. things for your shirts..

[00:03:55.05] I: Ohh, yes.

[00:03:56.23] A1: I don't know what they are called ...

[00:03:59.11] I: Me neither... Not in English.. ((laughs))

[00:04:01.06] A1: ((laughs)) ... Manchetknopper.

[00:04:03.15] I: Yeah, same in German ((laughs)).

[00:04:07.02] A1: Uhh, yeah, I think that it reminds me of my... my grandparents, really, and the stuff we have in the basement at my parents' house.

[00:04:14.22] I: Mhm.

[00:04:14.22] A1: Stuff you find in ... yeah... sort of ... a bit nostalgic ((raises voice))... I think.

[00:04:22.00] I: So, uh, what do you like about the brand in total?

[00:04:29.01] A1: Uh...

[00:04:30.14] I: What you see here, let's put it that way.

[00:04:32.16] A1: I think it's difficult to say something about the brand, this is the only product they make...?

[00:04:39.22] I: At the moment.

[00:04:40.02] A1: At the moment, yeah. Uhh... I don't know really, it's difficult when you don't know ... that many other things about it... Uh...

[00:04:59.04] I: Yeah, basically, all the products are different...

[00:05:01.23] A1: Yeah... Just... Yeah, the...

[00:05:08.25] I: But just spontaneously, what do you like?

[00:05:12.05] A1: I like the nostalgic feel that I get when I look at it. I don't think I would put any of these in my own home, necessarily, but I like the feeling you get when you look at it.

[00:05:22.15] I: Why wouldn't you put it in your home?

[00:05:23.06] A1: Uhh, it doesn't match ((laughs)) my style..

[00:05:27.14] I: Ok, because?

[00:05:27.14] A1: Uh, I think I'm more... clean ((raises voice))... lines... uh ... I also do have a lot of vintage stuff... uh... but I think it's just, uh, too much patterns, really.

[00:05:43.22] I: Ok, yeah. So that's the point that you don't like..

[00:05:48.00] A1: Yeah, I think, but at the same time it's a whole concept of the... of the whole lamps, so I like it and I like that it's different, but just for my home, at least, it wouldn't match. But I could see it in, I have a friend who is very much into vintage decoration and everything... uh... And I think it would look perfect there.

[00:06:10.19] I: Mhm... So you said it wouldn't match your own house but you told me what you like, spontaneously, what do you not like about the form, the shape, the way the products look, the, you know, overall...

[00:06:28.12] A1: Uhhh, it may be a bit big, actually, because of ... the lamp is, I know the the lamp is big for a bulb, or the bulb is big for a bulb, but the box ... is maybe a bit big for the whole thing to be, maybe if it was shorter ... or ... I think, yeah, that's probably the proportions ((raises voice)).

[00:06:53.09] I: Ok, so, I know it's difficult if you don't know a lot about the brand, but, if you had to describe this brand with three adjectives, how would you describe it?

[00:07:06.01] A1: Uhh... colorful, and ... vintage... and unique, I think.

[00:07:13.11] I: Mhm, and if the brand was a person, how would he or she look, what would he or she wear, how old would he or she be?

[00:07:22.21] A1: Uhh... I'm getting like two different persons, actually ((laughs)). One is like, uh... a young person from Nørrebro, or something very edgy, very... go to flea markets and find their clothes... That's a one, and the other one is ... maybe a person a bit older than my mom who thinks this is funny because of the... it gets ... you know, it gets associations from childhood. So, but still colorful, and... I don't know... flamboyant is maybe a big word, but you know, like.uh... clothes is very big and ... uh, you know what I mean?

[00:08:06.27] I: Yeah, I think so... So the whole, very..

[00:08:09.21] A1: The whole artsy... artsy glasses, and yeah, maybe a turban or something ((laughs))

[00:08:16.24] I: Mhm ((laughs)). That's cool. So, how important is it for you personally to buy interior, like furniture or lamps or design pieces with a history?

[00:08:33.18] A1: Uhh.. depends on what it is. Uhh... I think some pieces, I think a vintage couch could be really really pretty. Uhh, some lamps also, but I think maybe most of the lamps I buy is new ones, new design pieces.

[00:08:55.08] I: Why is that?

[00:08:55.08] A1: Uhh... I don't know, it's because that's where I spend the most, chairs and lamps, actually.

[00:09:05.29] I: Why is that?

[00:09:05.29] A1: It's just, I don't know, it's a thing. I have like, I have so many lamps and I've always ... If I had to spend, it would be on a lamp.

[00:09:17.04] I: Ok, what kind of lamp?

[00:09:18.09] A1: Uh... pendulums and, yeah, and... I have one, very big, a Kartell, uh.. lamp for a table, really. Uh... and a wall lamp, I have quite a different range, yeah.

[00:09:41.00] I: Ok, cool. So, you said you spend the most ((laughs)) on that kind of things. How much do you think these products are sold for ... in Denmark?

[00:09:52.25] A1: Uhh... In Denmark... I don't know, four, five hundred kroners?

[00:10:01.06] I: Ok, why do you think so?

[00:10:05.25] A1: It's just a, I don't know, it's just a vibe I get. I can't really explain why I think that, it's just... yeah.

[00:10:14.00] I: Ok, and how much would you spend on it if you bought it?

[00:10:18.01] A1: Mhhh... Oh that's difficult, because I think if, if I found it on flea markets, four, five hundred would be a lot, but if you go into a store, I would yeah, probably pay that amount, but at a flea market I would probably wouldn't pay more than 100.

[00:10:41.04] I: Do you think you would find something like that on a flea market?

[00:10:43.07] A1: No. Nothing like this... maybe get the... sure the box and everything, but not in this combination.

[00:10:52.08] I: So if you were, let's say looking for something like that, where would you go?

[00:10:58.02] A1: Mmh, probably to Nørrebro, some of the small shops there.

[00:11:04.16] I: Ok, because...

[00:11:04.16] A1: Because I think their interior are a bit more different, if you go into Illums Bolighus or ... any other store () and uh, every interior store almost have the same, always, but I think in Nørrebro you can find smaller shops that are a bit more ... yeah, they have a different product selection.

[00:11:28.23] I: Do you mean that they might not be as... Would you say that the shops in the city are more clean..

[00:11:37.18] A1: Streamlined... streamlined and they know which products they can sell, and which products are... uh, maybe representative for Danish design so the tourists will buy them. I think that's why they, it's a safe choice.

[00:11:57.15] I: So if you had to rate the overall attractiveness of this brand, let's say brand, not this specific product, 'cause every product is different... If you had to rate it on a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rate it?

[00:12:16.22] A1: Uhhhh..... My personal taste, it think I would say ... 6 maybe, because it's still interesting and I still get a ... a vibe from it, it's not like I'm... *UGH*... but it's not like I'm completely sold. It's somewhere in-between.

[00:12:35.03] I: Ok... Is there anything else you would like to add to ...

[00:12:44.05] A1: Uh... no, I think I'm pretty ... came around the whole design thing, and yeah, I think that's it.

[00:12:49.20] I: Ok. So what are the three most significant things you are going to remember about this brand?

[00:12:58.05] A1: I think it's the, the patterns, the vintage feel... uh... and the proportions also, because...

[00:13:08.01] I: Proportions, what do you mean by that?

[00:13:08.01] A1: Because it is quite big on the bottom, so I think I'm gonna remember that... the whole...

[00:13:14.03] I: Shape...?

[00:13:14.03] A1: Yeah, the whole shape of the product. Uh.... yeah and the prints... yeah ((laughs)). The prints, the colors and uh, the tin box, also.

[00:13:33.13] I: If... would you... talk to other people about this?

[00:13:45.04] A1: I'd probably tell them about this interview maybe, and what it was about.

[00:13:53.03] I: What would you tell them about the brand?

[00:13:51.02] A1: I think I would tell them, you know, what I said before that it was vintage tin boxes, used for making lamps and was playful, was fun... maybe not my taste, but... yeah...

[00:14:10.10] I: Ok, cool. Then just two last questions for the demographic ... stuff.

[00:14:19.11] A1: Sure.

[00:14:19.11] I: What's your year of birth?

[00:14:19.11] A1: It's 1990.

[00:14:21.27] I: Ok, and your profession?

[00:14:25.21] A1: My profession? Well, yeah studying, right now, uh, and when I'm done I'm gonna work in marketing.

[00:14:31.12] I: Ok, cool. Well, thank you, that was faster than expected ((laughs))

[00:14:35.20] A1: You're welcome.

Transcript A2

Group A (no story) - Respondent A2

Year of Birth: 1991

Profession: Student

Nationality: Italian

Gender: Female

[00:00:04] I: Thank you for participating in this interview.

[00:00:12] A2: You're welcome.

[00:00:12] I: Just to mention again, this interview will be audio-recorded and your anonymity will be ensured throughout the process. This study is about brand perceptions and brand experience and I would like to hear your opinions on the brand at-hand. It is a young start-up that is about to launch their products in Europe. You're free to touch the lamp, to move it around, to do whatever you like. And, yeah, let's just start with your overall perceptions. What are your first impressions of this brand?

[00:01:01] A2: () Uh, I don't know. It looks something vintage, I would say. Kind of... like ... old, like you know... old-fashioned I'd say. Does it work like this? ((touches lamp))

[00:01:17] I: Mhm.

[00:01:17] A2: Like do you touch it for... ok, yeah. But, uhh... about the pictures. The pictures are really cool. Like if you contextualize the lamp in these different contexts like, I don't know, I think it's living rooms or other... uh, spaces in the house, it looks pretty... cozy and, like, cool. But like, personally, like just seeing the lamp at first sight, I thought like, it's really old and... uh, weird.

[00:01:47] I: ((laughs)) What do you mean by weird?

[00:01:48] A2: Uh, I don't know like it's... just the picture on the lamp ((moves lamp around)). Yeah, it's really Chinese and... old-fashioned... uh... something that you would buy on, I don't know, a flea market maybe.

[00:02:07] I: Mhm. How do you feel... well, this is one product in the whole collection, the Jonas Co. brand, and these pictures are just different, uh, just to show that each product is a little different. How do you feel when you look at the brand or at the product at-hand?

[00:02:30] A2: Uh... in the pictures?

[00:02:34] I: Yeah, or the whole... brand in the sense that you have the product at hand, you see the pictures of other products of the brand, uh, the brand name, everything you just see here because you don't know the brand, so.. uh, yeah.

[00:02:55] A2: I don't know, like, I think it's something that I wouldn't personally buy, it's maybe just because it's not my taste. Uh... but ... uh.. in some context or in some... mmh... like place... I would see it, like, I don't know like in a bar for example, you know like in a cozy environment with a cozy atmosphere. You know these kind of bars where you find like.. uh.. strange but innovative pieces of design and like, that it looks like they're just randomly there... but that you like in the context with other things. I would say, I would see like a piece of design like this in a place like this. But probably, I wouldn't buy it myself for my place.

[00:03:45] I: Why, why is that?

[00:03:45] A2: Uh, I think it's not my personal taste, uh... maybe just for this reason...

[00:03:52] I: What is your personal taste?

[00:03:55] A2: I think it's more minimalistic and, uh, like less colorful... Uh... at the moment, but it changes a lot too, so. Uh.. or maybe it's just this one, like the one you brought, that makes me feel... that is different from the others in the picture. Like you know, I have a different perception in the pictures, because I'm seeing the products already in a context. So like, I don't know... For example, if this would be one of my rooms or in my apartment, I would see it really fine there, you know. But then, just the one we have here ((moves lamp around)), maybe I just don't like it, but the design in the other ones are maybe cooler.

[00:04:53] I: So you said the lamp reminds you of .. maybe flea markets, something old. What else do you associate the brand with, let's stick to the brand, not specifically this one product, but the whole...

[00:05:12] A2: the collection?

[00:05:12] I: ... brand as you see it. Yeah, meaning the different designs, the name, the whole set-up.

[00:05:20] A2: Uh, this is the name, right?

[00:05:20] I: Yeah, Jonas Co.

[00:05:22] A2: Jonas Co. And you said this is a Chinese brand?

[00:05:25] I: It's a Swedish start-up.

[00:05:26] A2: Ah ((surprised)) it's a Swedish start-up. Yeah, because, I don't know, the design of the brand, it looks Chinese, most of the pictures...

[00:05:37] I: How can you say that? Why do you say that?

[00:05:32] A2: Because they are like ((moves lamp around)) on this one, there are some Japanese or Chinese writings. Maybe this one with the bird, too, it reminds me something, this one, something you would see in a Chinese... uh... painting on the wall. You know, like ... uh... I don't know, old-fashioned, and.... uh, I don't understand why I have to touch it ((touches the lamp)) for ((laughs))... for having a different light. Like it doesn't, the light doesn't stay fixed, right?

[00:06:14] I: Well, yeah, you can dim it by touching the lamp.

[00:06:19] A2: Ok. And, uh... I don't know...

[00:06:28] I: Does it remind you of a person, or a situation or just, like, a country maybe, or an area of the world? What does it remind you of?

[00:06:37] A2: Uh... countryside ((raises voice)). I don't know ((laughs)). I don't know, like I'm thinking about ... it reminded me of something that, just like, personally, uh... because I said before, old-fashioned and vintage, so maybe something that I would find at my grandmother's apartments in the country-side. So something like that. Uh... which would be maybe like, uh, something that was common to have in the past, like in uh... like that was fashion or that looks cooler in the past. Mh... really vintage. I don't know why I have this feeling. Like, I mean, vintage in a way that this is something, like old somehow, but which is like, innovative, also.

[00:07:38] I: Why innovative?

[00:07:38] A2: Because I mean it looks like a box that could be, I don't know, uh... a biscuit box or just, you know, uh... this, the name of this ... box... that could contain something like books or pictures or something that you store in your bedroom. But then there's a lamp, you know. So it's innovative in this way, but the, uh... the concept like the, the design, the pictures, the colors of the boxes are kind of vintage and old. And, for example, in this context, they're really modern. Like this chair ((points at picture)), it's a chair of design and it's kind of Scandinavian, uh... like also here ((points at picture)), it's all white and really... minimalistic and then you find this... so it's innovative in this way. So, I mean I think that's also like, what vintage is really cool for, that you can.. uh... you can mix it with the contemporary pieces, an old piece, and it's always good and always good to see.

[00:08:45] I: Why do you think this is ... a thing right now that you mix vintage with modern? Why do you think people do that? Or why, would you do it? Would you mix?

[00:09:01] A2: Yeah, I would do it personally..

[00:09:01] I:... How would you do it?

[00:09:02] A2: Both in clothes, and in ... pieces of design for, uh... like furniture or just, uh... small accessories for the house. It's something that I like. Like, I don't like everything too vintage, then maybe you have the impression that it's old and old-fashioned too, but if you mix to something simple, like one color and... I really like it. And I really like it also on clothes. And I think that.. uh... like today it is also really fashion, like it is really fashion to wear vintage with modern things and to have vintage pieces at home with the, you know like old vintage fridges sometimes, or coffee machine... And then you can find them in a really modern environment.

[00:09:56] I: Why do you think people do that? Why do you think people appreciate the vintage touch in their, let's say modern or their personal lives? Or why do you appreciate it?

[00:10:14] A2: Uh... because maybe I like the old times that we haven't lived ((laughs)), like the sixties or the seventies, like, I like the music, I like the books from the time. And, also, the taste, like how people wear... uh... yeah, like the shapes of the clothes, like the forms, the size, uh... like... that's my personal opinion. But I also think that it's something that nowadays everyone likes to be hipster or indie, you know, and like, a lot of people connect and link vintage with being hipster. Sometimes, it's completely... it has no connection, but a lot of people do, so, like, being cool sometimes means being vintage, I think. And also, like, there are a lot of flea markets, more and more. If you think about it. Like there were flea markets before too, but no one cared about them, I think. I think now it's more fashion to go and buy second-hand vintage things. Like give a second life to pieces that maybe you had in your storage.

[00:11:23] I: I understand. What do you like about the brand?

[00:11:26] A2: Uh... I like the fact that it is a lamp, so it's uh... like... uh... it's something that you can put in different places in different rooms, different environments of your house, or, as I told you, like, uh, a cafeteria or bars or... different places, so it... like depending on the style, the () style of the environment, it can fit quite well. And, uh... I like some of the designs, actually, some of the pictures, like this one and this one ((points to the red and the green lamps on the picture)), uh... So I prefer some more than other, to be honest. And... uh... yeah, the fact that it's a box, but that it's a light, it's a lamp. ((laughs))

[00:12:28] I: ((laughs)) And what do you don't like about the lamp. Or let's stick to the brand, because this product here, this lamp, is only one out of many.

[00:12:40] A2: So, what I don't like. ((moves lamp around)). It's a little bit too big.

[00:12:52] I: Ok.

[00:12:54] A2: And.. uh... the light, the what it's called...

[00:13:00] I: The bulb?

[00:13:00] A2: Yeah, the bulb, uh... it's big but the light inside is not too lightful. So yeah, it gives you the like cozy environment, but it's not really useful, maybe. It's just decorative. Uh... and...

[00:13:22] I: You said it's too big, uh...

[00:13:26] A2: Uh, this part...

[00:13:25] I: ... the box...

[00:13:25] A2: .. yeah...

[00:13:28] I: Why do you think that, or in which environment would you rather put a smaller one? Or which environment do you have in mind that this box is too big for what you have in mind?

[00:13:44] A2: Uh, no, I'm just considering these pictures. Uh... like ... on kind of a commode, like this one for example, I think it's a little too big. Uh... also on a shelf, I think it's a little bit too big. But if you use it like here, like this one, it's really cool, on the floor. Or with some books on the floor and then you can just put it up, you know, like... yeah, that's true, it can be big in some places, but it's ok for other... places. ((laughs))

[00:14:24] I: If you had to describe the personality of this brand in three adjectives or three words, how would you describe the brand?

