

REBRANDING OF LUXURY FASHION BRANDS

— A CASE STUDY OF HOW TO COMMUNICATE
REBRANDING TO YOUNGER CONSUMERS

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Abstract

Background: The luxury fashion brands need to rebrand themselves towards the younger consumers. In 2025 Millennials and Generation Z will represent approximately 55% of the market for luxury products. The exclusive brands need to adapt to this target group. Rebranding requires considerable investments with different rebranding methods and new marketing channels and there is no guarantee of a successful outcome. It is important to understand what the new desired target group appreciates.

According to previous research, the right type of marketing is important for the companies rebranding to reach their desired target group. However, there is a gap in the scientific research between which marketing strategies are most efficient for the luxury companies to reach the younger consumers.

Purpose: The purpose with this research is to investigate from a marketer's perspective how younger consumers perceive rebranding and marketing of luxury fashion brands by looking at the communication of the rebranding towards the consumers.

Which rebranding methods and marketing channels are efficient towards the younger consumers?

Methodology: A qualitative case study has been made with four case companies. To find out what companies have done in their rebranding, data have been collected from the chosen companies' websites and from other fashion industry related websites. Semi-structured interviews with younger consumers have also been made in order to find out how they experience the luxury brands rebranding and marketing?

Findings: The findings suggest that it is efficient for the luxury fashion brands to hire a new creative director and create a new style in the assortment. They should keep their old, famous,

iconic logo and monogram. If it somehow must be changed, they need to create a new unique one and avoiding an already existing font. It is also efficient to create new collections with entry-level products for the brand, such as accessories and ready-to-wear collections.

When it comes to marketing of the rebranding, social media, celebrity endorsement, collaborations, traditional stores, TV and TV-series, are efficient communication channels to use. The best way is to show the luxury clothes and accessories on influencers via Instagram. Marketing through fashion magazines is still good but the luxury fashion brands do not need to put as much emphasis on that as they did before.

Conclusion: If the luxury brands work with these efficient rebranding methods and marketing channels they will most likely succeed in reaching their new younger target groups. The rebranding methods are: A new creative director and a new style, accessories and ready-to-wear collections, new logo and new monogram. The marketing channels are: social media, celebrity endorsement, collaborations, movies and TV-series, editorial placements and traditional stores.

Keywords: Rebranding, Marketing, Marketing channels, Luxury fashion brands, Millennials, Generation Z, Communication channels, Marketing communication, Rebranding communication.

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Table of contents

1.1	Background.....	- 1 -
1.2	Problem discussion.....	- 2 -
1.3	Purpose.....	- 5 -
1.4	Main Questions.....	- 5 -
1.5	Contribution.....	- 6 -
1.6	Delimitation.....	- 6 -
2.1	Luxury fashion brands.....	- 7 -
2.2	Rebranding.....	- 7 -
2.3	Marketing communication.....	- 10 -
2.4	Consumers brand perception.....	- 15 -
2.5	Rebranding model.....	- 16 -
3.1	Scientific approach.....	- 16 -
3.2	Research design.....	- 17 -
3.3	The collection of the empirical material.....	- 17 -
3.3.1	Data collection from websites.....	- 17 -
3.3.2	Semi-structured interviews.....	- 18 -
3.4	Analysis of collected material.....	- 18 -
3.5	The quality of the research.....	- 20 -
3.6	The selection of the respondents.....	- 20 -
3.7	The selection of the case companies.....	- 21 -
4.1	Balmain.....	- 22 -
4.2	Burberry.....	- 22 -
4.3	Gucci.....	- 23 -
4.4	Louis Vuitton.....	- 23 -
5.1	What have the luxury fashion brands done in their rebranding?.....	- 24 -
5.1.1	New creative directors and new fashion design.....	- 24 -
5.1.2	Accessories and ready-to-wear collections.....	- 25 -
5.1.3	New logo and monogram.....	- 25 -
5.2	Through which marketing channels have they communicated their rebranding?.....	- 26 -
5.2.1	Social media.....	- 26 -
5.2.2	Celebrity endorsement.....	- 27 -
5.2.3	Collaborations with other companies.....	- 29 -
5.2.4	Gamification.....	- 30 -
5.2.5	Editorial placements.....	- 30 -
5.3	How do the younger consumers experience luxury fashion companies rebranding?.....	- 31 -
5.3.1	New creative directors and new fashion design.....	- 31 -
5.3.2	Accessories and ready-to-wear collections.....	- 33 -
5.3.3	Logo and monogram.....	- 34 -
5.4	In which marketing channels have the respondents paid attention to the luxury fashion brands?.....	- 35 -
5.4.1	Social media.....	- 35 -
5.4.2	Celebrity endorsement.....	- 36 -
5.4.3	Collaborations with other companies.....	- 37 -
5.4.4	Movies and TV-series.....	- 37 -
5.4.5	Gamification.....	- 37 -
5.4.6	Editorial placements.....	- 38 -
5.4.7	Traditional stores.....	- 38 -
6.1	Which rebranding methods are efficient towards younger consumers?.....	- 40 -
6.1.1	New creative director and new style.....	- 40 -
6.1.2	Accessories and ready-to-wear collections.....	- 42 -
6.1.3	Logo and monogram.....	- 43 -

6.2	Which marketing channels are efficient to communicate the rebranding message towards the younger consumers?	- 45 -
6.2.1	Social media.....	- 45 -
6.2.2	Celebrity endorsement.....	- 47 -
6.2.3	Collaborations with other companies.....	- 48 -
6.2.4	Movies and TV-series	- 50 -
6.2.5	Gamification.....	- 50 -
6.2.6	Editorial placements.....	- 51 -
6.2.7	Traditional stores	- 51 -
7.1	Managerial implications	- 56 -
7.2	Further research.....	- 57 -

1 Introduction

This chapter is about the background to why the luxury fashion brands need to rebrand themselves. The problem discussion regarding the issues that is linked to the rebranding process is also presented. Furthermore, the purpose and research questions, contribution and limitation of the research are discussed.

1.1 Background

Luxury fashion brands have a long history and a strong heritage (Cooper et al. 2015). These brands are among the most respected, recognised and well-known brands all over the world and they have a strong corporate identity and image (Fionda & Moore 2009). Historically they have approached a wealthy and established group of customers in a traditional way for this industry via haute couture fashion shows, fashion magazines, elegant boutiques on the exclusive streets and department stores etcetera (Theng et al. 2013). But a change is at hand.

As the globalisation, technology and consumers' taste evolve more rapidly the rivalry on the international fashion scene increases (Todor 2014). Brands are according to Muzellec, et al. (2003) forced to stay on top of changes and stay in tune with the shifting market trends. In consideration of the many choices of brands today with lots of new players on the market scene it is difficult for consumers to choose (Muzellec et al. 2003). According to Lewenhaupt (2003) and Gelman (2017) fashion brands need to sustain its relevance by adapting to the development on the market, position itself in the front and work actively with communication to capture their customers' interest. In order to survive, one way of doing this is by targeting new, younger consumers (Lewenhaupt 2003; Gelman 2017).

Many have noticed that luxury brands in the fashion industry have increased their social media presence, changed to the same sans-serif font in their logos and their traditional monogram (Reuters 2019; Whelan 2019). It has been noticed that the luxury brands direct to a new target group. According to Bain (2019) the influence of younger consumers increases. In 2025 Millennials (born 1990-1995) and Generation Z (born 1996-2005) will represent approximately 55% of the market for luxury products (Bain 2019). In the scientific research there is an ongoing discussion regarding how the younger consumers will transform the luxury market, and according to Boston Consulting Group and Altagamma (2019) the exclusive brands need to adapt to this target group and renew their identity and image, in

other words 'rebranding'. The key feature of corporate rebranding is to communicate to the new consumers that something has changed. But how will they do it in the most efficient way?

1.2 Problem discussion

It can be a challenge to change a well-known brand image and new customers' perception of the company (Yeo & Youssef 2010). It is also a challenge to know if it is necessary to change the brand image, and not just for the sake of a change (Aaker 2010). One problem that is discussed in the scientific research is that the luxury company's former communication towards their old customers is not always appreciated by the younger generations. The goal is to attract these new desired consumers without abandoning the existing ones (Gelman 2017; Fionda & Moore 2009). According to Sarker & Roy (2015) there is a risk that the existing customers can not identify themselves with the new brand image. However according to some scholars rebranding is considered a necessary process in order to maintain its competitiveness on a changing market (Collage 2015; Miller, Merrilees & Yakimova 2014; Da Silveira et al. 2013; Tevi & Otubanjo 2013; Merrilees och Miller's 2008). Considering the above mentioned challenges, it is critical for the brand to understand the major enablers and major barriers for an efficient practice when rebranding (Miller, Merrilees & Yakimova 2014).

Luxury fashion brands are often called 'status brands'. The customers associate these brands with high-perceived quality, luxury, prestige and high class attached to them (Shermach 1997). According to McCracken (1988) these brands are often chosen to indicate status and as such displayed conspicuously to provide a visual representation of status. Many researchers (Bian & Forsythe 2012; Gentina et al. 2016) discuss why it is so important with luxury and status and why these brands are attractive. Lee & Watkins (2016) explains that it is human to show a successful appearance in order to feel belonging to the others in a group, it builds self-confidence (Ibid). Consumers wish to have admission to and approval by their reference group (Zinkhan & Prenshaw 1994). A reference group consists of like-minded, social compared people (Heine et al. 2002). The consumer will often be inspired by and identified with the people in this group (ibid). By wearing right brands the consumer can feel belonging to his/her reference group. (Zinkhan & Prenshaw 1994). One way for the companies to promote their rebranding is by using role models in the advertisement in order to reach new

intended target groups. It is here important that the right type of reference group is attracted by the message, otherwise the marketing can fail (Solomon, Bamossy and Askegaard 2002). A challenge for luxury fashion brands and brands in common is that they can not control who buys their products (Kim & Choi 2016). An example of this is when football hooligans in England wore clothes with the Burberry chequered pattern (either originals or copies) in 2003 (Olteanu 2020). This led to that the brand consequently got a bad reputation and in order not to be associated with football hooligans many of Burberrys customers ceased to buy the brand. To change the negative reputation Burberry carried out a brand revitalization process that successfully began in 2006 (Ibid). It is therefore important that the companies precisely follow up their rebranding campaign. They must be flexible to modify and do right if necessary (Solomon, Bamossy & Askegaard (2002).

According to scientific research another factor for the importance of luxury and status is to get attention and be trendy. A trend is created when early adapters form a desired need for a certain product or style among a larger population (Godart & Galunic 2019). The luxury fashion brands are famous for leading the latest trends. Their innovative ideas and aesthetic value have always been at the top and have influenced the rest of the fashion industry (Arrigo 2018 ; Kim & Ko 2010). Innovation has often been considered as particularly important in the area of fashion, and the frequent introduction of new styles makes the fashion market a highly desirable area for younger consumers (Gentina et al. 2016). Teens may place more importance on luxury brands which are perceived as trendy and innovative than non-luxury brands (Ibid). Lately many new innovative companies have entered the fashion industry and made a competition with the luxury fashion brands (Jain et al. 2021). In order to not be overtaken by these companies it is important that the fashion brand vigorously develops innovative ideas without losing its core values (Ibid). According to Sarker & Roy (2015) if, in the process of rebranding, the companies choose to change one of the brand characteristics, such as heritage, brand name, logo etcetera they will risk to lose its recognition factor towards a lot of customers. An established company with a long history brings a feeling of safety and nostalgia to the customer (Hakala, Lätti & Sandberg 2011; Sarker & Roy 2015). To communicate the company heritage in the marketing strategy can give the customer positive feelings and by this strengthen the company towards their competitors (Ibid 2011). However, in some cases it is important to improve the brand name and logo (Sarker & Roy 2015).

The process of rebranding is very complex. It is important to do it right otherwise it can instead damage the brand (Miller, et al. 2014). One risk is if the marketing message in the rebrand process is perceived wrongly by the new target group (Kimmel & Kitchen 2014). Owing to social media, brand perceptions are spread much faster today via word-of-mouth online (Mrad et al. 2019), and negative consumer perception could be hard to correct afterwards (Grönroos & Rubinstein, 1986). Consumers of today have a much greater power to influence the company's reputation both positively and negatively through social medias (Arrigo 2018). Rebranding is also very expensive (Miller et al. 2014). It requires considerable investments with new marketing channels, new fashion design, new items and in some cases new logos etcetera but there is no guarantee of a successful outcome (Daly & Moloney 2004; Miller et al. 2014). In spite of the above mentioned risks rebranding can be necessary because there is an idea in the scientific research that a company has to restructure or renew itself in order to minimize the risk of being stuck and overtaken by competitors (ibid). Therefore, it is essential to understand the new desired target group, what do they appreciate, what captures their interest and what makes them buy a product? The company needs to do an exhaustive research on their new desired target group before they rebrand themselves (Merrilees & Miller 2008). With the right information and right communication the rebranding can be successful and therefore a necessary investment. However, in earlier research there is a confusion which rebranding methods are most efficient (Sarker & Roy 2015).

Some luxury fashion brands such as Burberry, Balmain, Gucci and Louis Vuitton have already started their rebranding towards younger consumers. These brands have spent large sums on rebranding and marketing which they are transparent with on their websites (Balmain n.d A; Burberry-plc n.d A; Gucci n.d A; Louis Vuitton n.d C). How have these brands been perceived by the new target group after their rebranding process?

The research of how the younger generation experience the luxury brands is limited (de Kerviler & Rodriguez 2019). It is therefore interesting to investigate the younger consumers' perceptions of the rebranded luxury companies. The key feature of corporate rebranding is to communicate to the new consumers that something has changed. According to Muzellec, Dogan and Lambkin's (2003) research, they conclude that the right type of marketing is extremely important for the companies to reach their desired target group. However, there is a gap in the scientific research between which communication and marketing strategies are

most efficient for the luxury companies to reach and build long term customer relations with younger consumers.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose with this research is to investigate from a consumer perspective how younger people perceive rebranding and marketing of luxury fashion brands by looking at the communication of the rebranding towards these consumers. As many companies implement rebranding it is today much discussed and has attracted much attention (in the business press). However, in the scientific research it is not that investigated but existing studies show the importance of rebranding (Tarnovskaya & Biedenbach 2018; Sarker & Roy 2015; Merrilees & Miller 2008; Muzellec et al. 2003). Therefore, it is relevant to find out how to implement rebranding, how it is perceived and how to reach younger consumers most efficiently.

