Final thesis
By Lisa Wilts

The Potential of playing for fashion communication strategies, when addressing the German Generation Y

International Fashion & Management
Amsterdam Fashion Institute
June 2015

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Declaration of Authorship
I hereby certify that the thesis I am submitting is entirely my own original work except where otherwise indicated any use of the works of any other author, in any form, is properly acknowledged at their point of use.
Foreword

When I was standing in the lobby of the Amsterdam Fashion Institute for the first time and waited for my entrance examination, I felt that this is the place where I belong. Within the last 4 years of my AMFI education, I knew that feeling wasn’t misleading and the Amsterdam Fashion Institute became my mentor, my confused, but best friend and my family. I owe respect and gratitude to this institution, which challenged me like nothing else did. The Amsterdam Fashion Institute educated me, but above all it helped me to figure out who I am and what I am capable of. Even though the last 4 years required plenty of energy and passion in order to finally be able to write my final thesis, it has been an amazing and unforgettable experience I will always be grateful for.

During my time at the Amsterdam Fashion Institute I received the opportunity to get to know the Fashion industry from several different perspectives and I have learned that it is a crucial industry, but also that it is able to make people dream. I have been asked if fashion would be a song, which one would it be and I thought that is a very naïve way of aiming to characterize fashion. Fashion is not black and white, not peaceful or cruel and it is definitely not possible to define it in one song. For me personally fashion is change and diverse, it is colorful, provides safety, but risk as well, it can help define who we are, it is a communication instrument, it is art and a social construction, but I think the most essential aspect about fashion and working in the fashion industry is to know and understand that you have to be critical about it.

When I told people that I am studying fashion, they expressed a shiny and naïve attitude towards it and I knew that they could not understand that studying fashion is not reading the Vogue and making some drawings. After explaining how wrong they are, how much hard work it has been, how complex it is, I recognized that before AMFI I might have thought the same. Therefore I understood that being critical is probable next to my two specializations in Fashion Marketing and Buying the most important achievement of the last years.

However, when I started to write my thesis, I knew that I am also a member of the German Generation Y, but I never really identified with this generation based on what I knew back then, but while doing research on it, I had to admit, that I am indeed a part of it. I am close with my family, goal oriented and a strategic thinker and even though good grades and success have been important to me, I know that time is the most valuable currency and I am creating my life around spending it as intense as I can.

For someone like me, a person who tries to reflect herself constantly, it is not hard to understand that I would not be the same person I am, without the support of certain people. Therefore the special thanks part is an important one for me in order to show gratitude.
Therefore my special thanks go to

My mum, Dr. Bettina Wilts, one of the strongest and most intelligent people I know, who taught me to be independent and self-confident in order to find my own way.

To my dad, Hendrik Höppner, one of the most inspiring people in my life. He taught me to think creative, to see the world around me from many different perspectives and that everything can be seen in another context.

My parents gave me always the opportunity to be free and make my own decisions, which they always supported either way and for that I am entirely grateful.

To my grandparents, Karin and Jan Wilts, who are the most important people in my life, caring, loving and supporting. I can’t imagine life without them.

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To Constantin von Maltzahn, who has been a critical, supportive and amazing mentor for the last two years and an even better final thesis coach.

Besides, to Claudia, who is longing for new adventures and who showed me that it is never too late to do it differently. To my brother Tom, who is an incredible person and I hope he finds his way soon. To Gianina, Jane, Nele, Annia, Kim who are the most supportive friends. And to Amsterdam, the city of my heart, who made me feel home for the last 4 years.

And last but not least, to the course International Fashion & Management which helped me to see who I am and made me critical towards everything, which is a great achievement. My special thanks here go to Marco, who taught me fashion marketing in an innovative, creative and critical way. To Mirjam, the most wonderful and supporting internship mentor someone could imagine. To José, who always made me feel special and talented. To Orpheo, who is a visionary and I hope I will be so purely satisfied and happy as he is one day. To Jacqueline, Guido and Ligia, who believed in me since the first year. They prepared, taught, and educated me, but above all, each of them believed in me.
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Executive summary

My final thesis is mainly build upon three main subjects and is written from the demand side of the fashion business. The overall goal of my report has been to analyze to what extend the German Generation Y provides visibility to include aspects of playing in communication strategies. Above that I aimed to investigate which marketing tool would provide potential to connect with the German Generation Y effectively.

The first chapter introduces the subject of Generation Y in Germany and aims to present the final thesis statement “The potential of playing for fashion communication strategies when addressing the German Generation Y”. The first chapter furthermore provides information about the relevance, the thesis aim and the research questions I intent to answer throughout the report.

The second chapter features the most essential subject of my report: the German Generation Y. This section highlights the most important findings from the literature review about the German Generation Y leading to general characteristics in order to peruse and understand the following chapters. Including relevant definitions followed by a presentation of the German Generation Y and finalized with an overview of development steps that had an impact on this particular generation.

The third chapter of my final thesis is the Methodology chapter, which aims to provide crucial information in order to understand my decision making process and what sort of quantitative and qualitative research I used. This chapter includes explanation of how I worked with literature and explains the Shell youth study. It furthermore provides background information about my online survey “Let’s Play a Little Game” which has been designed as some sort of game in itself and gives insight about my Facebook cover picture analysis which I used to develop five Generation Y subcategories based on the generation specific desire to create their own identity by self-portrayal on social media platforms. The methodology chapter completes with the illustration of limitations of the research methods I used and therefore limitations of the thesis.

The fourth chapter, the grown-up child aims to illustrate to what extend the members of the German Generation Y could be considered as adults. According to my literature review, my observations and the outcome of my online survey it appears reasonable to consider at least a part of this generation in Germany as not grown-up, which seems to provide essential information for the creation of communication strategies. Besides, this chapter expresses potential fears of this generation and draws a connection to J. M. Barrie’s Peter Pan, the boy who does not want to grow up. Furthermore, the detected subcategories from my Facebook cover picture analysis are presented and explained in this chapter.

The fifth section of my final thesis, Generation Y and Fashion, maintains current information about Generation Y’s relationship towards fashion, including their on- and offline shopping preference and their overall shopping behavior.
The sixth chapter intends to discuss the second issue of my thesis, the aspect of playing. In this chapter questions as what play is, who plays and for what reasons human and nonhuman are playing are discussed. This chapter furthermore demonstrates the relationship between Generation Y and playing.

The seventh chapter provides information and examples, followed by a critical point of view about Gamification and aims to create a link between Generation Y, playing and marketing.

The ninth section features the third and last main subject of my final thesis, the communication aspect. Based on the previous chapters a potential of experience marketing approaches have been visible and are therefore mainly featured in this chapter. This section provides relevant information about experience marketing in general and a short introduction of fashion marketing developments and draws with the Gamification part a connection between communication strategies and playing, while the last part of this section aims to suggest a suitable communication strategy in order to address the German Generation Y.

The last chapter is the conclusion, which aspires to summarize the most important findings in order to illustrate the outcome of my analysis to be able to make a reasonable suggestion to develop communication strategies.
1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale and Relevance

“Generation Maybe”, is the title of Oliver Jeges Book about the today 20-30 year old people living in the western world and as it appears it could be an applicable name for the Generation Y Jeges writes about (Jeges, 2014). However, Oliver Jeges is not the only one who shows interest in this specific generation that seems better educated than all generations before, thousands of articles, books and scientific research kept the discussion about Generation Y going for the past few years and has reached a peak in 2014.

The journalist Tim Urban states that this generation is, despite all the possibilities, not really happy, or even satisfied (Urban, Tim: Warum die Generation Y so unglücklich ist. 2014, online). Generation Y appears to be longing for fulfillment, happiness and joy, rather than building a future, holding on to responsibilities, or planning a career. Generation Y runs wild, they want to experience life to its fullest, value quality time with family and friends the most and are apparently searching for happiness elsewhere than generations before. Generation Y’s way of living, attitude, values and priorities seem to differentiate this particular generation from previous, like Generation X or the Baby boomers (Red Brick Research study, 2015) and it appears that due to that their buying behavior becomes less predictable (Schweizer Kader Organisation advise report: Leading generation-Why and How, 2014). Nonetheless, those “kids” do not really know what exactly they are looking for but they apparently expect plenty of life and do not want to waste time for meaninglessness.

The first time I heard about Generation Y words like “being free”, “careless”, but also “being curious”, “enjoying life”, or “being happy”, created an image of a child in my head and I was wondering about that. A child who does not want to grow old and that is longing for love. A child that is trying to understand the world, a child that is scared in the dark, likes to play, searches for meaning and that is not afraid to try something new. In some way, it even reminded me of James Matthew Barrie’s “Peter Pan” about the boy, who is not able to grow up, because he does not want to live without fun (Barrie, James Matthew, 1911,2000) but in some way his mindset, especially when it comes to responsibility, became older even though he stayed to be a kid.

The difference between adults of Generation Y and children is that they are officially considered as grown-ups and legally free to do what they want and that makes this generation so interesting and so fertile for fashion marketing approaches, because if they are really longing for desire and excitement fashion marketing campaigns could be able to develop a grown up playground in order to connect with them.
But what does being part of the Generation Y even mean? Articles and magazines express one overall vision of how members of Generation Y can be illustrated, usually defined as one big group, but if you turn the page you find characteristics like striving for individualism, but how does that go together then? Are all Gen Y “team members” the same in the sense of sharing the same overall generation specific values? Or can subcategories be developed in order to understand them better? And if so, how could marketers identify and address them separately in order to develop marketing concepts that are as appealing to them as possible? Finding answers to those questions is crucial for fashion companies to create customer specific marketing communication strategies that reach out to them successfully.

In order to be able to analyze Generation Y into depth, which is essential to create communication strategies, I decided to focus on the German Generation Y. According to my early research there are differences of Generation Y characteristics between countries which required me to focus. I chose Germany for my research limitation due to the link I recognized between children and members of the German Generation Y. Based on that in combination with the ongoing Gamification trend I was wondering if playing could have a distinctive potential for fashion communication approaches when addressing the German Generation Y. Therefore the aim of my final thesis is to analyze the potential of playing for fashion communication strategies when addressing the German Generation Y.

Reaching out to potential and existing consumer has never been easy, or a “set in stone” routine, due to change of people and generations, but also circumstances which have an impact on buying behavior as well. Within the last years addressing humans on an emotional, sometimes even biological level, became more important (Pitta, Julia: Emotional Marketing: Creating Ties That Bind, 2011, Online) and especially the members of Generation Y, who are apparently searching for meaning, seem open-minded at first sight when it comes to marketing concepts like experience marketing, based on desire and excitement, but could that really be a suitable communication tool when addressing the German Generation Y?

For this particular generation personal links, connections, fun and memories appear to have the most value and that is the aspect I see the strongest possibility for reaching out to them; by enhancing personal links and creating connections. But could elements of playing in communication strategies provide assistance in order to accomplishing that? And which communication tool might be suitable? This final thesis aims to provide answers.
1.2 Thesis Aim

Research aim:

1. The first research part aims to get a deep understanding of the German Generation Y, playing and possible marketing communication tools, experience marketing in particular.

2. The second research part aims to analyze the link between the three subjects and in what way this link could be suitable for fashion marketing campaigns when reaching out to Generation Y in Germany.

Thesis Aim:

3. The overall thesis objective is to investigate the potential of playing for communication strategies when reaching out to the German Generation Y. If there is a distinctive potential to detect, the next question would be how can one use it in the most efficient way, being precise, what communication tools would provide the most potential when addressing Generation Y.

4. The final outcome of this thesis is to develop a general suggestion for the communication with Generation Y in Germany. Based on the research results and analysis the suggestion will ex- or include aspects of playing that can be used in order to create specific marketing campaigns that aim to address members of the German Generation Y.

Product Aim:

5. Furthermore, based on the research report a marketing approach for a fictitious fashion brand will be created that aims to address a specific subcategory, of the 20-30 year old consumers in Germany of today. The fashion marketing campaign is developed based on the research report’s outcome and the final communication advice.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How can terms like Generation, Generation Y, playing and experience marketing be defined?

2. How can Generation Y be characterized? What kind of subcategories can be detected?

3. To what extent is it effective to address Generation Y with marketing approaches? And which tool could provide most potential?

4. Is it effective to include playing, or characteristics of playing, in marketing approaches when reaching out to the German Generation Y?
2. Generation Y

2.1 Definition

*Generation*

Generation is a term that defines a part of the population that spends their boyhood in the same period of time. Social, political, environmental and religious happenings that take place in the growing up process of human beings have an impact on the character building and behavior for the rest of their lives and form due to that a particular generation (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, p. 15). A generation is therefore a group of the population that often shares the same basic values towards the surrounding in a broader context formed by the experiences and gathered impressions of the outside world during the sensitive transformation from child to adult. The start and end of a defined generation is not set in stone but are often redefined after a 15 year time span (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, p. 12 – 17).

*Generation Y*

According to Hurrelmann and Albrecht (2014), Generation Y is a definition that stands for a particular generation of people that were born between 1985 and 2000, therefore the today 15-30 year old (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, p. 17). Nevertheless, the time span can differ across sources, but the core age seems to be 20-30 years and is therefore the foundation for my research. The letter “Y” defines an alphabetical generation ranking and is above that frequently connected to the English word “Why” which intends to represent the critical mindset of Generation Y (Bund, 2014, p.11). Other commonly used terms that define the same particular generation are Millennials, mostly used in English speaking countries Generation MyPod, Generation Now, or MeMeMe Generation for example. In addition, due to characterization differences of Generation Y between countries I decided to focus on the German Generation Y, which comprises around 12 million people (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, p. 202) out of a total German population of 80,9 Million (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014) and is due to that the most narrow German generation ever.