[00:14:26] A2: The personality? Uh...

[00:14:35] I: The Jonas Co. brand.

[00:14:35] A2: ... uh, random words? Like, uh...

[00:14:41] I: Yeah, just character traits or uh... random

[00:14:47] A2: colorful ((laughs)). Uhh... colorful and... I don't know. I don't know why vintage is one of the words that is stuck to my mind. And uh... the ... third one... uh... maybe innovative ((raises voice)). Like, uh... yeah... it's a contrast, but ((laughs))

[00:15:18] I: No, it doesn't exclude each other.

[00:15:24] A2: Yeah, mhm.

[00:15:25] I: And if this brand was a person, what would he or she be like? How would he or she look like? How old would he or she be? The whole appearance, how would you..

[00:15:42] A2: I think it would be an old man...

[00:15:44] I: Okay..

[00:15:44] A2: Uh.. one of these men who are like really funny and friendly men you find on these flea markets, that... like, they know a lot of things about, like, old times and, like about books and... uh... someone you could like really have a funny conversation with, I don't know if you get it..

[00:16:11] I: Mhm.

[00:16:12] A2: Uh... but also... lonely. I don't know.

[00:16:18] I: Ok, why lonely?

[00:16:18] A2: I don't know, like I'm thinking about these men, like... a lonely person that probably has, uh... is melancholic... maybe... I don't know...

[00:16:33] I: Melancholic in which way?

[00:16:35] A2: That something sad happened in his life, but is still a friendly and funny person.... he has a friendly and funny personality, but you know these people you can feel that ... something in his life... and... then he's melancholic... uh...

[00:16:57] I: Yeah... How important is it for you to buy products that have a history? Let's stick to interior design pieces. How important is it for you to have ...

[00:17:14] A2: I think it is important to buy products with a history for interior design products, because it's something that you can talk about, it's something that it reminds you ... maybe... like story of your family or maybe story that the person who sold you told you... I don't know... Or maybe your own story, where you bought it, uh... yeah.

[00:17:42] I: You said you would talk about it, who would you talk about it to?

[00:17:49] A2: Like your guest, or uh... yeah... Your guests, basically. Like if it was in my house. Or friends, or ... yeah..

[00:18:02] I: How much do you think these products cost here in Denmark?

[00:18:08] A2: In kroner?

[00:18:08] I: You can also say it in Euros, if that's easier.

[00:18:12] A2: In Euros, ok. Ok, it's a Scandinavian brand, so it's not cheap. And... uh, it's design, so it's not cheap. I think it would be around ... 60 to 80 Euros.

[00:18:32] I: Mhm. Why do you think, why... How did you come up with that number?

[00:18:37] A2: ((laughs)) I don't know. Actually, I don't have any term of comparison, like, because, I never bought a lamp except from IKEA, but ... I mean IKEA doesn't count, it's uh... like I never bought a lamp, I think. So, uh... honestly I don't know much.

[00:19:04] I: Why have you never bought a...

[00:19:10] A2: Just because at the moment I don't have my own house, so, uh... I'm not... like, I would like to, but I'm not interested in spending money for like, a piece of design that I really liked and that I would put in my own house. But like, one day, or soon I hope, when I will have my own house and I will start, you know, decorating with my personal taste, and with my money, uh... then, like, I can choose how much I want to pay for uh... something that I maybe just really like, or... something that I really need. You know... So at the moment, just for this reason I have never bought a lamp.

[00:19:49] I: If you chose to buy one of those products, how much would you be willing to pay for it?

[00:19:57] A2: Uh.... one of these products... uh... maybe no more than 30, 40 Euros.

[00:20:11] I: Having looked at the overall brand and having talked about the different aspects, how would you rate the overall attractiveness of the brand, not necessarily this ((points at lamp)), the whole brand on a scale from 1 to 10?

[00:20:29] A2: To me or to like, if I think about the Danish market?

[00:20:33] I: To you.

[00:20:33] A2: To me. Uh... 6.

[00:20:37] I: Why?

[00:20:37] A2: Uh... because it's something, like, if I would find something like this lamp in a, let's say, uh... a concept store, like that's a place where I would see it, like a store with different, like, both clothes and ... uh... interior design, and ... cosmetics, everything, like, maybe it would attract my attention because it's colorful, it's design, and like, you can touch it and, I don't know, it's really ((laughs)), it's really handy to touch it. And, like some of them, like the boxes are really beautiful, uh... But, like, still I'm a student and if it's something that I have to buy just for myself, I would not pay much more. But maybe like, if you think about it for a present, then, yeah, the same price, I could also buy it for presents for a friend who is just having a new apartment, and... yeah...

[00:21:43] I: What are the three most significant things you'll remember about this brand, the Jonas Co. brand?

[00:21:56] A2: Pictures, the old-fashioned, Chinese pictures. And... the fabric, do you say fabric?

[00:22:11] I: The material?

[00:22:11] A2: The material. I don't know it really reminds me, like, a biscuit box. And, uh... the fact that you can touch and choose uh... how much light you want.

[00:22:28] I: If you talked about this brand to your friends, family whoever you talk to, how would you tell them about the brand? What would you tell them about the brand?

[00:22:47] A2: I don't know if it was something I would talk about...

[00:22:56] I: Why?

[00:22:58] A2: Uh... I don't know, because I don't think it's something that will stick in my mind, you know, like, in relation to my personal taste, but, if I would talk about it to my friends or my family, I would just say that it's a, uh... funny and innovative, like that this looks like a box, but it's a lamp ((laughs)) and, uh, I don't know. I don't know. Uh... yeah, something like that.

[00:23:31] I: Ok, perfect. Is there anything else you would like to add?

[00:23:38] A2: Uh... ((moves lamp around)). I don't know, I think that this one, like, it's a little bit different from the other ones, or maybe it's just because I, it's old, or... is it like this?

[00:23:51] I: Huh?

[00:23:51] A2: Is it old?

[00:23:51] I: Yeah.

[00:23:47] A2: Yeah, maybe for this reason, so... no, I think I'm fine ((laughs)). I don't think that I have something else to say about it.

[00:24:06] I: Ok, cool. Then just two last demographic questions, what's your year of birth and your profession?

[00:24:15] A2: I'm a student and I was born in 1991.

[00:24:19] I: Alright, perfect. Thank you very much.

[00:24:23] A2: Thank you too.

Transcript A3

Group A (no story) - Respondent A3

Year of Birth: 1983

Profession: Assistant Professor

Nationality: Dutch

Gender: Female

[00:00:10] I: First of all, thank you for participating. I really appreciate it.

[00:00:15] A3: You're welcome.

[00:00:15] I: Just to mention again, this will be audio-recorded and your anonymity will be ensured throughout the whole process of handling the data and writing the thesis and everything.

[00:00:29] A3: Mhm.

[00:00:29] I: So this study is basically about how people perceive a new brand that is about to launch on the European market. It's called Jonas Co. And they, as you can see, produce lamps, different sorts of lamps, that's why I also brought the little pictures. And.. yeah.. it's basically about finding out how people experience the brand. And I would just like you to answer in as much detail as possible, to be spontaneous and there are no right or wrong answers. So just go for it ((laughs)). Uh... yeah, you're free to touch the product, to move it around, whatever you like and then just tell me about your first impressions.

[00:01:17] A3: ((moves lamp around)) My first impression? Uh... I think it looks a bit special, I don't think I have seen such a kind of ... of set-up before. I like that the contrasting between having this looking very.. like.. modern, like these days, those kind of LED lamps, and then you have the, the, the more old-fashioned box below. Uh... Contrasting in the shape, which is, I think not really my taste ((raises voice)), but uh... yeah, I guess it can appeal to people. And, uh... if I look at the different examples there are, uh... ((looks at pictures)) I think it looks... still it is funny, I think with these boxes especially. The... the... that is maybe what attracts me the most ... to it.

[00:02:23] I: Why does it attract you?

[00:02:23] A3: Uh... because I like the vintage look in it... uh...

[00:02:31] I: Why is that?

[00:02:31] A3: Uh... Yeah, why is that? I guess partly just nostalgia, or... uh... yeah, like romantic, nostalgic feeling that it induced. Uh...

[00:03:02] I: What do you associate it with? You said it's kind of nostalgic feelings... Does it remind you of anything specific?

[00:03:13] A3: Uh... no, not specific, no. But yeah, it (), even though, like, this could be maybe older than that I am, I think it just reminds you of your childhood maybe, or, like... the... how easy it was as a child, or like this kind of things. And... uh... but at the same time what I also like about vintage stuff is, I think, that, that it's just being used again, right? That it has this, like, long... uh... I mean if it was really, or... it, it... it gives the suggestion, at least, that it is something that was already so old, and still is being used, right? () It's not just wasted. It's just used again in a different context, and I think that's fun. Uh... It's also, having for example, it then standing in a more modern, uh... living room, then... it just stands out and it's... I like when things are like that, like being different... uh... yeah.... in that sense.

[00:04:20] I: Does it... uh... I just lost what I wanted to ask... You said you like that it's reused, that it has, or at least that it suggests that it has a history. Why is that something that is important to you? Or do you, when you buy furniture, or interior design, or other things, is that a point that is important to you?

[00:04:55] A3: Yeah, I like to buy second-hand, if it's still, if the quality is still good, then I think that, uh... why then waste it? Just reuse it. Uh... But usually also a little bit, like, it's also more like the emotional part or the idea that "Uh, this has been standing somewhere else", that has some history already and that now it's standing in my house, or... it's being used by me. I think that's ... that's... a funny thought, yeah.

[00:05:32] I: What do you like about the brand? I mean you talked a little bit about it before, but, just to say again. Uh... what are the things you like and what are the things you don't like about Jonas Co. or, also the products, of course.

[00:05:54] A3: Mhm... so when you say brand or when you say product, I mean we're talking about this ((points at lamp)), right, so this is the product, or? Or...

[00:05:59] I: Yeah, the box, or the lamps, are the products, and the brand, or the company is Jonas Co. So it's about how you perceive, since the product is part of the whole brand and your experience, it's about the product but since the products are different, to kind of keep the bigger picture, not to be too focused on the one at hand, because... As we can see, they are very different, or... they look different...

[00:06:29] A3: Yes... well, they only look... to me they look actually quite the same, right? But they just have the different pictures on the box. Uh... Yeah, as I said, I don't think I like it so much, that, like, how the lamp is put on the box, uh... why that is... ((laughs)) I don't know.

[00:06:53] I: How would you rather have it?

[00:06:56] A3: Uh... ((laughs))... how would it be? I think I dis... so I must say I have these kind of lamps, like these bulbs, but they are just hanging from the ceiling and they are not... like... the transparent glass. I think I like that more, like, the more... that kind of light more... So that stands out I think from this product, that it is like that, but I don't know whether they all have it ((looks at pictures)).. yeah, I guess, it looks like that. Uh...

[00:07:47] I: So you would rather have the milky glass?

[00:07:52] A3: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Uh... ((moves lamp around)). But yeah, I said, I do like the box, I think that's funny, uh.. but... So is it responding on my touching?

[00:08:17] I: Mhm.

[00:08:17] A3: () It's also a funny feature, I guess ((laughs)). Uh... yeah, so that's (), I would like that, that tool with it, like, that I don't have to use the switch with that... () ((laughs))

[00:08:36] I: If you had to describe Jonas Co. as a company, brand, including everything you see here or that you know, how would you describe it if you had to describe it in three words, or three concepts?

[00:08:54] A3: I would think, so like the modern with the vintage combined in one product... Uh... in a rather contrasting manner ((raises voice))....

[00:09:15] I: Anything else, any ... character traits? Let's say, if it was a person, if the brand was a person. I know it's a difficult question, but, if it was a person, how would he or she look like, or be, or ... How old would, let's say, Jonas Co. be?

[00:09:40] A3: ((laughs)) Ok, then I'm thinking of... uh... a rather... age-wise... maybe just like thirties, like I am ((laughs)). Uh... but pretty extrovert, right, because like expressive, like contrasting... and... uh... It's uh... it's really dare, right? Like it's present... yeah, I think it stands out... uh... Maybe they are also put together in such a way that I think they stand out really from the rest of... the room... Funny, I guess. Yeah, I would say, I would expect it's a funny person... yeah...

[00:10:43] I: So funny, extrovert and .. quite young still.

[00:10:48] A3: Yeah.

[00:10:49] I: So now that we've talked about it for a few minutes, uh... How much do you think these products are sold for on the Danish market?

[00:11:02] A3: Uh... Oh... ah... 400 kroner?

[00:11:18] I: Mhm, why do you think that?

[00:11:18] A3: ((laughs)) 'Cause I'm just going higher than I would actually think the... the ... I don't know that it costs much to make this... But it's of course still the design that adds in the value... And... Yeah... I haven't been buying lamps recently, so I... Just guessing. In the Danish market the prices are usually around that... that high ((laughs)) Yeah, but I ... I would be positive if it was only 200 kroner, then I would think "Oh, ok". But... uh... I guess not.

[00:12:07] I: How much would you pay for a product like that?

[00:12:10] A3: Uh... Yeah, that would be 200 max., but yeah.

[00:12:21] I: Why is that? Does it depend, or is it because of the.. just of the overall.. thing. Or because that it's... uh...

[00:12:39] A3: Just for lamps in general, I would take that into account, and I think that... uh... I'm not so much into spending huge amounts on such a kind of product, but ... yeah.

[00:12:55] I: Mhm, ok. And how would you rate the overall attractiveness of Jonas Co, as you see it now? Because I assume you don't know the brand, or didn't know about it before... How would you rate it if you had to on a scale from 1 to 10?

[00:13:16] A3: Uh..... 7 or 8. Quite positive, but yeah...

[00:13:34] I: Why?

[00:13:34] A3: Uh... So what appeals to me, as I said before, I think is when products look special, different from what I have seen before. Uh, so that I value, but it's not so much my style, so that's why I don't go up to 10, while on the other hand, maybe I should not take that too much into account, when I'm just rating a ... so to what extent my own taste leaks through.

[00:14:09] I: Well, it's about you, and... it's about your spontaneous, what you think..

[00:14:13] A3: Yes, exactly. So then maybe 7, 8, yeah.

[00:14:16] I: Ok. Is there anything you would like to add that we haven't talked about yet, but comes to your mind?

[00:14:25] A3: Mh... I... I'm just realizing, because I think it's funny, actually, that this has some kind of language, but I have no idea what was originally in this box. So I think I would like if I could recognize, uh... could know what it was for...oh, it was a cookie box... yeah... like these also ((points at pictures)) I think, yeah, for me it would add, if I would recognize it from a certain product from the old days, maybe it's, like, even older than me, but more like my parents' or grandparents' generation.

[00:15:12] I: Something that you can relate to more on a personal basis, or?

[00:15:15] A3: Yeah.

[00:15:15] I: Yeah, yeah. Just a last question: What will you remember of Jonas Co. when you go out? What would you mention when people asked you about Jonas Co. "What is that?" ((laughs))

[00:15:34] A3: ((laughs)) Well that they make lamps with a LED lamp with an old box underneath it and that it has this nice feature ((refers to dimming)) ((laughs)) I think... yeah... yeah.

[00:15:47] I: Ok, and just two closing questions for the demographic analysis. What is your year of birth and your profession?

[00:15:55] A3: I'm from 1983 and my profession is a ... assistant professor.

[00:16:03] I: Perfect, alright. Thank you.

[00:16:05] A3: You're welcome.

Transcript A4

Group A (no story) - Respondent A4

Year of Birth: 1988

Profession: Chemist

Nationality: German/Italian

Gender: Male

[00:00:05] I: First of all, thank you for participating. I really appreciate it. Just to mention again, this will be audio-recorded, and your anonymity will be ensured throughout the process of handling the data. This study is about learning more about how people perceive a brand. This is a new brand, Jonas Co., that's about to launch on the European market. And, it's mostly about your associations, what you think, what you like, but I'll guide you through it. Please answer in as much detail as possible, there are no right or wrong answers, just be spontaneous and... Feel free to touch, to move around the product. I brought some pictures just to explain that there are also other products that Jonas Co. produced. And, yeah, just let me know what your first impressions are, really. Take your time, ...

[00:01:13] A4: My first thought was... Jonas is both a common name here, but a biblical name as well. So... if it was some sort of fish product, I suppose it would make sense, given the biblical story. Uh, but regardless, this seems to be... a very hipstery light bulb...

[00:01:38] I: Mhm...

[00:01:38] A4: ... that is the only association I draw from it, currently.

[00:01:47] I: So, you said hipstery. Does it elicit any special, or any feelings? What do you feel like when you look at these products? You said, it kind of has this biblical ... reference.

[00:02:00] A4: Oh, no, that's just an association with the name. Uh... I... I would say it's probably that kind of thing that one would expect to see made in a local workshop or something... () combining an old box with ... () something that would be salvaged and kind of hand-made. But of course it is not hand-made, it is, uh... factory-produced, I'd imagine. Uh... so, in that regard, uh... I think my impression is that it is trying to be something that it isn't.

[00:02:38] I: Why do you think that?

[00:02:39] A4: Because, uh... the... the impression that I get is that it is trying to recreate an authentic feel of parts melted together. Uh... by, you know, someone trying to make use of whatever they could find around them. Whereas, it is probably, of course the marketing people deciding, what this would look like. It's something that has been carefully designed, that is being marketed. It's not something that someone made from a junk yard and... sold on the side of the street.

[00:03:13] I: Why do you think that?

[00:03:15] A4: Mh... because it is something that is opening on the European market, it's not something that is opening on the market of the corner of Nørrebro and Nordvest.