1.4 Main Questions

- 1) What have the luxury fashion brands done in their rebranding towards younger consumers and how have they communicated this?
- 2) How do the younger consumers experience luxury brands, how have they perceived the companies rebranding and through which communication channels have they noticed it?
- 3) Which rebranding methods and marketing channels are efficient towards younger consumers?

1.5 Contribution

This master thesis will contribute to the scientific research and especially to the field of textile management and marketing regarding how luxury fashion brands will manage a successful rebranding towards younger consumers. This is an interesting and important subject but not yet much investigated within the academic research (Tarnovskaya & Biedenbach 2018). There is a gap in previous scientific research regarding the maintenance of the luxury fashion brands (Fionda & Moore 2009). Successful rebranding is the key to maintenance and survival of a company. This is therefore valuable information for the scientific research and their future work, but also valuable information for the marketers and the management of the luxury fashion brands to use in their rebranding process.

1.6 Delimitation

Based on the purpose of the research, this case study is limited to fashion companies in the luxury segment. According to previous scientific research regarding target groups for above mentioned companies, the younger consumers are considered to be the primary engine of growth in the future. Therefore the researcher has chosen to limit the respondents to consumers born between 1990-2005 as they are the most relevant group. The chosen respondents live in Europe.

2 Theory

In the following chapter the theory and the theoretical framework “The rebranding model” (figure1) are presented.

2.1 Luxury fashion brands

The definition of a luxury fashion brand is high exclusivity, excellent quality, premium price and craftsmanship (Jackson 2004; Fionda & Moore 2009; Cooper et al. 2015). These brands have a high customer awareness as their products are rare, distinctive and desirable. (Fionda & Moore 2009; Kapferer 2015). Many customers experience that they achieve the same image and status as the luxury brand they wear. A key attribute for luxury brands is their tradition and heritage (Freire 2014). The word heritage has its origin from the French language and means to “inherit” or to pass on (Balmer 2013). The heritage provides a meaningful interpretation of the company's long history which underpins the exclusive status of the brand (Cooper et al. 2015).

2.2 Rebranding

The research in rebranding started in the early 2000s. The first studies on corporate rebranding focused on conceptualizing this phenomenon (Stuart and Muzellec 2004; Muzellec and Lambkin 2006; Lomax and Mador 2006) and describing exemplary cases of its practical implementation (Ewing et al. 1995; Kaikati 2003;). During this time rebranding related to changing the brand name was very much discussed in the business press. However, in the scientific world rebranding did not attract much attention. Muzellec et al. (2003) were revolutionary in this topic and created the ”rebranding process”, but their main focus were on “Renaming”. Lately this model has been very important for other researchers and they have focused more on the other parts, developing this model. The Rebranding Process also called the “Rebranding Mix” is a theoretical definition of rebranding (Muzellec et al. 2003). To start a rebranding process, according to the previous scientific research, the company needs to change their brand identity and image (Daly & Moloney 2004). The corporate identity and the rebranding affect each other. The corporate identity means how the company sees itself (Kapferer 2008; Boström & Hernant 2010). According to Nadan (2005) the identity shall be in line with the company's image and reputation of how the consumers perceive the brand.

The Rebranding Process by Muzellec et al. (2003) contains four elements: repositioning, renaming, redesigning and relaunching (Muzellec et al. 2003). When rebranding most companies strive for repositioning. They want to create a new position on the market (Muzellec et al. 2003). Renaming is a stage when the company needs to do something radical. Most of the companies do not perform this because they have a good brand name which does not need to be changed (Le et al. 2014). The name is a core indicator of a brand and the basis for awareness and communication. It is the most valuable asset for a company, therefore it is important to have a strong one (Kapfer 1995). In some cases the previous research recommends the brand to change some of its livery such as logo, monogram, or a new style of their products, symbol and slogan etcetera (Roy & Sarkar 2015). This is called redesigning and is a common way of working with rebranding. The goal is to make the brand look modern and strong again (Muzellec et al. 2003). The performed rebranding like repositioning, renaming or redesigning needs to be communicated to the desired target group. This is done by the relaunching which determines how the public will perceive the company after its rebranding (Muzellec et al. 2003). Another way of working with rebranding according to Lee, et al. (2020) is that luxury fashion brands create more affordable, but still exclusive, ready-to-wear collections and accessories in order to reach new target groups. The accessories can be bags, shoes, sunglasses, perfumes and cosmetics (ibid).

Another famous scientific research from this time were Daly and Moloney's (2004), which resulted in classifying rebranding into three categories: minor changes, intermediate changes and complete changes. The minor changes were according to them related to the aesthetics. It can vary from a simple face lift to restyling or renewing the brand elements which may have lost its strength and need a change (Daly & Moloney 2004). The intermediate change is about giving the corporate brand a new image' by focusing on marketing tactics, especially communication and customer service techniques to reposition the brand favourably (Daly & Moloney 2004). In the complete change, however, the company is changing their brand name. Daly and Moloney (2004) however, mention that with a new brand name there is a risk that the stakeholders may not know what the brand stands for. In this case, the values and image of the new brand need to be communicated to all stakeholders through an integrated marketing communication campaign (Daly & Moloney 2004).

Later the research evolved and new ways of rebranding were discovered, not just focusing on a name change. Herstein, et al.'s (2008) research divided rebranding into internal and external

rebranding. External rebranding is about changes such as a logo, uniforms and advertisements and internal rebranding is about changes regarding a common language, procedures, and training methods (for the staff). It is important for the company to stay true to their aims and values when rebranding and developing the brand instead of forming a new one (Herstein, et al. 2008; Merrilees & Miller 2008; Muzellec & Lambkin 2008). During this period Merrilees & Miller (2008) created a rebranding model consisting of six principles for a successful rebranding with new ways of working. This model is also by later researchers considered relevant, conveying entirety and integrating many aspects of a rebranding process (Miller et al. 2014). The model implies 1) To develop a brand vision relevant to contemporary conditions but still balancing the need to continue to satisfy the core ideology (for example: to design a new slogan attached to a heritage and a quality). 2) To build a bridge from the existing brand to the revised corporate brand (for example: maintaining core values like quality and service but being more modern, quicker, more trendy etcetera) 3) To meet the needs of new market segments without losing the loyal customers. 4) To ensure that all employees and suppliers are aware of the company's revised brand meaning and their rebranding in the way of communication, training and internal marketing. 5) To keep a high level of integration and coordination in all aspects of the marketing mix and 6) To point out the importance of promotion in awareness building (creating and working with an integrated communication strategy (Miller et al. 2014).

Today the research in rebranding is more niched and the researchers investigate more thoroughly certain rebranding areas. Merrilles et al. (2014) considered the earlier researchers a bit sprawled and not very concrete. They describe how companies can rebrand on a both internal level and towards a customer. They summarised it in a model of six major enables that is critical for a successful corporate rebranding.

The internal goals are: 1) A strong rebranding leadership: It is important to find a committed leader, experienced in rebranding who engage all the partners of the company supporting the corporate rebranding. 2) Develop a brand understanding: The company needs to know the market and to do a situation analysis to find the necessary means. 3) Start with internal branding activities such as internal communication and training. The goal must be to encourage managers and employees to support the rebranding.

The external goals in Merrilles et al.'s (2014) model of six major enables are: 4) To work with a continuity of brand attributes. 5) To work with a stakeholder coordination and 6) To work with an integrated marketing programme: This can consist of activities such as advertising,

personal selling, public relations and the redevelopment of brand elements including name and logo. This is the most important part for launching the revised brand (Merrilles et al. 2014). Many researchers agree on the importance of an integrated marketing program for the company's rebranding (Merrilles et al. 2014; Bolhuis, de J. 2015; Cooper et al. 2015).

The research today indicates also a more digital rebranding. In Tarnovskaya & Biedenbach's (2018) research they focus on digital rebranding failures. In the digital era, marketing managers have lost the ability to exercise complete control or even to claim full ownership over their brands (Ibid). With social medias the levels of brand commitment increased among the consumers. Tarnovskaya & Biedenbach (2018) consider it both good and bad for the brands. The companies are forced to make sure that the right content is spread and that the right persons wear their clothes (ibid). It can, however, be an advantage, as the companies influence the consumer more directly. The consumer is constantly exposed to the brands on social medias (Tarnovskaya & Biedenbach 2018).

2.3 Marketing communication

Corporate marketing communication is recognized as one of the most valued strategic tools for rebranding (Herstein et al. 2008). According to Fionda & Moore (2009) marketing communication is a key to build a luxury fashion brand image (Fionda & Moore 2009). In order to maintain the exclusive status when rebranding many researchers within the field of luxury brand marketing consider that luxury values need to be implemented in the company's communication strategy (Aliyev et al. 2019; Arrigo 2018; Dietz 2014; Brioschi 2006). This can be made by signalling codes such as scarcity, quality, heritage and lifestyle (Arrigo 2018; Hennings et al. 2012; Brioschi 2006). Atwal and Williams (2009) and Dietz (2014) point out that luxury fashion brands must focus on selling a dream instead of just a product, they need to create something memorable when the customer buys from them. By doing this the companies can achieve the luxury status when rebranding (Atwal & Williams 2009).

The choice of marketing channel can be crucial for the effectiveness of the company's rebranding. A marketing channel commonly used nowadays is social media (Tarnovskaya & Biedenbach 2018). Social media is an umbrella term that contains a variety of digital platforms with effective and important communication tools (Barnes 2013). Many scientific researchers consider social media a suitable marketing (Aliyev et al. 2019; Arrigo 2018;

Godey et al. 2016; Kim & Ko 2010). Social media offer companies new business opportunities giving them a possibility to interact with the consumers on a new level (Arrigo 2018). Through social media you can establish closer relationships with your customers than earlier (Tarnovskaya & Biedenbach 2018). The company will be more transparent, the customers can follow the company on a daily basis and interact in new ways. On the other hand, there are scholars within this field who see risks with the large circulation (Arrigo 2018; Tarnovskaya & Biedenbach 2018). A milestone in rebranding communication is when the consumers share their positive experiences of the brand with other potential customers. This is called “Word-of-mouth”, meaning that experiences are passed on to other consumers (Grönroos & Rubinstein 1986). “Word-of-mouth”, is today more common owing to social media as the customers can share their opinions of the company with a wider influence than previously (Mrad et al. 2019). The companies can provide the consumers with more control, information and power over the marketing process. Arrigo (2018), however, points out that there are risks and challenges leading to too much customer power. Therefore, it is important to know what is said on social medias in order to respond quickly to the comments and take control over the situation (Mrad et al. 2019; Tarnovskaya & Biedenbach 2018).

According to Godey et al. (2016) social media is a quickly expanding marketing channel. Common social media channels in marketing today are Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest and Snapchat (Sommerfeldt, et al. 2019; Arrigo 2018). One channel that is increasingly growing is the video sharing site TikTok (Maguire 2020). TikTok is owned by the Beijing-company ByteDance and has over one billion users (Dr Bunker 2020). TikTok, however, has lately been much discussed among the politicians in the west. Especially the US government declares it as a security risk. They believe that China’s government may keep track of the many millions of users how have signed up to the app and collect personal data from them (Anon 2020). The risk is considered biggest for the American users, but governments from other countries are also aware of this problem (Dr Bunker 2020). According to Heine, Phan and Thomas (2011) marketing communications are an interactive dialogue between the brand and the consumer. To be able to form impressions the company needs to create memorable consumer experiences (Atwal & Williams 2009; Gilmore & Pine 1999). One way of doing it is to use celebrity endorsement or influencers (also called bloggers) (De Veirman, et al. 2017). The definition of celebrity endorsement according to Bergkvist and Zhou’s (2016) is an agreement between an individual who is a public figure (a celebrity) and a brand, to use the celebrity for the purpose of promoting the entity (Bergkvist

and Zhou's 2016). When choosing a celebrity for the marketing campaign you can according to Kitchen and Proctor (2019) proceed from different criteria's such as attractiveness, extraordinary lifestyle, or a person with expertise in the respective field. An advantage by using celebrity endorsement is that the consumers can perceive the brand as having superior quality because it has been endorsed by a credible source (Kitchen & Proctor 2019). Despite all advantages some scholars find disadvantages with celebrity endorsement (Kitchen & Proctor 2019; Brooks, 2012; Campbell & Warren, 2012), for example that it is extensive (Kitchen & Proctor 2019). In the articles by Brooks (2012) and Campbell & Warren (2012) they found out that celebrity endorsements do not always work in the positive manner envisioned by marketers. Negative associations to the celebrity can be transferred to the endorsed brand. The conclusions drawn in these researches was that marketers need to consider all facets – good or bad – of any potential endorser when searching for a collaboration (Brooks 2012; Campbell & Warren 2012). According to most of the previous researches it is considered profitable to work with celebrities in marketing of luxury fashion goods, because they have a big admiring fan base who has a wishful identification to them (Carrillat, et al. 2019; Kitchen & Proctor 2019; Bergkvist & Zhou 2016; Pradhan, et al. 2016). During the last few years the interest for blogs and Instagram has increased (De Veirman, et al. 2017). De Veirman, et al. (2017) explains that social media Influencers have built a sizable social network of followers. They have gained fame by successfully branding themselves as experts around a specific niched topic on social media (ibid). Many companies have chosen to market their products in collaborations with influencers through this channel (Schouten, et al. 2019). It can be an efficient strategy in the marketing campaign to work together with a famous person (Hani, et al. 2018).

A collaboration between a luxury and non-luxury brand is regarded as an exciting marketing technique (Ahn, et al. 2010). It is an increasingly popular business strategy among the luxury fashion businesses (Yu, et al. 2020; Mrad, et al. 2019; Alexander & Contreras 2016). Usually when a luxury brand makes a collaboration, they tend to be oriented towards a new customer segment. Yu, et al (2020) found in their research that a collaboration between a luxury and non-luxury brand can lead to the fact that consumers who may not yet be interested in luxury, become more knowledgeable about the brand and familiar with luxury fashion products, and likewise with the non-luxury fashion brands. According to the scientific literature there are many benefits with these types of collaborations (Yu et al. 2020; Alexander & Contreras 2016; Ahn et al. 2010). In consideration to this Mrad, et al. (2019) and Hoffmann &

Stankeviciute (2010) have found that these types of collaboration can harm the brand as well. If the two brands and their core values insufficiently fit, it can dilute their current brand images (Hoffmann & Stankeviciute 2010). On the other hand, according to these scholars, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. It is therefore important to collaborate with the right type of brand (Mrad et al. 2019). By using a celebrity in the marketing campaign between two companies can improve the outcome of the collaboration (Bergkvist & Zhou 2016).