2.2 Introducing the German Generation Y

Within the last 4 years the debate about Generation Y and it´s characteristics do not seem to have an end. Journalists, historian´ and scientist´ do not seem to agree on an overall picture of the Generation Y. Some´s vision towards this generation appears quite negative when characterizing the 15-30 years old as narcissistic and egoistic, but not happy, due to endless option availability and unreachable expectations (Urban, Tim: Warum die Generation Y so unglücklich ist. 2014, online). While others state that Generation Y members certainly are happy, but are constantly searching for more ways of fulfillment (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, p. 8).
And in-between this ongoing debate led by professionals from different fields about negative and positive associations echo the members of Generation Y who seem to operate their own acute debate about which developed characteristic might apply to them and their generation. Despite the apparent disunity in Germany when it comes to defining what this certain generation is all about, particular behavior and basic values that might drive Generation Y are due to scientific studies, like the German Shell study, or the Book “Die heimlichen Revolutionäre” by Klaus Hurrelmann and Erik Albrecht (2014) for example, more explicit.

In generations before, like the Baby boomers, or Generation X, children have been educated by their parents to work, to have their own family and to save money in order to build up a good and especially safe future. A safe and materialistic future, a family of your own and marriage, all built upon hard work have been, according to Hurrelmann and Albrecht, the ruling life framework people aimed for in generations before, but the German Generation Y seems to believe that this is nowadays a naive way of structuring your life (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014). The country, society and world, Generation Y grew up in has been a different one and the framework of building up a safe future seemed to become an illusion for Generation Y members, for them little seems safe anymore. The author Kerstin Bund states due to that the value system and the relationship to time and materialism of the German Generation Y has changed and differs to previous generations (Bund, 2014).

But what does Generation “WHY” value if it is not a career, or money? What is part of their modern priority system? As it appears Generation Y value quality time, self-actualization and personal success (Red Brick Research study, 2014). After all, Generation Y seems demanding and self-confident which makes them believe “impossible” is just a word. This way of thinking and behaving defines Generation Y members as realists, but opportunists as well, due to their ability to adapt and to learn fast (Red Brick Research study, 2014).

Hurrelmann and Albrecht describe the members of the Generation Y as tactic egoists, who focus on their own success and wellbeing, based on a strategic way of thinking (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, P. 32). The authors explain this strategic behavior as a pure survival method due to the uncertainty the members of the German Generation Y had to grow up in. The rise of the internet, the introduction of mobile phones, the internationalization of the country that went along, or the currency change from Deutsche Mark to Euro, compelled the today 20-30 year olds to develop a survival strategy that would allow them to adapt to new situations very quick (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014).

Experiences of global terrorism and dangerous inconsistency like the World Trade Center in 2001 in New York for instance, or the Fukushima reactor accident 2011 in Japan, to name only two, seemed to have an impact on the meaning of time and made it more valuable than money for members of the German Generation Y.
Based on that, it appears that the priority system had to be rearranged and investing unlimited energy in making money and building up something in the long term are apparently strategically not smart for German Generation Y members, due to the fact that uncertainty appears to be the only constant they know of (Shell Jugendstudie, 2002).

2.3 Development

In order to understand this Generation, it is important to see where the behavior is coming from. As stated before, experiences and impressions occurring during the transformation period from child to adult form the vision toward the world and their personal life. This means, that in combination with the parental education and their vision of the world a new generation evolves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Date of birth Timespan</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Issues of growing up period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'68 Generation</td>
<td>1940 – 1955</td>
<td>Authoritarian education Men were in charge Family &amp; marriage important</td>
<td>Economic miracle, Cold war, DDR and West Germany, Youth protests and first step of democratic Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babyboomer</td>
<td>1955 - 1970</td>
<td>Wealth and vitality Still old fashioned family and gender systems. First time that Postmoralish values became interesting (creativity, enjoying life etc.) Politic also important for the youth</td>
<td>As many new borns as never before Oil prices increased over 70% and West Germany fell in recession first big unemployment number new political protests RAF attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>1970 - 1985</td>
<td>Wealth and vitality Everything was good mentality Everyone had a job, study place or apprenticeship training position, but still often no motivation to work</td>
<td>First signs of economic problems 1989 Fall of the Berlin wall Start of the internationalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>1985 - 2000</td>
<td>New forms of communication Increase of media presence and use. Not enough study and apprentice places Internship becomes useful Women and men become equal Tolerance towards homosexual marriages</td>
<td>German school education is ranked low by the PISA study Introduction of a new currency, Euro. Germany co-founder of the European Union Internet and mobile phones Increase of unemployed people World financial crisis 11.09.01 New York attack and US proclamation to fight the international terror US war in Iraq and Afghanistan Germany votes Angela Merkel as the first women as federal chancellor Terror Attack in London Environmental damages Worst case scenario in nuclear power station Fukushima (Japan) Terror attack in Paris Terror attacks in Sweden and Denmark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(�Swiss Kader Organisation advise report: Leading generation-Why and how, 2014, p. 3)

**Competition and the feeling of the individual**

Generation Y in Germany appears to have developed a healthy sense of realism while growing up with the internet, increasing number of the unemployed population, governmental changes in the German school system, bad PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results, foundation of the European Union and the currency change from Deutsche Mark (DM) to Euro (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014).
All of that became a part of the internationalization of their surrounding in a transforming country and seemed to establish the impression of a world that is changing fast and as it appears it supplied the young German Generation Y members with a realistic attitude and the assumption that the word “safety” needed to be redefined. Even in times of war generations before had to face, the problems that went along with the internationalization of a country, seemed to have forced the German Generation Y, in contrast to other generations, to develop a rather competitive and flexible mindset. Based on the understanding that if they are not better than the rest, the chances of a good future would decrease required the development of flexible survival strategies with a self-centered focus, which appear to be the reason for Hurrelmann and Albrecht to name them tactic egoists (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, p. 32-34). Due to that the feeling of the individual appears to become stronger and the vision of a bigger one less realistic, or at least lost its priority status it might had once. Nonetheless, even if the majority of the German Generation Y seems not aiming to be alone, the attitude everyone fights for themselves seemed to arise.

Decision making problems and relationships

In fact, the German Generation Y members seem to find comfort and safety only with their families, which they value the most, followed by friendship (Shell Jugendstudie, 2006). Based on the Shell Youth Study in 2010 81% of the female and 71% of the male participants between 12 and 25 state that to have a family is required in order to be happy (Shell Jugendstudie, 2010, p. 57). With their parents, or in the family systems, members of the German Generation Y stay children as long as they do not have children of themselves, but also the financial and unconditional personal support apparently supplies them with the impression of safety and consistency (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014). Nonetheless, it seems that members of this generation cannot handle consistency for a longer period besides their families; as it appears that they rather get bored and confused by it. Apparently the life of the German Generation Y is built upon inconsistency and change and due to that their whole behavior and decision making seems to be aligned to that, which might be the reason for boredom and confusion, when facing a stable situation over a certain period (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014).

Probably due to a constant change, broad option availability and the fact that Generation Y members are often characterized as realists, decision making problems became a part of them as well (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014). Generation Y members appear to be scared to make the wrong decision, due to regret and the fear to be left behind based on the wrong decision (Ben, Generation Y – 11 Stärken und Schwächen von GenY, online, N.A, Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, p.88). The capability of making up their minds about the best decision seems to be lacking. As soon as Generation Y members are not entirely committed and connected which would lead to meaningfulness, the process of deciding seems to be difficult for members of Generation Y.
This apparently concerns not only the buying behavior of the German Generation Y, but relationships too (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014).

Conclusion

Based on the education of their parents and the internationalization of Germany, Generation Y seems to become a generation that is not only open minded, well-educated and tolerant, it made them also very flexible when it comes to adjust to new situations. Even more, as mentioned before Generation Y grow up with the certainty that maybe nothing lasts forever; parents split, friendships change, flexibility for jobs became crucial, relationship models vary and Generation Y apparently has no choice than become a generation of realists. They learned to keep up with uncertainty and instability that it became a part of their way of behavior and decision making (Bund, 2014). In addition, non-materialistic values and the transience of life seem to make Generation Y appreciate the time they have and developed the demand for more than working hard until you are old (Red Brick Research study, 2015). Besides, it appears that flexibility became such an essential part of them that they are overstrained when facing stability for a longer period (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, p. 41), like children do, when they get bored, because they are not used to a “steady flow” of life.

In order to understand my way of working and the methods I used, especially my observations which are essential for the next chapters, I would like to continue with the methodology part.

3. Methodology

The general approach of this thesis is to analyze the demand side of the German fashion industry through Nethnography. My final thesis will address three main subjects; the German Generation Y, playing and based on my research with a focus on the communication tool experience marketing. The most essential subject is the German Generation Y as this thesis is written for the demands side. In order to be able to link the two other subjects to the German Generation Y, I need to understand what this particular generation is all about, their vision of life, but also towards values and what kinds of desires can be detected. Without understanding the needs of the German Generation Y, it is not reasonable to suggest that potential communication approaches could be appropriate. Therefore, the subject German Generation Y is chapter and subject overlapping. In order to receive valuable outcomes, I used primary and secondary research to gather data. To be precise my final thesis outcomes are based on quantities research from literature and my own developed online survey as well as qualitative research like observations. For my methodology part it is essential to manifest, that I will give insight of how I worked and why I did it that way. The results will be found in the relevant context within the following chapters and can be reread in the appendix part.
3.1 Literature

To almost every subject a diversity of perspectives in reports, research results, or explanations for instance are available and can make it harder to see clear.

Especially when it comes to understand and define a generation the perspective seems crucial, because there might be a difference between a journalist, a youth researcher, a historian or a member of the particular generation that needs to be investigated even though stated the objective perspective would be assured. The same goes for the subject of playing for instance, several sources from all over the world seem to define “play” from different perspectives and result rarely in the same results. Based on the fact that I noticed the importance of perspective, I aimed to include more than one perspective as the foundation, which is not of necessity the same as a diversity of sources. I researched the most respective books for each of my subjects (Generation Y, playing and experience marketing) and started to build up my research. I continued with a diversity of other books, articles, research reports and statistics in order to guarantee a solid research ground with a diverse perspective. Especially when it comes to the German Generation Y it has been crucial for me to include books as a research foundation that include the outside and the inside perspective to achieve a panorama view.

An important source for my literature analysis has been the German Shell youth studies which supplied me with valuable quantitative information. Shell Germany authorizes independent research organizations since 1953 to analyze the youth in Germany. Mostly every 2 – 5 years the company releases new study result reports to provide valuable information about the German youth, their social and political mindset. The outcomes seem relevant for the government, as well as the economic sectors and social institutions. The latest Shell youth study is released in 2010 initiated and supported by German youth researchers Professor Dr. Albert, Professor Dr. Hurrelmann and Dr. Quenzel and the Munich social research institution TNS Infratest. In the beginning of 2010 2.604 teenager between 12 and 25 years were asked to fill in a standardized survey, including questions about their current situation, religious believes, their value systems and their attitude towards politic. Afterwards 20 qualitative case studies were executed and resulted, in combination with the quantitative outcomes, in the official report. But not only the latest report from 2010 has been valuable for my analysis, also the reports from 2002 and 2006 (with 1000 up to 2.500 participants) have been essential for my final thesis, due to the fact that the Shell youth study participants have to be 12 until 25 years old it allowed me to extend the age radius without losing the today 20-30 year old focus and supplied me with valuable insight about Generation Y’s believes over a longer period.

3.2 Online survey explanation and research goal

In order to get a better up to date insight of the German Generation Y I decided to come up with an online survey.
I decided to use the free survey creation tool Typeform, based on the fact that it supplied me with several creation options and good analyzing tools, like showing me the average time of completing my survey, or what devices were used, which could be useful eventually. Besides, it gave me also the opportunity to choose between different kinds of question and answer models and allowed me to include also pictures, which has been essential for my concept.

I came up with 4 main subjects that I wanted to investigate with my survey. Characteristics of the German Generation Y members, their relation to fashion and buying behavior, their opinion on games and marketing approaches as well. Due to two main reasons I did not want to have an ordinary survey.

The first reason has been based on my own experiences with surveys. Most of the time, people, including me, are annoyed by filling in questionnaires due to the time consume and the fact that quite some people do not appreciate providing personal information, even if it is anonym which led me to the suggestion that it would be probably not easy to enthuse people to participate. On grounds of the certainty that I have not been interested in everyone to participate, simply members of the German Generation Y, I had to focus on my literature outcomes in order to create an online survey. The literature outcomes stated that the German Generation Y is longing for valuable experiences and fun, but also that they seem to be smart realists that appear not interested in spending time and energy with meaninglessness. Therefore I assumed that if I want information from them, I need to give them something in return that triggers them to participate in order to have a reasonable number of participants that could provide me with reliable outcomes.

The second reason has been the fact that I am investigating the potential of playing for communication strategies, when addressing the German Generation Y. As mentioned before, the incorporation of several perspectives has been crucial for this research report, especially when it comes to the German Generation Y.
Due to that a survey has been created that is some kind of play in itself, to make it special, fun and interesting for members of the German Generation Y to participate in and to analyze the reaction of the participants towards this playful way communicating. I furthermore indicated that I would donate 20 cents to UNCEF for each participant.