[00:03:26] I: Ok, so what do you associate with the brand?

[00:03:42] A4: With the brand itself?

[00:03:42] I: Yeah, with everything you see here. Because I assume you don't know Jonas Co...

[00:03:47] A4: I don't...

[00:03:48] I: ... because it's not out yet.

[00:03:51] A4: Right. It looks like they make stuff for illumination. It looks like it is all in the same ... vein. It looks like the only thing that differs between the products is the different boxes. Uh... I think... what I said about my impression holds true for the one you brought and some of these, but not all. Because this one, for example, has a flowery pattern, but it doesn't necessarily look like it is a box that was previously used to hold something else. It could be made just specifically for the purpose of decoration for this light. That would... that would make me perceive the product differently.

[00:04:37] I: In what way?

[00:04:38] A4: In that it would not be trying to be something that it isn't. It would not... uh... be... yeah... attempting to give the impression that is... parts in disuse put together. This ... could well be something that has just been ... made decorated specifically for this purpose.

[00:05:04] I: Uh... So if you look at the the brand with those different designs, and some of them, you say, look as if they were, kind of, repurposed, or, that, are old, others might not look like that, how would you then describe the whole brand? Because these are very, you know two sides of a coin, kind of. Does that influence your way of perceiving the brand as a whole?

[00:05:39] A4: Nope. Just the product.

[00:05:41] I: This is just the product difference?

[00:05:47] A4: Mhm.

[00:05:47] I: Ok. Does it, the brand or the different products, does one of them, or maybe more of them remind you of something? Let's say a situation, or a person, or a feeling, or... anything?

[00:06:03] A4: Mh... not one of the products specifically, but the trend that I mentioned that reminds me actually a lot, I spent one year in Berlin, and that was of course rife with the same thing, so with.. Uh... areas that used to be, sort of poor, and that is where they have

this big art scene, that was were all the, almost () to the artists, like where musicians would move, and then that gained popularity, and then there was gentrification, the artists and the like were pushed out, and the families moved in...

[00:06:37] I: Mhm, are you talking about Kreuzberg?

[00:06:38] A4: Uh, for example Prenzlauer Berg, previously, and now slowly the northern areas of Kreuzberg, yes. Uh... and... then of course you have the opening of these bars, that made a desperate and highly calculated attempt to look, uh... in a decayed status to... remind of the origins but actually that was not what they were. So... that is the one thing that comes to mind...

[00:07:09] I: What do you like about the lamps and the products, and the, brand, let's say as a whole, even though you don't know too much about it?

[00:07:24] A4: Uh... not much, I guess. Uh... I do like these floral patterns for example ((points at picture of black lamp)). Uh... I ... this looks like this sort of thing that I would actually, probably want to buy if it were authentic. But would not wish to buy, given it's ()

[00:07:47] I: How do you decide on the authenticity of the products?

[00:07:53] A4: I think the pure fact that there is a brand attached to it... That alone is enough to dissuade.

[00:08:01] I: Ok. And that's something you don't like?

[00:08:06] A4: Yeeeah... it gives a bit of an impression of hypocrisy. It gives a bit of an impression as though I'm being sold something ... in an attempt to make me think that it is something that it is not.

[00:08:18] I: What, is there anything else that you don't like about the brand and the products?

[00:08:28] A4: Esthetically? Or...

[00:08:28] I: Everything, anything that comes to your mind.

[00:08:30] A4: The light bulb seems somewhat oversized. And... in my personal opinion it would probably do better with some decoration also above or encircling the light bulb. But these are... just personal preferences. And, rather small ones ()

[00:08:51] I: But this is all about your personal preferences...

[00:08:54] A4: Sure, sure sure. Uh.. yeah.

[00:08:58] I: If you had to describe the brand in three, let's say words or sentences, or concepts, ideas, how would you describe the brand Jonas Co.?

[00:09:09] A4: That would probably also depend on the price that these things would have.

[00:09:12] I: Ok.

[00:09:13] A4: Uh... But (), I would just say... hipster illumination goods, or something on those lines.

[00:09:25] I: Ok... You said it depends on the price?

[00:09:26] A4: Well, whether they are overpriced would also be part of that.

[00:09:30] I: How much do you think they are sold for here in Denmark?

[00:09:34] A4: The cost of making this is extremely small. So, with a mark-up I would expect this not to cost more than ... 30, 40 kroner, if it were, you know, actually made with, uh... so if it was made artisanally, that is what I would expect it to cost. I imagine, this, however, would probably cater for the sort of crowd that would likely spend upwards of 100 kroner for this.

[00:10:03] I: Mhm. How much would you spend for a product like that?

[00:10:05] A4: Probably 40 kroner.

[00:10:07] I: Ok. And that's, uh... because these seem, you said, since it's launching on the European market, it kind of or is most likely being produced, or mass-produced...

[00:10:24] A4: I would guess so.

[00:10:24] I: ... to be something, yes, to be able to, let's say, cater to the European market.

[00:10:30] A4: Yeah.

[00:10:32] I: Uh... if this brand was a person, who would he or she be? What would he or she look like? Character traits? Anything that comes to your mind.

[00:10:48] A4: That too depends a lot on the price. Because if this were made... If this were made... Say, if the pricing would not strike me as excessive, and that means given the product, the pricing being very low, then it would be, sort of () handyman, or handy-woman. Kind of... one of these people that live, perhaps off the grid. And... uh... makes do with various things, and recycles various things into interesting things. And that would be positive. If the pricing was very high, then it would be more of a... rather classical, rather boring business man type personality or persona that would take advantage of... or take advantage, you know it's, make use of a given trend, in order to sell something in an overpriced fashion.

[00:11:49] I: Why do you think that's a trend right now?

[00:11:52] A4: Well, because it's a trend that is seen all over the place. And because there is demand for it.

[00:11:57] I: Why do you think it is a trend?

[00:12:00] A4: Because people will pay for it.

[00:12:02] I: Do you think, why is this vintage thing, a thing? What do you think are people's motivations in buying...

[00:12:14] A4: The perception of authenticity, I would guess.

[00:12:16] I: Ok. Do you think people... actually care about authenticity? Or...

[00:12:24] A4: No, I think they care more about the perception of authenticity than about authenticity. Because I think almost anyone could actually build something of this sort very cheaply. The fact that someone would buy it, uh... I think means that they, you know, they genuinely care more about the perception of authenticity than authenticity.

[00:12:46] I: Mhm... We talked about the price already, what you think, and you said it very much depends ... how... well, let's say... Because we have these two kind of perceptions of, either, if it's mass-produced or if it's, uh... hand-made. How does that, both of them

are possible, how does that influence your perception of value from both sides? If you see it as a hand-made thing, then you said something about 30, 40 kroner...

[00:13:29] A4: probably, yes.

[00:13:29] I: ... and if it was mass-produced, then you would think it's much more. How do you rate the overall attractiveness of the brand, as you see it now, without a lot of information at-hand?

[00:13:52] A4: Uh... not very high.

[00:13:54] I: On a rate from 1 to 10?

[00:13:58] A4: 3.

[00:14:00] I: Ok. Why?

[00:14:00] A4: Uh... this perceived trend that I mentioned.

[00:14:09] I: Ok, cool. Is there anything else that you would like to add that we haven't talked about?

[00:14:16] A4: No, I don't think so. Uh... If this brand were to ... market itself... So the one I can think of nullifying this effect, which is negative in my perception would be if the brand were to market itself as a sort of charity-shop kind of thing. If it would say "yes, these are actually recycled ()" and yes, a vast portion of ... you know () because the costs are very very low for this sort of thing. But, even if it were to sell it for, let's say 100 kroner, if it were to say, "80% of the profit goes to charity" or some of that sorts. That would completely change the perception of this?

[00:14:58] I: How would they communicate it in an authentic way, that you would actually believe?

[00:15:04] A4: Adverts, adverts, I mean... have you ever been to Cambridge, England?

[00:15:07] I: Yeah

[00:15:09] A4: Then, yeah, there are lots of charity shops that have been popping up. And there is no... uh... no mistake in that.

[00:15:16] I: Ok.. So it's physical shops where you can walk in...

[00:15:20] A4: Yeah, and I suppose if there were a website, then, of course, similarly, in a prominent "About Us"- section of that sort.

[00:15:30] I: Yeah, ok. So, what are the three, or what are the things you will remember about Jonas Co.? If someone asked you on the street, "What is Jonas Co.?"

[00:15:41] A4: That it makes hipster goods.... As far as I can tell.

[00:15:47] I: Anything else?

[00:15:47] A4: Uh... light bulbs... I mean... makes lamps.

[00:15:51] I: Ok, cool. Then two more demographic questions, just for the analysis. What's your year of birth and your profession?

[00:15:59] A4: 1988 and chemist.

[00:16:04] I: Ok, cool, awesome. Thank you.

Transcript A5

Group A (no story) - Respondent A5

Year of Birth: 1993

Profession: Student

Nationality: Danish

Gender: Female

[00:00:08] I: First of all, thank you for your participation. I really appreciate it.

[00:00:12] A5: You're welcome.

[00:00:12] I: Just to mention again that this will be audio-recorded and that your anonymity will be ensured throughout the whole process of handling the data. Do you have any questions before we start?

[00:00:23] A5: No.

[00:00:25] I: Ok, so this study is basically about learning more about how people perceive a brand. The brand is Jonas Co., it's a new brand that is about to launch on the European market. And, I would just ask you to answer in as much detail as possible, to just be spontaneous, and there are no right or wrong answers. Feel free to move around, or touch, or whatever you want to do with the lamp. I also brought some pictures of other products, so you know that they also, you know, produce different designs. And... yeah, feel free to examine it and then just tell me what your first impressions are.

[00:01:12] A5: Uh... It's very colorful, that thing, it's kind of... like..cou cou, I would say, crazy ((laughs)). Uh.... but I kind of like it. I'm more minimalistic in my style, so... for me, it wouldn't, like it's not my style per se, but I like the whole element of like... It looks like... it's like... reused, uh... that's cool.

[00:01:38] I: Why do you think it's reused?

[00:01:44] A5: Well, it looks like an old tin box, doesn't it? Yeah... that's like the kind of vibe I got from it. Like... that could be, like, at your grandma's house or something. And then... like a whole new spin of it with the lamp on top. I know that this is very in right now with the... the bulb. I see a lot of, like, the bulbs hanging and stuff. So they use that element, that's really cool.

[00:02:06] I: How do you perceive the whole shape of the product?

[00:02:12] A5: Well that's the thing. To me, it... you notice it right away that it's different, definitely. Uh... but the more I look like it, of course it looks like the original shape of a lamp, but the... yeah... but you definitely notice it when you walk into the room. That's for sure ((laughs))

[00:02:38] I: Does it elicit any special, like, any feelings, or any...?

[00:02:42] A5: Well, as I said, like, my grandma's house. It looks like something that would be, like, in an old kitchen and stuff. So it's like... memories of my grandma's house, I think ((raises voice)). Yeah, and then, like, with a modern element on top. Yeah...

[00:02:55] I: What else do you associate the... let's stick to the brand, because the products are all different. They are kind of different, but kind of similar as well, uh... What else do you associate it with? You said your grandma's house, uh... anything else?

[00:03:15] A5: Well... I guess there's also a sort of modern element, I feel like, I said with the bulb on top. Like I see that a lot in, like, Danish... uh... interior design. So... yeah...

[00:03:33] I: Does it remind you of anything else?

[00:03:39] A5: I don't know, really. Uh... It doesn't, no. It's very, like, unique, I think. Yeah... That's cool.

[00:03:51] I: What do you like about the Jonas Co. brand so far? You don't know a lot, but from what you see here?

[00:03:58] A5: Well, I like the whole, like, recycling of, like, if it was an old tin can... Uh... Also, like the colors, like it's very colorful, like I know, if I would () use it, like... uh... everything of mine is white and then this would be, like, a pop of color in a room, I think that's really cool. Uh... As a brand... I think it's unique, uh... special... uh... what's that called, uh... innovative, yeah.

[00:04:34] I: What don't you like about the brand?

[00:04:35] A5: ... What don't I like about it... It might be too... what's that word for it... crazy for me ((raises voice)) Yeah... it's too much in your eyes, like, what's that called, like.. uh... It's definitely something that you see when you walk into a room, I feel like. And that's maybe not my kind of style...Yeah...

[00:04:59] I: If this brand was a person, how would he or she be? How would he or she look like?

[00:05:08] A5: Well, I get kind of a hipster vibe, I feel like... Like a hipster Copenhagen... ((laughs)) kind of, yeah... long beard... ((laughs)) I don't know... Definitely a hipster from Copenhagen, I could totally see that.

[00:05:25] I: What does a hipster include?

[00:05:26] A5: Well, it's the whole recycling, uh... but with an element of modern... I feel like, it's different... yeah.

[00:05:41] I: Mhm... If you had to describe the brand in three adjectives or three words or sentences, how would you describe it?

[00:05:53] A5: Uh... the brand? Uh... innovative and creative... uh... mh... unique... yeah...

[00:06:19] I: For you personally, how important is it to buy furniture or interior design pieces that have a history?

[00:06:28] A5: For me personally? Uh... It doesn't really. I'm more into, like, personal pictures and stuff like that. So... not really. It doesn't really...

[00:06:42] I: So it's more about your own history and your own self that you bring into the room?

[00:06:48] A5: Yeah, definitely. Definitely, yeah... And then maybe my family's old stuff. Yeah... But not going out and finding something in a store or something like that. Yeah...

[00:06:58] I: How much do you think these products cost on the Danish market?

[00:07:03] A5: Uh.... that's hard to say... Maybe like... I think they would maybe say like... uh... 1000?

[00:07:25] I: Mhm, why do you think so?

[00:07:25] A5: Because it has this element of, like, uniqueness, and... and creativeness. But it still looks... it doesn't look like trash... Like it still looks classy in a way ((raises voice)) That's why I feel like it's in that... it's in that, maybe more even than 1000. Yeah, but maybe around 1000?

[00:07:46] I: How much would you be willing to spend?

[00:07:50] A5: Puh... on a lamp? Uh... yeah, I wouldn't spend that... But maybe 500, somewhere around... yeah.

[00:07:59] I: How much do you usually spend on...?

[00:08:04] A5: Yeah, around 500 I feel like, yeah... But if it was something that was like really special to me or that I felt like was... I would probably spend more, yeah.

[00:08:12] I: Now that we've talked about it a little, how would you rate the overall attractiveness of the brand?

[00:08:21] A5: From 1 to 10?

[00:08:24] I: Yeah.

[00:08:24] A5: Uh... I would say, uh... a 6 ((raises voice))

[00:08:31] I: Ok, why is that?

[00:08:31] A5: Because I feel like, when I see, like how it's put in the different kind of rooms, I see that it has potential for even different kind of styles and stuff. So... that's kind of a plus. Uh... for me, it's just... kind of too out of there, like too out there for me... So that's, I think that's why the lamps are like 6.

[00:08:53] I: What would it need to be rated better?

[00:09:00] A5: For it to be better?

[00:09:01] I: For it to be better.

[00:09:01] A5: Yeah.. uh... Yeah, I don't know... Uh... It would need for me to be more.. classy, I feel like. More sty..., like maybe more minimalistic. Like, I feel like it's... yeah... it's... yeah... it's too much for me, I feel like. I don't know how to explain it ((laughs)) But I'm... like my style is probably boring as well, but...

[00:09:38] I: Well, everyone has his or her own style, so that's totally fine. That's also what this is about.

[00:09:42] A5: Yeah.

[00:09:43] I: Is there anything else that we haven't, that you would like to add?

[00:09:53] A5: I would just say that I feel like... it could do really well, uh... especially, like, with the Danish style right now, with the bulb, it's very popular. Uh... and then with the whole new element of the, the tin can, if that's what you call it. As I said, I feel like it would do really well... just not for me, but I feel like there's a really big market for it... probably.

[00:10:17] I: Because, you said, because the bulbs are kind of in?

[00:10:21] A5: Yeah, and also the whole, uh... the recycling, and everything like that...Uh... yeah.. () But yeah, I feel like that style, I could see that a lot at homes.

[00:10:37] I: Why do you think that's a thing right now?

[00:10:42] A5: I feel like there is... a lot more attraction to recycling things, and... and that has been in Copenhagen for a long time... I just feel like people... want that history element. And don't necessarily want what everybody else has. So they also try, like, find something unique... I feel like people find that very... attractive, or... inspiring. Yeah...

[00:11:11] I: Ok, cool. What are the three most significant things you are going to remember about Jonas Co.? If somebody asked you on the street "Jonas Co., what is it?" How would you describe it?

[00:11:25] A5: Uh... I would say "It's that tin can lamp" ((laughs)) No, just kidding ((laughs)). Uh... I would say it's like a new innovative project of using... creating a lamp. Is it only lamps they do?

[00:11:38] I: For now.

[00:11:38] A5: For now, yeah. Uh... It's kind of a mixture of... uh... recycle and modern. Uh... what else would I say... Yeah, that it's... it... appears very unique, uh, and I haven't seen anything like it. Yeah.

[00:12:07] I: Ok, that, was basically it already ((laughs)) That was fast. Just two more demographic questions. What's your year of birth and your profession?

[00:12:17] A5: 93 and student.

[00:12:19] I: Ok, awesome.

[00:12:21] A5: Perfect.

[00:12:21] I: Thank you.

[00:12:22] A5: No problem.

Transcript B1

Group B (story) - Respondent B1

Year of Birth: 1988

Profession: Student, part-time job at Nestlé and at a clothing store

Nationality: Danish

Gender: Female

[00:00:07] I: Thank you very much for being here today.