Other types of interesting marketing channels commonly used for luxury brands are music, gamification and editorial placements (Strähle & Kriegel 2018; Lascu, et al. 2016; Eagle & Dahl 2015; Kapferer 2015; Barnes 2013). Editorial placements have existed for a long time (Barnes 2013). It is still an efficient way to promote the brand on billboards and in the fashion press (Lascu, et al. 2016). Magazines such as Vogue, Elle and Harper's Bazaar, are according to Barnes (2013) the opinion leaders in the fashion business. Lascu, et al. (2016) and Barnes (2013) explains the fashion promotion as unique in relation to other businesses, due to the role played by the fashion press. Companies market their products in the magazines advertising pages. However, the fashion journalists take their own initiative to write about the latest collections and promoting the brands in their magazines (Lascu, et al. 2016). The fashion companies have taken advantage of this and invites the fashion press to their latest events and fashion shows (Barnes 2013). In the scientific field of fashion promotion there is discussed what will happen to the traditional fashion press in consideration to the rapid development of the social media (Arrigo 2018; Lascu, et al. 2016; Crewe 2013). Some scholars see it as an advantage for the fashion press if they adjust to the changes. Lascu, et al. (2016) explains that due to the technology development online the fashion magazines have become more up to date and can interact more with their readers in their web editions. The luxury fashion brands have used these online magazines in their marketing strategy (Lascu, et al. 2016). Another marketing channel that is discussed in the scientific research is collaboration between fashion companies and music artists (Strähle & Kriegel 2018; Eagle & Dahl 2015; Kapferer 2015; Lee, Chen, & Wang, 2014). Many designers consider that fashion and music goes hand in hand (Eagle & Dahl 2015; Kapferer 2015). It is common that fashion brands dress the artist for red carpet events, letting them play in their fashion shows and sponsor them with clothes in their music videos (Lee, Chen, & Wang, 2014).

Another marketing channel which is quite new in the luxury fashion industry is gamification (Gawrysiak, et al. 2020). This topic is scientifically not much researched but Gawrysiak, et al. (2020) and Eagle & Dahl (2015) consider it as a marketing strategy with much potential. By entering the gaming world the fashion brands can create a hype and reach a new target group (Eagle & Dahl 2015). The global growth of the gaming industry has been extraordinary over the past years. The speed of invention in this business opens new opportunities for companies to market themselves (Hutchins 2008). According to Eagle & Dahl (2015) the opportunity to integrate the products to the gaming world is possible with e-games, mobile games, console-based video games and advergaming. Eagle & Dahl (2015) consider gamification as an efficient marketing strategy because during the time the gamers are playing they are exposed for the products unconsciously (Eagle & Dahl 2015).

Through the years the luxury fashion brands have arranged catwalk shows at fashion weeks (Fionda & Moore 2009). According to Barnes's research (2013) this is a marketing strategy which is unique for the fashion market and characterise fashion promotion. The catwalk shows are used less to sell the clothes but more to sell the brand (Barnes, 2013). With these shows the companies will communicate to the market that they are an exclusive brand with highly desirable products (Fionda & Moore 2009).

The digitalization has resulted in a high competition between the traditional stores and the online businesses (Aliyev et al. 2019). In the scientific research there is a discussion regarding the survival of the traditional physical store and its importance for the fashion market (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al. 2020; Collier et al. 2018; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Many scholars still consider that the traditional stores are important for the luxury fashion brands and critical for luxury brand success (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al. 2020; Collier et al. 2018; Dauriz et al. 2014; Theng et al. 2013). With the stores they can attract and emotionally bind the customers with delightful experiences through the atmosphere and the personal services (Kauppinen-Räsänen, et al. 2020). According to Theng et al. (2013) the traditional stores can create an aesthetic appealing environment and the luxury fashion brands can show their latest products in a fun and entertaining way. Kauppinen-Räsänen, et al. (2020) consider the traditional boutiques important due to the possibilities to build a creative world in the store and working with storytelling which can enhance positive emotions for the customers. *“The Luxury fashion consumers expect personalized customer services and tactile shopping experiences corresponding to the higher price”* (Dauriz et al., 2014). With the

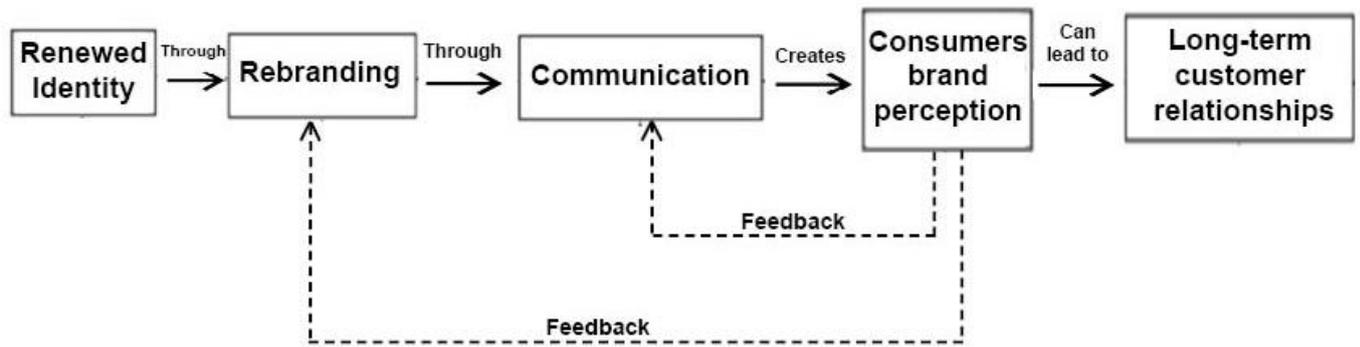
luxury stores the brands are able to give the customer that extra service and then strengthen the customer-brand relationship (Collier et al. 2018; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Fionda & Moore 2009; Gilmore & Pine 1998). However, Aliyev et al. (2019) point out the importance of digitalisation of the traditional physical store. The research shows that the most effective way of running a retail business is to connect the offline marketing with the online (ibid). In Aliyev et al's research (2019) they recommend the companies to install interactive displays, smart mirrors and digitalized fitting rooms in the physical stores in order to maximize the shopping experience.

2.4 Consumers brand perception

Consumers form brand perceptions based on their experience, thoughts and feelings of the company and its marketing (Grönroos & Rubinstein, 1986; Percy, 2003). What others say about the brand affect them as well, also called "word-of-mouth" (Mrad et al. 2019). According to Festinger's (1954) Social comparison theory, individuals are likely to compare themselves with significant others and who share a similar outlook and common values. This is based on affiliation to certain groups and people (Grönroos & Rubinstein, 1986; Percy, 2003). When the company's identity and the customer's perception of their image mirrors, the customer can experience brand love. They become loyal customers committed to the brand (Grönroos & Rubinstein, 1986).

Scholars in the field of marketing tend to use the term 'image' to assess the consumers' actual perceptions of the company (Brown et al. 2006). Corporate images are not consistent over time and are influenced by environmental forces. Therefore it is important that the company tries to influence the signals to the customers in the wanted direction by renewing its corporate identity with rebranding (Daly & Moloney, 2004; Herstein, et al. 2008; Roy & Sarkar, 2015). The company needs to know what their desired target group says about them so that they can respond quickly and efficiently through rebranding and marketing measures towards this group (Kimmel & Kitchen 2014).

2.5 Rebranding model



Theoretical model for *the communication of the corporate rebranding*, (Figure1).

The theoretical model for *the communication of the corporate rebranding* is used to measure how efficient a company's rebranding and marketing communication is in order to achieve long term customer relationship with their new desired target group. To match the company's renewed identity with the consumers' brand perception (image and reputation), it is important that the rebranding and communication is done in the right way. This model is based on Gray and Balmer's (1998) original model "*The communication of the corporate identity and image*" which examines whether a company's identity corresponds to the company's image in order to achieve competitive advantage, for example long-term customer relationship (Gray & Balmer 1998). Through feedback from the desired target group, a company can see the effectiveness of their rebranding and communication (Aaker 2002). If the feedback is positive, the company's strategy has been successful (Roy & Banerjee 2014). The parts that will be studied in the framework are Rebranding, Marketing Communication, Consumers brand perceptions.

3 Method

This chapter presents the research design and other methodological considerations throughout this dissertation. The chosen method for the study, the analysis of the collected material and the quality of the research is introduced.

3.1 Scientific approach

In this research a qualitative case study has been made with a hermeneutic viewpoint. Data has been collected from the chosen companies websites and by interviews with younger consumers. A hermeneutic approach of knowledge can be defined as the science of

interpretation (Bryman & Bell 2015). It is focused on what is said instead of quantification (Bryman & Bell 2013). For this thesis it is considered useful thus the purpose is to get the informant's own experiences (Eklund 2016).

3.2 Research design

The research design that has been used is case study design which can provide a deeper insight into a specific problem area (Harboe 2013). In this research the specific problem area is about rebranding of luxury brands and their marketing communication. Four companies have been used for the case. It is common to use a case study in qualitative research to get a holistic and real-world perspective on a case (Bryman & Bell 2013). The advantage of a case study is that the analysed object can be studied on a deeper level and from different aspects which can give the researcher a better understanding of the topic (Ejvegård 2009). This research's formation and design has been developed with a deductive approach. With such an approach the researcher forms the theories based on previous researches in theory (Bryman & Bell 2013). These theories were written down and formulated in research questions.

3.3 The collection of the empirical material

The primary data has been collected through the companies own websites and with semi structured interviews. The interview questions are based on the data collected regarding what the companies have done in their rebranding and on the scientific research presented above in the theory chapter.

3.3.1 Data collection from websites

Data about the luxury brands' rebranding and communication of the rebranding has been collected from the case companies' own webpages. These companies have been transparent regarding their rebranding strategies and communication on their websites. In order to get more supplementary data about their rebranding and communication strategies, secondary data has been used from other fashion industry related websites. When using secondary sources it is important to control its trustworthiness (Bryman & Bell 2015). In this case the secondary data was trustworthy as it matched the primary data.

When gathering the data from the case companies rebranding the researcher has chosen themes based on previous research. The investigated themes are: New style, New creative director, New collections, New logo, New monogram, Social media, Celebrity endorsement, Collaborations with other companies, Gamification and Editorial Placements.

3.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

In order to investigate younger consumers' perception of luxury fashion brands and on what marketing channels they have based their perception, semi-structured interviews have been conducted. Semi-structured interviews are a qualitative research method involving both open and structured questions (Ejvegård 2009). Open questions allow the respondent to talk freely about a topic based on the informant's own thoughts, feelings and experiences (Bryman & Bell 2013; Dalen 2015). That is one reason why semi-structured interviews has been used in order to get a deeper understanding of the consumers' thoughts. In this type of interview the researcher wants detailed answers where the underlying factors can be analysed. Structured questions, on the other hand, infer to follow a questionnaire in a structured way (Larsen 2009). In consideration to this the researcher gets the opportunity to manage the interview in a more structured way. This is also a reason why semi-structured interviews have been implemented.

The interview questions are based on the gathered data from what the companies have done in their rebranding and from the previous scientific research. The questions are sorted into rebranding and communication themes as follows: New design and style, New creative director, New collections, New logo, New monogram, Social media, Celebrity endorsement, Collaborations with other companies, TV and TV-series, Gamification, Editorial Placements and traditional stores. The empirical material collected for the research has been processed by actively sorting and categorizing the answers to the formulated questions (Ahrne & Svensson 2015). This is then compiled and presented in the results under Consumer brand perceptions.

3.4 Analysis of collected material

In this research the theoretical model for *the communication of the corporate rebranding* (Figure 1) has been used as a framework and forms the basis for the collected empirical material to be analyzed correctly. With this theoretical framework it is possible to measure how effective the company's rebranding and communication are towards the new desired

target group, in order to reach long-term customer relationship. The following has been investigated:

- 1) What have the luxury fashion brands done in their rebranding towards younger consumers and how have they communicated this?
- 2) How do the younger consumers experience luxury brands, how have they perceived the companies rebranding and through which communication channels have they noticed it?
- 3) Which rebranding methods and marketing channels are efficient towards younger consumers?

In this research a thematic analysis has been made to be able to analyse the collected data. It is a common analyse method in qualitative research (Bryman & Bell 2015). To be accepted as trustworthy and to enable the reader to determine whether the process is credible, a qualitative researcher must demonstrate that data analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent, and exhaustive manner through recording, systematizing, and disclosing the methods of a detailed analysis (Nowell et al. 2017). In a thematic analysis the researcher code text in terms of certain themes (Ibid). It is a method for identifying, organizing, describing, analyzing and reporting themes found within a data set (Nowell et al. 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher has structured and sorted the data, to place the valuable information under different categories (Bryman & Bell 2015).

In this research the themes that have been identified from the website data collection are: New style, New creative director, New collections, New logo, New monogram, Social media, Celebrity endorsement, Collaborations with other companies, Gamification and Editorial Placements. The semi-structured interview questions were then based on the data from the websites and previously scientific research. Then the researcher coded the data from the interviews into themes in a thematic analysis. These themes are: New design and style, New creative director, New collections, New logo, New monogram, Social media, Celebrity endorsement, Collaborations with other companies, TV and TV-series, Gamification, Editorial placements and Traditional stores.

3.5 The quality of the research

The quality of the research is depending on three measures: Credibility, Transferability and Dependability (Korstjens & Moser 2018). Dependability shows the trustworthiness of the result. If the research is done again after a period of time the outcome should be the same. Dependability depends on different changes in the society, environment and people's opinions (Bryman and Bell 2013). In order to obtain high dependability in this research the researcher has presented on which criterias the interviews were based. This is a condition to make it possible to repeat the study under the same circumstances (Bryman & Bell 2015). It is also important that the interviewer does not interrupt and affect the respondents' answers as the respondent is the one who contributes with information (Harboe 2013; Larsen 2009). This has been taken in consideration by the researcher when performing the interviews.