Based on those two main reasons I decided to create a survey that is a playful test in itself. Being precise, I developed a survey that is based on playful characteristics and came up with the idea to develop a survey that is constructed as a partner finding ad in the sense of “Let’s get to know each other” like in an email contact between two people that have never met before. The reasons for that has been the aim to encourage people to participate and to investigate the reaction of participants towards my playful survey in the sense of messages, comments and reposting.

I developed 33 questions and decided to supply the participants with mostly 2-6 answer options and not with open questions, in order to be able to have an outcome that is quantitative comparable and easy to measure. To nearly each question, a funny picture has been incorporated that symbolizes the type of question, without giving the reader any kind of answer direction, only to make it more surprising and fun.

In order to enhance curiosity and to prepare potential participants I named my survey “Let’s Play a Little Game”. I decided to supply the survey link for 5 weeks on Facebook which provided me based on the literature review with an effective social media platform in order to reach out to the German Generation Y. Above that using Facebook as distribution base for my online survey link would be coherent with a Facebook title picture analysis for the self-portrayal chapter in which I developed German Generation Y subcategories. I supplied the participants with two versions. In the first version, I did not ask how they liked the survey in order to be able to analyze their reaction, which is most of the time more valuable than opinions after asking.
After three days I added one question about how they liked the survey in order to have also numbers related to that issue. I have to admit 370 participants, the re-sharing rate of my link and the outcome surprised me and lied above my expectations. Talking to other graduation students of the Amsterdam fashion Institute, as well as from other universities the average number of participants has been calculated to 85 out of 10 thesis surveys, two of them developed with the same survey supplier Typeform, which seems quite remarkable.

370 people participated in the survey, 60% women and 40% men, while the most active period has been the first week. Most of the user, 285 of them, opened the link with their mobile phones, but the majority of actual participants, 185, used their laptops to fill in the questionnaire, which is quite interesting and could be an indication for device preferences when it comes to survey designs of the German Generation Y members.

3.3 Facebook cover picture analysis

**Analysis idea:**

Not only Generation Y members in Germany use Facebook as a communicator of their personality, but the literature review conduct that especially the 20 until 30 years old use this particular platform to express who they are, or how they want others to notice them. Based on that I thought it might be reasonable to develop subcategories of the German Generation Y not based on how other people perceive them, but on how members of this particular generation see themselves.

**Time span:**
01.03.2015 – 20.03.2015

**Place:**
Facebook.de

**Research aim:**
To develop German Generation Y Subcategories.

**Research questions:**
How do members of the German Generation Y see themselves?
What do they communicate about themselves to others?
What subcategories can, due to their self-expression, be detected?

**Methodology:**
The overall goal has been to understand the members of the German Generation Y and their personal vision of themselves, their self-portrayal, by recognizing the messages of the cover pictures.
Due to the fact that self-image creation and expressing via Facebook is an important communication tool, I analyzed 50 Facebook profiles from friends, but mostly, in order to stay more objective, from friends of my friends and came up with German Generation Y Subcategories. I conveyed the overall message by using key words that derive from analyzing the cover pictures. I analyzed the cover pictures, due to the fact that it’s the only part that is visible to everyone and not dependent to a Facebook friendship.

Essential to state is the fact that it is important that I analyzed not only one of the cover pictures, but all to the public available cover images in order to receive a clear message. Looking at only one picture, could have made the outcome less strong and/or visible. Out of each subcategory I was able to identify, I chose 1-3 of the 50 profiles and included it in my appendix to clarify my outcome (Appendix 11.3).

3.4 Limitations

As presented and stated in the methodology chapter, certain parts, like the German Generation Y and fashion, or playing, but marketing too are partly based on outcomes that were delivered by an online survey that I developed. However, the survey outcome of 370 participants can be seen as successful but nonetheless it is crucial to manifest, that the survey itself has limitations. The way of asking, the option availability, but maybe even the choice of pictures could have had an impact on the outcome, which is the reason I would consider the statistical outcome as not 100 percent relevant, due to design principles. Nonetheless, the outcome can be seen as indication based on the number of participants and the fact that the general answer options has been provided. In order to be precise, I do not consider the statistical outcome as accurate, but overall valuable as tendency. The same goes for my observations. I would consider the timespan, the date and the observations outcomes as relevant and comprehensible, but observations are interpretative and subjective, which could lead to limitations.

In addition, the respected books I chose for the different subjects as foundation could be a limitation too. The research has been diverse and analyzed from several perspectives in order to stay as objective as possible, but the process of deciding, what books, what kind of articles, what kind of question imply always limitations, due to the fact that deciding is always excluding too and not everything can be read. Furthermore I would like to manifest that especially the subjects playing and marketing, are extremely diverse and broad that seeing clear has not always been easy.

Especially when it comes to the issue of playing, there is no such thing as clarity and the perspective seems to be key, therefore it has been helpful to choose a few books that seem to be broadly respected in order to have a foundation I could rely on somehow while considering other points of view.
Again, deciding is always excluding and therefore limiting, especially when it comes to own
developed surveys and observations the outcome cannot be 100 percent objective, but that does not
mean that the outcome is less valuable.

**Transformation intro**

Based on the literature review on the German Generation Y, it came to my attention that this particular
generation seems to have problems with growing up. Even if most of the German Generation Y
members are according to the German law officially adults when turning 18, the fact has been
questioned that they can be considered completely as grown-ups yet and I would like to elaborate on
that in the following chapters.

Being more precise I try to investigate what growing up means, which evolutionary steps a child has
to pass in order to be considered adult, but maybe even more important I aim to figure out how
members of the German Generation Y see themselves.

In addition, I would like to emphasize, that the descriptive part, which has been essential in order to
understand the German Generation Y, has been primarily completed and the analyses part is about to
begin. Nonetheless, I would like to clarify that the following chapters that feature playing and
marketing, still contain descriptive parts providing essential information for the reader to be able to
follow my argumentation.

The following chapter provides an overview of the growing up process and elaborates on the
connection between the German Generation Y and children.

**4. The Grown-Up child**

The German Generation Y members seem not in a hurry when it comes to grow up and they appear
not to care about the adult status (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, p. 102). Generation Y members, as
mentioned before, have often very close relationships with their parents, which according to
Hurrelmann and Albrecht could be one of the reasons they do not want to grow up. Another
explanation for that could be the fear for the real world, full of responsibilities, uncertainties and
problems they might seem not ready for yet (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, p. 103). But what does
growing up actually mean? And what teenage processes need to be lived through in order to become a
grown up part of the German society?

*The process of growing up*

Based on the latest sociological findings, the traditional picture of youth as a temporary phase with
particular characteristics is no longer valid.
According to Gabel, there is no universal event or behavior anymore which would define the end of the youth phase and the start of the adult period (Gabel, Henning: Stationen der Entwicklung Jugendlicher, online, 2012).

The youth research defines the transition from child to adult by passing through 4 important social and psychological development steps during the growing up process in order to integrate the teenager as a completely grown up member in the society:

1. **Educate & qualify**: To find a job which leads to financial independence.
2. **Letting go & reconnect**: Take over responsibilities.
3. **Consume, economic activity & prevent**: Get familiar with the role as consumer, media user and economic responsibilities in order to handle money in the long and short term.
4. **Value oriented behavior & political participation**: The role as social committed and political involved person that behaves based on an own value system (Hurrelmann, Quenzel, 2013, p. 28)

Those steps defined the development from child to adequate adult of the society. Nonetheless, the internet developments, which provided a change of information exchange, during the growing up process of the German Generation Y, seemed to have led to an alteration and disturbance of the traditional process which might be the reason for confusion and childlike behavior. Furthermore, it even seems that the grown-up process has changed in the sense of being faster an adult when it comes to media, digital communication and information exchange (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, p. 28-29), but overall the transition from child to adult appears to be interrupted which could to be the reason for an extension of the grown up period.

![Figure 4.1](image)

**Would you consider yourself as a grown up, or as a child?**

- 62% Grown-up
- 28% Child
- 10% 50/50

In addition, the online survey “Let’s Play A Little Game” which has been created as some kind of role play between me and the participant with a focus on fun conducted remarkable outcome.
With 62% of my “Let’s Play a Little Game” survey participants, a significant majority as you can see in figure 4.1, thinks that there is still a part of them that is not grown-up yet. As the figure shows, only 28% consider themselves as adults.

Another interesting insight of my survey concerning the issue if Generation Y members can be considered as adults provided the outcome of the question what fantasy character they would like to be. As you can see in figure 4.2 the most chosen answer with 41% out of 6 options has been Peter Pan, followed with 17% by Mulan. Peter Pan is a fictional story about a boy that lives at a dream place called Neverland where he never wants and never will grow up. Peter Pan experiences adventures, he loves to tell and hear stories and the only thing he really aims at is fun. Besides, remarkable is also the fact that the story of Peter Pan has no happy ending or an ending at all as most children’s books have and it seems to characterize the Generation Y again as realists, but as dreamer too. Generation Y members are aware that they do not live forever and question the fact of a happy ending in real life, but this particular outcome illustrates that they are somehow still longing for adventures, for fun and a never ending life, full of stories.

Besides, very fascinating too is the fact that not only males chose this character, female participants chose Peter Pan over being a princess like Cinderella for instance too, which makes the desire and therefore the outcome even more outspoken. If you value that particular outcome, it is quite extraordinary that women chose a boy that cannot grow up and a girl (Mulan) that saves her father by taking his spot in the army over a princess, characterized by beauty and the marriage with the prince. This outcome illustrates that terms as “fun” and “enjoying” seem to characterize Generation Y in Germany and appear to be crucial elements when reaching out to them. This generation is longing for making their lives more valuable because emptiness seems to be linked with boredom and regretting seems to be one of the deepest fears of this Generation. It is a generation that aspires experiences and stories which seem to be the ultimate barometer of a wonderful, successful and extraordinary life.
Companies that aim to reach out to the German Generation Y have to understand that giving them something valuable and fun is key. Companies have to surprise them, reinvent new forms of communication and maybe meet them in some sort of playground for grown-ups. The following section continues with an important Generation Y characteristic, which is essential for marketers to understand in order to use it for their own purposes, the self-portrayal. Which is nonetheless some sort of play too and might provide insight when it comes to the aspect of playing as well.

4.2 Self-Portrayal

Nina Pauer states in her “Die Zeit” article: “The demonstration of being happy turns the being happy into actually being happy” (Nina Pauer: Reich mir mal den Rettich rüber. online, 2014). Generation Y members are as mentioned before often characterized as people that need to reinvent themselves consistently in order to provide them with some sort of advantage (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014) and what Pauer appears to demonstrate is that Generation Y turns fake into reality by self-creating and continuous self-portrayal mostly by creating a visual, yet virtual life on social media platforms, but also by style.

The use of media, especially the internet, became a tool for Generation Y to create and form their own reality and identity (Schenk, Niemann, Roßnagel, 2012, P. 3). Due to that it appears to be crucial for fashion marketers to understand the image those Generation Y members have from themselves. According to that, finding Generation Y subcategories that share the same vision or way of behavior in order to create fashion marketing approaches that contain an additional value could be useful.

One of the most important social media platforms for self-portrayal is Facebook, over 90% of the German Generation Y is part of the virtual community (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, p.153).

However, not only Generation Y members in Germany use Facebook as a communication tool of their personality, but an analysis of Generation Y members in Germany illustrates that especially the 20 until 30 years old use this particular platform to express who they are, or how they want others to notice them.

Due to the fact that the creation of the own identity, based on self-portrayal, seems to be an important Generation Y characteristic I was able to define subcategories based on their personal vision and the image they bring across through their Facebook profiles.

Following subcategories could be developed:
The Wild Child

Those members seem to be wild, careless, cool and individual. They often use provocative slogans and rude expressions, next to pictures that illustrate freedom, creativity and often also a fashion interested nature. Furthermore a strong relationship to fun, music, art, party, adventures and friends is visible. They also seem very realistic, or at least not naïve about relationships, love or the future. It appears as if they do not care and it makes them seem strong, independent and not vulnerable, but linking it to other cover pictures and picture names, or descriptions they seem to care after all about relationships and love. Considering the fact that most Generation Y members appear to be realists and often used to parents that split up, their distant “not caring” attitude seems to make sense. Their fashion style appears cool and several times also expressed through tattoos and an extraordinaire fashion style (Appendix 11.6). Mentality slogan:

“Here I am! I am cool, self-confident and life is an adventurous party!”

The Arty Kid

This subcategory seems not very different from the “Wild child” category, but still clearly distinctive. Members of this subcategory seem not to seek for personal attention, which is probably the major difference to the “Wild Child’s”, visible in the absence of selfies as cover pictures. In this subcategory pictures are key that have a creative and arty outlook. Those pictures can be paintings, drawings, pictures from nature, or circumstances but do not have to have a visual relation to the person, because members want to seem or are slightly mysterious and melancholic. In addition, those members can be childish, but seem not that careless or provocative, like the “Wild Child” category, more down to earth and not that self-confident as members of the “Wild child” subcategory.
Besides, in this category some political or ecological vision could have been detected too. The style is not that distinctive, but rather individual, cool, casual and sometimes a vintage mix (Appendix 11.6).

Mentality slogan: “Life is what you make out of it, be who you are!”

The Journey Seeker

For those members culture, travelling and making experiences seems key. Furthermore, self-expression appears not that important, but they pursue to create their online personality based on experiences which symbolize diversity and being cosmopolitan. Those members want to be seen as independent, open minded and modern, but probably fearless too. For them adventure, experiences and living life to its fullest seems matter the most and are based on international experiences they like to share. The style of those members seems inconsiderable, but also experimental and individual (Appendix 10.6).