[00:00:10] B1: You're welcome.

[00:00:11] I: I just wanted to mention again that this will be audio-recorded, and that your anonymity will be ensured throughout the process.

[00:00:21] B1: Yeah.

[00:00:21] I: So this study is about brand perceptions and brand experience and I brought this brand and this product, and different other, you know, impressions of the brand, which is soon to launch on the European market. And I just want your, you're welcome to move it around, to touch it, to do whatever you want, just don't destroy it...

[00:00:53] B1: ((laughs))

[00:00:53] I: ... and what I'm looking for is just your associations, your opinions, and, just your overall perceptions. So take your time, examine everything you like and then just let me know what your first impressions are, your thoughts, your feelings.

[00:01:14] B1: Uh, well, the, ((touches the lamp)) oh ((surprised)). Ok ((laughs)). Is it because of touch? Ahh, ok, makes sense. That's a nice feature. Uh... it, it looks really cool, it would be something that... uh... yeah, I would, I would like to make on my own, uh... but probably never would get around to. Uh... I have this, uh, I really have this thing for ... I guess these are real, old boxes, yeah?

[00:01:45] I: Mhm.

[00:01:45] B1: ... using, yeah, reusing old stuff and then, yeah, make it your own with the... for instance lamps. I used the Nilfisk vacuum cleaner, I don't know if you know that, but uh... yeah to make my own lamp...

[00:02:03] I: Oh wow, nice!

[00:02:03] B1: ... so kind of in ... the same, well not the same genre, but I like these a bit untraditional lamps. So I think that's really cool. Uh.... yeah ((moves lamp around)). And then I guess there's a lot of variety in... in the boxes, so you can choose, yeah, some of the different ones. I might not go with the baby and the biscuits.. uhh ((laughs)).

[00:02:32] I: Why is that?

[00:02:32] B1: Uh... I think for me it's ... I don't know, when I look at this side, it's a bit ... I don't know, old Russia, maybe, I have no idea, but that's the associations I get. And then when you look at the other side and you get the probably Japanese or... Chinese scripts so it's ... yeah, probably not Russian with this, but uh, that's some of the ... yeah, the associations, and then a bit of Scottish with the (). But looking at some of the other boxes here, there is, I would say there are some of them that I would prefer. Uh... I really like the ones with the parrots. Uh... well, I think for me it would be, yeah, because of the colors, this one, I think I probably find these two the most interesting ((points at pink and red lamp on pictures)). Uh... I don't know if there's a number or anything on these if you need that, but...

[00:03:41] I: No, there isn't. But I got it ((laughs))

[00:03:41] B1: Uh... Yeah, I find it really cool and I think it's uh... I think this one ((points at lamp with doll)) is a bit more difficult to probably sell to the Danes, and maybe also, maybe this one would go in it as well, but I think these would... because a lot of people are.. reusing, finding their own things and building their own ... well, both lamps and ... shelves and, yeah, people would like to do it themselves, uh... So this is kind of untraditional and could look like something that you could have made yourself, even though you didn't, you went for the easier way to buy it, but, uh, but it could be something that uh... I could see in a lot of my friends' places. What, what's the price? I don't know if we get to that...

[00:04:32] I: We'll get to that later.

[00:04:32] B1: Ok. Yeah, because that's of course something that ...uhh .. needs to be considered, because I think for me, when buying things that I think I could ((laughs)), I probably wouldn't be able to make the touch feature, but I could make the, uh... yeah, do it... at home we have the Philips Hue, so we have the light dimmer, so if I made it () one of these bulbs instead, then I could get the same feature without ... Uh...

[00:05:04] I: Yeah, just using your phone...

[00:05:04] B1: ... Just using my phone instead. Uh... but I think this is, uh, yeah, I could definitely see myself having one of these. I think they are really nice.

[00:05:16] I: So what do you associate with the brand?

[00:05:21] B1: Mmh... It's difficult to say, I would probably say it's small.... I don't know... but I see like a small start-up, someone really creative, who has probably been building these for themselves and then your friends and then seeing, ok there's a market for it. A lot of people find them interesting and want to buy them, so.. and then probably started up a company.

[00:05:46] I: Why do you think people would find it interesting?

[00:05:46] B1: Uh... because it's... it's not... just an IKEA lamp, it's ... uh... it's something... well the boxes are reused so they have a history behind it and I think that's, like, storytelling is a big part of what people buy through. They want to buy the story as much as they want of course the lamp, but they want the story behind it, instead of just going to IKEA and buying the same lamp as everyone else.

[00:06:17] I: Why do you think that is?

[00:06:17] B1: I think here in Denmark we want to... we want to think that we are unique ((laughs)), even though we might not be. We want to say that we have our own taste, even though if you go to all my friends' places and... a lot of them would.. then look similar. But we try to make them our own, and this could be a way to do it, because if I buy this lamp, then... I think I would know that no one else has this specific or the same lamp. So in that way then it would be... yeah, it's unique and it could have been something that I built myself. So it, it kind of, as I said, I wouldn't choose this one ((lamp with doll)), I would prefer going with one of the others here. Uh... and I think in terms of that they... that also reflects your personality. Either you go for the ones with the color or you go for the ones with more history behind. And.. Yeah, so...

[00:07:18] I: You say more history. What do you mean by that?

[00:07:20] B1: Uh... yeah, I don't know, probably if... it's difficult to see on these small ... smaller pictures, but if there was a... more history is probably not the right way to frame it, but ... uh... if I went with something ... ((points at blue lamp)). This one reminds me of travelling, because of the, and diving, I know it's a ... it looks like a peacock or something, so it's not diving or anything but if there was something with water and ... and that would reflect my personality as a diver. Or... yeah, so... also the countries, if they reflect the country that you have actually been in, then it also connects some people, because if you, if you talk about the lamp, then .. uh, „it's really nice“, and uh, “I bought this lamp because it reminds me of the Philippines“ or, something, so you kind of then attach your own story to something even though it's a bought product.

[00:08:19] I: So you said people create their own stories...

[00:08:29] B1: Yeah.

[00:08:29] I: ... through things like that. What does it remind you of, the brand?

[00:08:38] B1: Uh... Well the brand, it looks like old cookie jars, uh... or cookie tins, I don't know if that's just because there's a cookie on this one, uh, could also be coffee... or ... no, it's biscuits. Are they all biscuit ones? Because this one says biscuit, and there's a biscuit on this one.

[00:09:04] I: Yeah, a lot of them.

[00:09:01] B1: So.. they are all from the same? Or is it just a coincidence that this specific size is.... from the biscuits or...

[00:09:14] I: Well, they're actually ... uh... most of them are biscuit tins from the same region in the world.

[00:09:23] B1: Ok. ... So they're all from Asia? Or is that just my assumptions because there are some Asian writings on this one, or is it...

[00:09:36] I: Well... actually ((points to the paper tag and the story))

[00:09:48] B1: ((reads the story)) That's a really cool story, though.

[00:10:23] I: Why do you think that?

[00:10:23] B1: Because it just... makes more ... puts more history into the box and the lamp. Uh... and because, as it says... uh... “the symbol of rebellion against today's world of mindless mass-consumption“. Uh.. so again, going back to my statement earlier where it's... you don't want the IKEA mass production, you want something that's unique and something that's your own, even though you may not have the time to build it. You may have thought of something similar, not similar, but building something ... creative and your own, and then you might not be that creative on your own ((laughs)). And then you, you opt for the buying version but it's still, yeah, reused products and, yeah, so...

[00:11:16] I: Why do you think people are interested in that?

[00:11:18] B1: I think we're trying to ... not all, but ... trying to get away from, yeah, mass-consumption, I... a lot of the things in my home are things that are reused or I find on the street or ... so try to ... not buy things in IKEA and not ... uh... I think () more conscience buying organic, buying reused stuff, second hand, all those things, so... I think it's... getting more and more in, and being more trendy to instead of just buying new stuff all the time and throwing away, then reusing what's already there, and then ... making lamps out of biscuit tins or ... old vacuum cleaners or...

[00:12:05] I: What are the reasons for this, let's say, rebellion against mass-consumption, what are the values behind it? Is it the thought of ecological sustainability, or having maybe ... historical or old, up-cycled cookie boxes?

[00:12:33] B1: I think for me it's the sustainability, uh... yeah, uh... as number one, but then, as a student as well, I think instead of throwing away money on new designer stuff, than buying reused stuff or finding things on the street and then kind of rebuilding them on your own, then ... that ensures that you have money to do other things, like travel,... yeah... so you can actually go and experience where these cookie jars came from, or... yeah. So I think people are... again, I think it depends on who you are and where you're from, but ... trying to break away from this mass-consumption and... and thinking more sustainable, I think many people at my age, they start to buy organic products instead and think about the environment and... yeah.. And don't just consume for the sake of consuming.

[00:13:34] I: So, coming back to the brand and the product, what does it remind you of, spontaneously? A situation, a person, a feeling, a...

[00:13:50] B1: Uh... I think this one ((points at picture of blue lamp)) as I said before, because of the colors, reminded me of diving in the Philippines, even though it's a peacock on the... but just the colors and because it's such a small picture it could remind me of that. I don't know, this one ((points at picture of pink lamp)) reminds me of, a lot of them actually remind me of travelling. Uh, this one reminds me of Costa Rica and parrots and... and this one ((points at picture of red lamp)) more like an old... I would say.. coffee tin....

So I think, they could all reflect my personality in a way, but... with the ... yeah. What's it called... uh, but it's me projecting my own story to the tins. So, yeah.

[00:14:44] I: What do you like about the brand?

[00:14:49] B1: I think the uniqueness that it's not something that ... you've seen before and the fact that, yeah, no one else would have, again I don't know how many were produced of these specific tins, so there might be someone having the same, but the feeling that I would be the only one to have this specific lamp, that would be something I would find interesting. Uh... and the fact that it could look like something that I built myself ((laughs)), even though it's not.... in a more, I would say, skilled way than it would turn out if I did it myself ((laughs)).

[00:15:28] I: What do you maybe don't like as much about the brand?

[00:15:33] B1: Mmh... I don't know, I think the only thing, what's it called, here ((points at the bulb socket))... because I like the bulb, and I like the tins, I'm not too keen on the chord, I don't know if they come in different colors, and I'm not sure what you could do with this one, but it's, the plastic here ((points to the bulb socket)), I don't know, I would prefer it differently. Not sure how, but... yeah, and I think the chord kind of ruins it a bit, uh...

[00:16:14] I: Ok, why do you think so?

[00:16:14] B1: I think the... I would prefer it in just an ordinary color, because it takes a bit of the focus away and it's kind of, I think it's a clash between the very modern, with the chord and what we try to... yeah, build with the tin... because this is very old, and I know it's then built into a new lamp, but I think it's... this one, then we have the black and white stripes and... I don't think it goes too well with the tin. I think I would just prefer it either black or in one color way that matches the theme of the tin, so this one maybe could be red or white, here, go for pink, this one maybe go for the blue, this one go for the green, so it matches the tin.

[00:17:13] I: If you had to describe the personality of the brand, not particularly one of the products, but the brand per se, in three adjectives. How would you describe Jonas Co.?

[00:17:29] B1: Mh... that's a difficult one. Uh... I'd probably say sustainable, uh... innovative, and ... playful.

[00:17:45] I: And if the brand was a person, how would he or she look like, what would he or she wear, his or her age? How would you describe?

[00:17:57] B1: I don't know. I would either say... uh... in the twenties, or like... yes... end twenties, beginning thirties, or otherwise... I have to be careful what I say, not really old, but then maybe 50, 60. Someone where these tins actually mean something to them. Uh... this could either be, yeah, the person that... so, it could be either a grand-child of someone that lived when they had these tins, where their grandma and grandpa, someone had these... tins standing at home and thinking "Oh, they're really cool!" and started looking into it and getting there, so that would be the young person, or otherwise it would be yeah, an older person thinking... like super, super skilled, uh... I don't think in the mid-section, but...

[00:18:56] I: Why do you think so?

[00:18:56] B1: Uh... I don't know, I think it's either... I don't know... either young, creative, or then someone who had a relationship with the tins... uh... so yeah.

[00:19:14] I: Mhm. How important is it for you to buy products with a history?

[00:19:22] B1: Mh... I would say somewhat ((laughs)). Because ... some of the things in my home don't have a history at all, but ... uh... I really find it interesting and also going to friends' places if they have something where there's a history, if, for instance this lamp was bought on a vacation or ... something like that, that would be a story behind the lamp. But also the story that's attached to the lamp with the brand, I find it interesting. Uh... I don't say that I only buy things that ... come with a history, or... but, I don't know, I find it more interesting if there's some history behind the product.

[00:20:07] I: We talked about it earlier, or... not really, but how much do you think these products cost on the Danish market?

[00:20:14] B1: It's difficult to say. It could be anything between 500 and 5000 ((laughs)). So... they would probably be 1500 maybe?

[00:20:37] I: Why do you think that?

[00:20:40] B1: Because of the history and ... people tend to be willing to pay more for history, because if IKEA just reproduced these tins and stuff, then it would probably be 150 kroner, but... because of the history and the gathering of the tins, and also the fact that it has this function ((refers to dimmer)) makes it ... more expensive than just... uh... just a lamp that you switch on and off, you can actually dim the light and, yeah.

[00:21:16] I: How much would you be willing to spend for it?

[00:21:18] B1: Are you asking me as a student, or me as ((laughs)) when I'm done with studying?

[00:21:25] I: ((laughs)) If you had the money.

[00:21:30] B1: If I had the money ((laughs)) Uh... I think probably, realistically, 1000 to 1500, I don't think I'd pay above that. Uh... preferably less, but, uh... yeah, in that range.

[00:21:50] I: Ok. So all in all, how would you rate the attractiveness of the brand... on a scale from 1 to 10 to make it a little more difficult ((laughs))?

[00:21:57] B1: ((laughs)). Uh... is it the brand or the lamp?

[00:22:07] I: The brand.

[00:22:10] B1: I think as a brand, with the history and... like everything in total, I would say... probably... 8, maybe 9 ((raises voice)). Uh... Yeah.

[00:22:24] I: Why is that?

[00:22:27] B1: Well, as I mentioned, I am really into, like all these sustainable... ways of using things, and the history, so I think it all combined, it generates a really good story and... I could reflect my own stories on the products as well. So...

[00:22:47] I: Ok. Is there anything else you would like to add about this product, this brand?

[00:22:52] B1: No, I find them really cool, so... what is the price? ((laughs))

[00:22:57] I: ((laughs)) I'll tell you later. So after this interview, what are the three things that will stay in your memory, that you will remember about the brand?

[00:23:11] B1: Uh... I think... like the whole story about uh... Vietnam and North Korea... yeah, the sustainable, and going away from mass-consumption. And then... yeah, I think I'll remember these two ((points at pictures of pink and blue lamp)) more ((laughs)) than I'll actually remember this one ((points at lamp with doll)). Uh... I'm not sure about the name of the brand.

[00:23:42] I: Ok, why?

[00:23:42] B1: Uh... because it doesn't really say what it is. It's a ... not that it has to, I don't know if there are other products behind the brand, but it's not something that is... I wouldn't say it's a strong brand name, uh, because it could be anything. Uh... so I think for me the name is probably not something... I'll probably google tin lamp, something like that, because I'll forget about the brand, but I'll remember what the lamp looked like.

[00:24:23] I: Ok, interesting. Perfect. So how would you tell others about the brand?

[00:24:37] B1: Mh... It would be... It would probably be something if I saw it ... uh... on Facebook or something, then I would share the story there. It's I think... for me... it's difficult to explain, unless you have a picture or something, so... I wouldn't go and say "I saw this... " then I'd have to google it if it was something that I wanted to buy. Uh, but I think it would probably be something that I would share on social media and say "Oh, this is supercool" and spread the word that way.... Unless I buy it and then I'll tell a lot of people about it ((laughs)) when they ask about it.

[00:25:18] I: Yeah, I think that's it. Just two more demographic questions. What is your year of birth and your profession?

[00:25:25] B1: I was born in 1988 and I'm a student and then I work part-time in HR at Nestlé and part-time at a clothing store as well.

[00:25:42] I: Ok. Perfect. Thank you very much.

[00:25:52] B1: You're welcome.

Transcript B2

Group B (story) - Respondent B2

Year of Birth: 1983

Profession: Chemical Researcher (post-doc.)

Nationality: Portuguese

Gender: Female

[00:00:09] I: First of all, thank you for your participation.

[00:00:16] B2: Of course.

[00:00:16] I: I really appreciate it. I just want to mention again that this will be audio-recorded, is that fine?

[00:00:24] B2: Ok.

[00:00:24] I: And that your anonymity will be ensure throughout the process of handling the data and everything. So, this interview, or this study is basically about, uh, learning more about how people perceive a brand. And this brand, it's Jonas Co. and it's about to launch on the European market. What I'm looking for is your opinions, your associations, your, uh, how you perceive the brand. I would ask you to answer in as much detail as possible, there are no right or wrong answers, and just be spontaneous. And also, feel free to touch the thing, to move it around, do whatever you like... So, what I would just ask you to do is look at the brand, at the... product and I also brought some pictures of other products to show that every product is different. Just examine everything you have here.

[00:01:33] B2: ((moves lamp around; reads story))

[00:02:13] I: So what are your first impressions of the overall picture of the brand, of Jonas Co.?

[00:02:19] B2: Uh... strange ((laughs)). So some, somewhat, so on one hand it's vintage, it's trying to like, appeal to this look-old-style, and uh... also at the same time trying to be modern, right. So for example in these pictures you can see that the decor is pretty ... modern, recent furniture with this vintage look of the... of the tin part. Uh... And you want me to answer also what I think about the product?