The measurements credibility and transferability are based on the relevance of the empirical data, meaning that the research really measures what it is supposed to measure (Ejvegård 2009). The collected data needs to be relevant for the purpose of the research and should answer the research questions (Bryman & Bell 2013). If the researchers' theories match the result from the collected data then the measurement credibility is obtained. In order to obtain high credibility it is important for the researcher to show a high level of engagement towards the participant and to build trust with them. It is also substantial that the researcher is well-informed and can identify those characteristics and elements which are most relevant to the problem or issue under study (Korstjens & Moser 2018; Bryman & Bell 2015). The selection of the respondents is also important and affects the transferability (Korstjens & Moser 2018). They must be relevant to the research and be within the selected delimitations. The respondents in this research have been carefully chosen so that the report has as high external transferability and trustworthiness as possible.

3.6 The selection of the respondents

The participants in the interviews are who consider themselves love fashion. According to them they care how they dress and like to buy clothes. They are in the age between 15-30 years old and live in Europe. The number of individuals participated in the interviews are 16 people, both males and females. It is important to cover all groups in the age range to get the highest possible credibility (Ejvegård 2009).

The first number of the participants was chosen on a purposive sampling. A purposive sampling is when the researcher selects people who can provide quality information and valuable insights on the research topic based on their interest (Denscombe 2010). These participants were chosen based on the researchers' knowledge of their interest in fashion. The other participants were selected by a snowball sampling, which means that they were recommended by the first chosen participants (Ahrne & Svensson 2015). They also have the same interest for fashion.

3.7 The selection of the case companies

This research is based on four luxury fashion companies that have performed a rebranding. These companies are Balmain, Burberry, Gucci and Louis Vuitton. The reason why these companies have been chosen is that they have a long history and heritage and are well known. They have been transparent about their rebranding in purpose to reach younger target groups. It can be a challenge for these well-known companies to perform a successful rebranding regarding their strong brand image and heritage (Kapferer 2008).

4 The selected brands

The background of the four case companies is introduced in this chapter.

4.1 Balmain

Balmain was founded in 1945 in Paris by Pierre Balmain. The brand became famous for its bold way of dressing women in a way of embracing women's form and charm with their signature styles. (Balmain n.d G). The Parisian fashion house was very renowned and became a success among royalties and iconic celebrities like Brigitte Bardot, Marlene Dietrich and Ingrid Bergman (ibid). After Pierre Balmain's death in 1982 the house has been managed by a series of strong designers, one of them Oscar de la Renta (The MET-museum n.d). Today Olivier Rousteing is the creative director for the brand and according to Business of Fashion (BOF n.d), he was the youngest creative director in Paris since Yves Saint Laurent, when he entered the position at Balmain (Ibid). Balmain's headquarter is still located in Paris where it has its roots (Balmain 2018). Balmain have both their own flagship stores and sell their products in other multi brand stores (ibid). Presently the brand is available in 310 stores in 51 countries worldwide (Balmain n.d I).

4.2 Burberry

Burberry is a multinational company with stores all over the world and with approximately 10.000 employees globally (Business of Fashion, n.d. A). In the year 2020, Burberry had 465 stores (Statista 202). It is today one of the most iconic British fashion brands, with their headquarter located in London (Forbes 2019).

Burberry was established in England in 1856 by Thomas Burberry. The purpose of the brand was to design clothes protecting people from the British weather (Burberry n.d. G). Burberry became famous as many explorers around the world wore Burberry's clothes during their expeditions. During the two world wars the brand provided the British military with uniforms (Ibid). Now the Burberry trench-coat was launched and became their signature garment (Burberryplc n.d C). In the 1920s the well-known monogram the Burberry check was introduced as a rainwear lining. This print became famous worldwide and is a signature for the brand together with their historical logo The Equestrian Knight. The logo and the

Burberry monogram have followed the brand through the years and have always been popular among celebrities, especially the British royalties (Burberry n.d. G).

4.3 Gucci

In Florence in Italy the house of Gucci was founded in 1921. They have always represented an imaginative design emphasizing on details and quality, the pinnacle of Italian craftsmanship (Kering n.d). Gucci is famous for their iconic symbols such as the double G logo and the horse bit. The horse bit represents Gucci's equestrian look which has followed the company through the years. As the brand has its roots in Italy, they are proud to show the colours of the Italian flag in distinctive motifs (Defanti, et al. 2014). In the 1950s film stars and jet-set travellers discovered Gucci in Italy. Nowadays the brand is a world known luxury fashion company with approximately 550 stores located all around the world (Gucci n.d G). Gucci has today grown to a multibillion dollar company, being a part of the Kering Group which owns a series of renowned fashion houses (Gucci n.d F). The house of Gucci's headquarters is still located in Florence where it all began (Forbes 2020).

4.4 Louis Vuitton.

Louis Vuitton has a history of French craftsmanship specialized on trunks and bags (Golbin 2012). The French trunk master Louis Vuitton opened his first luggage shop in Paris in 1852. In 1925 he started the production of shoes and handbags. Since 1987 LV is a part of Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, a consortium of French luxury goods. The company has always had an adventure spirit as a core value followed by innovation and ingenuity, by the boldness of its creations and the demand for design perfection. They have become legendary in fashion for travellers and have clients all over the world (LVHM n.d). Louis Vuitton is famous for their leather products and iconic monogram with the LV initials on a background of three stylized floral motifs. This monogram became one of the earliest symbols of modern luxury (Pasols, 2005).

Nowadays the brand have 598 own stores around the world (Louis Vuitton n.d E), and the headquarters of Louis Vuitton is located in Paris (Business of Fashion n.d B). Louis Vuitton was pointed out to be the most valuable luxury fashion brand in 2020 (Forbes 2020). LV has according to Forbes (2020) a brand value of 47.2 billion U.S. dollars.

5 Result

In this chapter it will first be presented what the four case companies have done in their rebranding and how they have communicated it. Then the result from the interviews will be presented. How have the participants experienced the luxury fashion companies rebranding? In which marketing channels have they noticed this rebranding message? Below the result from the thematic analysis is being presented.

5.1 What have the luxury fashion brands done in their rebranding?

5.1.1 New creative directors and new fashion design

Balmain, Burberry, Gucci and Louis Vuitton have taken strategic decisions by performing a rebranding and by transforming their business models towards the younger consumers (Balmain n.d A; Burberry-plc n.d A; Gucci n.d A; Louis Vuitton n.d C). Balmain started their rebranding in 2011 when Olivier Rousteing became their creative director, only 25 years old. In their opinion he would be perfect for their new desired target group (Balmain n.d A). According to Sherman (2018), Olivier had a lot of celebrity friends and was popular among social medias. He designed Balmain's first menswear collection and this was revolutionary since they had earlier only designed for women (Balmain n.d C). Burberry however performed its rebranding recently (Aminoff 2018). In November 2017 they started with a multi-year strategy to establish their position in luxury fashion (Burberry-plc n.d A). In March 2018 the brand announced Riccardo Tisci as their new Chief Creative Officer (Burberry 2018). According to Burberry (2018), they believed in him and his skills of mixing streetwear with high fashion, which is most relevant for today's luxury fashion (ibid). According to Kim and Reed (2018), Gucci took a strategic decision in 2015 by choosing Alessandro Michele as their new creative director to perform their rebranding. With Alessandro in a leading position Gucci has embraced a new style (Kim & Reed 2018). Kim and Reed explains that Gucci has been inspired from the streetwear fashion and they have mixed it with nostalgia (ibid). Louis Vuitton was according to Davis (2020) in a situation 2013 when they needed to do changes in strategy to move forward. They replaced Marc Jacobs with Nicolas Ghesquière which has helped them through a time where streetwear is the new jet-set, and tiny bags are the new trunk luggage (Davis 2020). In 2018 they also appointed a new Men's Artistic Director Virgil Abloh, owner of the fashion brand Off White (Vuitton, 2018). According to Louis Vuitton (2018), Virgil is up to date and working close

with celebrities, music, digitalisation and often creates a hype. He is also a master of using irony and is capable of making the men's wear more relevant and more visible to a younger generation (Friedman & Paton, 2018)

5.1.2 Accessories and ready-to-wear collections

The four companies have extended the assortment in their rebranding process (Balmain n.d H; Burberry n.d E; Gucci n.d C; Louis Vuitton n.d D). During the last years they have launched cheaper ready-to-wear collections in order to reach new consumers. All the four brands sell bags, shoes, accessories and fragrances (Balmain n.d H; Burberry n.d E; Gucci n.d C; Louis Vuitton n.d D). Burberry and Gucci have even their own makeup. Balmain does not have a collection of their own, but they started a collaboration with Kylie Jenner and her makeup brand Kylie Cosmetics in 2019 (Kylie Cosmetics n.d). Balmain has extended its brand to hair care, marketing their hair products as Hair Couture (Balmain Hair Couture n.d). Louis Vuitton on the other hand broaden their collections towards electronics and interior decoration (Louis Vuitton n.d D). On their website they present their own created tech accessories like earphones, smart watches, phone holders and phone cases (ibid). They also sell books, drawing materials and travel guides. As Louis Vuitton likes sports and games, they have designed their own sport products and games. (Louis Vuitton n.d D).

5.1.3 New logo and monogram

In 2018 both Balmain and Burberry introduced new logos (Verner 2018; Burberry-plc n.d D). Balmain presented a new logo for the first time in 70 years while Burberry has updated their logo a few times earlier. Balmain changed the traditional inline typeface logo to a minimalistic sans-serif font (Sherman 2018). They also made an abbreviation of the logo with a single B (Verner 2018). According to Burberry, they developed their new graphic identity in July 2018 by Riccardo Tisci. It is designed in collaboration with the legendary British art director and graphic designer Peter Saville (Burberry-plc n.d C). The old Burberry logo's serif typeface has been replaced with a sans-serif font and the Burberry knight has been removed (Aminoff 2018). Gucci however didn't make a new logo but they did a change. According to Dazigner (2017) Alessandro Michele brought back Gucci's iconic GG-logotype and he presented the logo on some of Gucci's iconic products, for example the Gucci belt and the Gucci bags from the 1960s which he relaunched.

Old Logo

New Logo



Balmain's (Picture 1) and Burberry's (Picture 2) old and new logos

Burberry and Balmain did not only create new logos, they also developed new monograms. Balmain's new monogram was designed with the logo on a black background, introducing it in February 2019 in a large campaign with the celebrity Cara Delevingne (Balmain n.d E). In September 2018, the Thomas Burberry monogram was brought to life to celebrate the heritage of Burberry as a fashion house in in honour of their founder (Burberry-plc n.d C). The monogram consists of Thomas Burberry's initials "TB" in a repetitive print. The monogram is inspired of an original drawing in Burberrys archives and was presented to the customers in May 2019 (Burberry-plc n.d C).



Burberry's new (to the left) and old monogram and Balmain's new monogram and logo (Picture 3; Picture 4; Picture 5; Picture 6).

5.2 Through which marketing channels have they communicated their rebranding?

5.2.1 Social media

The four brands have all used social media when rebranding. They are active on Instagram,

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat and Pinterest (Balmain n.d; Burberry n.d; Gucci n.d; Louis Vuitton n.d A). Balmain is the first fashion house to be presented on Tik Tok (Salessy 2020). According to Balmain (n.d.), when Oliver started his position as Balmain's creative director one of his goals was to make this brand a fashion pioneer. The company has worked intensely to establish new ways of direct communication with its followers and customers on their Tik Tok channel (Balmain n.d B). The followers can take part of exclusive Get Ready videos, behind-the-scene videos from fashion shows, getting a closer look of the leading silhouettes and accessories from the latest Balmain shows (Salessy 2020).

Burberry and Gucci have also started with Tik Tok which is an upcoming social media channel (Burberry n.d; Gucci n.d). Louis Vuitton concentrated instead on starting LVTV in its YouTube channel in 2019, containing never-before-seen contents from the brand (LV now n.d). According to the brand itself, their celebrity brand ambassadors take their viewers exclusively behind the scenes in get-ready videos from galas like the met gala, fashion shows and leather goods workshops (LV now n.d). They also work very actively with Instagram creating their own LV filter (Instagram n.d C). Even Gucci present its own Instagram filters. (Instagram 2020 C) and is the only one of these four brands with a podcast (Gucci n.d B). In 2018 Gucci was awarded “Best performing digital fashion brand” (Farooqui 2018). Burberry wants to find new exciting ways of engaging customers in Burberry online. They were the first brand to livestream a fashion show on social media (Burberry-plc n.d A). *“We are improving our omnichannel experience to enable more flexibility around payment and delivery options as well as seamless switching between physical and digital channels”* (Burberry-plc n.d A).

5.2.2 Celebrity endorsement

All the four brands have teamed up with contemporary style icons such as Rihanna, Beyonce, Bella Hadid, Gigi Hadid, Kendall Jenner and Selena Gomez (Instagram n.d A; Instagram n.d C; Davis 2020). One of the most influential celebrity among the younger target group is Billie Eilish (Ewens 2019). Both Gucci, Burberry and Louis Vuitton have made collaborations with here (Instagram 2020 B; Instagram n.d B). Eilish is one of Gucci's brand ambassadors. Two other brand ambassadors for Gucci are Harry Styles and Dakota Johnson (Gucci n.d C). Louis Vuitton also works with brand ambassadors, for example Alicia Vikander and Emma Stone (Louis Vuitton Magazine n.d A; Louis Vuitton Magazine n.d B).

Other celebrities representing the house are J Balvin, Tyga, Shawn Mendes and Haylie Bieber (Instagram n.d C).

Balmain is also working a lot with celebrity endorsement. When Olivier entered the position as creative director for Balmain, he wanted to revolutionize the fashion world and go against the fashion rules (Balmain n.d A). According to Balmain (n.d. A) there has been a lack of diversity in the fashion system. Olivier wanted to change this by presenting the collections with a casting of models and celebrities in different ages, colours and ethnicity. He created the “#BalmainArmy” in 2014 consisting of well-known persons and top models in the designer’s own generation, with strong and powerful characteristic (Balmain n.d A). Rihanna, Kim Kardashian, Kendall Jenner, Jourdan Dunn, Naomi Campbell and Cara Delevingne were the first to partake in the Balmain Army (Balmain 2020). The artist Kanye West, the world famous soccer player Neymar Jr (Balmain 2020) and the influencer Leone Hanne who has 2,2 million followers on Instagram (Instagram 2020 E) have often represented the brand.

Louis Vuitton also combines celebrity endorsement with diversity to promote their brand. According to Okwodu (2018), in Virgil Abloh's debut fashion show for Louis Vuitton he did a smart move that not only drew the young men’s, but also the young women’s attention (Ibid). Rihanna attended the show together with Kim Kardashian, Bella Hadid, Naomi Campbell and Kylie Jenner all dressed up in clothes from the SS 2019 Menswear collection that was going to be shown on the runway that day (Ibid). Other celebrities that joined this show was Kanye West, ASAP Rocky and Alexander Skarsgård (Waterhouse 2018).