Mentality slogan: “Life is too short, so go and experience it!”
The Average Kid

The next subcategory that I could detect is “The Average Kid”. Members of this subcategory seem to care about safety, family, travelling, friends and bonding more than being special. However, members of this category seem, compared to the “Wild Child” subcategory almost boring and even if fun is important, they seem to care more about an easy and steady life - as steady as it can be in times of uncertainty - then adventure and personal attention. The priority of self-expression and egoistic behavior seems less strong based on my analysis. The personal style seems more toned down, average and not that experimental or bold (Appendix 11.6).

Mentality slogan: “Life is good!”

The Outsiders

In the last category are members of Generation Y in Germany that are not expressing a clear message, or belonging through their cover pictures. Most of the times those people are not that active at Facebook, when it comes to pictures, statements or posts visible for everyone. As it appears those members use Facebook rather for staying in contact, for their friends and for gathering information than self-creation. A critical mindset could be the reason for that, or a strong personal attitude which does not require staging it. Their style is undefined and often not even visible, or inconsistent (Appendix 11.6).
To sum up, based on that 5 subcategories the first one the "Wild Child" is the most outspoken one and somehow transparent, as well as distinctive. Besides, the "Wild Child" subcategory seems to share the most childlike characteristics and behavior, due to attention seeking, self-expression and fun loving characteristics and could imply the most outspoken potential for playing. The subcategory “The Journey Seeker” could also provide strong communication qualities, due to their open attitude. They seem to be longing for adventures and experiences in order to fill their lives with diversity, and communication strategies could address that desire.

The next chapter will provide information about the relationship between Generation Y and fashion. The chapter aims to clarify the relationship towards fashion and its meaning, as well as shopping behavior and expectations of the German Generation Y based on the survey outcomes.

5. Generation Y and fashion

5.1 Definition

Fashion

The definition of fashion has been an issue since many years. How can fashion be characterized? Is every garment also the same as fashion? Or is fashion more of a culture phenomenal than simply clothing? Several research papers have been published, articles written and discussions about this complex subject were held that aimed to define and understand fashion from different perspectives. The cultural background, the education, the personal perspective and the time context seem to provide relevance for the definition, or characterization of the term Fashion. The issue appears to fascinate, to challenge and to trigger, but a universal definition seems hard to find and would probably explode the final thesis framework requirements which has been the reason to include dictionary definitions instead that fit my understanding of the term the best. The Thesaurus dictionary defines the noun fashion as a way of dressing, a socializing approach, while the Merriam dictionary incorporates time as an important factor as well, when defining fashion as “a popular way of dressing during a particular time or among a particular group of people” and expand its definition by adding: “Fashion can also stand for the business of creating and selling clothes”.

The German Generation Y’s relationship to fashion

The German Generation Y has been characterized and defined based on values in the previous chapter extensively, but what kind of shopping behavior is typically, or most interesting to them? Mostly based on survey results, the following outcome could be gathered.
5.2 Online vs. offline shopping

When I started to research Generation Y in general, not Germany specific, the literature review demonstrated that Generation Y is not only internet affine, they also like to shop online. Due to that I wanted to investigate if that shopping characteristic applies specifically also to the German Generation Y and the result was surprising: As you can see in figure 5.3 74% of the participants state they like to shop offline better. Only 26% claim they prefer online shopping.

Therefore it seems as even if this generation grew up with the rise of the internet, when it comes to shopping, they prefer the real shop, which might be due to the differences of experience.

5.3 Shopping behavior

The German Generation Y appears to be a generation that follows instincts and enjoyment and that attitude seems also visible in their shopping behavior.
Figure 5.3 provides insight about the shopping habits and illustrates that 51% of the participants shop spontaneously. If they see something nice they would like to have, they buy it. This outcome states that for at least a part of the German Generation Y shopping seems more of an activity due to fun and desire, instead of being in need of something which seems to support the impression that they consider shopping as enjoyment and not as requirement.

![What do you shop most frequently?](image)

When it comes to the question what they like to buy frequently, figure 5.4 shows that the German Generation Y participants like to shop T-shirts (35%) most often, followed by shoes/sneaker (15%). This could lead to the suggestion that especially this product category could indicate a distinctive potential for promotion activities and extension of the assortment.

To conclude, the German members of Generation Y are spontaneous decision makers when it comes to shopping, they prefer offline shopping and T-shirts are their favorite shopping piece. Especially due to their spontaneous shopping behavior, concepts and marketing approaches based on value and personal connections that establish loyalty seem indispensable. The following chapter provides relevant information about the second subject of the thesis, the playing aspect. Next to definition and background information, connections between the German Generation Y and playing are established.
6. Generation Y and playing

6.1 Definition

Play

First of all, there seems to be a common difference between the terms of play for children and play for teens, or adults.

According to Huizinga and Sutton-Smith, the term “play” refers to infants and children, while the term “leisure” and “recreation” refers to teens and adults (Sutton-Smith, 1997). In order to avoid confusion I use the both terms throughout my research report, “play” as well as “leisure”.

Due to the fact that a part of the German Generation Y sees themselves as half child and half adult, the usage of both terms in the same context, seems reasonable.

To start off, the definition of what “Play” is has been far more complex than expected and it has to be clear, that there is no such thing as the “one” right and universal definition of what play means or how it can be defined. Over the past 200 years, researcher, philosophers, pedagogues and people from several different fields of profession tried to find one right definition, but no one has ever accomplished to develop a universal approach that is generally accepted. Besides, according to Burghardt the modern usage of the word “play” in terms of children’s behavior suggests an activity that is spirited, voluntary and fun (Burghardt, 2005, p. 23). Also children when asked define play as fun (Scarlett, Naudeau, Salonius-Pasternak Ponte, 2005, p.4) which apparently seems also for Generation Y members to be the reason for playing games (Appendix 10.2, no. 31) but not all play is automatically fun. According to Sutton-Smith and Kelly-Byrne play is often idealized by the western world and can be scary as well (Sutton-Smith, Kelly-Byrne, 1984, p. 305-321). While Johan Huizinga for instance sees play as something that occurs for its own sake, as something that it is fully absorbing, including elements of uncertainty, involved illusions or exaggeration and not real for those doing it (Huizinga, 1938). Huizinga defines play as something that develops within culture and that it is not separable from it (Huizinga, 1938). The definition by the National Institute for Play appears very appropriate as well due to the fact that it does not really exclude other respected authors view on the subject and seems therefore quite suitable for my research. Dr. Stuart Brown defines play for the American National Institute for Play as “a state of being that is intensely pleasurable. It energizes and enlivens us, it eases our burdens, renews a natural sense of optimism and opens us up to new possibilities (Dr. Brown, Health Starts Where We Play, National Institute for Play, Online, 2014)”.

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6.2 Characteristics of “play”

In order to get a grip on the subject of playing, or leisure, and to understand the different aspects of playing a generated list developed by the outcome of several respected views on playing might be helpful. Common characteristics of activities defined as play are: (Kuhaneck, Spitzer, Miller, 2005, p. 6, figure 1.1)

- Flexibility
- Spontaneity
- Intrinsic motivation
- Non literal or symbolic use of objects
- Voluntary engagement
- Free choice
- Elicitation of positive affect (fun/enjoyable)
- Lack of functional purpose or goal
- Often resembles real behavior but lacks the consequences

Furthermore, several authors like Hutt in 1966 and Burghart in 2005 suggest making a distinction between exploration and play. Exploration is defined as the stadium in which a child needs to explore a new object and the process of playing starts as soon as the child has explored that object and is able to understand what to do with it (Burghart, 2005).

However, aspects of playing seem to be the free choice to do, to be who or what you would like to, self-actualization and behavior that is fun, but without real consequences and analyzing those, again not universal right, guidelines of the definition of play, it seems as it would define not only the act of playing but the German Generation Y as well. Even more, it appears as the German Generation Y itself is some sort of a play; a play of stories, self-portrayal and fun, with the only difference that their life is real and consequences, or wrong decision, do have an impact.

Who plays?

According to Kuhaneck, Spitzer and Miller, everyone plays. It does not matter in what society someone grows up, or under what circumstances, every human plays and even nonhuman (Kuhaneck, Spitzer, Miller, 2005, p.3-4). Gomes and Martin-Andrade argue that the way animals play, is different from the way humans play, due to the human capability of pretending (Gomes, Martin-Andrade, 2005, p. 139-172). Even though humans and non-humans seem to play, there are differences in the way we do it which are influenced by parental education, social status, media, and society but above all by gender.
Girls for instance, when free in choice, prefer house toys like tea sets and dolls, while boys choose rather transportation and construction toys (Kuhaneck, Spitzer, Miller, 2010). Reasons for that seem to have evolutionary origins. Nonetheless, also the circumstances in which humans play seems not easy to define, but several sources claim that a feeling of security and safety is a required foundation, but also the freedom of other commitments appear to be an important factor (Kuhaneck, Spitzer, Miller, 2005, p. 19).

*Why do we play?*

The overall logic seems to be the ability to examine the brain in new ways. Being more precise, playing, or leisure, appears to be a form to work out current psychological issues and difficulties. Furthermore, it seems to help children to prepare for adults roles and responsibilities (Ginsburg, 2007, p. 119,182-191). Play also seems to support youngsters to develop motor skills and promotes cognitive and social development (Kuhaneck, Spitzer, Miller, 2005).

The director of The National Institute for Play Stuart L. Brown, M.D., states: “When we play, at any age, we are engaged in the purest expression of our humanity, the truest expression of our individuality. Is it any wonder that often the times we feel most alive, those that make up our best Memories, are moments of play? Play is a basic need. It is a biological requirement for normal growth and development (Dr. Brown, Stuart: health Starts Where We Play, online, 2014).

As it appears, the aspect of fun, in combination with memories are apparently important when it comes to playing, but what exactly is “fun”? The US psychologist Anne Jean Ayres defines the term “fun” in 1979 for children and adults as a game or toy that provides an appropriate level of challenge (Ayres, 1979). It appears that development and play together grow in a spiraling process whereby play both reflects and contributes to the development of the child in all areas (Kuhaneck, Spitzer, Miller, 2010).

Another reason for playing that is in line with the primary research of Generation Y’s relationship to games is stated in the theory to playing to engage. The theory demonstrates the vision of playing to escape boredom and illustrates the belief that individuals choose activities based on the sensory experiences they provide and that those choices reflect an individual’s need for sensation (Zuckermann, 1971, p. 36, 45-52).

To sum up, playing encourages flexible thinking, creativity and problem solving. It furthermore promotes social-emotional bonds between individuals and pleasurable aspects of play promote quality of life and mental well-being (Kuhaneck, Spitzer, Miller, 2010).
Basically, play seems to be an essential aspect of growing up and development of a human being, but if playing is characterized as a basic need or something that everybody does, how could a specific potential for experience marketing campaigns be detected when aiming at the German Generation Y? The connection between playing and the memories occurring while having fun, seem to be a relevant aspect to consider.

My observations and the literature review demonstrated that the German Generation Y is a generation of stories and self-creation who values time the most and as it appears a generation that is not completely grown up yet, which makes the suggestion of further development reasonable and draws a thin line between Generation Y and playing.

6.3 Generation Y and playing

![Pie Chart: What would represent your childhood the best? You can choose more than one option.]

To start off, one of the most important play relevant outcomes seems to be the understanding that the members of the German Generation Y consider themselves not as fully grown-up yet, as mentioned before, they like to have fun and link their childhood as visible in figure 6.1, to playing, before being outside, the most. This outcome could provide marketers with essential information to build up communication campaigns when addressing Generation Y due to their close relationships with their parents, offering them aspects that remind them with their childhood, could create a connection between German Generation Y members and fashion brands.
Interest in playing

For 46% of the participants, playing games is still part of their lives, but not that frequently as stated in figure 6.2. 34% even state that they like to play games very much and that they often play. Only 20% state they do not really play games.

Besides, a part of the Generation Y members (29%) seem to like all games that are based on interaction, only 9% claim that they do not intentionally play at all as you can see in Figure 6.3.

As it appears there is an interest in games in general, while the German Generation Y prefers every game that is based on interaction which provides marketers with several online and offline possibilities to engage.
What do you like about those games?
- 74%: The companionship
- 21%: I can’t really tell
- 5%: I do not have game preferences, I let others decide

Why do you play?
- 57%: For the fun
- 28%: Because of the companionship
- 13%: To win
- 2%: I don’t

What is most important aspect of a good game?
- 54%: All options combined
- 33%: Strategy. The smartest person wins.
- 8%: Luck. This way everyone has the same chances.
- 5%: Knowledge. Knowledge is important!
Nonetheless, probably the most essential questions of the “Let’s Play a Little Game” survey, when it comes to the play related subjects, have been what the German Generation Y likes about games and why they are playing. As it appears they like certain games, because of the interaction and the companionship, visible in figure 6.4. Besides, the reason why they play is simple as that: fun and very important: not to win as stated in figure 6.5. In addition, when linking it to characteristics of this generation, being individual in the sense of being the winner, has to be considered too. Furthermore, a majority of participants with 54% (Figure 6.6) state that the most important factor of a game is a combination of strategy, knowledge and luck, basically all available options in one. To continue, 33% of the participant’s state strategy is the most important factor for them.

Above that not only the results of my questions supplied me with insight when it comes to playing, the “Let’s Play a Little Game” survey itself expressed potential of communicating through playing and fun. Several unknown participants declared a very positive opinion about it.