[00:02:55] I: I'm sorry?

[00:02:55] B2: You want me answer also if I would purchase it...

[00:02:58] I: Well, for now just your ... what do you think about it, what do you feel when you look at it?

[00:03:02] B2: Ok, but I think it's interesting. Cause I think...

[00:03:06] I: You said strange...

[00:03:03] B2: Strange...

[00:03:07] I: Strange because it mixes the two?...

[00:03:10] B2: Strange, actually the design, I find it strange... So the fact that the tin is the base of the lamp, and actually there's no protection, I mean the lamp is exposed to the eyes. Uh, and the lamp has a very modern aspect to it, the lamp, the bulb I mean. And then the can is obviously looking old. So it's kind of unexpected, so, surprising, I would say, that's what I mean by strange. Uh... so, different. Uh... yeah, but so far, I think it's an interesting concept.

[00:03:49] I: What do you associate with the brand or with the products that Jonas Co. offer?

[00:03:53] B2: You mean what I, what it makes me think of?

[00:03:58] I: Yeah. Does it remind you of anything? Of...

[00:04:03] B2: Yeah, like, grandmothers. ((laughs)) You know, so, like, maybe cookie tins that my grandmother used to have cookies in. And... also, actually, it reminds me of, uh... Asian propaganda posters. So for like, uh... yeah, also because of what I read I suppose, but also because of the, the, the inscriptions of the tin, some kind of, yeah, this kind of uh... especially Chinese posters with, uh... the dolls with the very bright, big eyes. Uh... but also I see on the ones that you are showing me on the cards, that not all of them have this on them.

[00:04:54] I: Yeah, every lamp is different.

[00:04:54] B2: Right, so this one, I think I'm focusing too much on this one here in front of me. But, yeah, so basically, like, I think the design of the tin itself reminds me of that kind of, like my grandmother's house, you know. Uh... yeah, but also... with the modern bulbs, so it's kind of interesting.

[00:05:15] I: Does it, you said it reminds you of your grandmother's place, do you associate that with, like, good feelings of when you were little and, is it good feelings or good memories, or...?

[00:05:30] B2: Yeah, good memories. Yeah, I think... yeah, good memories of things that evoke this kind of good feeling of something that has been in the family for a long time.

[00:05:43] I: So what do you like, I mean we already talked about it a little, but what do you like about the brand per-se. I mean, you don't have a lot of information here, and I'm aware of that, but from what you see here, what do you think of Jonas Co.?

[00:05:58] B2: So the brand or the product?

[00:06:00] I: The brand.

[00:06:01] B2: The brand. So...

[00:06:03] I: But I mean the product is part of the brand.

[00:06:06] B2: Right, right. So if I'm talking about the product itself that I see in front of me, I think it's interesting. Uh... I touched it and actually, I don't know, it's like not really working very well... In my opinion. And so every time I touch it, the light kind of flickers... Uh... and it kind of bothers me that there's no... how do you say.. to turn on and off...

[00:06:30] I: The switch..

[00:06:30] B2: The switch, yeah. There's no switch. And it seems to not be very well connected, I'd say. So in terms of quality, I'm not very impressed with it, no.

[00:06:41] I: Why do you think it's, uh...

[00:06:46] B2: I think it might be on purpose, maybe... I don't know, to make it... like... seem older, kind of, more vintage-feel... Uh... But, yeah, in terms of being practical, if I wanted it for myself, I wouldn't probably, in the condition as I see it right now, I probably wouldn't buy it... But, the brand itself, I think the concept, like I said before, is very interesting and it's nice to have this kind of history on the label that you kind of appreciate better the product that's in front of you. I like also the lettering of the card, I think it's... and I like how the presentation is done, it is very simple, with, kind of, the card on it... very simple, not too much text... not too busy with a lot of information, but with a nice story. Uh... yeah... so overall, again, I think it's an interesting concept, the product is interesting, uh... it evokes some nice, familiar feelings... Quality-wise I'm not very convinced.

[00:07:52] I: Because? Could you elaborate on that?

[00:07:56] B2: Because of, when I touch it, the light is flickery, and turning off sometimes, and I would want this to be more steady, I suppose. But maybe it's just because it's not well-screwed.

[00:08:08] I: I think it's like ((touches the lamp several times to present dimmer function))... it's supposed to be a dimmer.

[00:08:10] B2: Ohhh ((understands))...

[00:08:13] I: But you can have the different... lights...

[00:08:16] B2: Oh, so that's why, ok. It just felt like it was ((laughs)) not working well. Yeah, you're right, now I see. So, yeah, that's why there's no switch ((laughs))... Now I understand. So actually, in that case, it's quite cool.

[00:08:32] I: You said you like the story, why is that? Why do you think the story influences you?

[00:08:39] B2: Why it appeals to me?

[00:08:43] I: Why do you think it appeals to you?

[00:08:44] B2: Uh... I mean I think it's always interesting that you are able to... uh... take something that has been used for a certain purpose, and use it again with a different purpose, that maybe, is more reflective of the times you live in. So... you know this up-cycling kind of movement, I think that's kind of interesting. And so it's looking old, but looking new at the same time. So... yeah... it's not like ((laughs)) it's not dirty or whatever, but it can be used for something that I would be able to use. I think that's a good feeling. And also, you know, there's a little bit of the whole history of, like, the person who designed it has been involved in... and things that obviously are very important, and, you know has done some nice work and ... uh... probably influenced by that experience in Asia, uh... you know, could see a product that has been used there for one purpose and could bring it back here and use it for something else, but people still know what it used to be used for. So, I think that's kind of nice to think of the history of the object, that now is serving a different purpose.

[00:09:57] I: Is that important to you when you buy furniture or interior design? Do you...

[00:10:04] B2: Yeah... personally, no, but because of my history. Personally, I have moved around a lot, I always stay short-time in every place, so I don't do that too much. Like invest in important pieces that I think are valuable for this kind of reason. I would like to. So it's just because of how my life has been so far, that I haven't done that but I think that, yes, it's a nice feeling that I would like to have. So for sure, at some point in my life, I would like to start collecting, purchasing some pieces that have a meaning and when I look at them, you know, it makes you feel good, because you think "Oh, this used to be in this place and used to be used for this and now I'm using it for this". And you, like, when your friends come over, and you explain what this was for and ... I think that's nice. Personally, I don't have any of those kinds of things right now, because I always kind of buy things used and have to sell it after a few months, and then move, so... personally no, but... yeah.

[00:11:03] I: Makes sense. If you had to describe the Jonas Co. brand in three words, how would you describe it?

[00:11:14] B2: Mh... uh... hipster ((raises voice))... authentic... mh... maybe vintage. You mean the brand, like based on the product, right?

[00:11:46] I: Yeah, what you know of Jonas Co... And if this brand was a person, how would he or she be? What would he or she do?

[00:12:03] B2: A hipster.

[00:12:04] I: A hipster... meaning...?

[00:12:04] B2: So meaning modern, so using technology, like you know, the latest iPhone and Laptop and whatever. But then at the same time wearing some pieces of clothing that you can clearly see that have been used before and have some history... passed on maybe from previous generations. So like, uh, a combination of modern and old, uh... yeah. And especially using... bringing back to the modern days technology or things that used to be used in older times, maybe for a different purpose. Yeah, so how people would use maybe a bag that used to be, maybe for doctors in the Second World War and now they would be using it maybe as a carry-on or a normal, like, purse. Something like that. But at the same time still modern... yeah.

[00:13:01] I: Yeah... Why do you think that's a thing these days? The up-cycling, or the vintage, or this whole... it is kind of a hype I feel...

[00:13:09] B2: It is, it is. So on one hand I think that it is because of .. there's more concern for the environment, because of, you know, how things are () world. We should worry about the environment, climate, all this kind of things. And I think there is some kind of effort to ... to kind of care more about the impact, our carbon footprint, our impact on the planet. So I think a lot of people are aware of

Transcript B2 | 2 of 4

that. And one way to approach this is to buy, you know, trying not to, I mean trying to reuse things and yeah. But I also think it's very, because of social media, right. A lot of, there's a lot of ... people who are maybe great photographers or great designers, great interior designers and they know how to take a piece and make it look cool in a different setting and so people, you know, if they are subjected to that many times, they also start thinking it's quite cool. So I think it is a little bit of concern with the environment, but it's also about technology and all the access to information that we have now, and all this... I'm gonna say invasion of privacy, but I don't mean it in a bad way, but like the fact that you know so much about other people's... you know... interior, preferences of interior design, or... yeah... how they decorate their living room, what kind of, like plates they are using in the kitchen, and cooking ware and stuff like that. So I think, because people share that a lot, so there's the possibility to ... kind of understand that you can do things differently...

[00:14:47] I: Might it also be that people try to differentiate themselves, because they know so much about ... I'm just thinking...

[00:14:54] B2: Yeah..

[00:14:54] I: I don't know, maybe...

[00:14:56] B2: Yeah, it could be. People want to be different, also, and like, kind of stand out from ... from, you know, the mass production of things, you know. With IKEA, with all these big, like, accessible price-wise stores, also, people tend to be kind of.. you know, buy always the same and maybe it is a way to... yeah... to make it evident that you like this particular thing... Or you want to stand out a little bit... Like show your personality with what you purchase, how you decorate your house or how you dress or how you ... yeah... also that...

[00:15:34] I: So how much do you think these products cost?

[00:15:42] B2: How much I think they cost?

[00:15:42] I: Mhm.

[00:15:44] B2: I think... ((laughs))... it's hard to tell. I would say it costs probably, can I say in Euros or Dollars?

[00:15:58] I: Yeah, please.

[00:16:00] B2: Yeah, that's very hard for me..

[00:16:01] I:... for me too ((laughs))..

[00:16:03] B2: I would say, maybe this would go for... 80 Dollars

[00:16:13] I: US-Dollars?

[00:16:13] B2: Yeah, US-Dollars. I don't know what is the actual price, I mean, I'm not saying I agree with that price, so I'm just saying, probably if I saw this in a store, I would expect them to be selling them for maybe around that... 80 US-dollars.

[00:16:28] I: And what would you be willing to pay for such a product?

[00:16:31] B2: For this... actually, now that I touch it, it's cool... ((laughs)). Now that I know how it works... Uh... I would be paying maybe 50, around 50 US-dollars, something like that ((raises voice)).

[00:16:47] I: And how would you, we talked about it a little before but how would you rate, now that we've talked about it, how would you rate the overall attractiveness of the brand? Maybe not this specific product, because as you see there are other... uh... products as well. But how would you rate the attractiveness of, let's say, Jonas Co, as a company or as a brand?

[00:17:12] B2: Attractiveness...

[00:17:16] I: Let's say on a scale from 1 to 10...

[00:17:18] B2: And visually, or like after I've tried the product. Or you mean if I saw it on a shelf, you know..?

[00:17:24] I: Just now, right now from what you know...

[00:17:28] B2: From 0 to 10, I would say these products are ... maybe... 6 ((raises voice))

[00:17:36] I: Why is that?

[00:17:38] B2: So it's above average, I would say, because it's a nice concept, uh... seeing it up-close.. uh... And, I mean, I'm not personally very convinced by this whole vintage, up-cycling movement, not always at least, and so I think it's a nice concept, but ... it's not the best thing I've ever seen in terms of a lamp that I would like to have in my living room for example. So I wouldn't say a 10 or a 9, probably not even an 8, but ... So in terms of functionality and how it ... looks... it is nice, but not that top... But it's still, you know, above average, so it's not just a standard lamp that you can find anywhere, it doesn't look crappy or something. So it looks nice, but not at that, like, super-high level. So... yeah, maybe 6, 7, I would say.

[00:18:29] I: Ok, perfect. Is there anything else you would like to add? Anything that comes to your mind when you look at the... I know, it's ... you always focus on the product at-hand, I was actually trying to bring some more, but it wasn't possible..

[00:18:44] B2: Yeah, it's really hard to transport.

[00:18:44] I: So I brought the pictures...

[00:18:48] B2: Yeah, that's nice..

[00:18:48] I:... To try to focus on the brand, because, yeah, tastes are different.

[00:18:56] B2: Of course..

[00:18:56] I: But is there anything that comes to mind that comes to your mind at this point?

[00:18:59] B2: That I would like, yes, I would like, for example, I didn't realize it was by touching that you turn it on, and that there's actually more than one position than on and off. I think if I saw this product, I would like, at least, maybe, like small somewhere, maybe on the label or maybe a sticker somewhere, just to kind of.. then I could actually appreciate, because if this had happened in a story I would have been like "This is broken", you know. So, because of course, I was picking it up and lifting it, and things were changing and it just felt, from the beginning, that it was because it was not... so, I, one thing I would like to comment is that yeah, maybe some small, like "touch" or like, you know, "three different dimmer positions", something like that, just to know that there is more value to the product than you see at first. That's one thing. Uh... the other thing is... personally, I don't really like the... visually, the bulb being shown. The type of.. at least the fact that this is kind of clear glass and that it is not blocking, ... not... you know,

Transcript B2 | 3 of 4

blocking the light from my eyes, so it's kind of... it's not a pleasant light. So I don't feel like it's a... this might only be the bulbs's problem, maybe with a different bulb it would be different..

[00:20:21] I: Yeah, any bulb works.

[00:20:22] B2: So again, it doesn't take away from the concept of the product, but personally, this, this one and I mean I see that they are kind of similar, the other designs... So I don't particularly like the type of bulbs with the light itself is kind of not shaded. I felt like it needs a shade or something. Uh... and I think those are the two comments that we didn't talk about before.

[00:20:47] I: So after this, what are the three points you're going to remember about Jonas Co.?

[00:20:54] B2: Uh... I'm gonna remember, ok, lamps... I mean like, cool-looking lamps. Uh... I'm gonna remember this... up-cycling kind of thing, so like, trying to use things that are ... meant to be old, and use for something else and trying to transform it into lamps that you could use nowadays. So that's, like, a nice concept. Uh... and I will remember... What I will remember also, probably is, like, the name, Jonas Co.. So... I don't know, like... this male name, that Jonas, and the company, you know the Co. I don't know, I think I will remember that and I will remember that is has nice lettering, like the logo is nice, it looks cool. Uh... and I will remember... Also, can I make another comment?

[00:22:02] I: Please

[00:22:02] B2: It is actually related to what we discussed before but I think the tin is a little bit too big. If I could, like, ideally design, of course if this has been used like this, it is the size that it is, but I feel like, somehow the proportions are a little bit weird ((laughs)). For me. Like the size of the tin versus the size of the bulb. Ok, that was completely aside, but yes, I will remember, yeah, those things, I think. So the logo, the name and, uh.. this vintage-feel, hipster kind of thing, combination of modern with old. And also ((laughs)) that it is a lamp and that it has a touching thing ((laughs))

[00:22:46] I: ((laughs)) Ok, perfect, that was pretty much it. Just two more demographic questions. What is your year of birth and what's your profession?

[00:22:54] B2: I am from 1983 and I'm a chemical researcher, post-doc.

[00:23:02] I: Alright, perfect. Well, thank you very much.

[00:23:04] B2: You're welcome. It was a pleasure.

Transcript B3

Group B (story) - Respondent B3

Year of Birth: 1991

Profession: Student

Nationality: Danish

Gender: Female

[00:00:08] I: First of all, thank you for participating, I really appreciate it.

[00:00:13] B3: You're very welcome.

[00:00:13] I: I just want to mention again that this will be audio-recorded and that your anonymity will be ensured throughout the process. Do you have any questions before we're starting?

[00:00:27] B3: No, I'm curious about this. ((laughs))

[00:00:31] I: ((laughs)) Yeah, so this study is about brand experience, how people perceive a brand. First of all, yeah, just answer in as much detail as possible, be spontaneous, there are no right or wrong answers. Just feel free... And you're free to touch the product, to move it around, to do whatever you like. Just some background information: Jonas Co. is a new brand that is about to launch in Europe. And, they produce, as you see, lamps. I also brought these small pictures that you see that they have different designs and everything. And, yes, first I just like you to examine it and take a look at everything you see here today. And...

[00:01:28] B3: Uh... ((surprised)) Uh... Does it turn up when you touch it? Or no? Yes? Oh, ok, cool. ((laughs)) ... It's very... colorful, huh? ((laughs)) And it's, it's made of metal, or what is it made of? Aluminum or something?

[00:01:53] I: Yeah, I can't tell you the exact thing, but it's a metal box.

[00:01:56] B3: Ok. It kind of, it reminds me of something my... you know, my grandma, she has these, uh, boxes for cookies or something, cookie jars. Kind of these old-fashioned, it's become modern again, I think, with, uh... with these sort of drawings as well, of kids, or... uh... you see them in... what are they called? Flea markets? Yeah, yeah.

[00:02:22] I: Why do you think they're coming back, or being interesting again to people?

[00:02:25] B3: Uh... I think maybe we have this, it's kind of... this romantic view on... on... We want to bring in something a bit more old-fashioned to our homes as well, we see it in vintage furniture, or in... you know we want to go back to... to something that has previously, that has sort of a history to us, some kind of... uh... some kind of affection ((hesitates)) We have this word in Danish, but it has some kind of value to us, historically, or personally, or... yeah.

[00:03:01] I: So your first impression, you said, it reminds you of your grandma's place...

[00:03:09] B3: Yeah... but this is very modern as well.. Like this part ((points to upper part of lamp)) is more, uh.. something I, I ... uh... I... it's similar to more modern items in households I think. It's become ... maybe even during the last maybe five years we see a lot more of these types of lamps ((refers to bulb)) than previously. So it's kind of a combination, I think, of this, sort of retro, old-fashioned maybe, in my view. Uh.. with a more.. with a modern touch, or... yeah..