Another strategy in celebrity endorsement discussed in the scientific research are the collaborations with social media influencers (De Veirman et al. 2017). All the four brands have partaken in the social media influencer endorsement as a rebranding strategy. Louis Vuitton works with the influencers Leonie Hanne, Aimee Song, Caroline Daur and Emma Chamberlain (Instagram n.d C). Lately Emma Chamberlain and Louis Vuitton has started a closer collaboration (Louis Vuitton Magazine n.d A). She is one of their brand ambassadors. You can follow her at Instagram or YouTube at different events, representing Louis Vuitton. She makes promotions with the super model Karlie Kloss, also a brand ambassador for Louis Vuitton (Maguire 2020).

5.2.3 Collaborations with other companies

Louis Vuitton has a history of collaborations, for example with the artist Takashim Murakami and Yayoi Kusama during Marc Jacob's time as an artistic director (Golbin, 2012; (Kapferer and Bastien 2009; Agac et al., 2017). One other collaboration was with the trendy New York-based cult skatewear brand Supreme (Lupica 2017). The collection had Supreme's colours and logo, and Louis Vuitton's traditional monogram on the products (Ibid). Virgil Abloh's first collaboration as a creative director for Louis Vuitton is with the Japanese designer and DJ “Nigo” (Louis Vuitton Magazine 2020 A).

Balmain also works with collaborations. The first collaboration Olivier Rousteing did as a creative director for Balmain was with H&M in 2015 (Balmain 2020). According to Balmain (2020) their intention was that a future customer should have the opportunity to buy her/his first Balmain products to a more favourable price. They released a marketing campaign in the form of a music video with Kendall Jenner together with Gigi Hadid, Jourdan Dunn and Olivier Rousteing himself (Balmain 2015). Balmain explains on their webpage that in order to reach a younger audience, they started a collaboration in 2017 with Victoria's Secret (VS). This collection was presented in VS' famous fashion show (Balmain 2017). The latest collaboration was made in November 2019 with the sports company Puma (Balmain 2019 A). It resulted in a sporty collection influenced by the boxing gear, inspired by Cara Delavigne, the front person for the collection (Ibid).

Gucci and Burberry have also made some collaborations through the years but not to the extent of Louis Vuitton's and Balmain's. As Burberry wished to be a more sustainable company (Burberry-plc n.d.E), they partnered up with the luxury consignment company TheRealReal in order to offer the customers recycled and reused clothes, towards a more circular economy (Instagram 2019 A). In 2018 they also collaborated with Vivian Westwood. It was a limited edition collection with re-imagined British heritage pieces with a punk twist (Burberry n.d C). Gucci's creative director Alessandro Michele invited the graffiti artist Trevor “Trouble” Andrew, aka GucciGhost to collaborate in Gucci's fall and winter 2016 collection (Gucci n.d D). The idea according to Gucci (n.d. D) was to mix two cultures, Gucci's old tradition with today's modern pop culture. According to Gucci, he created a set of eye-catching motifs with the GG-logo in a graffiti-style and painted graffiti over a lineup of accessories and ready-to-wear clothes (Ibid). Gucci's latest collaboration was with Disney to celebrate the Chinese New Year and welcome the Year of the Rat. It is a unisex capsule

collection with a dedicated range of exclusive items humorously playing around with Gucci double-G logo and Disney's iconic Mickey Mouse (Harper's Bazar 2020).

5.2.4 Gamification

According to Louis Vuitton, they wished to capture a new market by entering the gaming world (e-sport). They partnered up with "*League of Legends*" (LOL) where the players can buy "in-game skins" to their game characters, designed by Louis Vuitton (Louis Vuitton n.d B). In this collaboration they have designed a collection of clothes inspired by one of Louis Vuitton's characters in LOL (Louis Vuitton Magazine 2020 B). They also design the Trophy Travel Case to hold the Summoner's Cup, which is the trophy for the winner of the League of Legends World Championship in Paris. It is considered the most prestigious prize in e-sports (Louis Vuitton n.d B).

Burberry on the other hand has aimed at mobile games. They launched their first game "B Bounce" in 2019 where the player shall race to the moon (Burberry-plc 2019). To gain extra speed they can collect Burberry's gold TB logos along the way. The winner can receive a real jacket from the new Burberry puffer collection (Ibid). After the success with B Bounce they launched another online game called Ratberry (Burberry-plc 2020). Now they have launched a new game called B-SURF on Burberrys on webpage. It is a surf racing game where the player shall ride the waves through Burberrys monogram world. They introduced the game to celebrate the TB (Tomas Burberry) Summer Monogram collection (Burberry n.d F).

5.2.5 Editorial placements

All the four fashion brands work close to the fashion press (Elle 2020; Instagram 2020 G; Instagram 2020 H; Instagram 2019 B). According to the scientific research, the luxury fashion brands invite the fashion magazines to the front row on their fashion shows presuming that the magazines will publish their new collections both online and offline (Barnes 2013). By sponsoring the latest collection you can see Louis Vuitton's clothes on the cover of the magazines and in fashion reportages, for example in Elle and Vogue (Elle 2020; Instagram 2019 B). Gucci promoted their clothes with Billie Eilish on the cover of Vogue for the March issue 2020 (Instagram 2020 G), and Vogue did a fashion reportage of Burberry with the famous model Irina Shayk (Instagram 2020 H; Instagram 2019 C). Hailey Bieber did a photoshoot for Vogue Japan in clothes from Balmain's SS20 collection. (Instagram 2020 I).

5.3 How do the younger consumers experience luxury fashion companies rebranding?

5.3.1 New creative directors and new fashion design

A much discussed topic during the interviews was the election of a creative director for the respective brands. Many of the respondents were very acquainted with the chief designers of Louis Vuitton and Balmain, while there were not so many who knew Riccardo Tisci for Burberry and Alessandro Michele for Gucci. The majority of the respondents had a theory that the reason was that they were not very famous before. One participant had another idea regarding this. *“Alessandro Michele, I don’t know so much about him because he tries to be mysterious”* (Participant C). Olivier Rousteing at Balmain and Virgil Abloh from Louis Vuitton are more well known among the participants. The majority believed that they were chosen because they were famous before they entered these positions.

Yes Virgil has really created a name for himself. He was already famous through his own brand Offwhite before he came to Louis Vuitton. He has done much on his own, for example the collaboration with IKEA. He is so hyped that the products sell themselves only because of his name. -Participant E.

Virgil Abloh for Louis Vuitton. I loved it. It was one of their best decisions during the last 10 years. They wanted to become popular very fast and they took the designer that had his popularity on the peak. -Participant C.

However, there were more of the male participants who knew about Virgil Abloh of Louis Vuitton, than the female participants. A reason for this according to the male respondents is that they already knew Virgil Abloh owing to his own brand Offwhite, a male luxury fashion brand. Some of the female participants described that they knew him because they had a brother or a boyfriend that had talked about Virgil Abloh and his work.

My partner adores Virgil Abloh. He easily becomes obsessed with famous people and can buy products from one brand only because of this person. He regards Virgil Abloh as an influencer... I do think, however, that Virgil Abloh has more influence on guys than girls .- Participant H.

According to the participants it can also be a risk with a famous creative director. The slightest bad behaviour privately can affect the brands reputation in a negative way. One participant mentioned that Virgil has expressed himself badly on social media and the consequence is that people no longer like him. The respondent thinks that his behaviour can affect Louis Vuitton's reputation negatively.

As I have understood it Virgil Abloh is now kind of cancelled online. People don't like him anymore. So now we'll see what happens. He made lots of statements during Black Lives' matters that made people think Fuck Virgil. It's the same with Kanye West, like what happened last night that he kind of wants to be president, he is cancelled to. -Participant E.

Another participant also knew this incident and had an opposite opinion:

He expressed himself wrong on social media, but it was a misunderstanding. You could see two camps, one that criticises him and one that says that he is misunderstood. Afterwards he apologised and donated a lot of money to the black lives matters.... what I have heard people have already forgotten this. So it is not going to be a big deal for Louis Vuitton as a brand. -Participant C.

Some of the respondents did not agree with each other on how harmful Virgil's behaviour was to Louis Vuitton's reputation. One of the respondents described the situation based on what he/she had heard from others and rumors on social media. Another participant did not see this as a big deal for Louis Vuitton, because the respondent told in the interview that he/she personally likes Virgil Abloh and knew very well about the situation. The majority thinks that it is a good decision to hire a famous person as a chief designer of the luxury brands as the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. But they point out that it is still important to choose the "right" person as a creative director who stands out as a role model and an inspiration to the target group.

The brands that are most popular regarding new fashion design according to the participants are: Gucci, Louis Vuitton and Balenciaga. Balenciaga is popular among the younger consumers because they are playful and stylish. Many of the respondents describes Balenciaga as a "hyped" brand. The respondents like that the brand plays with norms in a stylish and spectacular way. The respondents like that the brand plays with norms in a stylish and spectacular way. Several respondents mentioned the 'IKEA bag' of which Balenciaga has

designed a copy to the price of 20.000 SEK, or the oversize jacket. “*the oversize jacket that is so big that you can't wear it. They have fun ideas and design*” (Participant J).

They design many products that are Instagram friendly, which younger people like. You want to have clothes from luxury fashion brands but you don't want to send out to others that it is too serious. You want it to be fun. We live in a period where memes are popular and it feels like Balenciaga understands that. We younger people want to have fun products that do not feel too serious, but we still want to brag with our clothes from luxury fashion brands. - Participant K.

The participants also talked about the importance of having iconic signature products from the luxury fashion brands which they do not change in the design, timeless products. They are famous for these products and they have sometimes been sold over generations. This is one of the reasons why they like these brands. With these products the participants felt like they could get a higher status when they wear them.

All the luxury brands have a special product they are famous for. If they keep this product, the main product of the brand, they do it the right way.....If it is autumn and I need a coat or a trench coat I would go for a brand that is famous for that like Burberry. If I want a bag I would go for Louis Vuitton. -Participant C.

5.3.2 Accessories and ready-to-wear collections

The majority of the respondents mentioned that the first product they would buy from a luxury brand is an accessory like a bag, shoes, sunglasses, a belt and a perfume. A jacket from the brands' ready-to-wear collection is also popular to buy according to the younger consumers. The respondents describes that an accessory or a jacket feels more price worthy than the other design clothes because it is timeless and usable products. They consider the clothes as more influenced by trends and has a shorter life span. They also prefer to buy accessories as a show of product.

It is so true that you buy accessories first, before you buy clothes from luxury fashion companies. I have a long list of products I would like to buy from luxury fashion brands. But I choose to buy shoes, bags, jackets and accessories instead of their clothes.... These products are easier to use and combine with lots of clothes. This type of product feels more price worthy. When I have all that, I can buy the clothes in the future. -Participant E.

5.3.3 Logo and monogram

One central theme during the interviews was the logos and monograms of the companies. According to all the participants it is important that the products they buy from a luxury fashion brand have a high recognition factor as they want to show that they can afford it. They also want to feel that they belong to others in a group and a certain brand gives them status. Therefore, it is important with a famous, but not too flashy, logo and monogram. “*You want to buy a product from a famous brand that people can recognise. I don’t like clothes with logos that pop too much. I want it to be there but not too much*” (Participant C). According to the participants the logo shall not be too flashy as it sends out the wrong signals. It looks like the consumer wants to brag with its clothes. To keep the luxury status it is important to show that they can afford the luxury brand, but in a sophisticated way.

I mainly think that you buy the bag because of the logo. I definitely bought my products because of the logo and I'm a little annoyed with myself for that. You pay so much money only for the logo they are not worth more, but they are only worth that price because of the brand and because you want to show it. -Participant K.

Burberry and Balmain have rebranded their logos and monogram while Gucci and Louis Vuitton have stayed with their old ones. Gucci have however brought back their old GG-logo on some of their products. All the respondents know Gucci’s and Louis Vuitton’s logos and monogram.

When I think of Louis Vuitton I think of their monogram. It feels luxurious. It is brown with a lot of LV in the monogram and with some beige colour as well.....The combination between green and red is the signature color for Gucci.....The best example of good logos is Gucci and Louis Vuitton. They have brought back their traditional logo that was popular in the 60’s and the 70’s and now it is very trendy and likable again. They stayed true to themselves and didn't change their logo. -Participant C

The majority of the interviewees described the old version of the logos when they were told to picture Burberry’s and Balmain’s monogram and logo. Not many people knew they had changed. Their reaction towards the two brands' change of logos and monograms was not positive. Many of the participants liked the older logos more. They felt nostalgia about the old logos and monograms. Many brought up Burberry’s old logo and monogram during the interviews as examples of iconic logo and monogram. Another iconic logo they mentioned were Gucci’s, while Louis Vuitton’s monogram was brought up many times during the interview as a likable one. The majority of the participants were disappointed when they

found out that Burberry had changed their traditional monogram. *“It's fun when a brand does new things, but I do not think they should change their signature. It's like Audi would remove its rings, it would be weird. It feels wrong”* (Participant J). Another reaction towards the new rebranded logos and monograms were that they were quite similar to each other. The majority of the respondents thought it was bad that the case companies had changed their logos because of this the brands lost their personality. *A logo for me should be unique, and it is important to be able to link a logo to the brand”* (Participant A).

It can be cool but no wow-factor. It feels like it's a bit like Gucci or Chanel, when the two BB are placed against each other, the same thing. It would have been cool if they did something new, something unique, like some cool pattern, not just their letters. It's too similar to other brands' monograms. -Participant C

5.4 In which marketing channels have the respondents paid attention to the luxury fashion brands?

5.4.1 Social media

One topic the respondents agreed on was that the most popular marketing channel for the luxury brands is social media. According to the respondents, Instagram is the largest channel on social media where the younger consumers are exposed to luxury fashion brands. YouTube and TikTok are other influential channels that the majority mentioned. Two social media channels which the participants did not recommend when promoting luxury fashion brands are Snapchat and Facebook. They consider these channels to be non-inspiring for these types of products.