53% of 137 stated that they enjoyed filling in my questionnaire and that it has been actually fun. 45% stated that it was good and only 2% claimed that they did not like to participate, which is quite outspoken. But maybe even more valuable for me have been the positive comments, messages and posts about my survey, like: “that was real fun”, “great survey”, or “cool questionnaire” which make it seem that there is indeed potential for fun aspects in German Generation Y communication strategies, at least when it comes to surveys (Appendix 11.1).
Besides, based on the fact that the German Generation Y members do not consider themselves as fully grown up yet, makes the inclusion of playing aspects even more reasonable, because after all playing, no matter what kinds of, seem to be closely linked with their childhood (Figure 6.1) and might convey due to that also a feeling of freedom and safety.

To conclude, according to the “Let’s Play A Little Game” survey and the previous literature review, it appears that games that are based on companionship, interaction and fun imply a maximum potential and could be valuable for communication strategies when aiming at the German Generation Y. Besides, the previous chapter illustrate that when it concerns Generation Y, fun, experiences and personal connection seem to be key and due to that I see a strong potential in connecting with them due to experience marketing, a communication tool that aims to engage and provide the possibility to experience the brand. Based on the characterization of the German Generation Y and the outcome of the analysis what play means to them, I consider that experience marketing approaches as communication tool could be suitable and would like to elaborate on that. However, the next section is about Gamification, which can be seen as connection between playing from a general perspective and its transformation to several other areas with a focus on experience marketing.

7. Gamification

7.1 Definition

Gamification is a term that has been established in 2002 by the British computer engineer Nick Pelling (Zac Fritz-Walter: A brief history of gamification, online, 2013) and is often used as a communication tool. Gamification uses playful or game relevant aspects, or mechanics mostly from digital games, like levels, points, reward and challenge in a non-game context in order to motivate, engage, surprise, convince and inform people of a service, product, firm or brand. Gamification can be used in several contexts, as approach in urban landscape, the internet, billboards and nature for instance (BBVA Innovation Center, 2013).

7.2 Development

Gamification aims to trigger or fulfill human desires when using game mechanics, as you can see in the figure 7.1. The human desire of reward aims to be fulfilled by collecting points, or the wish for status, within a social construction can be defined by levels, if someone has been able to achieve a higher level than someone else, the given status is considered more valuable.
Game researcher and game designer Sebastian Deterding (Deterding, 2013) defines three important key elements which should be the basis of each Gamification project.

- **Meaning:** Gamified applications have to connect to something that is already meaningful to the user, or wrap themselves in a story that makes them meaningful.
- **Mastery:** The experience of being competent of achieving something. A sufficient chance of reaching the goal has been provided.
- **Autonomy:** A free space to play and something to play with, which should provide a room for exploration and expression.

Gamification is not new, only the definition might be, but the discussion and also the use of it has extensively evolved within the last years. To use game mechanics in order to motivate or stimulate people have been used by the US firm Weight Watchers for instance for 60 years. Weight Watchers is a firm that sells a certain diet method that is based on a point system.

A point system including reward, as well as the achievement of levels is visible within the Weight Watcher methods. But even though Weight Watchers and other companies have used playful characteristics for communicating, selling, or addressing in some way, the success and the number of firms using Gamification increased within the last 10 years.
A reason for that could be the information exchange and the possibilities provided by the internet, but also the power shift from brands, or companies, service or products to customers could have influenced the desire for more than ordinary billboards and approaches and increased the pressure of brands and firms to motivate and convince. Sociologist Stefan Humer, of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, sees the success of inclusion of game relevant elements in the desire to handle the seriousness of life by escaping it (Deutschlandfunk, online, 2014). But Gamification is not only used for marketing strategies, or business internal motivation, also complex problems can be solved or analysis of markets for instance can be created by providing a game construct under certain aspects.

An example is the decoding success of the protein structure of the AIDS virus by games in 2011 using the free game “Foldit” (Laborwelt.de, Online, 2011). “Foldit” is an online puzzle video game about protein folding. The game is part of an experimental research project, developed by the University of Washington's Center for Game Science. The objective of the game is to fold the structure of selected proteins as fitting as possible, using various tools provided within the game (Fold.it, Online, 2015). The game seems similar to Tetris but in 3D and aims to build up 3D protein constructions. The 100 gamer who participated accomplished what scientist tried since 10 years within three weeks.

An urban marketing example is the piano stairs campaign of Rolighetstearin.se (The Fun Theory). The Swedish company developed, next to several other campaigns, an approach for the Stockholm train station Odenplan to make people choose the stairs over the escalator, changing their behavior, by making the stairs look and sound like piano keys by using pressure sensors.

Each time someone walks the stairs the piano sound per key rings and as it appears it has been quite a success, considering the number of people who chose the stairs over the escalator which increased over 66% (The Fun Theory by Volkswagen, online, 2009) and the video about the campaign at YouTube had more than 20 million views. Another approach of The Fun Theory is the Bottle Bank Arcade machine. The Fun Theory page states concerning their campaign that for cans and plastic people recycle it because they get something in return, but not for glass, so for motivating people to be environmentally friendlier they developed a glass bank that is some kind of game. The participants have to press start and everything about it supplies the vision of a game, while establishing that it is about the glass bottles. By throwing glass bottles in, the participant receives points, and also a light system supports the impression of a game.

Like several of The Fun Theory approaches to make people environmentally friendlier, also this one has been successful, especially during the night, when the light effects of the glass bank became more visible hundreds of people came by to throw in their glass bottles for recycling (The Fun Theory by Volkswagen, online, 2009).
“The Fun Theory” is an initiative from the German automobile firm Volkswagen and they describing themselves as “Dedicated to the thought that something as simple as fun is the easiest way to change people’s behavior for the better. Be it for yourself, for the environment, or for something entirely different, the only thing that matters is that it’s change for the better (thefuntheory.com, online, 2014)”. Even if the initiative definition sounds not as a communication strategy, Volkswagen uses this instrument of Gamification indeed for their marketing and image development by linking fun to environmentally friendly driving and therefore to the Volkswagen brand.

Another interesting aspect of this initiative is not only the fact that Volkswagen uses Gamification as marketing tool for their image development for environmentally friendly cars, the overall purpose is communicated as the will to change people’s behavior by using game elements in order to motivate and is therefore at first sight not aiming to sell cars, but after all it is still the goal of the initiative.

Another example is the German pharmacist giant Bayer. The marketing department developed an online game in which two participants play against each other in a game quiz testing their knowledge about the firm’s identity and history (Deutschlandfunk, Online, 2015). For Bayer providing this game could have a positive impact on the firm’s image, it informs and could create excitement for potential business partner, customer or employees.

As mentioned before Gamification uses often game specific mechanics, as levels, badges and achievement to motivate the participants for different reasons, but does game relevant mechanics do have to be incorporated for communication goals? Andreas Lieberoth questions those elements and argues that if activities that are only dressed as a game, but does not include game specific mechanics could also from a psychological point of view motivate people. Within the Aarhus experiment he claims to find out that presenting an activity as game means as much as game specific mechanics.

The psychological experiment from the Aarhus University in Denmark basically compared the motivation and enjoyment of three groups doing the same tasks. Two groups where sitting at a table around a colorful board game and one person started to read out load an issue on one of the game cards.
For one of the two groups around the table the other participants rated the discussion formed by the 
reader, which resulted in points the reader would be allowed to go further with its playing figure 
around the board game. The other group doing this game around the board did exactly the same, but 
they were not rated, after their discussion the reader or initiator was allowed to go one field further. 
The last group was not sitting around the board game with colorful cards and play figured, they only 
had usual worksheets with issues to discuss. Between group one and two, the two groups around the 
playful game board, have been no difference in motivation be visible, both groups ranked the activity 
as interesting and engaging while all three groups considered their overall activity as equally 
important, useful and socially meaningful. The outcome, according to Lieberoth, demonstrates that an 
activity presented as game in combination with interaction that is associated with gaming, but without 
game specific mechanics, like points, or badged, can also motivate people. Lieberoth therefore states 
that the game set up alone flipped the participant’s play switch on (Lieberoth, 2014). Nonetheless, the 
author manifests that different aspects can have an impact on the outcome, that the results are 
therefore not to be considered accurate but still relevant.

7.3 Impact

Gamification mostly communicates on a level that aims to develop a relationship or to motivate by 
making the usual to something exciting. When thinking of the glass bank the participants probably did 
not throwing their glass bottles in the glass bank because they wanted to be environmentally friendly 
after recognizing the “game” but because it has been fun to do so. The goal of “The Fun Theory” to 
change people’s behavior for a given period apparently has been successful, but it is questionable if 
they actually change their way of thinking concerning recycling and their constant behavior. 
Nonetheless they created awareness and it has been probably successful in terms of marketing and 
image purposes, but seeing it in a broader context it appears to me that Gamification is, even if it is 
fun, often more story telling then something real and I question if it delivers additional value. 
However, Gamification is a critical subject and can be sees as manipulation, therefore the honest and 
proper communication with consumer for instance seems crucial. Otherwise the firm or brand could 
be negatively associated as manipulative. Important, according to economist Nora Stampfl, is the core 
of gaming, that it is voluntary, which is often forgotten by firms which use Gamification as motivation 
for employees for instance.

Stampfl claims that the definition and the core principal of playing seems often not proper considered 
which could lead to negative association or problems in social constructions as a working atmosphere 
for instance (Nora Stampfl: Gamification: Die Welt wird zum Spielfeld, online, 2012). Another issue 
Stampfl illustrates is the data security, which is often not visible, efficient communicated or moral 
faultless especially in Germany (Nora Stampfl: Gamification: Die Welt wird zum Spielfeld, online, 
2012).
Dr. Ian Bogost, an award winning game designer, expresses a very negative attitude towards Gamification and claims that it is a grifter’s game, hiding the actual intention and degrading due to that the meaning of the original game.

Dr. Bogost sees Gamification in most cases as a crucial bullshitting marketing trend that could change the perception of real games as we know them only to make sales as easy as possible (Walz, Deterding 2015, p. 65 – 80).

As it appears the misuse of games for marketing purposes or other motivation reasons could have a negative impact of the association of Gamification and therefore also on firms using it, which makes it essential that the use and context is clarified sufficiently also in order to set rules and guidelines. Besides, the character of play, that it is voluntary for instance, needs to be defined and considered when developing Gamification strategies.

The next chapter elaborates on fashion marketing and the use of experience marketing in order to come up with a suitable communication strategy when aiming at Generation Y in Germany.

8. Experience Marketing and the German Generation Y

8.1 Definition

Experience

According to Pine and Gilmore, experiences are, in contrast to goods and services, “personal and existing only in the mind of the person who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level (Pine, Gilmore, 2011, p. 17).” This means, every experience is different because the experience someone is involved in is formed by the interaction between the staged event (like a theatrical play) and the individual perception (Pine, Gilmore, 2011, p. 17). In compliance with Pine and Gilmore, experiences occur under different circumstances, they arise in a process of exploration, scripting and staging (Pine, Gilmore, 2011). Pine and Gilmore argue that people desire experiences because the value of experiences lies within them, where it remains long afterwards and stay as memories (Pine, Gilmore, 2011, p. 19, 45). While Carter and Gilovich determine that buying experiences makes people happier, with a greater sense of well-being, than purchasing goods (Carter, Gilovich, 2010, p. 146-159).

Experiences seem to be integrated across two dimensions called the four realms. According to Pine and Gilmore the first dimension, presented at the horizontal axis, demonstrates the participation. (Pine, Gilmore, 2011, p. 45-56):
Experiences based on **passive** participation, in which customers don’t affect the performance at all. Customers listen and/or observe.

- Experiences that are based on **active** participation, in which customers are united with the event or performance. Customers interact and/or immerse.

While the second dimension, at the vertical axis, seems to illustrate the connection, or the environmental relationship of an experience defined as:

- **Absorption**: Bringing the experience into the mind from a distance
- **Immersion**: Becoming physically or virtually a part of the experience itself

Furthermore, Pine and Gilmore argue that experiences can be sort into 4 broad categories within the 4 realms (Pine, Gilmore, 2011, p. 45-56):

1. **Entertainment experiences**: Passive and absorbing participation, like watching TV. People want to **enjoy**.
2. **Educational experiences**: Passive participation, but slightly more active, like attending a ski lesson. People want to **learn**.
3. **Escapist experiences**: Active and immersing participation, which can educate (educate experience) and amuse (entertainment experience) like acting in a play, or descending the Grand Canyon. People want to **go and do**.
4. **Esthetic experiences**: Rather passive and immersing participation. Customers are immersed in an activity, but have little or no effect on it, like a tourist in an art gallery. People want to **be**.

As stated by Pine and Gilmore in 2011, the richest experiences are achieved by combining those 4 realms (Pine, Gilmore, 2011, p.58).
The authors manifest that experiences based on the 4 realms provide the opportunity to transform a plain place into a distinctive one, for staging a new or improved experience (Pine, Gilmore, 2011, p. 63). It furthermore appears to be essential to acknowledge within the staged experience that it is created in order to not fool the guests. Pine and Gilmore state that there are good and bad fake experiences, while the good ones are not fooling and seem to improve the reality (Pine, Gilmore, 2011, p.55).

**Experience marketing**

Experience Marketing is often characterized as a marketing and communication tool that is used when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event (Pine, Gilmore, 2011). Therefore experience marketing is a form of advertising that focus primarily on helping consumers to experience a brand (Experiential 101: What is Experiential Marketing? Online, 2013).