[00:03:43] I: What else do you associate with the brand?

[00:03:47] B3: Mh... I think it's very colorful, it has, uh... also these pictures with a lot of flowers and... It has kind of an, to me, a, maybe a natural element. It seems that they have birds on some of them, and it wants to... again it wants to illustrate some kind of, uh... a bit more rustic touch as well, with this kind of, with the product or material used, I think. Uh... And it's very, it's quite big for a lamp, I think, as well. It's kind of, uh... it's square, it has these, the form also says something about the product, right. So it's... but it's very funny, like, what... you know, it's very different from what you see in lamps otherwise. I guess that's also, perhaps part of the idea that it's something that sticks out from... from... what you see otherwise.

[00:04:51] I: Are you referring to, like, clean design? Or...

[00:04:58] B3: Yeah, I mean, mostly, these images, actually, that it's kind of, it's very bombastic in a way, at least the lower part is very bombastic. And then it, these images, it's something I haven't seen on lamps before, at least. Again, it's like a cookie jar with a, with a... what are these things ((points at bulb))

[00:05:18] I: Bulb

[00:05:18] B3: Yeah, bulb. So it's, it's quite different. And I can imagine that it, I mean it, maybe the idea is also to have something that looks like, I mean, it's a lamp but with a different function, like underneath, or something. It blends in with some of the furniture or you can put it somewhere where it looks like a decoration perhaps. Or... yeah...

[00:05:42] I: What do you like about the products and the brand?

[00:05:46] B3: Uh... For me personally, I... I like the top the most, actually. But also because I normally, I.. I.. I think I buy products that are more... or that are less colored, actually. Uh... At least for this type of... of... I can't imagine where it should be in my home, at least. But I ... I like the fact that it has this modern touch with the lamp. I like these kind of.. uh... () ((laughs)) That's a Danish. Yeah, the inside, you know where you can see through. It's...

[00:06:24] I: The stuff that... shines ((laughs))

[00:06:29] B3: ((laughs)) Yeah. I don't know what that's called. Exactly, inside the pear, what do you call it?

[00:06:36] I: Bulb

[00:06:37] B3: Bulb, yes, bulb, that's the word. Uh... yeah. I think that's what I like the most, actually.

[00:06:46] I: What don't you like?

[00:06:47] B3: ((laughs))

[00:06:50] I: ((laughs)) To put it the other way around.

[00:06:50] B3: I think for me it's, I think it's.. it's nice with this touch. It's very different with these images, and the colors, and the... But it's very... again, it reminds me of this kind of cookie jar, or... uh.. something that you have in a kitchen or something. And it's very different for me to associate this with, with a modern lamp, or something that I would. uh... that I would purchase, I think. So I think it's kind of this flea market look that it's maybe a bit negative to me, personally.

[00:07:21] I: Why is that? Just because... Could you elaborate on that?

[00:07:31] B3: Yeah, I guess, it's, it's too different for me maybe. The product is a bit too different for me, maybe it's also a Scandinavian thing, I'm not sure. Uh... that we have this very, very... sim... simplicity ((raises voice)), or minimalistic, uh... feature in our, you know homes and interior. I think, I've taken that in, sort of in Denmark, () we have this other... I mean... So maybe it's the colors, it's the shape, I think, uh... I kind of like it. It's also a bit funky, I mean. But it doesn't really fit in my other... interior things.

[00:08:19] I: If you had to describe the brand in three ... words or sentences, how would you describe it, with everything you see here?

[00:08:29] B3: I think, actually, funky ((laughs)). Uh... maybe a bit retro... retro meets modern ((laughs)) Uh... yeah... uh... ((moves lamp)) and... uh... the first that popped to my mind was also this, like, colorful. It has a lot of different colors, not just one, I mean, so... yeah, colorful, funky, retro meets modern, I think.

[00:09:05] I: And if the brand Jonas Co. was a person, how would he or she be, how would he or she look like?

[00:09:19] B3: That's a good question ((laughs)) I think, uh... I imagine some kind of more bohemian style person, that has, also with clothes, in types of, or in terms of what clothes the person wears, would be very colorful as well. A bit more ... open to what colors are also on the walls in their home, in terms of having these more retro things, having something that's more valuable to them historically, and personally. Uh... so I think a more... an open-minded person, and colorful person, I think. Yeah.

[00:10:01] I: For you personally, how important is it to buy products with a history?

[00:10:09] B3: Mh... I think it's important, I buy a lot of things, actually, from flea markets, or antique shops. But for me it's even more... I more appreciate the furniture I inherit from, for instance, my grandparents, or ... uh... especially my grandparents, or something that has value to me through my family. Uh... but if I buy something, I could actually, I would... I have bought a lot of lamps before on flea markets or something, because they have this kind of more, uh... rustic touch sometimes. You can see that they've been used, not in a bad way, but... it's... and... and also, a different time age, not just, uh... in 2000, you know, it's from maybe 1970s or 1950s, there are a lot of really really nice brands I think as well. Uh... especially Danish, uh... Danish brands and Danish interior... So, yeah...

[00:11:05] I: Why is that important, to have this kind of historical...

[00:11:13] B3: I think it shows something about your home as well, what you put, you know into your home, if it's, I have a, an old, wooden chair that was my grandfather's who died a couple of years ago, and for me it's, it gives me some kind of, you know, uh... it has some kind of affections to me, or... personal value to me. Uh... so it says something when people come to my home and you can see that it's an old chair and some people ask "Oh, it's really nice, where did you get it from?" So it kind of, it gives you an opportunity to tell people about a history of your family, or... uh... But it can also be photographs or... you know, old frames, or, something like that. But otherwise, I mainly like keep furniture... maybe more modern, but I love having these items that you pick out from flea markets and have some kind of, yeah, history. Yeah...

[00:12:10] I: I'm not sure if you've read the little ... little text ((points to tag))

[00:12:15] B3: Oh, it says something about North Korea ((laughs))

[00:12:18] I: Just take a look and let me know what you think.

[00:12:20] B3: ((reads text)) Mhm... That's pretty cool ((laughs)) Yeah, that's, now it gives me more value, actually, reading this about the product. I think I would be, when reading this, I feel, I would be more willing to buy a product, I think.

[00:13:07] I: Why is that?

[00:13:07] B3: 'Cause I think, now I associate it with something meaningful and... actually, when I read this about, also ... recycled products and, uh... I ... I've been thinking about that more and more the last couple of years after you know, we need to take care of it more. Uh... and... this also makes for the decision of buying or purchasing old, older products, or reusing products. So this appeals to me that it's something that, the idea that it's been, it's part of a history somewhere. And it makes it kind of unique as well, I guess.

[00:13:48] I: How much do you think these products are sold for on the Danish market?

[00:13:55] B3: Actually, I think they could be quite expensive ((laughs)) Having read this as well. Uh... I guess... couple of thousand kroner, maybe ((raises voice)) ((laughs))

[00:14:09] I: How much is a couple of thousand?

[00:14:10] B3: 2000 ((raises voice))

[00:14:13] I: Ok, why do you think that?

[00:14:13] B3: Uh... now because of the tin that I read about this sort of that it's been, the ... repurposed or recycled, up-cycled. Uh... and that it has this kind of history, I think that adds a lot of value to a product. The same way that, for instance, this chair that I told you about, that it's probably worth a lot more. I know that it's an expensive chair, it's an... arti... what you call it, not an artist, but an interior maker that's been even more popular after he died, sort of, you know. So it gains value later-on, even more than... And they reproduced this product, this chair today. But I guess mine, because it has this.. history... or it would cost more when selling it. And, perhaps, the same thing about this old tin, that it might add value to it, yeah... That it has this...

[00:15:07] I: How much would you be willing to pay for such a product?

[00:15:14] B3: Uh... I think maybe 1000, also because I guess from my position right now as a student as well, but if I really wanted the product, then, for a lamp for me that's, uh, that's a lot of money as well. So maybe 1000 kroner.

[00:15:28] I: You've just read the story, how come you have just now read it and not before? Has it not... attracted your attention before?

[00:15:51] B3: It has actually. I paid... when you asked me your first question, I was like "Oh, it says something on this note, maybe I should read it", but then, I guess there was a meaning as well, with seeing the product as well, and maybe there was some kind of, but I did think about, maybe it says that there is some kind of history behind, or at least behind the... uh... Jonas... the company, or the founder of the company. But I was quite surprised actually by the knowledge, or the information it says, also about North Korea and what he has worked with before. And he's a Swiss designer? Yeah... that's pretty cool ((laughs))

[00:16:34] I: Why is it cool? I mean, why is it...

[00:16:37] B3: I had an idea that he was Danish for some reason, maybe also, we are in Denmark, and ... But, uh... it's interesting that he's also from Switzerland or at least he's a Swiss designer, and that he's, you know, both worked in Vietnam and North Korea and these products come from... I'm curious also why these places, why these old tin boxes? Why not... where did he get this idea? It kind of makes you curious when you read this kind of information behind the story. Yeah... So... it gives you an interest in him as well, as an artist or designer, yeah...

[00:17:17] I: Having talked about this for a while, what is, if you had to rate the overall attractiveness of the Jonas Co. brand, how would rate it on a scale from 1 to 10?

[00:17:31] B3: I think based on my first impression, uh... I would have to say... 3 maybe ((raises voice)) actually. But if I had to evaluate it after I got the story and read this information about the tins, I might say... uh... a 6 ((raises voice)). So I think for this product it means a lot to tell the story behind, and I would imagine on a website as well, or selling these products that it would make a lot of sense if you made like an introduction or something for the customers. Uh... initially to tell them, this product actually has a history, or a, you know ... a ... kind of, it makes you curious.

[00:18:21] I: Why does the perception, or the way you think about the brand change from a 3 to a 6 through the story? Why do you think that is?

[00:18:38] B3: I think first, I judged sort of, I judged the product because I thought it... maybe the looks or the esthetics of it was not really in my taste, or... so I judged it by the looks, and... suddenly, it was more attractive to me, because I knew the history behind. I think, it gave it a lot more value, yeah.

[00:19:02] I: Is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't talked about?

[00:19:10] B3: Oh yeah, actually, the, I think this is a really cool ((touches the lamp)) ((laughs)), I'm touching the lamp now. Uh... it's cool that it goes, you know that you can adjust the light just by touching the tin, I like that.. It's a nice little detail, feature, yeah... I think that's a good, yeah, detail ((laughs))

[00:19:36] I: Ok, what are the three most significant things you'll remember about the Jonas Co. brand?

[00:19:46] B3: I think the tin, the old tin box, and the fact that it's been used, especially this last bit that I read, that it's been used as a medicine box during the Vietnam War, that it has this kind of, it had a purpose, you know. I'm not sure if these boxes each have these kind of notes, because it must have a different story for each box. Uh... but that was something that caught my attention, or my... my interest. Uh... that they are very unique, uh... and, uh... sorry, what was the question again? In terms of...

[00:20:26] I: What will leave an impression?

[00:20:32] B3: Also, well, that was my very first impression, that this very colorful, the sort of cookie jar, I can't get that out of my head, because...

[00:20:40] I: It actually is a cookie jar..

[00:20:41] B3: Really, yeah, that's yeah... oh yeah, it has cookies here as well. So that was my first impre... that you could use it, or that it has been used perhaps for something else, that it kind of this reusable image as well of it, yeah... And that it's very, very unique, very different from what I've seen before. I will also definitely remember that, yeah. ((laughs))

[00:21:04] I: Ok, well then just two last demographic questions? What's your year of birth and your profession?

[00:21:08] B3: I was born in October 1991 and, what was the other question, sorry?

[00:21:15] I: Your job, your profession.

[00:21:16] B3: Oh, I'm a student.

[00:21:18] I: Alright, perfect, that's it. Thank you.

[00:21:22] B3: You're welcome.

Transcript B4

Group B (story) - Respondent B4

Year of Birth: 1946

Profession: Lawyer

Nationality: Danish

Gender: Male

[00:00:19] I: First of all, thank you for participating, I appreciate it.

[00:00:27] B4: You're welcome.

[00:00:27] I: I just want to mention again that this will be audio-recorded and that your anonymity will be maintained throughout the whole process of handling the data. So, as you've read before, this is a study about brand perceptions and brand experience. And, I've brought a new brand that is about to launch on the European market. It's called Jonas Co. And, I would like to ask you to answer in as much detail as possible, to be spontaneous and there are no right or wrong answers. You're free to touch the product, move it around, do whatever you like. I also brought some pictures of some other products that the brand makes just to show that they have different styles. Yeah..

[00:01:23] B4: Yes... but more or less the same size, I suppose.

[00:01:25] I: Yes.

[00:01:25] B4: Ok.

[00:01:26] I: Yeah, just take your time, look at everything you see here. I know it's not a lot, but, uh... look at everything you have here and then let me know what your first impressions are of the brand Jonas Co.

[00:01:40] B4: ... Well, what the first impression was, the question "Does it have radiation?" ((laughs)) Oh, it... ((touches lamp)) oh, it's just turning with touches... Well, uh... my first impression, when I start to think and what I see, this, uh... this, uh... what it's called, () what's that word in English? The can ((raises voice))

[00:02:12] I: Yeah, the box.

[00:02:13] B4: ... is something with tea...

[00:02:16] I: Tea, ok.

[00:02:16] B4: ((laughs)) But there's no tea in it, I suppose ((laughs))

[00:02:20] I: No ((laughs))

[00:02:20] B4: Uh, but it is... it must be, I guess, an original, sort of, uh... can... used for storing something that you sell somewhere... Uh... And they are all the same, they are all the same size?

[00:02:40] I: Yes

[00:02:40] B4: So it is some sort of product, uh... And you... you... at least I cannot look at it without thinking: What has been in it? ((laughs)) What has it been? ((raises voice)) What has it been used for? And I suppose that, uh... when I see ((moves around lamp)) ... When I see, when I look at the can. Is the word a can or a dose or what's the word in English?

[00:03:13] I: Yeah, just box, tin, whatever.

[00:03:16] B4: Yes a tin box. I suppose that these are not the original...

[00:03:24] I: The original what?

[00:03:24] B4: The original uh... paintings on the box.

[00:03:26] I: Why do you suppose that?

[00:03:28] B4: Uh... I thought they would be part of... the design that the one that is producing the lamp is putting things up. But then I see, uh, it looks as if I'm wrong, as a matter of fact.

[00:03:41] I: Why do you think you're wrong?

[00:03:41] B4: Because it seems very authentic, this one. But... uh... But of course it, it would be possible with some sort of... modern... uh... techniques to put something like this on it. Uh... this is an example, you know. ((shows his coffee cup)) This is our house in Montenegro ((laughs)) So... if you can put in on that, you can put it on that as well. So... this looks very authentic, so when you see it you have the impression that this is original. But then I suppose, uh... ((moves around lamp)) Yes, and... and this is a biscuit?

[00:04:30] I: Yes.

[00:04:30] B4: ... and ... it might very well have been a biscuit can, or box... Though I think it would not be very practical to... have biscuits in a can like this. But, uh... but uh... uh... Looking at all the different pictures of the boxes... uh... I would think that this has been put on by the producer of the lamp and not by the producer of the biscuits or whatever. Uh... is that true or not? Are you...?

[00:05:23] I: Actually, you can read through this ((points at text)), maybe that helps. Let me know what you think.

[00:05:29] B4: ((reads text)) Ok... this biscuit box, it is a biscuit box ((surprised)) ... who used to work on... prosthetic limbs, uh, ok... oh dear... ((turns around tag)) oh dear... interesting ((laughs))

[00:06:23] I: What do you think of the brand now? What does it, does it elicit any feelings, or any thoughts?

[00:06:30] B4: Well, it delivers some, uh... thoughts or feelings of something authentic. Uh... and it, of course it... it renders some sort of character... uh... that has an impact on... uh... the way you look at it. Uh... But, uh... is the idea to, uh... is it the idea to convey associations, or is the idea of the lamp to just look good in a living room as a part of the... or... ((laughs)) Or is it a mixture?

[00:07:26] I: I think this really depends on the person purchasing it. Uh, and that's also, and how the person experiences the brand, and that's also what this whole study is about. How different people perceive the brand. Uh... for example, what do you associate with the brand?

[00:07:52] B4: I suppose that the idea is, that you're, that this lamp is presented to you in some lamp shop or other kind of, uh, business...

[00:08:03] I: Yes.

[00:08:03] B4: ... and that you are supposed to be attracted to it ((laughs))

[00:08:07] I: Well, I wouldn't say you're supposed to be attracted to it. It depends, I mean, if you, people have different styles and different needs and they look for different things. Uh... but, uh, yeah, they are sold, or they will be sold in design shops and also online. Uh...

[00:08:29] B4: And they are expecting to be used for decoration?

[00:08:32] I: Whatever you use a lamp for.. I would say usually it's decoration...

[00:08:40] B4: Yes, because it's a bit difficult, I suppose to sit and read at this lamp. So I think it has to be decoration on a shelf or table, or whatever.

[00:08:49] I: Yeah.

[00:08:51] B4: I would think that... to me, it associates with, uh... a time long gone.

[00:09:00] I: Ok.

[00:09:00] B4: Uh... when, when I was young. That is many years ago. Uh... in the 60s and 70s, uh.... things like this, in our part of the world were used for furniture or decoration in, in, a lot of different connections. And, uh... one might make a lamp in that period like that. Uh, even the bulb would be, uh... like it was 40 years ago ((laughs)) or something like that.