Instagram is the main channel. I'm also a fan of TikTok, I know that only a few brands are shown on TikTok. But I think it will grow. YouTube also have a great potential for the fashion brands to promote themselves in an inspiring way. - Participant C

Another theme is that photos of a stylish outfit where the brand is tagged are more inspiring than hauls. They considered bought advertising as fake. Unboxing on YouTube is also a popular way to promote the luxury brands products according to the participants in the interviews. When one of the participants describes a classic unboxing he/she looked dreamy, as if he/she imagined itself buying and unboxing such a product. He/she said: *“When you buy something from, for example Louis Vuitton you get the product in this big orange bag. You*

can watch when the influencer opens the package on social media” (Participant N). This is called unboxing.

We follow influencers on YouTube and Instagram. I usually scroll past if they show to many products in an advertising context. Hauls is not interesting, but it is more inspiring if you post a nice picture with an outfit on a product where the brand is tagged.... It feels fake when the hauls are sponsored. -Participant B.

5.4.2 Celebrity endorsement

Among celebrities that promote luxury products, the participants often mentioned Rihanna in the interviews. The respondents considered that models like Cara Delavigne, Kendall Jenner and Gigi and Bella Hadid are inspiring when it comes to luxury fashion. Many of the participants also follow TV reality stars on social media such as Molly-May Hue and the Kardashians. *“I actually do not follow the brands themselves, but I follow celebrities and influencers....I would rather see a product on a person than just a picture on a bag. It's more inspiring” (Participant B).* One central theme that was brought up during the interviews was that the respondents were more inspired by influencers and fashion bloggers instead of artists, actors and athletes. These younger consumers like to follow the fashion bloggers who really know and have a passion for fashion, they considered them as celebrities.

One theme that came up during the interview was that it is important that the right type of person promotes the luxury brand. If a celebrity, influencer or a group of people that the respondents do not want to be associated with, wears the luxury brand, it influences their opinions of the brand. The majority of the respondents said that they could not use products from a luxury brand associated to the wrong person. *”Let’s take Gucci and LV as an example, there are many young people who want it, there are a lot of 15 year olds who wear it and I do not want to be associated with a 15 year old when I am 23 years old.” (Participant D).*

Jockiboi and Einar. I don’t look up to them, so I do not care. But many ”boys from the suburbs” who live in the “getto” areas look up to them and that is why they dress like them. The typical Gucci person is a guy in Adidas clothes, with a Gucci-cap and a Gucci-belt. This typical guy likes himself to much. It’s the typical getto look. The brand have got a new target group. Gucci have become a brand for the younger people and for the cocky guys in the poorer suburbs. It does not feel as nice anymore. If I see a guy wearing a Gucci belt, I do not feel wow how nice. Then I feel more like he’s annoying. - Participant B.

5.4.3 Collaborations with other companies

According to the interviewees, it is important to the luxury fashion brands to collaborate with the right company in order to reach their intended target group. Many liked Balmain's collaboration with H&M. *“If you get a collaboration with H&M then you are safe. You broaden your target group with such a collaboration”* (Participant H). The majority knew of Balmain's with H&M, and Louis Vuitton's collaboration with Supreme. None of the interviewees knew what Burberry had done. Instead, several mentioned Virgil Abloh's collaboration with IKEA, which took place last year. He is the creative director for Louis Vuitton but this he did with his own brand Offwhite. Gucci's collaboration with Disney was known to a few of the respondents. However, according to the participants, this collaboration was thought to be more for the Asian market. When it comes to Louis Vuitton's collaboration with Supreme it was mostly the male participants who knew about it.

I think Supreme is more talked about among boys than girls. Therefore I think they wanted to focus more on men's fashion with that collaboration. Otherwise, they might not have chosen Supreme but a brand more suitable for both girls and boys. Everyone knows what Supreme is, but there are more boys who wear it than girls.
-Participant H.

5.4.4 Movies and TV-series

According to the respondents Movies and TV-series are an often used marketing channels by the luxury fashion industry. Some of the female respondents presented the TV-series Gossip girl as an example, while some of the male candidates mentioned James bond as a movie where you get inspiration of luxury fashion brands.

Yes of course. Fashion trends can be created from movies and you can be affected of what you see in them. If you see a product in a store and you think it looks nice, maybe it is because you have seen it in a movie before. We are usually more affected than we think. -Participant M.

5.4.5 Gamification

One surprising topic was that there were not so many candidates in the interviews who knew about Burberry's mobile games and Louis Vuitton's collaboration with the e-sport game LOL. However, many respondents thought it sounded fun with Burberry's mobile game, but maybe something for the younger kids or for the Asian market. The majority of the respondents thought that marketing via e-sport is much better than mobile games as e-sport has a much

bigger audience and fan base. One respondent compared Burberry's mobile game to Louis Vuitton's e-sports collaboration:

Burberry's mobile games are on such a small scale that I think the consumers will forget about it. I don't think it gives any giant effect. But I can imagine that they reach younger ages with it. But when it comes to gaming, there are lots of events and game fairs. By sponsoring an event as Louis Vuitton does, I think it's more efficient. Many other brands from other industries have done this, such as Mercedes and BMW. They have sponsored similar events to get their message out to young people....It costs money, but you do not come close to the same publicity with mobile games as in the e sports world because e-sport is so big. -Participant M.

5.4.6 Editorial placements

Editorial placements are a marketing channel which the participants mentioned in the interviews. Approximately half of the interviewees told that they sometimes read the fashion magazines to get inspiration. Another participant presented billboard advertising in the cities as a channel where consumers are exposed to the luxury fashion marketing. *"Sometimes I buy fashion magazines and then I see the luxury fashion brands in fashion reports or as trend inspirational pictures."* (Participant A). However, all respondents agreed that this is a decreasing marketing channel due to the competition from social medias. *"Before, it was in magazines, such as Elle. But now it is more on social media."* -Participant G.

5.4.7 Traditional stores

One topic that was discussed in the interviews was the importance of if the luxury brands' own traditional stores will remain or not. According to several participants the traditional stores create a certain feeling for the fashion brand. They are located on the finest streets with stylish inspiring shopwindows. The respondents consider these iconic stores to be an important image creator for the fashion brand. Many participants often visit them when they travel. The respondents describes that it is an experience to visit these stores and also a special feeling to buy a product from such a store. They mention the special feeling of entering the store, the staff helping them to choose a product and leaving the store with the product in a bag with the brand's logo. They feel that they are special and many of them connect this feeling to status, prestige and the sense of a successful career.

The stores are important. It is a dream to buy something from them. They make you feel important and successful. It's an experience. Good service and nice design. Yes, I've always wanted to leave a Louis Vuitton store with a bag from them. -Participant F.

6 Analysis and Discussion

To find out "Which rebranding methods are efficient towards younger consumers?" the data from "5.1 What have the luxury fashion brands done in their rebranding?", "5.3 How do the younger consumers experience luxury fashion companies rebranding?" and previous research, is compared. To find out "Which marketing channels in rebranding are efficient towards the younger consumers?" the data from "5.2 Through which marketing channels have they communicated their rebranding?", "5.4 In which marketing channels have the respondents paid attention to the luxury fashion brands?" and what previous research says, is compared.

6.1 Which rebranding methods are efficient towards younger consumers?

6.1.1 New creative director and new style

A good way for the luxury fashion companies to get younger target groups attention to their rebranding and get them to start buying from the brand is to hire a new creative director (Roy & Sarkar, 2015). All the four case companies have done so to give their assortment a new fresh look (Balmain n.d A; Burberry 2018; Kim & Reed 2018; Vuitton, 2018). According to the interviewees, a majority of them recognised Balmain's and Louis Vuitton's new creative directors but not Burberry's and Gucci's. This is because Virgil Abloh at Louis Vuitton and Olivier Rousteing at Balmain already were famous before they were hired.

Yes Virgil has really created a name for himself. He was already famous through his own brand Offwhite before he came to Louis Vuitton. He has done several things on his own, for example the collaboration with IKEA. He is so hyped that the products sell themselves only because of his name. -Participant E

According to the respondents it is therefore efficient to hire a new creative director who is already famous. This comports with Bergkvist & Zhou's (2016) research regarding celebrities' impact on consumers in the luxury fashion industry. The fashion brand gets automatically new customers because they love what the new creative director has done before (Bergkvist & Zhou 2016). One interesting topic that was brought up during the interviews was that there were more male than female consumers who knew of Virgil Abloh

at Louis Vuitton. The reason can be that Virgil was famous for his own male brand before he entered his position as a creative director for Louis Vuitton. Louis Vuitton probably knew this when they hired him, because they wanted to expand and invest more on their male fashion line. The female collections were already running well with Nicolas Ghesquière as the creative director. Today, Virgil's own brand Offwhite has grown and he offers fashion for female consumers also (Bray 2014), which benefits Louis Vuitton. According to previous scientific research there is on the other hand a risk for the company if the new famous creative director behaves badly. Then it can affect the brand's reputation negatively (Seiler & Kucza 2017). However, many of the respondents believe that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages of a well known director compared to an unknown one.

He expressed himself wrongly on social media, but it was a misunderstanding. You could see two camps, one that was criticized him and one that said that he was misunderstood. Afterwards he apologised and donated a lot of money to the 'Black lives matters'....But from what I have heard people have already forgotten this. So it is not going to be a big deal for Louis Vuitton as a brand. -Participant C

The most important thing about hiring a new creative director for the luxury brands is that the person must have a sense of what the desired target group appreciates when it comes to creating a new style (Kim & Ko 2010; Godart & Galunic 2019). According to previous research one efficient method for rebranding is that the company puts itself in the leading position of the trends (Godart & Galunic 2019). The luxury fashion brands have historically always been good at this (Kim and Ko 2010). They have always had a lot of customers that follow them and these consumers like to be first with the latest and trendiest fashion (Kim & Ko 2010; Godart & Galunic 2019). The majority of the respondents appreciated the design of Balenciaga's new collection. They are considered as one of the trendiest brands now.

Balenciaga designs many silly/playful products, but only because they are Balenciaga people buys it. For example the bag that was inspired by an IKEA bag... "They design many products that are instagram friendly, which younger people like. You want to have clothes from luxury fashion brands but you don't want to send out to others that it is too serious. You want it to be fun. We live in a period where memes are popular and it feels like Balenciaga understands that. We younger people want to have fun products that do not feel too serious, but we still want to brag with our clothes from luxury fashion brands. - Participant K

One conclusion can be made that the younger consumers want to have luxury products that stands out and says luxury, they want the fashion brand to be recognizable on the product.

Many younger consumers that appreciate luxury products take it very seriously and can save money for a long time to afford the latest products, which comports with earlier research (Gentina et al. 2016). It is important for them that the products they wear are a little playful and Instagram friendly, like Balenciaga's products. Many of the interviewees also talked about Louis Vuitton's creative director for menswear Virgil Abloh and Alessandro Michele for Gucci with a new Instagram friendly style that attracts the younger consumers. Instagram is a network that is influential on our society (Frucosol 2019). The concept "Instagram friendly" means that it is a popular product that is suitable to show on Instagram, a product which guarantees many 'likes' if published on Instagram (Ibid).

While it is important to develop a new style in rebranding, they must not remove their most famous iconic products. The respondents believe that these products are the most important ones for the brand reputation because they are so well known.

All the luxury brands have a special product for which they are famous for. If they are keeping this main branded product, they are doing it the right way.....If it is autumn and I need a coat or a trench coat I would go for a brand that is famous for that like Burberry. If I want a bag I would go for Louis Vuitton. - Participant C.

According to Merrilees & Miller's (2008) rebranding model, "principle 2" it is important to build a bridge between the existing old brand and their new rebranded one. It is common that luxury products are consumed to indicate status (McCraken 1988). Attention is an important factor in the consumption of luxury fashion products (Zinkhan & Prenshaw 1994). According to previous research and the interviews it is efficient for the luxury fashion brands to keep their iconic products in the assortment when rebranding as they are so well-known and recognisable. If the luxury companies cease to sell these iconic products they may lose their value according to Torenkova and Biedenbach (2018).

6.1.2 Accessories and ready-to-wear collections

Many luxury fashion brands have extended their assortment with more affordable products to reach the younger consumers at an early stage (Lee, et al. 2020). These branded products often become hyped such as bags, shoes, sunglasses, perfumes and cosmetics (Fionda & Moore 2009). All the four case companies have extended their assortment with these

products (Balmain n.d H; Burberry n.d E; Gucci n.d C; Louis Vuitton n.d D). According to the participants in the interviews the first products they would like to buy from luxury fashion brands are accessories and jackets.

It is so true that you buy accessories first, before you buy clothes from luxury fashion companies. I have a long list of products I would like to buy from luxury fashion brands. But I choose to buy shoes, bags, jackets and accessories instead of their clothes.... These products are easier to use and combine with lots of clothes. This type of product feels more worth their price. When I have all that, I can buy the clothes in the future. (Participant E).

One reason why accessories, bags and jackets can feel more worthy for the younger consumers to spend money on is because these are the products that stands out the most and which the consumer can show off to others. Products from luxury brands are often consumed to indicate status (McCraken 1988). It has been much discussed in the scientific research why it is so important to achieve status (Bian & Forsythe 2012; Gentina et al. 2016). One explanation is that the consumers feel that it can strength their confidence (Ibid). It is a human trait to show a successful appearance, to get attention and to feel a sense of belonging to others (Lee & Watkins 2016). By wearing the “right” products from the “right” brands the consumers can get an approval from their reference groups (Zinkhan & Prenshaw 1994). According to the respondents the luxury fashion brands did right to expand their assortment with ready-to-wear collections and accessories. However, a luxury brand should have premium prices, excellent quality and high exclusivity, (Jackson 2004; Fionda & Moore 2009; Cooper et al. 2015). It is therefore important that the brand does not set to low prices for their ready-to-wear collections. In this case the feeling of luxury and exclusivity decreases.

6.1.3 Logo and monogram

Luxury fashion brands have rare, distinctive and desirable products which give them a high customer awareness. (Fionda & Moore 2009; Kapferer 2015). Many customers feel that they achieve the same status and image as the luxury brand they wear. Therefore, the respondents consider it important that the products they will buy from a luxury fashion brand have a visible logo, monogram or iconic design.

It should be visible what brand and product it is.... You also invest in a product with a logo and brand because then everyone sees what it is. It should be seen that it is a

luxury brand. You want people to see that it has cost a lot otherwise it feels unnecessary. Logo is important. (Participant F).