Experience marketing approaches, or complete company strategies, can be built upon five key design principles, according to Pine and Gilmore (Pine, Gilmore, 2011, p: 67-91):

1. *Development of a strong theme:* Starts with the development of a well-defined theme, which needs to be concise and compelling in all design elements.
2. *Harmonize positive impression:* Impressions are the “takeaways” of an experience and fulfill the theme.
3. *Eliminate negative impressions:* elimination of contradictories and impressions that are not supporting the theme and create a negative cue.
4. *Offer memories to take away:* Products that can be taken home to function as a reminder of an experience.
5. *Engage all five senses:* The sensory stimulants that accompany an experience should support and enhance its theme.

However, Gilmore and Pine seem to lay a certain emphasis on the 4th aspect the memories to take away. They state that incorporating elements that can be brought home, into the actual experience, could provide a richer opportunity to attach a memory to a physical artifact (Gilmore, Pine, 2011, p.85-88). Benedikt even illustrates that besides the fact that humans like to keep something as some sort of a reminder, because the experience could fade without something physical, he sees the most essential reason for humans to keep those artifacts due to the desire to show to others what we have experienced and envy (Benedikt, 1987, p. 4).
8.2 Marketing developments

The communication part for fashion companies has been the key for success (Stone, Fashion Marketing and Merchandise, online report) within the last 10 years but hasn’t been easy. People, origin, age and many other aspects change all the time and make perfectly fitted strategies to reach out to potential customers more complicated (Petersen, Birkholm, person, Nash, 2014). Due to that, understanding your potential and existing customers has been crucial. Looking at the marketing history the value of products has changed, the importance of branding developed and the customer became more powerful (Petersen, Person, Nash, 2014, p.2).

Mark Tungate states about fashion marketing; “You don´t buy clothes, you buy an identity. (…) When clothes leave the factories where they are made, they are merely “garments” or “apparel”. Only when the marketers get hold of them do they magically become ‘fashion’” (Tungate, 2012, p. 1). Tungate furthermore illustrates that in contrast to other industries marketing departments only fashion has such an overbearing reliance on it (Tungate, 2012, p.1).

As it appears Tungate aims to define the difference of fashion marketing and marketing of other industry quite similar as Pine and Gilmore, by adding value in order to transform a garment into fashion that seems unique in order to sell not only garments that fulfill the purpose of covering the body, but that supply an additional value that goes beyond the simple which aims to establish desire. Desire, seems to be the ultimate goal of fashion marketing campaigns and appears to make it even more essential to understand the potential customer in order to detect desire triggers.

But not only the perspective of communication strategies and the inclusion of additional value seem to have changed, also the knowledge and demand of customers. Statistics and customer definition by age, area, living standards and salary, next to definitions like “targeting” became outdated and made room for “Sub-cultures”, minority groups and glue-value and lost its meaningfulness to them. Probably due to internationalization, the internet, change of the Zeitgeist and better education, but especially due to a developed parental education next to more transparency and knowledge about our world we live in, people do not believe unreserved what advertising campaigns try to tell them anymore (Petersen, Person, Nash, 2014, p.2-4). Customers have become more critical and seem to express a negative attitude when treated as undefined wallets (Petersen, Person, Nash, 2014). As it appears they want to feel special and experience marketing can be a tool for providing their customers with additional emotional value (Pitta, Emotional Marketing: Creating Ties That Bind, 2011, online).

Nevertheless, the ongoing developments seemed to make it more complex for marketers to address their potential and existing customers with their communication strategies and made them more diverse (Stone, Fashion marketing and Merchandise, 2014, Online report).
Due to that experience marketing approaches can be a supportive tool to gain understanding about their customers by interacting with them (Petersen, Birkholm, Person, Nash, 2014, p. 3) and can be built, according to Petersen, Birkholm, Person and Nash, upon 4 principles:

1. **Attract:** Creation of attention by sending out clear communication messages via the customer preferred channels, that attract the group a firm is aiming at.
2. **Communicate:** Communication needs to be focused on customer’s values, need to connect emotionally which would make the customer identify with the brand.
3. **Trust:** Relevant communication leads to establishing trust when relevant content leads to the certainty of the customer that this particular brand is able to provide personal and relevant value. Trust is crucial in order to develop commitment.
4. **Commit:** Means loyal commitment and a close relationship between customer and brand (Petersen, Birkholm, Person, Nash, 2014, p. 4-8).

### 8.3 How to address the German Generation Y

In order to create loyalty and being successful in addressing the German Generation Y fashion companies have to develop a close relationship based on value and trust. Due to that defining a potential market and the strategy that would effectively address customers it is key to understand them as best as possible, but not on a superficial level, but on an intimate one. Every person has longings and values that differentiate them from others and on a certain level fashion brands have to determine what those longings are in order to develop and sell products successfully (Petersen, Birkholm, Person, Nash, 2014). Fashion developed to become more than clothing or status symbol, it supplies peoples with the possibility to create and recreate there identity and are a communication tool in itself. Companies and marketers who do not understand the value of fashion that goes beyond covering the body will not be competitive in the future when aiming for loyalty and commitment.

![I remember marketing campaigns the best if...](image)
Based on the survey outcome, the German Generation Y seems to connect with fashion brands that are honest, fun and supply them with additional value (figure 7.1 and figure 7.2). Nonetheless, the fashion market is crucial, every day new innovative brands are found that aggressively sell their products, the competition due to that increases and also subjects of social and ecological responsibility became an issue fashion firms had to face within the last years. Based on that it appears to make it difficult to combine goals of financial matters and growths with customer expectations which make the suggestion reasonable that it became crucial to establish customer loyalty by giving them not only a trend based and qualitative sophisticated product that fits the concept and identity of the brand, but by addressing them on an equal level. Being more precise, this means marketers and companies need to look at the relationship to their potential and existing customers as some sort of friendship, based on trust (Figure 7.2), commitment, stability in the sense of coherence, appreciation and additional value. For the German Generation Y members, who shop spontaneously, personal links, build upon identification and loyalty could become the unintentional trigger that supplies them with meaningfulness.

In other words; shopping for the German Generation Y seems like making friends, most of the times you are not looking for new ones, you find them based on shared values and sympathy which is, according to my research and personal experience, the best way for fashion marketers to address the German Generation Y when aiming at longtime loyalty. Friends and family as mentioned before are most important to the German Generation Y members and Fashion brands need to become some sort of friends they can relate to, identify with and they can value for the same reasons: Honesty, coherence, comfort and reliability. Experience marketing could be therefore a suitable communication tool when addressing the German Generation Y, it encourage the brand experience and can create identification, which is essential for the German Generation Y and above that can be the foundation of stories they can share.
To conclude, the German Generation Y is all about value and if fashion brands are not supplying their Generation Y customers with what they are longing for, long-term and loyal relationships will according to my analysis presumable not be developed.

When it comes to Gamification it appears to be an important aspect to consider for communication strategies. Gamification, transforming the ordinary in something special, provides the opportunity to transform Generation Y’s surrounding in an adventurous setting, by bringing the excitement into their lives on another level by featuring the child within them and addressing them by what they are used to, by constant change and surprises, but in a positive manner.

Gamification is some sort of experience that is mainly built upon fun, resulting out of playing and is therefore the final connection between Generation Y, communication strategies, experience marketing and playing. However, Generation Y is a generation that is very critical; therefore honest use of Gamification seems to be the key for success. I also consider it essential that playful elements should not replace every process otherwise it is no escape from reality or optimization of life without consequences anymore. The choice between participating or not has to be the basis for each Gamification campaign when addressing the German Generation Y, due to the fact that based on my definition research the voluntary aspect seems to be a crucial element of the play DNA and if someone is forced to have fun, the world most likely loses its meaning. When addressing Generation Y the inclusion of constant change, in order to provide them with the possibility to escape reality, is crucial and boredom needs to be excluded as efficient as possible.

9. Final outcome

9.1 Conclusion

To conclude, members of the German Generation Y are well educated, adaption artists, with intention, gut feeling and the capability, due to constant personal reflection and modulation, to make smart strategic decisions for most areas of their lives. Generation Y members have big ideas, about who they want to be, or become and social platforms supply them with self-creating possibilities. They are realists, but dreamer too, they have visions about projects they dream of and are not afraid to talk about their fears, which are often linked to let go, intimacy and growing up.

The core principle of the German Generation Y is the longing for value in all aspects of their lives and constant change, an important characteristic of fashion too, became a part of them. Especially due to that it seems essential to develop a relationship that is built upon trust in order to oblige Generation Y members to your concept, your brand and not at least to your products.
This insight needs to be applied throughout the whole concept and presentation of a fashion brand, but what marketing tool is most suitable in order to build and rebuilt relationships based on shared values?

There is no universal answer to that question, because it is depending on the fashion brand and its identity, but in general it is certain that the German Generation Y is looking for fun, adventures and stories they can tell to have the feeling of a fulfilled life and to define and recreate their identity.

Due to that, experience marketing campaigns, based on adventure and fun are one of the most suitable ways in order to connect with them. Those experiences have to be based on interaction and extraordinaire experiences that make their lives better and for them personally more livable. When effectively applied, the participants will link the brand and its products to the experience. They will share it with people and it will not only shape their identity, but the identity of the fashion brand as well.

In order to address the German Generation Y with experience marketing effectively it is crucial to develop approaches that are based on equality and interaction, in the sense of neither the approach, nor Generation Y stories can exist without the other, basically a dependence which creates a symbiosis.

But maybe the most important characteristic which is visible in almost every part of their lives is the fact that they seem to have realized that the only currency that never gets more and that never loses value is time. The German Generation Y members know that they will not stay young or live forever and in contrast to other generations, they are not screaming for a change, they are transforming their lives and nation quietly in order to find happiness. If someone would supply the German Generation Y members, some subcategories more than others, with the possibility of doing whatever they would like, they would probably experience one adventure after another; they would travel the world and would stay young and childish forever, like Peter Pan does and a part of them probably will which appears to be a reasonable foundation for an experience marketing campaign including aspects of playing.

Even if the results of my survey could have been influenced by design principles, it still provides information about the positive reaction towards my little game in order to receive information. Even if I would have not used one single question outcome, the survey perception based on mails, comments and feedback has been remarkable and seem to make it reasonable to argue that communication strategies that features game like characteristic, as in Gamification, do have potential when addressing the German Generation Y. As mentioned in the Gamification chapter and The Arhus University experiment, the context of a game, is sometimes as valuable as a game itself, like my survey. No points, no levels, no personal reward was offered, but it looked like a game, it offered financial support to UNICEF which could be seen as a goal for the game participation and it has been fun due to the setting.
Another confirmation for the potential of playing is stated in the theory to playing to engage that is in line with the primary research of Generation Y´s relationship to games. This particular theory demonstrates the vision of playing to escape boredom and illustrates the belief that individuals choose activities based on the sensory experiences they provide and that those choices reflect an individual’s need for sensation. Based on my observations the German Generation Y likes to play but often when it comes to a decision of what to play, different people want to play different games, based on their special talents; someone sees his/her strengths in games based on strategy, other like games based on knowledge, or luck, because everyone wants to play a game that promotes their own strengths in order to be better than someone else. Certain competences are built and let them grow to adults, but the reason for at least their intentional playing seems to be fun.

Furthermore, even if play is a basic need, as Dr. Brown claims, taking the German Generation Y characteristics into consideration, for this particular group of humans in Germany, it represents something else too, a chance to enter a world without real consequences and the possibility to start off again based on less pressure for decision making. Furthermore, playing, or leisure supplies the German Generation Y members with a construct that is in some way due to rules and guidelines certain and express a feeling of control while in the real world there is no such thing as certainty or predicted life planning for this generation anymore.

A majority of the German Generation Y seem to be professionals when it comes to self-creation and portrayal and appear not to be completely grown-ups yet, not because the youth research illustrates the missing of clear events defining someone as adult, but even more important because how those members see themselves. Play is often associated with children’s behavior and due to the childlike characteristics of Generation Y members it seems reasonable to argue that this generation is more open for playing and games, then usual adults would be.

Generation Y members are longing for fulfillment and seem to measure the value of their lives in experiences and stories about it, enhanced by platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or twitter. They want adventures, fun and to feel alive, which sometimes if not as easy as they wished it would be, but still. This generation is about value of time and life, about connections, feelings and self-creation and due to that it supplies fashion companies with so many options when it comes to communication strategies. Above that the understanding that fashion seems to be built upon similar characteristics as the German Generation Y as additional value, self-creation, self-actualization, fun, adaption to change, experimentally and freedom someone could argue that fashion might have a closer relation to Generation Y then to previous generations. Fashion can be critical and it can define who you are. After all, maybe that is one of the strongest reasons for Generation Y´s interest in fashion, because for them it might be a tool which allows them to create their identity and provides them with some sort of safety.
Even though the basic characteristics of the whole Generation Y in Germany seem to supply fashion companies with the possibility to reach out to them by experience marketing campaigns, the “Wild Child” subcategory that I developed based on my research is probably the most suitable and promising one when it comes to fashion experience marketing campaigns that are based on interaction, self-portrayal and adventure.

“The Wild Child” subcategory illustrates the strongest interest in adventures and careless attitude. They appear to be the wildest of the 5 developed categories and seem to fear boredom the most, due to that connecting with them based on experience marketing approaches seems suitable. Those members seem to be wild, cool and individual. They can seem provocative, appear to aim for freedom, creativity and show often a fashion interested nature, which seems to open them for surprising communication strategies. Furthermore a strong relationship to fun, music, art, party, adventures and friends provides several possibilities in order to create communication approaches that could develop a close relationship between demand and supply side.