[00:09:39] I: Really

[00:09:39] B4: Not that it was, that... that that technique

[00:09:47] I: The wires, yes, it's not an LED

[00:09:45] B4: ... but, what it's called, carbon... simple thing with the same sort of, of... a huge bulb and this very orange light. So, uh... so, uh... what I would think, when I see it, I ... can't help thinking of that time that has passed, so.... so in the old days. So to me, it's... really not a new... uh... concept. If we had a box like this in the 70s a lamp would have been made from it, no doubt.

[00:10:31] I: Really. Ok.

[00:10:32] B4: Someone would have done it... no doubt in that. But, uh...is it Chinese? Is it Korean? Was it Korean? Uh... the text on it?

[00:10:44] I: The text, this text? I can't say for sure.

[00:10:48] B4: That is not Chinese, is it Chinese? Chinese? ((moves lamp)) Is it Chinese?

[00:10:57] I: I can't say. I know that Jonas sources his lamps at flea markets all over China, but also, I think other countries in Southeast Asia.

[00:11:08] B4: But, ok. But how is he collecting the boxes?

[00:11:13] I: He finds them on flea markets.

[00:11:16] B4: He finds them on flea markets.

[00:11:19] I: And then he makes them, he up-cycles them.

[00:11:23] B4: He up-cycles them... which means...

[00:11:24] I: Which means he makes those lamps out of the old boxes.

[00:11:29] B4: And they are all original, the boxes, and the paintings on the boxes are original...

[00:11:33] I: Yes, that's why all of them look different. There is, they are very unique, none of them are the same.

[00:11:39] B4: Ok, but they are all the same size?

[00:11:40] I: Yeah.

[00:11:43] B4: Ok. Uh... Does anyone know for how long time they've been produced? Or... if they made these boxes for years...

[00:11:56] I: Well, these are made in the 1960s, 50s, 60s.

[00:12:01] B4: Ok.

[00:12:02] I: And there are apparently still a lot left that are forgotten just like this one, like the one, like it says in the text, that most of them are just, you know, old cookie boxes that are stores somewhere and that are then... yeah, that Jonas looks for and that he... and he makes, you know, something new out of the boxes. Uh... yeah. You said it reminds you of the old days, does it remind you of a specific situation, or do you have a certain picture in your head? Or do you associate it with people?

[00:12:48] B4: I associate it with a period because when we were young, then we... we didn't have much money, we did, uh... our decorations, a lot of them ourselves and uh... it was a fashion to use different things. Bottles, cans, uh... whatever you could find and lamps were, uh... quite often made by yourself or, also sold in shops, uh, for decoration as if they were made from simple things. So the idea is not new in that respect, uh... but uh... In those days it were, I think combined with some sort of political thought or idea that you, uh... should use simple things, do not buy something expensive, but use simple things to decorate and to use in all respects. Not just lamps but whatever things... It was, this period of, of... you know... all young people were leftists. And this part you could see on the bikes on the streets, they were made by... on purpose they were made simple and looking Chinese or looking... as little American as

you could. ((laughs)) And, uh... This could be part of this. So to me it's not a revolution to see something used like this. Uh... I would think that it's hard for me to say that it is, uh... it is beautiful.

[00:15:06] I: Why is that?

[00:15:06] B4: I would think that the can without the bulb would be beautiful and for decoration I would much rather have the can without the bulb. Just have it on a shelf, because, uh... The shape of the lamp, uh... the shapes, I suppose the idea must be that it has to be different than this...

[00:15:41] I: The box?

[00:15:41] B4: The box with the... straight lines. Then you have the... bulb on top of it, it should be, I suppose a... contradiction in forms that gives you some idea, I don't know, but, uh... to me, it's not harmonic.

[00:16:00] I: Ok.

[00:16:02] B4: It... I would think that, when you turn on the light ((touches lamp)) what was it? Ok... the colors of the light are not matching the box as well, and... not too good at least.

[00:16:19] I: Ok.

[00:16:19] B4: Uh... So I would think that, uh... and then I think that my way of looking at a design like that would be quite a novel way to look at it. So I think that the idea would be to attract attention to something not... not because it's ugly ((laughs)) but to attract attention for someone to come look at it and see, what is that.. Uh... But in different, in concepts of... decorating, decorating that is not the word... When you put in furniture in a...

[00:17:09] I: Yeah, decorating your home..

[00:17:09] B4: Is it decorating? Ok, decorating your room... I can see it in some contexts. Uh... But I'm not sure I would have it in my living room.

[00:17:24] I: As I said, this is one product out of a few. What else is there that you don't like about, let's stick to the brand, the Jonas Co. brand as a company that offers those different types of lamps, or different styles of lamps. You said you don't necessarily like the shape of the box as a square..

[00:17:50] B4: I do like the shape of the box...

[00:17:51] I: You do...

[00:17:51] B4: The box in itself has very beautiful, what it's called, size... It's good for the eye. But the combination between the lamp and the box... not sure about that ((laughs))

[00:18:06] I: What else do you dislike about the Jonas Co. brand as you see it here? Is there anything else that you don't like?

[00:18:17] B4: The brand you're talking about, what is the brand here?

[00:18:23] I: Well, the brand is called Jonas Co. and they make those different, you know, lamps. I brought this specific product here, this lamp, as an example, but let's stick to the overall view, not to this particular product but to, you know. You now know that they offer different styles, and that not all of them look like the product that I brought.

[00:18:48] B4: No, but all the boxes are the same size, I suppose...

[00:18:50] I: Yes.

[00:18:51] B4: But they have different drawings on them... But that does not change the impression very much. I think they would be the same. That has nothing to do with this design, I would think... Well... ((points at pictures)) This one might be a bit more pretty ((laughs))

[00:19:12] I: The one with the flowers.

[00:19:12] B4: The one with the flowers, yes. Uh... Yeah, maybe there are small differences that would, uh... sort of mellow the impression. This one is quite nice as well...

[00:19:34] I: The red one.

[00:19:34] B4: But I don't think the different way of the decorations on the box really matters much to the general idea of the impression. But, uh... I'm not sure what you mean about a brand. Is this ((points at lamp)) what you mean with a brand? Or is...

[00:19:49] I: This is the product. And the brand is like the company, what you know of the company at this point. You know that it's called Jonas Co., you've read a little text, and you have the different products here. And the over expression of what you have here, that's what I define as a brand in this context right now. So it's basically everything that you know about the company and the products.

[00:20:22] B4: And the brand is all that I see here?

[00:20:24] I: Everything that you see here.

[00:20:24] B4: That's what you call a brand...

[00:20:25] I: Yes.

[00:20:27] B4: Ok... So the definition of a brand is both a product and the way it has been marketed...

[00:20:39] I: Well, the brand consists, branding is a part of marketing, and brands, the company, for example, they produce some, it's called touchpoints. For example the product or the text or the logo or, uh... everything that is connected to the company, uh, that builds the brand. For example, when you talk about, uh... Volkswagen... you have a certain image in your head. And that's part of the brand. So the brand is the overall thing. And you don't have a lot of information here, but that's all you know about the Jonas Co. brand at this point.

[00:21:32] B4: ((reads text)) The biscuit box stands as a symbol of the rebellion against today's world of mindless mass-consumption... What is the thought behind that?

[00:21:55] I: It's the thought of...

[00:21:58] B4: This is, I suppose and example of mass-production.

[00:22:00] I: Well this is hand-made.

[00:22:01] B4: This is hand-made? ((surprised))
 [00:21:58] I: Yes, it is hand-made.
 [00:22:03] B4: How do you know that?
 [00:22:04] I: Because...
 [00:22:08] B4: That's not hand-made.
 [00:22:08] I: It is made by Jonas in his little workshop in Shanghai.
 [00:22:13] B4: The box?
 [00:22:15] I: The box I don't know, but the lamp.
 [00:22:17] B4: The lamp is hand-made, of course. But the impression is the box. It's the box that's interesting here, I suppose. So it's not the box that is hand-made...
 [00:22:31] I: No, but this product.
 [00:22:32] B4: Yeah, the product, the result is. But why is a biscuit box a symbol for the rebellion against today's... Is that the ... the hand-made whole...
 [00:22:46] I: Yeah, they are talking about the lamp.
 [00:22:47] B4: So they are talking about that, not the box, ok.
 [00:22:49] I: Well, the box is, pretty much the base of the lamp.
 [00:22:58] B4: Ok.
 [00:23:00] I: Is there anything you like about the Jonas brand at this point?
 [00:23:05] B4: If there is anything that I ...?
 [00:23:10] I: What you like. We talked about what you don't like. Is there anything that you like about what you see here?
 [00:23:18] B4: ... This, uh... text here is that about this special box ending up in... what was it.. during the Vietnam War, this box? This box has been there, or does it go for all the boxes?
 [00:23:53] I: It goes for several boxes.
 [00:23:53] B4: Ok, but for this one as well.
 [00:23:56] I: For this one as well.
 [00:23:58] B4: So... What he's writing here is... special for this box but covers all other boxes, some other boxes?
 [00:24:11] I: Yeah.
 [00:24:11] B4: So it has been box as a medicine box in Vietnam and... has been passed down multiple generations finally ending up here with you ((laughs)) Uh...What he describes here is... more or less the attraction with antiques. That... you... though this is not as old, but I suppose it's... do we know how old it is? It's produced in... from the design...
 [00:24:54] I: As far as I know, they're from the 50s and 60s.
 [00:24:56] B4: Yes, I would think so too. ((moves around lamp)) And maybe even older. It could be older. Ok, but... this idea that this thing has been in many hands, uh... maybe even all over the world, that is one of the attractions with antique things. And I realize every day when I draw my old clock that is 230 years old and is working perfectly ((laughs)). It's... the idea of thinking how many eyes through the years have been looking at it and how many ears have been listening to... the ringing of the clock and looking at the time.. ((laughs)) All those souls, that's interesting. And this one is not so old, but nevertheless,... it does something... to the whole thing that, uh... that it has had a purpose for something else and that, uh... many many many people have used it and touched it... Of course, it, uh... it means something and has something to do with the marketing and the attraction to, uh... to the product that you have that background is part of it, but, uh... But when you look at it as a decoration in a room, you, well, you... that's not your first impression. Uh... but... then again, using something that has other purposes for... a thing like this, a lamp or whatever it could be, that has had other uses before... Uh... It has a certain impact. And maybe it works in some ways. You asked for what I like about it?
 [00:27:15] I: Mhm
 [00:27:16] B4: I think I mentioned before that I think the box is in itself very beautiful. Uh... I'm not sure that the one that in the old days make those pictures on a box thought of the colors and the... the combination of the colors and the figures, and the shape of the box, but they are very harmonic, as a matter of fact. I think they have been designed in the old days just to attract the eyes for a potential buyer of ... the biscuits, but they are quite beautiful. And very harmonic.. ((moves around lamp)) That goes for that box. And as I mentioned, I think this one is quite ((points at black lamp))... That is a biscuit box as well?
 [00:28:14] I: As far as I know, yeah.
 [00:28:17] B4: That is quite beautiful. Uh... so... My overall impression is that I... I do like the box, I think it's interesting that it has this authentic background... I don't think that the design... overall is... very beautiful or attracting, but ... it is something that catches your eye, of course. It's something that catches your eyes... because of the different shapes and the... this very, to me a bit harsh contradiction between the lamp and the box... Uh... There's no way of thinking it being combined with a sort of.. what it's called, en lampeskærm...
 [00:29:16] I: Uh... shade... yeah.
 [00:29:20] B4: Some...
 [00:29:20] I: I think at this point, no, but there's you know, always the opportunity and the possibility. So if you had to describe Jonas Co. in three words, how would you describe it?
 [00:29:36] B4: Uh... The first word that comes to my mind in that respect would be fantasy... Uh... And the second would be, I think... authenticity. Uh... And the third word would be, I don't know what the word is in English... uh... but... in Danish it would be (). Uh... too many thoughts, so to speak. A little, uh... It is as if the idea behind the construction here is not, uh... harmonic. It's as if he has been

thinking "I'm going to do something strange, and something that attracts.." As if it's... too many calculating thoughts behind the idea. So that would be the three words that I would use for it.

[00:31:23] I: And if Jonas Co., like the company or the brand, if it was a person, how would he or she look like, how old would he or she be?

[00:31:38] B4: Uh... I would think, but that's because I'm biased, because I would combine it with... a person in the age of 20 to 35 or something like that, loong hair... uh... it would be a male, uh... with long, shoulder-long hair, uh... not too clean ((laughs)) and a beard somewhere on the head, not a big one, but just something that doesn't grow too well ((laughs)) That's what... that's the figure I see when I think of this kind of product from that period. Uh... Maybe older... I don't know, but I would think, I would think, of course, it's Jonas, so... it is male, but I would think it was a character like that. I wouldn't, the person behind it, I wouldn't think was a big muscle man with a bald head ((laughs)) So... and tattoos all over the place.

[00:32:55] I: Why is that?

[00:32:56] B4: Uh... Yes, I don't know why, why do you have associations like this ((laughs))... I think that a big biker wouldn't be sitting in () things like that. So I would think it was a... a little, not small, but, uh... a little skinny type of person. Thinking philosophical thoughts and, uh... doing... yeah, I would think, that's ... what I sort of... ((laughs)) How close am I?

[00:33:43] I: There is no right or wrong. This is about you. But you mentioned before that one of the three words is fantasy. Why fantasy?

[00:33:54] B4: To have the idea of combining, to have... to see such... a box like that. And to... associate it with the possibilities that is... I think that requires fantasy. And...

[00:34:11] I: Do you mean fantasy in the sense of, also creativity?

[00:34:14] B4: Yes, of course creativity. Uh... and, uh... Some sort of courage as well, to have the courage to do a thing like that. I suppose that Jonas himself, uh... would understand that it may convey impressions like the ones I'm trying to express. Uh... And I think that, to put that on the market and invest, I don't know how much money is invested, not very much, I suppose, but, uh... nevertheless, it... you need some guts to do that. and, uh... you have to, I suppose, answer a lot of questions.

[00:35:05] I: What kind of questions?

[00:35:07] B4: "Why do you do that?" ((laughs)) "What's your idea? How did you get the cans? Do you think it looks good?" Or... whatever. I don't know how a product like that is marketed, but if he is carrying one under his arm and walking into a modern decoration shop and ask them to put that on the selves, I would think he would have to answer some questions ((laughs))

[00:35:47] I: Ok. How important is it for you to buy products with a history? With a story behind the product, when you buy, let's say furniture..

[00:36:02] B4: As I mentioned before, I think I have a, I do like antiques and I do like to have, uh... old things.. not old things but used thing around me. I very much like new things as well... and... intelligent thoughts of designing lamps or whatever. Uh... interesting new constructions or designs... I do... That interests me. Not very much, but nevertheless. But I do care very much for old things as well, as you can see around the house. We have... those ((points at old cabinet with glasses on the wall)) old things and they are more mine than my wife's because I like that very much. For instance, old glasses. It's nice for me to know that these ((takes out one glass and shows it to the interviewer)) for instance, these... These are glasses that we found in Rome and brought home in a plastic bag. We had 36 of them I think. Uh... They are Austrian, they said that. They are supposed to be Austrian glasses from the beginning of the last century. And.. I think they are beautiful. But I think it's very funny, it has something to do with a thing that you have in your hand. That it has been used for this... or some other purpose. But that means something, that... it has... this history behind it. I really... that is important in some respects.

[00:37:49] I: How much do you think these products are sold for on the Danish market?

[00:37:57] B4: The price?

[00:37:59] I: Mhm.

[00:37:59] B4: With or without VAT? ((laughs)) Well I would think, uh... I would guess... 600 kroners ((raises voice))

[00:38:18] I: Why do you think so?

[00:38:20] B4: Mh... I would think that the material expenses with producing it should be, would be quite low. And the time, uh... spent with making such a box, I would think ((moves box around)), uh... there's a lid and there's ... I would think it takes an hour or something like that. But maybe 10, it takes several days ((laughs)) But I wouldn't think the time you spend producing such a lamp would be very much. I would think that it would be very difficult to get a... a very much higher price, so... I would think it should be something like that. But I haven't any idea.

[00:39:21] I: Nobody knows.

[00:39:24] B4: It hasn't been () yet.

[00:39:24] I: Well, they're in the starting phase. How much would you be willing to spend for a product like that?

[00:39:34] B4: ... I'm not sure I would buy it ((laughs)) I'm not sure I would buy it. Maybe... if I had it as a present ((laughs))... it would be put somewhere in the kids' room in the Summer house, but, uh... It wouldn't, uh... I don't think it would, it would not, uh... fit my taste for decorating. I don't think I would buy it. I don't think I would put it in the living room, or... It should be in the living room of course.

[00:40:23] I: Ok. So now that we've talked about this for a while, how would you rate the overall attractiveness of the Jonas Co. brand on a scale from 1 to 10?

[00:40:37] B4: And when we're talking about brand, you're talking about the whole...

[00:40:44] I: Yeah.. not only this specific product, but the whole thing.

[00:40:48] B4: Uh... Something about 2 or 3 or something like that. When we're talking about brand, uh... I think this is a fine text. I think it's well-made, uh... I think I sort of... uh... misunderstood or maybe the first sentence is not that clear. Uh... But this, the design of this and the letters and the balance is quite alright to me.... Uh... If I was Jonas, I think I would... put the wordings a little different in this first sentence, because it's not clear if he's talking about the box or if he's talking about the product. But... I think the text is fine and it should be sold of course with some sort of explanation and background. But, uh... as you probably realized ((laughs)) It's not really me, no, I wouldn't be attracted. I would probably look at it probably read the text about... but I don't think I would buy it. So for me it's not... it's for younger people I suppose.

[00:42:56] I: Ok. Why? Why for younger people?