However, according to the respondents the logo should not be to flashy. In the interviews the younger consumers explain that it sends out wrong signals to others. They do not want to have an appearance that they brag with their clothes. To keep the luxury status they want to show in a sophisticated way that they can afford luxury brands. *“You want to buy a product from a famous brand that people can recognize. I don’t like clothes with logos that pop too much. I want it to be there but not too much”* (Participant C).

Some of the luxury fashion brands have changed their logo and monogram. This is called redesign in the “rebranding process” and is a common way of working in order to reach new target groups. (Muzellec et al. 2003; Roy & Sarkar 2015). According to the interviewees not so many of the participants appreciated the change of logo and monogram. The respondents prefer the brands' older iconic logos and monograms more than the new rebranded ones. According to previous research it is recommended that the companies stay true with their aims and values when rebranding, instead of creating new ones (Herstein et al. 2008; Merrilees & Miller 2008; Muzellec & Lambkin 2008). Merrilees & Miller (2008) explain in their research that it is important to create a smooth transition from the old brand image to the new brand image. In Hatch & Schultz’s (2003) research they consider it to be efficient to include references to history, heritage and luxury in the communication for exclusive brands. The tradition and heritage are a key attribute for luxury brands (Freire, 2014). According to the participants *“The best example of good logos are Gucci and Louis Vuitton. They have brought back their traditional logo that was popular in the 60’s and the 70’s and now it is very trendy and likable again. They stayed true to themselves and didn’t change their logo.”* (Participant C). By communicating its corporate heritage and legacy towards the consumers the company gains strength and this can tend to create positive emotions among the customers (Hakala, Lätti & Sandberg 2011). A company with a long history provides a sense of stability and security towards their customers (ibid 2011). A company’s logo contains many values such as heritage, high-perceived quality, luxury and prestige, which the customers will associate with the brand (Shermach 1997).

Roy and Sarkar (2015) and Torenkova and Biedenbach (2018) consider in their researches that if a company choose to remove some of the important factors that characterize the brand,

such as the logo or monogram, there is a risk that the brand loses its recognition factor. In the case of Burberry and Balmain both brands have changed their logo to a sans serif font (Sherman 2018; Aminoff 2018). This was something that was noticed by the respondents. *“It is bad that they have changed the logo because it will not be personal anymore. All luxury brands today change to the same type, it becomes too simple and impersonal.”* (Participant L). The logo and monogram are the core indicators of a brand and the basis for awareness and communication. These are two valuable assets for a company, therefore it is important to have strong ones (Kapfer 1995). Mostly it is better to stay true with the old ones. On the other hand, if they feel that their old logo or monogram does not work anymore in order to reach the new younger target groups, it is important to create a new unique one, not too similar to anyone else's. They should not use the same font as the other ones.

6.2 Which marketing channels are efficient to communicate the rebranding message towards the younger consumers?

6.2.1 Social media

According to previous research, social media is a common marketing channel for luxury fashion brands (Barnes 2013). The channels that have been used a lot in marketing are Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, and Snapchat (Sommerfeldt et al. 2019). TikTok is an increasingly growing channel and might take a leading position in the future (Maguire 2020). However, it has lately been much discussed as a security risk. It is suspected that China's government collects personal data from millions of TikTok users around the world (Dr Bunker 2020). This ethical issue needs to be considered very carefully among the luxury fashion brands. They have to follow the development in this matter. Louis Vuitton may have made a smart move to invest more in YouTube instead of TikTok. The respondents think that social media is the best marketing channel for luxury fashion brands. Instagram is the most popular, closely followed by YouTube and TikTok. No one of the consumers raised issues about TikTok in the interviews. The respondents did not agree with the scientific research implying that Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat are interesting channels when it comes to fashion inspiration. They considered Facebook as a no longer relevant channel, and one participant described Snapchat as following: *“I get no inspiration from Snapchat, I use it more to have fun with friends. If you want to market a product, I think Snapchat is the wrong place”* (Participant B).

Instagram is the main channel. I'm also a fan of TikTok, I know that only a few brands have went to TikTok. But I think it will grow. YouTube has also a great potential for the fashion brands to promote themselves in an inspiring way. - Participant C

The majority of the interviewees felt that they were more inspired by what others post than what the companies publish. The company needs to create memorable experiences for the customer in their marketing (Gilmore & Pine 1999). One way is to use celebrity endorsement or influencers (also called bloggers). Very few of the respondents follow only luxury brands, instead they follow influencers posting the luxury brands' products. They also became influenced when luxury fashion brands make Instagram advertisements. *"I actually do not follow the brands, but I follow celebrities and influencers.....I would rather see a product on a person than just a picture on a bag. It's more inspiring."* (Participant B). This is how the luxury fashion brands need to market their rebranding. They need to publish their products via other people on social medias like Instagram. The respondents prefer an advertisement that feels natural, not too obvious that it is an advertisement. One consumer brought up the video advertisement that calls "Haul" as an example.

We follow influencers on YouTube and Instagram. I usually scroll past if they show too many products in an advertising context. Hauls is not interesting. It is more inspiring if you post a nice picture with an outfit on a product where the brand is tagged.... It feels fake when the hauls are sponsored. - Participant B.

This is something that the company needs to consider. The best way is to promote the products on an influencer with a stylish outfit where the brand is tagged in the photo on Instagram. According to Brioschi (2006) the company can work with creating a lifestyle in order to maintain the exclusive status when rebranding a luxury brand. Unboxing with a celebrity on YouTube is also an interesting way of promoting the products where the person shows when he/she opens the package with the product, as if they have just bought it. *"When you buy something from, for example Louis Vuitton you get the product in this big orange bag. You can watch when the influencer opens the package on social media. It's called unboxing."* (Participant N). With this method the company can show the lifestyle in a natural way.

One respondent compared Balmain to Gucci in terms of popularity and prominence in marketing: *"Balmain probably needs to be seen more. I see Gucci everywhere. It may have*

something to do with me following those who like Gucci. But I think Balmain needs to be seen even more among popular influencers to become trendy again." (Participant F). It is therefore important for the luxury fashion brands to work actively with social media and to show their products through influencers so that they are more visible. One way for the brands can be to lend clothes to influencers. By doing this the brand is more often seen on the right people.

6.2.2 Celebrity endorsement

In Bergkvist and Zhou's (2016) research it is found out that celebrities have a big fan base who look up to them. These fans identify themselves with the celebrities (ibid). According to Solomon, Bamossy and Askegaard's (2002) research they describe how Veblen's Trickle-down theory from 1899 has changed since. Today's consumers imitate what the celebrities are wearing instead of looking up to what the upper class is wearing as they did before (ibid). Several researchers have discovered the power of celebrities and today's social media influencers, and Hani, et al. (2018) have come to the conclusion that collaboration with celebrities is considered to be an efficient rebranding strategy. Nowadays it is very common that younger consumers follow several celebrities on social media. However, according to previous research, it is important for the company to choose the right celebrity to promote the brand (Kitchen and Proctor 2019). The choice of celebrity can have positive or negative effects on the rebranding depending on whether it is a celebrity who belongs to a reference group to which the consumers have a wishful identification to or not (Solomon, Bamossy & Askegaard 2002). In the interviews, it was noted that young consumers are sensitive to the wrong type of people wearing certain brands. An example of this was given by two respondents in the interviews. They explain that there are two YouTubers who they do not like and when they promote Gucci the respondents do not want to wear this brand. *"I don't want to wear Gucci products because I have bad associations to that brand"* (Participant B). This is in consensus with previous research. According to Olteanu's research (2020) Burberry had a problem in 2003 with the wrong type of consumers who wore their monogram products. Football hooligans in England wore clothes with the Burberry chequered pattern (either originals or copies). This led to a bad reputation for the brand (ibid). They lost many customers due to this as no one wanted to be associated with football hooligans. Burberry had to do something so they rebranded themselves to get out of the crisis (Olteanu 2020). Reference groups can both have a positive and a negative effect on the brand's reputation. It is important that the

company knows what is being said about them, and as in the case of Burberry, do something about it if the “wrong” target group wears the brands clothes. It is also important for the company to know its new desired target group and to which celebrities the target group has a wishful identification when using a celebrity endorser to make the marketing of the rebranding impactful (Solomon, Bamossy & Askegaard 2002).

Many of the participants knew of Balmain's collaboration with the Kardashian family and with Cara Delevingne because they have promoted the brand several times (Balmain 2020). Both Louis Vuitton and Gucci have invested in collaborations with influencers, which is completely correct because today they are seen as celebrities among younger consumers. According to the respondents, they follow more fashion bloggers and influencers than artists, actors and sports stars on social media. *“I mostly follow influencers. I see them as celebrities.”* (Participant H).

6.2.3 Collaborations with other companies

Collaboration between a luxury company and another company could be an exciting marketing technique. With a collaboration the company is able to reach a new customer segment (Ahn et al. 2010). This is something that all the four case companies have done when rebranding towards the younger consumers. Burberry has done two collaborations lately, one with the company “TheRealReal” about sustainability (Instagram 2019 A) and another a limited-edition collection together with Vivienne Westwood (Burberry n.d C). None of the participants knew about these two collaborations. On the other hand, the majority of the interviewees knew about Louis Vuitton's collaboration with the trendy New York-based cult skatewear brand Supreme. However, there were more male than female respondents who were interested in this collaboration.

I think Supreme is more known among boys than girls. Therefore I think they wanted to focus more on men's fashion with that collaboration. Otherwise, they might not have chosen Supreme but a brand that is more suitable for both girls and boys. Everyone knows what Supreme is, but there are more boys who wear it than girls. -
Participant H.

It is popular in the fashion industry today with collaboration between a luxury and a non-luxury brand (Ahn, et al. 2010; Yu, et al. 2020; Mrad, et al. 2019; Alexander & Contreras 2016).). Many of the participants knew about Virgil Abloh's collaboration with IKEA, which took place last year, and all of them knew about Balmain's collaboration with H&M.

I think the Balmain X H&M collaboration boosted their hype. It became more affordable. People became more crazy about the brand. Everyone wanted Balmain that period. At least among my friends. Those who wanted Balmain who could not normally afford it got their chance to get products from the brand via H&M. It became very trendy when people got the chance to wear it. Many younger people got the opportunity. -Participant H.

According to Balmain their main purpose with this collaboration was to give the consumers the opportunity to buy their first Balmain products to a lower price, like a steppingstone to the Balmain family (Balmain 2015). That is the same with Virgil Abloh's collaboration with IKEA. He explains in a press release with IKEA that they wanted to make a high-end furniture design which is practical and also affordable to more people (IKEA n.d). The collaboration between a luxury and non-luxury brand seems to be an efficient concept, where the non-luxury brand normally offers affordable products to many people and is a famous company. However, Gucci made a collaboration with Disney that not so many participants were interested in. Regarding this collaboration most of the respondents thought it did not suit their style. *“It feels like they launched this collaboration for the Asian market, not for the Swedish market. In Asia they like the Disney figures more than us. In Sweden, you do not want to stand out so much”* (Participant G).

Even though research shows that collaborations are a successful marketing strategy in rebranding, it is important to find the right find the right collaboration partner suited for the desired target group the desired target group (Mrad et al. 2019). It is important to do a thorough investigation of the new target group. What do they like, what captures their interest and what makes them buy a product? This is crucial for a successful outcome.

6.2.4 Movies and TV-series

Many of the respondents have noticed that luxury brands products are being shown in movies and series. It does not appear on the companies' websites regarding their rebranding that they communicate in these channels. According to previous research, product placement is a marketing method that has been around for many years (Balasubramanian, et al. 2014). *“Yes of course. Fashion trends can be created in movies and you can be affected of what you see in them. If you see a product in a store and you think it looks nice, maybe it is because you have seen it in a movie before. We are usually more affected than we think.”* (Participant M). The respondents mentioned the James Bond movies, the series Gossip Girl and the TV reality star Molly May Hue as influential. This shows that product placement in movies and TV series is an effective way in rebranding to reach younger consumers. But of course you have to choose the right movie and TV series that attracts this target group.

6.2.5 Gamification

Gamification is a quite new marketing channel for the luxury fashion industry (Gawrysiak, et al. 2020). The gaming industry has grown exceedingly over the past years (Hutchins 2008). Therefore, gamification is an interesting communication channel when it comes to rebranding. It is possible to integrate the products with the e-games, mobile games, console-based video games and advergames (Eagle & Dahl 2015). Two companies that have worked with this are Burberry and Louis Vuitton. Burberry has created mobile games (Burberry-plc 2020), while Louis Vuitton has entered the e-sports world, by sponsoring competitions and creating their own character in "League of Legends" (Louis Vuitton Magazine 2020 B). No one of the respondents knew about Burberry's mobile games and very few knew about Louis Vuitton's collaboration with "League of Legends", but many thought it sounded fun. A reason for this can be that the respondents in the interviews is not the target group that play e-sport and mobile games. A few of the participants answered that they sometimes play e-sport games, but the game LOL with which Louis Vuitton collaborates is not a game they play often. However, many of the respondents thought it could be more efficient with marketing in e-sport instead of mobile games, because e-sport is such a big community. *“I think e-sport is much better than mobile games, they have a much bigger audience and fan base.”* (Participant C).

Burberry's mobile games are on such a small scale that I think the consumers will forget about it. I don't think it gives any giant effect. But I can imagine that they reach

younger ages. When it comes to gaming, there are lots of events and game fairs. By sponsoring an event like Louis Vuitton does, I think it's more efficient. Many other brands from other industries have done this, such as Mercedes and BMW. They have sponsored similar events to get their message out to young people....It costs money, but you do not come close to the same publicity with mobile games as in the e-sports world because e-sport is so big. -Participant M.

According to the respondents, e-sport can be more effective than mobile games. But since none of the respondents knew about the companies' collaborations with the gaming world, it may indicate that this is a wrong marketing channel to reach the target group in this research.

6.2.6 Editorial placements

Editorial placements have existed for a long time. According to previous research it is still an efficient way to promote the brand on billboards and in the fashion press (Lascu, et al. 2016). Fashion magazines such as Vogue, Elle and Harper's Bazaar, are the opinion leaders within the fashion industry (Barnes 2013). But is this still true nowadays? All the four case companies work with the fashion press. They sponsor the magazines to let their clothes be on the magazines covers and in the fashion reportage (Elle 2020; Instagram 2020 G; Instagram 2020 H; Instagram 2020 I). The respondents disagree with each other about whether fashion magazines are still relevant or not when it comes to the luxury fashion brands marketing. A few of the participants read the fashion magazines. *"Sometimes I buy fashion magazines and then I see them in fashion reports or as trend inspirational pictures."* (Participant A).