To conclude, my literature review, my observations and my survey supplied me with the insight that there is a superior potential to include aspects of playing in fashion communication approaches when addressing the German Generation Y and in experience marketing campaigns in particular. German Generation Y members want stories to tell, are longing for adventures and connections that are built upon honesty and due to that the most sufficient and effective way of developing a relationship with a brand is by making them part of it and by supplying them with an extraordinary experiences without pressure, but with freedom and respect.

A part of them will probably stay young forever and triggering the child in them by allowing them to be mysterious, special, playful and free of consequences, will supply them with the feeling of being alive and create a glimpse of what it would be like to be a real version of Peter Pan. After all this seems to be one of the deepest longings of German Generation Y, not to grow up, ever.
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11. Appendix

11.1 Online Survey

“Let’s Play a Game” survey.

Survey explanation and research goal

In order to get a better up to date insight of the German Generation Y I decided to come up with an online survey.

I decided to use the free survey creation tool Typeform, based on the fact that it supplied me with several creation options and good analyzing tools, like showing me the average time of completing my survey, or what devices were used, which could be useful eventually. Besides, it gave me also the opportunity to choose between different kinds of questions and answer models and allowed me to include also pictures, which has been essential for my concept.

I came up with 4 main subjects that I wanted to investigate with my survey. Characteristics of the German Generation Y members, their relation to fashion and buying behavior, their opinion on games and marketing approaches as well. Due to two main reasons I did not want to have an ordinary survey.

The first reason has been based on my own experiences with surveys. Most of the time, people, including me, are annoyed by filling in questionnaires due to the time consume and the fact that quite some people do not appreciate providing personal information, even if it is anonym which led me to the suggestion that it would be probably not easy to enthruse people to participate. On grounds of the certainty that I have not been interested in everyone to participate, simply members of the German Generation Y, I had to focus on my literature outcomes in order to create my online survey. The literature outcomes stated that the German Generation Y is longing for valuable experiences and fun, but also that they seem to be smart realists that appear not interested in spending time and energy with meaninglessness. Therefore I assumed that if I want information from them, I need to give them something in return that triggers them to participate in order to have a reasonable number of participants that could provide me with reliable outcomes.

The second reason has been the fact that I am investigating the potential of playing for communication strategies, when addressing the German Generation Y. As I mentioned before, the incorporation of several perspectives has been crucial for me and my research report, especially when it comes to the German Generation Y. Due to that I created a survey that is
some kind of play in itself, to make it special, fun and interesting for members of the German Generation Y to participate in and to analyze the reaction of the participants towards this playful way communicating.

Base on those two main reasons I decided to create a survey that is a playful test in itself. Being precise, I developed a survey that is based on playful characteristics and came up with the idea of developing a survey that is constructed as a partner finding ad in the sense of “let’s get to know each other” like in an email contact between two people that have never met before. The reasons for that has been the aim to encourage people to participate and to investigate the reaction of participants towards my playful survey in the sense of messages, comments and reposting.

I developed 33 questions and decided to supply the participants with mostly 2-6 answer options and not with open questions, in order to be able to have an outcome that is quantitative comparable and easy to measure. To nearly each question, I incorporated a funny picture that symbolizes the type of question, without giving the reader any kind of answer direction, only to make it more surprising and fun.

In order to enhance curiosity and to prepare potential participants I named my survey “Let’s Play a Little Game”. I decided to supply the survey link for 5 weeks on Facebook which provided me based on the literature review with an effective social media platform in order to
reach out to the German Generation Y. Above that using Facebook as distribution base for my online survey link would be coherent with a Facebook title picture analysis for the self-portrayal chapter in which I developed German Generation Y subcategories.

I supplied the participants with two versions. In the first version, I did not ask how they liked the survey in order to be able to analyze their reaction, which is most of the time more valuable than opinions after asking. After three days I added one question about how they liked the survey in order to have also numbers related to that issue. I have to admit 370 participants, the re-sharing rate of my link and the outcome surprised me and lied above my expectations. Talking to other graduation students of the Amsterdam fashion Institute, as well as from other universities the average number of participants has been calculated to 85 out of 10 thesis surveys, two of them developed with the same survey supplier Typeform, which seems quite remarkable.

370 people participated in the survey, 60% women and 40% men, while the most active period has been the first week. Most of the user, 285 of them, opened the link with their mobile phones, but the majority of actual participants, 185, used their laptops to fill in the questionnaire, which is quite interesting and could be an indication for device preferences when it comes to survey designs of the German Generation Y members. Furthermore, 53% of 137 stated that they enjoyed filling in my questionnaire and that it has been actually fun. 45% stated that it was good and only 2% claimed that they did not like to participate, which is quite outspoken. But maybe even more valuable for me have been the positive comments, messages and posts about my survey, like: “that was real fun”, “great survey”, or “cool questionnaire” which make it seem that there is indeed potential for fun aspects in German Generation Y communication strategies, at least when it comes to surveys.
richtig cool deine umfrage hat mir tatsächlich spaß gemacht, ich bewundere dich echt, hab noch letztens zu marie gesagt alles was du dir vornimmst gelingt weil du so ehrgeizig bist aber auch fleißig und das was du machst auch einfach gut ist 😊 ich würde später mal gerne für dich arbeiten wollen, das meine ich ernst!
Clemens, Saskia, Char, A...

https://thecoolkids.typeform.com/to/5XIcCJ

Let's play a little game...

Erstellt mit Typeform, dem GRATISTOOL zur einfachen Plattformübergreifenden Erstellung...

12:11

Lena

Hab mitgemacht. Hast du gut gemacht, wirklich nicht langweilig 😊

Verfasse eine Nachricht ...

Aa  📸  📜  😊  🗣️  🙏  Posten

Clemens, Saskia, Char, A...

https://thecoolkids.typeform.com/to/5XIcCJ

Let's play a little game...

Erstellt mit Typeform, dem GRATISTOOL zur einfachen Plattformübergreifenden Erstellung...

12:11

Lena

Hab mitgemacht. Hast du gut gemacht, wirklich nicht langweilig 😊

Verfasse eine Nachricht ...

Aa  📸  📜  😊  🗣️  🙏  Posten

Marie Beitrag

Marie Henze ✨erfreut

Gestern um 23:22 · Bearbeitet · ✨

hier mal eine coole und spannende Umfrage...mein bro Lisa freut sich wenn ihr alle mitmacht, damit ihre Bachelorarbeit auch was wird. also go! go! go!

UNICEF würde sich auch bedanken, denn für jeden Teilnehmer werden 20 Cent gespendet.

https://thecoolkids.typeform.com/to/5XIcCJ

$10

$200

Let's play a little game...

Erstellt mit Typeform, dem GRATISTOOL zur einfachen Plattformübergreifenden Erstellung...

Gianinas Beitrag

6 Personen gefällt das.

Saskia Grittener

Erledigt 😊

Mittwoch um 21:24 · Gefällt mir

Jasmin Spri

Wir haben auch mitgemacht 🎩

Mittwoch um 22:06 · Gefällt mir

Melanie Gruber

Ich auch

Donnerstag um 05:42 · Gefällt mir

Anna Jagdmann

Ich auch

Donnerstag um 07:26 · Gefällt mir

Anna-Lena Lasch

Ich auch 😊

Donnerstag um 10:01 · Gefällt mir

Gianina Blablu

Top! 😊

Donnerstag um 12:41 · Gefällt mir

Verfasse eine Nachricht ...

Aa  📸  📜  😊  🗣️  🙏  Posten
11. Appendix

11.2 Survey results

Unique visits: 559 Participants: 370 Period: 18.02.2015 – 22.03.2015

Survey research result report: https://thecoolkids.typeform.com/report/lXIBcJ/K7SE

Question 1

- More females participated in my survey.

Question 2

- With 59% most of the participants are studying
Question 3

With 54% have most of the participants a side job.

Question 4

The goal of the participant’s majority with 76% aims to earn enough money for a living, but the priority is to be happy. To be famous and rich seems not very popular with 2%, followed by the wish of an average job with 3% and a career and a lot of money by 7%.
Question 5

As determined in my secondary research already, family is with 69% followed by friends with 25% fundamental for the German Generation Y members.

Question 6

The outcome for the question which word defines you the best it is quite visible that the outcome is not that significant. However, self-dependent and fun with 20% and 18% are nevertheless the best defining words.
Question 7

Almost the half of all participants, 43%, fear to regret and to waste time. Therefore, time and the use of it seems the most precious one after family to the German Generation Y.

Question 8

It is very remarkable, that with 62% of the participants, a significant majority thinks that there is still a part of them that is not grown-up yet. In fact, they state that they are half adult and half child.
Question 9

Was könnte für deine Kindheit stehen? Kannst ruhig mehr als eine Option wählen

- 72% Draußen sein
- 71% Spielen
- 64% Unbeschwert sein
- 49% Blödsinn machen
- 49% Abenteuer erleben
- 44% Sicherheit
- 43% Etwas bauen
- 30% Regeln

370 participants

- ! Important to mention: This was the only question for which it was allowed to choose more than one option and due to that the total percentage is not 100, but above!
- In the previous question the outcome has shown that the German Generation Y members still do feel like a child and that they are not completely grown up yet in their point of view.
- This question should discover what aspects of the childhood have been the most important ones and are today still connected with the childhood of the German Generation Y, which could be useful for marketing campaigns.
- However, the three most chosen links to the childhood of the participants are being outside (72%), playing (71%) and feeling free in the sense of being careless (64%).
- The outcome of this question in combination with the previous one and the success in the sense of participants of this Let’s Play a Game survey, have shown clearly that playing has potential for marketing approaches when reaching out for Generation Y in Germany.

Question 10

Wärst du gern wieder ein Kind?

- 51% Nein
- 49% Ja

369 participants
The almost balanced outcome (Yes 49% and No 51%) of the question “Would you like to be a child again?” is not that surprising, considering the previous two questions that have shown that a clear majority of Generation Y members in Germany thinks a part of them is not fully grown up yet.

Nonetheless, the outcome of this particular question demonstrates that even if they think a part of them has not grown up yet, is therefore a child still, a small majority do not want to be little again.

**Question 11**

![Pie chart with 92% Vogel and 8% Fisch](image)

The outcome of the question, “If you would like to rather be a bird or a fish?” is a playful question in order to analyze deeper layers.

92% chose the bird over the fish and illustrate that they would rather be free, self-dependent and flying, than restricted to a specific river or ocean, kind of limited.

However, the outcome and the characteristics due to that go in line with my secondary research.
Question 12

- The German Generation Y is choosing safety over risk.
- It establishes the fact that in situations they would have to choose between letting go for instance, and holding on to it, the decision would scare the German Generation Y and they would probably chose to hold on to it, because of the fear to risk too much, or to choose the wrong option.
- Still, some sort of fascination when it comes to risk seems to be present anyway.

Question 13

- 41% of all participants chose to be Peter Pan. A boy that never can and never will grow up. And very fascinating too is the fact that not only males chose this character, any female participants too, which makes the desire and therefore the outcome even more valuable.
- Based on the previous questions about the childhood and the question about child or adult, the outcome of this question, “which fantasy figure would you like to be?” gives even more confirmation about what the German Generation Y things about themselves, but even more
what they are longing for: being a grown up child, that lives forever, enjoys life with adventures and experiences, but another important part of James Berry’s Peter Pan is the storytelling aspect and the close relationship to parents.

**Question 14**

Welche drei Wörter beschreiben deine Generation deiner Meinung nach am ehesten? Wenn du dich und deine Freunde denkst zum Beispiel.

- 42% chose “Self-actualization, fun and confused” as answer to the question which words they think describe their generation the best.

- However it was the only answer option that included nouns, instead of only adjectives and somehow could have attracted the participants also due to the special outlook of the possibility, next to the content.

- The outcome of this particular question states, like the secondary research, that those three characteristics; do represent a generation or at least a broad part of it and seem crucial to consider when creating marketing approaches.
Subject: Fashion

Question 15

More than a half with 52% of the participants states that they are interested in fashion.

36% answer that they are interested in fashion only sometimes.

No one can escape fashion, every time someone picks an outfit from their wardrobe, they are connected to fashion, but being interested is something different.

To know that the German Generation Y is mostly interested in fashion can be seen as positive outcome for communication tools.

Question 16

74% of the participants state they like to shop offline better. Only 26% claim they like online shopping better.

This is a result I did not expect. While doing secondary research I collected information in the beginning about the online shopping behavior of Generation Y in general, not German specific and the outcome was that generation Y likes to shop and even prefers to shop online.
However, the contrary outcome of my survey illustrates that this could be one of the main differences between the German Generation Y and everywhere else. As it appears in general, worldwide, the members of Generation Y do prefer to shop online, but the German members of Generation Y-based on my survey- clearly like to shop offline.

Question 17

Was magst du am Online Shopping?

- 38% of the participants state what they like on online shopping is that it is more relaxed.
- Even though there is a difference between choice number one and answer option two, the differences between the options are not that distinctive and deliver not that clear results due to that.

Question 18

Sind dir Modemarken wichtig?