[00:43:00] B4: Well, there is this rebellion idea in the whole thing. And it is, it is of course something that attracts your eyes. And there is this idea behind it that it is... has got something to do with youth, rebellion and youth, uh... It would be a sort of decoration for ... my kids are a bit too young, but in the age 25 or something like that. My generation, I suppose wouldn't...be the first to buy this.

[00:43:46] I: Ok. Is there anything else that we haven't covered so far? Anything that you would still like to add on your whole experience with everything you see here?

[00:44:00] B4: I'd like to try to taste the biscuits ((laughs))

[00:44:07] I: Those times are long gone ((laughs))

[00:44:09] B4: They're long gone. They've become soft years ago ((laughs)) No... do we... something we missed? Some questions you would like to put?

[00:44:25] I: I've actually one last question. When somebody asks you "What is Jonas Co.?", how would you describe the brand? To somebody on the street... What is Jonas Co.?

[00:44:40] B4: ... Uh... I would think that Jonas Co. would be, uh... someone who are producing not just, not one, but would be using the same concept for different kind of decoration or small machines or whatever you would think. But something that... yeah... is decorating... Uh... Again, I would think it was... something with youth and... energy and... trying to, uh... have a purpose with the thing they're doing to send a message. And that might be that one, but it might be anything else as a matter of fact. Not just... things that are made to please the eye but things that are... have an idea of conveying a message behind it. Uh... and.. I would think that... if you visualize the persons behind, it would be... characters with the ideas and... what's it called... when you have holdninger ... what... what's the word we use for it...

[00:46:46] I: Opinions?

[00:46:47] B4: Opinions, yes of course. Holdninger, holdninger, oh, whatever. And have a lot of those and have... an idea or a purpose of... () this message out into the world. So I would think.. the impression of the people behind would be positive, these are people that want to do something, they are active in their heads, somehow. So... so I would have a positive impression of the idea ((laughs)) even though the product as a design is not just my taste.

[00:47:37] I: Ok, perfect. That was it, I just have some more demographic questions for my analysis. What is your nationality, your profession and your year of birth?

[00:47:52] B4: I'm a Dane, more or less, I am a lawyer and I was born in 46 and...

[00:48:06] I: That's it.

[00:48:06] B4: That was all?

[00:48:06] I: That was all, everything I need. Alright, yeah. That was it. Thank you very much, I appreciate it.

[00:48:15] B4: You're welcome.

Transcript B5

Group B (story) - Respondent B5

Year of Birth: 1992

Profession: Student & part-time job

Nationality: Dutch

Gender: Female

[00:00:14] I: First of all, thank you for participating. I appreciate it.

[00:00:20] B5: You're welcome.

[00:00:20] I: I just want to mention again, that this will be audio-recorded and your anonymity will be maintained throughout the process of handling the data. Do you have any questions before we start?

[00:00:32] B5: No, fire away.

[00:00:34] I: So this study is about learning more about people's brand experience. I brought a new brand that is about to launch, it's called Jonas Co. And, what I'm looking for is just your, pretty much your associations, your opinions.

[00:00:56] B5: Ok.

[00:00:56] I: I also brought some pictures to see that, you know, they have different products and each product looks a little different. And, yeah, I would just ask you to answer in as much detail as possible, there are no right or wrong answers, just, you know, go for it. Be spontaneous. Feel free to look at everything you see here, it's not a lot, but as I said it's a start-up that's about to launch and... yeah... When you're ready, just let me know what your first impressions are.

[00:01:28] B5: Ok. Let me have a good look at it. Can I turn it around? ((moves around lamp))

[00:01:32] I: Yes, yes, please.

[00:01:33] B5: So I mean, obviously, it looks... cool ((laughs)) Uh... It looks like... kind of an Asian, old cookie box ((laughs)). I'm not sure what language this is... uh... maybe Japanese or Korean? My guess, () I have no idea.

[00:01:57] I: I don't know either ((laughs))

[00:01:59] B5: Uh... but... ok... so if you touch it, it goes on, brighter... that's so smart! So my first impression like looking at the photos, it's a lamp for inside, right ((raises voice)). Uh... with a vintage feel to it. Then also this kind of exposed light bulb thing is.. I think very fashionable right now, very kind of industrial... Uh... It feels, like it's a story with, where they use old boxes or whatever, cans, uh... to make this kind of product. Uh... It's funny, because for example, this wire is kind of modern again, I'd say. Uh... yeah.. and looking at these examples in the photos, ... it seems like they're running themselves kind of fresh and clean. 'Cause I think if you would see this in... an old peoples' home, you could think that it is actually old, but the way they, uh... photographed it, it looks like you would combine it with, uh... a more modern design. What else?

[00:03:20] I: What do you associate with the brand? Does it remind you of anything?

[00:03:27] B5: Good question ((laughs)). Uh... like of other brands, or?

[00:03:35] I: Anything. Anything that comes to your mind.

[00:03:38] B5: Uh... Well I think it's been done before where they take old, uh... like kitchen utensils or things like that and then make a kind of a, a cross-baby ((laughs)) with, uh... a new technical use. Uh... So this whole retro feel for something modern, and... and new... uh... I cannot really think of very specific examples. Uh... But I think this is more, uh... authentic ((raises voice)) Also the way you were putting it together. It's different from making something new look old, I really feel like this... the bottom thing is old and the lamp part is new and probably the technique that's inside. Uh...

[00:04:28] I: Why do you think the box is old?

[00:04:30] B5: Because you can see that it's worn and it's a bit rusty, and you can't really recreate that. There are some bumps in it here and there, I just turned it on ((laughs)) That's how, I think.

[00:05:04] I: You said it has this vintage-feel, and that it has been done before that old things are kind of up-cycled or reused. Do you think that's a trend right now? Or...

[00:05:16] B5: Uh... yeah, prob... yeah, I think so. But not like... maybe not so recently. I think it's been going for... uh... maybe... like 7 years or something. Uh... I mean I guess in general people always tend to reuse stuff, if you're a bit creative... It's been done before, right ((raises voice)). But yeah, I'd say like, also looking at these photos, it looks familiar to see something kind of... old-fashioned and therefore odd in a ... in a more modern interior.

[00:05:56] I: What do you like about the brand?

[00:06:01] B5: Uh... well, actually, I haven't read the card ((reads text)) But let's read it quickly... Hm... It's very, uh... so it's called Jonas Co.? I think it's very... like... contemporary, the way they write, the style of the card, the logo even, it's very hip, I think. I really think that people like a lot to know where... their special designs come from, even if, you know... you don't ... I mean reading the card you still don't really exactly know where it comes from and if it's really true. Uh... yeah, I think, I like it, it's pretty cool. I would want to know more about it. I, I want to see if the other, like the other versions and how you can pick. I think... the presentation is attractive.

[00:07:20] I: You said you don't really know if it's true what's written on the card and, uh... Why do you think so and what could be done to make it more... authentic. Or to... Is there a way to do that?

[00:07:33] B5: I mean maybe because we study marketing, we know that, you know... you can always sell stuff, making up a nice story, I mean I trust it, it's not that I... I'm like... what is he writing ((reads card))... it's been passed down multiple generations, finally ending up here with you... Uh... I mean it's, I trust it, it's probably true. I think what could be done is, uh... I don't know if that's possible, but, like, have a serial number, you know, where you can see that it's one of so many and this is the only one that looks like this, or... uh... Yeah, it () exclusivity, I guess. Where you can kind of prove, hey this is actually exclusive. Uh.. yeah.

[00:08:21] I: Why do you think that could be important for people to have this exclusivity, and this...?

[00:08:27] B5: Uh... well, I think there are two things, there's like if you spend an X amount of money on something interior design related, then you'd want to know that, hey not everyone can go out and spend, say, a lot of money, and have the exact same thing as I do. Uh.. It's nicer to spend a lot of money and know that you're the only one in possession of this specific lamp holder ((laughs)) Uh.. and... So that's kind of to know it for yourself, but I think it's also a thing that you would want to be able to show others. Uh... that you're cool enough to know this exclusive thing and that it's in your reach and, uh... yeah, it's kind of... an, I mean, an extension of yourself. You're identity is this lamp ((laughs))

[00:09:31] I: How is that piece, or are these products different than other, let's say, you said, X amount of money, I don't know, medium, high price, whatever. How would you think these products differ from, let's say, typical Danish design pieces that might be in the same price range?

[00:09:57] B5: Uh... Well, I think Danish design, like design-wise it's much more, it's much less colorful than this, in my experience at least. Uh... It's more about shape and... uh... well, in my experience, a lot of Danes have the same things, even though they cost a lot of money. They will have PH lamp, and... so... I think their... You would buy that lamp to be part of a group, whereas here you would want to be not part of that group that buys the same lamps. And, yeah, I would wonder if Danes would want this in their interior ((laughs))

[00:10:48] I: What do you think? How would it appeal, or would it appeal to Danes?

[00:10:54] B5: I think it would appeal to Danes, yeah, if you present it kind of like here on the cards, where everything is very... colorless, and then this would be your one colorful thing in your room as an eye-catcher. Uh... I mean I know that Danes are very... touchy-feely about their, the light, and how much or how little and where... and... So in that sense I think it could be an interesting object for the Scandinavian market, because you can move it around, yeah.

[00:11:29] I: Is there anything that you don't like about the brand?

[00:11:31] B5: Uh... I mean... I mean, again, I don't know the brand so well, but when...

[00:11:43] I: Yeah, you can't know it because it's not on the market yet.

[00:11:46] B5: When I look at the product, uh... I don't know it's a pro and a con, because I wouldn't know the... the touch thing... If you touch it, it gets lighter or turns on and off. But that also makes it really cool and kind of, you don't know it automatically, which I guess is part of the design. Uh... No, I think, I think it's smart to kind of present the brand in a kind of hipster way, if I can call it that. Together with the vintage thing. Because if you would make this little presentation also as colorful and vintage, then it might not appeal anymore to the... more Scandinavian market. Because then, I think, it would just be considered a very colorful or thing from abroad, instead of, uh... an eye-catching piece for your home. Uh...

[00:12:50] I: You said that the text is presented in a very, the whole tag is kind of presented in a hipster way, you said. How do you define hipster?

[00:13:01] B5: So, like the... what do you call it, calligraphy or the typo, the text, actually that would be the logo as well... I think, I mean, a hipster it's a really bad term to go, but... uh ((laughs)) I said it now...

[00:13:21] I: It's not a bad term at all.

[00:13:23] B5: But I think they pay a lot of attention on the font of things... Uh... keeping it very sterile and... uh... yeah this whole presentation of, you know, it's from abroad, but bringing it to you and re-, or recycling or up-cycling or whatever. Uh... sounds like a sustainable story which I think would attract that kind of green group of people. And it's a bit odd, like I think that's what this group would want. It's a bit, it's different from what their parents would buy or their boring peers or something like that ((laughs))+

[00:14:05] I: So it's also to, I think you mentioned it before, for their own identity building, to show that they are different, or that they are not going with the typical Scandinavian design?

[00:14:20] B5: Yeah, exactly. Like, hey, I can think out of the box. Uh... I'm in the right network to find a design like this, cause that's also a very, you have to probably, read your magazines or your blogs or whatever to find out that this exists before everyone else has it. Of course that's the hipster part about it ((laughs))

[00:14:45] I: If you had to describe Jonas Co. in three words, three adjectives, how would you describe it?

[00:14:57] B5: Original, uh... daring... and... innovative ((raises voice))

[00:15:11] I: Mhm. Could you elaborate on these three?

[00:15:11] B5: Uh... Well, I mean it's very original to combine a box like that with a lamp like that and this whole, uh... yeah... up-cycling thing you call it. Uh... that requires some creativity and, uh... And then what did I say? Uh... daring... I think it's daring because uh... I mean it is colorful and it looks... kind of out of the ordinary. So, I mean, as a brand you have to, you know, A, dare making an investment, as a buyer you have to dare, like, spend probably a bit of money on something that you don't know how you, how it will fit in your interior or how your environment will react on it. Uh... What else did I say?

[00:16:09] I: I think you said innovative...

[00:16:09] B5: Innovative yeah, exactly. Well, I think it is really cool, like, I still don't understand how it works with the touching ((laughs)), uh... Yeah, like, it's new, you know, when you look at it, you're like "Hey, that's something I haven't seen yet" and it grabs your attention. Uh... I've never seen it before so I think it's quite innovative.

[00:16:38] I: Does it elicit any specific feelings?

[00:16:39] B5: Uh... It's like, it's a bit odd, like it does something kind of it makes you feel a bit "Huh?" ((laughs)) "I don't get it". Uh... yeah, it makes you laugh a little bit in a good way ((laughs)) Yeah, I would want to take it home and kind of see how it would work in my apartment. So it makes me curious, if that's a feeling. Uh... It makes me want to show it to other people and talk about it with other people who haven't seen it before. Uh... And I'd want to see it from the inside. I'm so curious how it works ((laughs)) Uh... but yeah, I think, I think, if I would, like, imagine it in my house, uh... I think it would make me happy ((laughs)) Just to have something funny of funky...

[00:17:44] I: If the brand was a person, how would he or she behave, or look like, or... Who would Jonas Co. be?

[00:17:57] B5: I think it would be, like, this kind of well-travelled friend, who is very cool... a bit hard to grasp, uh... You know someone who is kind of always on the move and you always feel like, "I wanna live this life", or do this. Uh... But maybe also a little bit, you know, how you have these people who are really cool and you want to follow them and be in their proximity but then also a bit, maybe a bit too much. Maybe a bit not cool enough ((laughs)) Yeah, so it's it's tempting ((laughs))

[00:18:45] I: How important is it for you personally, to buy products with a story or with a history behind the product?

[00:18:56] B5: Uh... I don't know if it's important, but I really like it. I really appreciate having a story behind the things I surround myself with. Uh... and that's not, it doesn't have to be a story to other people per se, but you know, when I travel I like to take home stuff to decorate my house with, just to make memories. And I think if you buy something from IKEA then your memory is that you bought it from IKEA ((laughs)) So in that sense, I think the way that it's a bit of a reflection of you and the people you surround yourself with. That's kind of the way you... both present yourself to people coming over as kind of creating a little cave ((laughs)) that really is your home. So in that sense, I think, it, you know, it's easier to reach that when things have a story. Uh... But I don't per se think that it's a brand that has to give or hand me the story, like on this card. Uh... It's more valuable to me when I make the story with this object myself. Uh... But yeah, if I would buy this, it would be nice, especially because people would ask about it, because it looks funny. And then I have a story to tell. I think that's, that's important about it.

[00:20:34] I: How much do you think these products are sold for on the Danish market?

[00:20:42] B5: Uh... I would say... I'd say... like 700, 800 kroner ((raises voice))

[00:20:53] I: Why do you think that?

[00:20:54] B5: Uh... Well I can see it's design, it's probably not made in big quantities. Uh... which makes it more expensive to produce and then I think, I can sense that there is like some creativity behind it, you would want to get money for your creative endeavors and investments and... Uh... I think artists also need some appreciation through monetary means ((laughs)) Uh... Then again, it's not, you know, it's not so much, uh... that, cause it's also an old thing, like they are not... and it's just probably tin or iron or whatever it is, uh... It's not, you know, marble or ((laughs)). So in that sense, material-wise I think it's relatively cheap, cheap produce. Uh... so that's the explanation.

[00:21:56] I: Ok. How much would you be willing to pay for it?

[00:22:01] B5: Uh... Probably, ... like... well I'm a student ((laughs)) But, say like 400, 500 kroner?

[00:22:15] I: And how do you rate the overall attractiveness of the brand on a scale from 1 to 10?

[00:22:26] B5: Oh, I think it's very, like especially also looking at the little pictures, uh... A scale from 1 to 10? I'd say, like a 9. I think they are doing a good job, the whole esthetic thing is, yeah... well-managed.

[00:22:47] I: Is there anything else that you would still like to add or that you think we haven't talked about? Or any questions?

[00:22:55] B5: Uh... where can I see the other designs?

[00:23:02] I: They are going to be online and some of the lamps are, two of the lamps are actually already in a design shop here, but they are still, it's a start-up so they are still working on, also.. improving the product a little more. But, yeah...

[00:23:23] B5: No, I have no questions.

[00:23:27] I: What are three things that you will remember about Jonas Co.?

[00:23:30] B5: Uh... Just the fact that it's a lamp in a different shape than you usually see. Uh... I guess the story behind it, probably not the exact story but the fact that, hey this was used in a different way before and now we reuse it uh... to make a statement piece for your interior. Uh... And that it is an interior, what do you call it, design brand, I guess ((raises voice)) Yeah.

[00:24:06] I: Do you think the story or the tag, does it have an influence on you? So if the story wasn't there, would you have a different opinion?

[00:24:16] B5: Yeah, because then I, uh... I might not, like ... guessed it was so design-y. Then it could have just been a weird uncle making this in his backyard or shed, selling it for 70 kroner. Uh... I think it kind of presents, like, "Hey this is trash turned chic and fancy" by, it kind of gives an authorization of it being a design, uh, piece.

[00:24:56] I: Are you talking about the text in a whole, or are you referring to any specific...

[00:25:02] B5: Just the whole, yeah, the text and the, again, the font, the letters used. You know the fact, that it has, like, the little ribbon around it, it looks... thought-out. Like, you're not just, you know, handwriting a little card with the price. There's a presentation that comes with it. I think, in that sense that adds to the experience.

[00:25:25] I: Ok, cool. Then just two more, two last, or three demographic questions. What is your year of birth?

[00:25:37] B5: 1992

[00:25:37] I: And your profession?

[00:25:39] B5: I'm a student and I work part-time.

[00:25:42] I: And your nationality?

[00:25:43] B5: I'm Dutch.

[00:25:44] I: Ok, perfect. That's it. Thank you.

[00:25:49] B5: Thank you.