"Before, it was in magazines, such as Elle. But now it is more on social media." (Participant G). According to this it can still be good for them to work with this channel but not put as much emphasis on it as they did before.

6.2.7 Traditional stores

In previous research the traditional flagship stores are considered important for the luxury fashion brands. With these stores they are able to strengthen the customer-brand relationship (Fionda & Moore 2009) and promote their products in a fun and entertaining way (Theng et al. 2013). None of the case studies that present their traditional stores as a part of their rebranding strategy. It is important for the companies to still maintain these stores and not to close them down. With the stores they are able to emotionally bind and attract the customers with delightful experiences through the store atmosphere and the personal services

(Kauppinen-Räsänen et al. 2020). Many respondents discussed the importance of the luxury brands' own traditional stores. The store creates a certain feeling for the fashion brand that is hard to achieve with their webshop. *“The stores are important. It is a dream to buy something from them. They make you feel important and successful. It's an experience. Good service and nice design. Yes, I've always wanted to leave a Louis Vuitton store with a bag from them.”* (Participant F). Several respondents describe the experience of being able to leave the luxury store with a well-known and distinctive bag. Inside the bag there is a beautifully wrapped product specific for the brand. They explained the special feeling of showing to the people outside the store that they can afford with products from this brand. They described it as a proof of success. This is congruent with the previous research that consumers often wear luxury fashion products to indicate status and to achieve a confidence boost (McCracken, 1988). Another theme that was identified from the interviews were that the traditional luxury stores have become a destination for the consumers. The majority of the respondents explained that when they travel to bigger cities in other countries they always visit these luxury brands traditional flagship stores. According to them it has become a trend for people in their age.

7 Conclusion

This chapter concludes the purpose of the study and outlines the managerial implications and further research.

Luxury fashion brands have a long history and a strong heritage but like every other company they need to renew themselves and reach a new younger target group. The way to do this is by rebranding. According to previously research there is a confusion regarding which rebranding methods are most efficient towards the younger consumers. The purpose with this research is to find out which rebranding methods and marketing channels are efficient towards the younger consumers. How do the companies work with rebranding and how do the younger consumers experience this? Based on previous research, on collected data from four case companies' rebranding and on interviews with younger consumers a conclusion can be made.

Daly and Moloney (2004) present three categories of rebranding. One of the categories are "The Intermediate Change". In this research it is observed that this could be an effective way to implement in a luxury fashion companies rebranding. This rebranding technique provides them with a new fresh image by focusing on the marketing tactics like communication and customer service techniques (Daly and Moloney's 2004). It is important to maintain the company's core values when rebranding and to develop the brand instead of creating a new one (Herstein et al. 2008; Merrilees & Miller 2008; Muzellec & Lambkin 2008). This is congruent with what the participants in the interviews considered and what previous research says.

It is crucial when rebranding a luxury fashion company to create a new fresh style in the design. The most important thing is to have a sense of what the desired target group appreciates. It is beneficial to put the brand in a leading position of the trends that the intended target group follows (Godart & Galunic 2019; Kim & Ko 2010). To give the assortment a new fresh look the company could hire a new creative director. According to this research it is a big advantage if this person is already well-known in the fashion industry. With a famous creative director the fashion brand automatically gets new customers because they already love what the new creative director has done in his/her previous work (Bergkvist & Zhou 2016). However, it is important to know that there could also be a risk with hiring a

famous person because the company's image and reputation can be affected negatively if the new creative director behaves badly. All in consideration the advantages still outweigh the disadvantages of hiring a well-known creative director compared to an unknown one.

As mentioned above it is important to develop a new fresh design when rebranding. It is considered important by the younger generation regarding a trendy style now are that the collections should be Instagram friendly. The younger consumers like when the style is playful, they do not want others to regard them as too serious about wearing luxury products. The brands must, however, keep their most well-known iconic products and not change the entire assortment as these products are significant for the brand reputation. It is important to build a bridge from the old brand to the new rebranded one (Merrilees & Miller 2008).

An effective way in rebranding is to launch new ready-to-wear collections and accessories like bags, shoes, sunglasses, perfumes and cosmetics. These should be branded products that are more affordable so that new younger consumers will have the opportunity to buy them. However, the price should not be set too low on these extended products as there is a risk that the brand can lose its luxury status. According to scientific research it is important that the luxury brands send out a prestige image with high exclusivity, excellent quality and premium prices (Jackson, 2004; Fionda & Moore, 2009; Cooper et al. 2015). According to the participants the first products they would like to buy from luxury fashion brands are the above mentioned accessories and jackets from the extended collections. These are entry-level products for the brand.

When it comes to logo or monogram it is important for the younger consumers that these are visible on the product, but not in a too flashy way. The rebranding strategy "redesign" created by Muzellec, et al. (2003), which involves changing the logo or monogram, is not recommended according to the results in this research. It can be risky to change a well-known one because the luxury fashion brands have a strong heritage and iconic status that is often connected to these factors. This is congruent with previously scientific research and can lead to the fact that the company may lose its recognition factor and core values (Roy & Sarkar 2015; Torenkova and Biedenbach 2018). In most cases it is better to stay true with their old one. However, if it for some reason needs to be changed, it is important to create a unique one that is not too similar to anyone else's. They should not use the same font as the other ones, like Burberry and Balmain recently did.

The most efficient and appreciated marketing channels for the luxury fashion company's rebranding according to this research are through social media. Instagram is the number one channel in popularity among younger consumers followed by YouTube and TikTok. However, TikTok is currently very uncertain as several governments, especially the US government consider it a security risk to the society (Dr Bunker 2020). Companies need to think through their decision whether to use the app TikTok or to invest in other social media channels such as Instagram and YouTube. The younger consumers feel that they get more inspiration from what influencers post than what the companies themselves publish. It is therefore important for the luxury fashion brands to work actively with social media and collaborate with influencers to make their products more visible for the younger target groups. One way can be to lend clothes to influencers so they can promote them online. It is more efficient for the luxury fashion brands to publish their products with an inspiring outfit on an influencer or a celebrity in a natural way instead of just showing the product in a picture. Pictures are better than Hauls on Instagram, and unboxing at YouTube can be good. According to scientific research celebrity endorsement is recommended in fashion marketing. Celebrities have a big fan base who look up to them and want to have the products they are promoting (De Veirman et al. 2017; Bergkvist & Zhou 2016). The younger consumers like millennials and generation Z follow more fashion bloggers and influencers than artists, actors and sports stars on social media. They see them as celebrities.

A luxury fashion company can also start a collaboration with a non-luxury brand to make the rebranding successful. With this collaboration they can reach their desired target group (Ahn et al. 2010). In this research it is considered efficient. However, this can only work if the luxury fashion brand finds the right company to work with. It needs to be a collaboration that the new target group appreciates. The company needs to do a thorough investigation of the new target group. What captures their interest, what do they like, and what makes them buy a product? This is crucial for a successful outcome.

Previous research shows that product placement in movies and TV-series is an effective way in the marketing of luxury brands (Balasubramanian et al. 2014). Based on this research it is an efficient rebranding method to reach younger consumers. The important thing is that they need to choose the right movie and TV series that attracts the brands desired target group. A new and a more common marketing channel is gamification (Gawrysiak et al. 2020; Eagle &

Dahl 2015; Hutchins 2008). Luxury fashion companies like Louis Vuitton and Burberry sponsor e-sport games and creates their own mobile games to reach a new younger generation (Louis Vuitton Magazine 2020 B; Burberry-plc 2020). The luxury fashion brands marketing in the gaming world have not reached the participants of this research. When the participants heard about this, they thought it to be a fun way of marketing. The majority of the interviewees considered e-sport more effective than mobile games, since e-sport is much bigger. None of the respondents knew about the companies' collaborations with the gaming world. It indicates that this is not as efficient as the other rebranding methods towards the target group.

Editorial placements like fashion magazines and billboards are a useful marketing channel for the company's rebranding. These types of marketing have existed for a long time and many scholars recommends it (Lascu, et al. 2016; Barnes 2013). All the four case companies are using editorial placements in their communication. However, the respondents disagree with each other when it comes to the fashion magazines relevance to the luxury fashion brands marketing. A few of the participants read the fashion magazines. In this research it is concluded that it is still a good communication channel for the luxury brands but they shall not put as much emphasis on it as they did before.

There is an ongoing discussion among the researchers about the relevance of physical retailstores in the future. Many consider the e-commerce to outrival them (Aliyev et al. 2019). In this research a majority of the interviewees thought that the luxury fashion brands retail stores are important. These stores create a certain feeling for the customers in relation to the fashion brand that is difficult to achieve with just a webshop. With their stores they are able to create delightful experiences through the atmosphere and the personal service that attract and emotionally bind the customers (Kauppinen-Räsänen, et al. 2020). Therefore it is important to maintain these stores and use them in the rebranding process.

7.1 Managerial implications

This research supports the luxury fashion brands to understand how they could work with their rebranding and how to communicate it in the most efficient way to reach the future consumers for the luxury fashion market: the Millennials and the Generation Z. This contribution can help them to sustain a competitive advantage in their ways of building long-

term customer relationships. It could facilitate for luxury fashion brands to choose the most suitable rebranding methods and marketing channels for them. When it comes to rebranding, it is most effective to create a new style with a new creative director. It is even better if the creative director is well-known since earlier. If it is possible, the luxury fashion brand should keep their old, famous, iconic logo and monogram. If it somehow must be changed, they need to create a new unique logo and avoiding an exciting font. An effective way for the company's rebranding to reach the Millennials and the Generation Z is to create collections with entry-level products such as accessories and ready-to-wear collections.

When rebranding the efficient marketing channels for luxury fashion companies are via: social media, celebrity endorsement, collaboration, movies and TV series, editorial placements and traditional flagship stores. The best way is to combine the channels. If a luxury fashion brand collaborates with a non-luxury fashion brand, it is smart to engage a celebrity in the marketing campaign promoting it on social media, for example via Instagram ads. In this research, it turned out that Instagram is the most efficient marketing channel. When it comes to influencing and inspiring the Millennials and the Generation Z the consumers in this research answered that through this channel, they became more inspired by seeing the products via other influencers' pictures than from the company's own posts. They experience it more genuine. Youtube is also popular and a recommended channel to use.

If the luxury brands use these different rebranding methods and marketing channels, they will most likely succeed in reaching their new desired younger target groups, the Millennials and the Generation Z.

7.2 Further research

With this thesis, it has been investigated which marketing channels are most efficient in rebranding for luxury fashion brands towards the younger consumers. The thesis is based on the European market. As future research, one can investigate another market, for example the Asian one. Which channels work for their young consumers? It appeared in the interviews that there may be some differences between these markets and consumers on separate continents may appreciate different things. You can also focus on only boys or only girls. Is there any difference in their taste and in that case which marketing channels are most

efficient according to them? In this essay, these aspects have not been taken into account. If new marketing channels emerge that are not known today, you can do a new survey and compare them with today's channels.

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Appendix

Interview questions:

Age?

Do you like fashion?

What style would you say you have?

What is trendy today?

Is it something you like and follow?

Luxury brands perception

What do you think of when you hear the word luxury brands? In the fashion industry?

What is the first brand you will think of when you hear luxury brands in the fashion industry?

Do you have a favourite brand in the luxury segment in the fashion industry?

Communication / Affiliation

Which brands are most talked about right now? Why?

Which brands are most popular / are your friends, colleagues, people around you talking about? Why is that brand so popular?

Is it something you like? Do you want products from that brand?

Have you ever shopped for a luxury brand? What? Why? Which brand?

Do you want to buy from this brand again?

Marketing

Do you remember the last time you were exposed / saw a luxury brand / product from a luxury brand? In what context? Was there anything you liked? Were you inspired and eager to look at more products from that brand?

What brands in the luxury fashion industry have you seen in the past? / Recent years? Where did you see it?

Which channels do these brands usually market themselves? where do you see them? Where is it most common to be exposed to these brands?

Which luxury brand or brands are most popular among young people today?

Which luxury brand is most popular among celebrities you like / know?

Which luxury brand are you most exposed to on social media?

Which luxury brands use influencers on social media today?

Do you follow any luxury brand on social media?

-Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube

Balmain, Burberry, Gucci, Louis Vuitton

Do you know any of the brands Balmain, Burberry, Gucci, Louis Vuitton?

What do you think of them? Is anything better than the others? Why?

Which target group do you think they are targeting?

Brand perceptions, regard each brand

What do you think of when you hear Balmain?

What style / design would you say they have?

What do you think of their products?

Do you know their creative director?

Can you describe their logo?

Can you describe their monogram?

Do you follow them on social media? Which channels?

Are there any influencers you know / follow who usually promote the brand?

Can you name some celebrities who usually wear clothes from the brand?

Do you know of any collaborations that the brand has made with other companies etc?

- H&M
- Victoria Secret
- Puma

What do you think of when you hear Burberry?

What style / design would you say they have?

What do you think of their products?

Do you know their chief designer?

Can you describe their logo?

Can you describe their monogram?

Do you follow them on social media?

- Instagram
- TikTok
- YouTube

Are there any influencers you know / follow who usually promote the brand?

Can you name some celebrities who usually wear clothes from the brand?

Have you tried Burberry's mobile game? Did you know it existed?

Do you know of any collaborations that the brand has made with other companies etc?

What do you think of when you hear Gucci?

What style / design would you say they have?

What do you think of their products?

Do you know their creative director?

Can you describe their logo?

Can you describe their monogram?

Do you follow them on social media? Which channels?

Are there any influencers you know / follow who usually promote the brand?

Can you name some celebrities who usually wear clothes from the brand?

Do you know of any collaborations that the brand has made with other companies etc?

What do you think of when you hear Louis Vuitton?

What style / design would you say they have?

What do you think of their products?

Do you know their chief designer?

Can you describe their logo?

Can you describe their monogram?

Do you follow them on social media? Which channels?

LV recently launched LVTV on YouTube, have you heard about that, do you follow them there?

Are there any influencers you know / follow who usually promote the brand?

Can you name some celebrities who usually wear clothes from the brand?

Have you heard about that Louis Vuitton have entered the gaming world, They collaborate with the e-sport game “LOL”, you can buy their products for the characters in the game, is that something you have heard about?

Do you know of any collaborations that the brand has made with other companies etc?

-Supreme

Rebranding / perception

Do you think any of the brands have changed in the last years? Have they changed in any way?

Did the brands feel more interesting then or now?

How?



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