- Very clear outcome: 65% of the participants state that Fashion Brands are not important to them.
Question 19

| Was ist deine Lieblings Modemarke/Retailer? |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| H&M             | 17%             |
| Zara            | 12%             |
| Vero Moda / Jack & Jones | 8%         |

357 participants

- Important to mention: Included are only the first three Fashion brands/retailer out of 25, the last two spots are both with 0% Brady Melville and G-Star!
- The outcome states that big and international retailer, that offer quite a good value for money like H&M and Zara are top positioned.
- That outcome confirms again: brands and big names are not that important to them.
- For me the big surprise has been Vero Moda/Jack & Jones at the third place.

Question 20

| Was macht die Marke für dich besonders? |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Preis / Leistung | 32%             |
| Designs          | 28%             |
| Qualität         | 14%             |
| Konzept und Identität | 7%         |

363 participants

- Important to mention: Included are only the first four options out 10. The last spot is taking by the option Shops with 2%!
- The question what they like about their chosen fashion brands/retailer makes even with a little majority clear that value for money and the designs are the reason for choosing their retailer.
Question 21

The outcome to the question how often someone is going shopping is very clear: 82% of the participants shop only 1-2 times a month. 13% 3-4 times a month.

Question 22

51% of the participants shop spontaneously. If they see something nice they would like to have, they buy it.

44% buy only if they need something in particular.

5% shop as soon as they have money, because they state they find always something to shop.

However, this outcome states that most German Generation Y members do shopping more due to fun and desire, than because they are really in need of something.
Question 23

- 45% spend 0€ - 50€ per month on clothing.
- 34% spend 51€ - 100€ per month on clothing
- Due to the fact that they stated they would buy when they see something they really like, their expenses could relate to the availabilities of options.

Question 24

- ! Important to mention: Included are only the first four options out 12. The last spots are taken by the option Skirts with 1% (3 participants), bags with 1% (4 participants) and scarfs with 1% (4 participants).
- The question has been what do you buy the most frequently and with 35% the answer has been quite clear: T-Shirts are the most frequently bought garments of the German Generation Y.
- Followed by Shoes / Sneaker with 15%, which is quite interesting
Question 25

58% of the participants state they would not like to design something on their own.
42% would like to.
If fashion brands would consider co-creation communication with Generation Y subcategories which are interested in self-creation of garments would be wise.

Subject: Marketing campaigns

Question 26

With a distinctive majority of 63% most participants like and remember a campaign better if they make them laugh.
13% remember an advertisement when they like the product.
Question 27

- Honesty is for 51% of the participants the wish for future campaigns.
- For 33% fun would be desirable

Subject: Playing

Question 28

- For 46% of the participants playing games is still part of their lives, but not that frequently.
- 34% even state that they like to play games very much and that they often play.
- 20% state they do not really play games.
Question 29

29% like every game that is based on interaction the most.
25% state they like board games the best.
24% like card games the most.
However, it is interesting to see that the German Generation Y prefers every game that is based on interaction and provides marketers with several possibilities.

Question 30

A majority of 74% like interaction with others the most about games they play.
Games based on interaction are perfect for marketing campaigns and advertisements, especially for experience marketing campaigns.
Question 31

With a majority of 56% most participants play games because of the fun.
- 28% because of the community.
- 14% play games because they want to win.

Question 32

- The majority of participants with 54% state that the most important factor for them is a combination of strategy, knowledge and Luck.
- 33% of the participant’s state strategy is for them the most important factor.
- However, my secondary research findings state that the German Generation Y members are tactic strategic people; therefore it is not that surprising that Strategy seems to be the second most important factor for them also when it concerns games.
- The 54% who chose all options together, could have chosen that option also because they have decision problems, but nevertheless this is also a result.
This is a special question because I added this one a short while after the first online post on Facebook.

138 participants received this question and 53% of those 137 stated that this survey has been cool and even fun doing.

45% stated that it was okay and only 2% thought it was boring like all the other questionnaires.

Quite interesting that only 2% did not like my survey, compared to my own experiences and other surveys this is quite a success.

Survey limitation:

First there is to say, that a certain number of participants is never exact. Maybe the next 300 participants would have chosen completely other options, which would have had a crucial impact. Nevertheless 370 people filling in my questionnaire is quite a number and provides me with some sort of valuable outcome.

Furthermore, for some question like the question for their favorite marketing campaign, the option “Other” was not provided by me, due to the fact that hardly anyone really likes advertising, so the outcome would have been not able to be measured. However, not providing the answer “Other” or “None of the above” has an impact of the value of the outcome too because participants are forced to make decision. However, considering the fact that my secondary research supplied me with the knowledge that German Generation Y members have problems deciding, to force them to choose an option seems reasonable to me. Besides, the design of the answer options had to be more specific in forms of a rating scale for instance; I do agree, I slightly agree, I am not sure, rather not, do not completely agree, do not agree, disagree. The way I formulated the questions and answer options could be misleading or impact the outcome.

Furthermore it is crucial to state, that not every one of the 370 participants answered every question. However, a majority of the questions were answered by all participants, but some like the gender question, or the question about their favorite retailer were less than 370 participants. In general this counts up to 11 non-participating people (only for the retail specific question) from the 370 total. Nonetheless, most of the times the not attendance per question varies between 0-4.
11.3 Facebook cover picture analysis

Explanation & results

Analysis idea:

Not only Generation Y members in Germany use Facebook as a communicator of their personality, but the literature review conduct that especially the 20 until 30 years old use this particular platform to express who they are, or how they want others to notice them. Based on that I thought it might be reasonable to develop subcategories of the German Generation Y not based on how other people perceive them, but on how members of this particular generation see themselves.

Timespan:

01.03.2015 – 20.03.2015

Place:

Facebook.de

Research aim:

To develop German Generation Y Subcategories.

Research questions:

How do members of the German Generation Y see themselves?

Who are they, or what do they communicate about themselves to others?

What subcategories can, due to their self-expression, be detected?

Method:

The overall goal has been to understand the members of the German Generation Y and their personal vision of themselves, their self-portrayal, by recognizing the messages of the cover pictures. I analyzed 50 Facebook profiles from friends, but mostly, in order to stay more objective, from friends of my friends and came up with German Generation Y subcategories. I conveyed the overall message by using key words that derive from analyzing the cover pictures. Essential to state, is the fact that it is important to analyze not only one of the cover pictures, but all to the public available cover images in order to receive a clear message. I analyzed the cover pictures, due to the fact that it’s the only part that is visible to everyone and not dependent to a Facebook friendship.

Results:

One of the most important social platforms for self-portrayal is Facebook, over 90% of the German Generation Y is part of the virtual community (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, p.153).
Due to the fact that the creation of the own identity, based on self-portrayal, seems to be an important Generation Y characteristic I was able to define subcategories based on their personal vision and the image they bring across through their Facebook profiles in order to address them more effectively. Following subcategories could have been detected.

- “The Wild Child”
- “The Arty Kid”
- “The Average Child”
- “The Journey Seeker”
- “The Outsiders”

**The Wild Child**

Those members seem to be wild, careless, cool and individual. They often use provocative slogans and rude expressions, next to pictures that illustrate freedom, creativity and often also a fashion interested nature. Furthermore a strong relationship to fun, music, art, party, adventures and friends is visible. They also seem very realistic, or at least not naïve about relationships, love or the future. It appears as they do not care and it makes them seem strong, independent and not vulnerable, but linking it to other cover pictures and picture names, or descriptions they seem to care after all about relationships and love. Considering the fact that most Generation Y members appear to be realists and often used to parents that split up, their distant “not caring” attitude seems to make sense. Their fashion style appears cool and several times also expressed through tattoos and an extraordinaire fashion style.

Mentality slogan: “Here I am! I am cool, self-confident and live is an adventurous party!”

**The Arty Kid**

This subcategory seems not very different from the “Wild child” category, but still clearly distinctive. Members of this subcategory seem not that attention seeking, which is probably the major difference to the “Wild Child’s”, visible due to the fact that rarely selfies were chosen as cover pictures. In this subcategory pictures are key that have a creative and arty outlook. Those pictures can be paintings, drawings, pictures from nature, or circumstances but do not have to have a visual relation to the person, because members want to seem or are slightly mysterious and melancholic. In addition, those members can be childish, but seem not that careless or provocative, like the “Wild Child” category, more down to earth and not that self-confident as members of the “Wild child” subcategory. Besides, in this category some political or ecological vision could have been
detected too. The style is not that distinctive, but rather individual, cool, casual and sometimes a vintage mix.

Mentality slogan: “Life is what you make out of it, be who you are!”

*The Journey Seeker*

For those members culture, travelling and making experiences seems key. Furthermore, self-expression seems not that important and rarely pictures of people are part of their cover picture album, but they create their online personality based on experiences which symbolize diversity and being cosmopolitan. Those members want to be seen as independent, open minded and modern, but probably fearless too. For them adventure, experiences and living life to its fullest seems matter the most and are based on international experiences they like to share. The style of those members seems inconsiderable, but also experimental and individual.

Mentality slogan: “Life is too short, so go and experience it!”

*The Average Kid*

The next subcategory that I could detect is “The Average Kid”. Members of this subcategory seem to care about safety, family, travelling, friends and bonding more than being special. However, members of this category seem, compared to the “Wild Child” subcategory almost boring and even if fun is important, they seem to care more about an easy and steady life - as steady as it can be in times of uncertainty - then adventure and personal attention. The priority of self-expression and egoistic behavior seems less strong based on my analysis. The personal style seems more toned down, average and not that experimental or bold.

Mentality slogan: “Life is good!”

*The Outsiders*

In the last category are members of Generation Y in Germany that are not expressing a clear message, or belonging through their cover pictures. Most of the times those people are not that active at Facebook, when it comes to pictures, statements or posts visible for everyone. As it appears those members use Facebook rather for staying in contact, for their friends and for gathering information than self-creation. A critical mindset could be the reason for that, or a strong personal attitude which does not require staging it. Their style is undefined and often not even visible, or somehow coherent.
Subcategory “The Wild Child”

Wild
Childish
Mysterious
Fun
Young
Party
Free
Fashionable
Cool
Provocative
No dreamer

Lara Jakipow / Age 22-26 /
Grew up in Hannover / lives in Hannover /

Cover picture key messages:
Being wild - being young - being free - being mysterious - being funny - being cool - being careless - being childish
being provocative - being realistic and not romantic (Somehow I do believe that she still hopes for a lovestory happy ending)
Lina Hasberg / Age 23-28 /
Grew up in Hannover / lives in Berlin
Is doing an apprenticeship as hair dresser

Cover picture key messages:
Being wild - being young - being free - being fun to be with
being different - being fashionable - being unsteady - being mysterious

Wild
Childish
Hide & seek
Individual
Arty
Mysterious
Free
Stylish
Fashion interested
Cool
Jan Philip Krebs  /  Age 23 /
Grew up in Hannover / lived in London for two years /
lives now again in Hannover / Quitted his fulltime job /
is now working for an event agency 1-3 times a week

Cover picture key messages:
Being wild - being young - being free - being fun to be with
being different - being cool - being handsome - being careless
being provocative
Subcategory “The Arty Child”

Key Words:
4 cover picture / Not really interested in self-Portrayal / Arty / Freedom / Vintage / Dreamy / Distant / Childish

Jane Schwörer / Age 24/
From Hannover / Studies in Hildesheim pedagogics

Cover picture key messages:
Being free - Being arty - Being not interested in self-Portrayal - being open minded - being not interested in being the focus being critical - being childish sometimes
Key Words:
5 cover pictures / Not really interested in self-Portrayal /
Arty / Freedom / Vintage / Dreamy / Creative / Childish /
Fun / Critical / Mysterious / Melancholic

Andre OffnaHa / Age 24-26 /
From Brazil / Grew up in Hannover/ Lives and studies in Berlin

Cover picture key messages:
Being free - being arty - Being not interested in self-Portrayal - being open minded - being not interested in being the focus
being critical - being childish sometimes - being creative - being critical
Hannah Jans / Age 22-24 /
Grew up in Hannover / lives in Hannover /

Cover picture key messages:
being young - being free - bein adventurous - being caring - being communative - being happy
Lea Louise Iver / Age 22 - 26 /  
From Munich / Studies Medicine in Hamburg

Cover picture key messages:
Being a nice girl / being in love with my friends and Family
being a dreamer and sometimes romantic too /
Key words:

Only 3 Cover pictures / Family / Friends / Adventurous / Fun /

Nature / Fashion interested / Cute / Girly / Innocent

Maja Marlene Mogwitz
/ Age 20-24 / Grew up in Hannover / Lives in Hannover /

Cover picture key messages:
Being a nice girl - being down to earth - being young - being responsible
being a family person - being funny - want to be brave and adventurous
Subcategory “The Outsiders”

Key Words:
No cover picture / No real interest in self-Portrayal / 
Uses Facebook simply to stay in touch with friends

Felix Harder / Age 24 / 
From Munich / Studies Medicine in Hamburg
Cover picture key messages: 
No cover picture / Being not interested in self-Portrayal /

Key Words:
No cover picture / No real interest in self-Portrayal / 
Uses Facebook simply to stay in touch with friends

Isadora Arredondo / Age 23 - 28 / 
From Germany / Studied in London / Lives in Paris
Cover picture key messages: 
No cover picture / Being not interested in self-Portrayal /

Key Words:
4 Cover pictures / No Pictures of him / Hamburg / 
No real interest in self-Portrayal / Sexy VS Models / Food 
Masculine / Loyal / Difficult to define

Nicolas Pickles / Age 25 - 27 / 
From Hamburg / Studied in Munich /
Cover picture key message
Being masculine - Being not interested in self-Portrayal Being undefinable - being interested in women