

# Brand (new) knowledge:

exploring children's brand knowledge and brand relationships,  
focusing on brands that are not in typical children categories

*“The A is from Audi, Alfa Romeo. Uhm yes, I will go from A, B, C. B is Bugatti, C is Citroen, D is Dacia, from the E there is not one. F is Ferrari and Ford, G is uhm there also is not one. H is Honda, and Hyundai is one. J is Jaguar. K is Kia uhm L is uhm Lexus and Lamborghini, M is Mazda uhm and Maserati. N is uhm, there is not one. O is Opel, P is uhm P... Q there also is not one, R is uhm Renault uhm P, did I already discuss P?”*

Student: Femke Derksen

Student number: s1014553

Supervisor: dr. Csilla Horváth

Second examiner: dr. Vera Blazevic

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**Radboud University**



## **Abstract**

Children's brand knowledge and brand relationships are not much studied yet. Only some studies show indications about children's development of brand awareness, brand associations, brand affections and self-brand connections. However, none of these studies focused on brands that are not in typical children categories. This research fills in this gap in the literature, by exploring the brand knowledge and brand relationships of children, focusing on brands that are not in typical children categories. This research further focuses on children in the age category of seven to eleven years old.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews with children were conducted. These interviews focused on brands that are not in typical children categories, but which they are regularly exposed to. Examples are household brands, retail store brands, car brands and electronic brands. Before the interviews with the children, the parents of the children were interviewed, in order to investigate these brands. Thereafter, relying on semi-structured in-depth interviews, the children were interviewed. The questions of the interview were based on the following topics: brand awareness, brand associations, brand affections and self-brand connections.

The results of this research indicate that children develop brand knowledge about brands, that are not in typical children categories, to a quite large extent. They seem highly aware of brands that are not in typical children categories. Most children seem to be able to recall a brand from any brand category that is not a typical children category. Children who are not able to recall a brand from particular brand categories, are most of the times able to recognize a brand from these categories. The extent to which children, in this age category, develop brand relationships seems quite limited. The brand relationships of these children seem mainly based on some aspects of brand affection; most children do not seem to develop self-brand connections with these brands. However, there is an indication that children start to develop self-brand connections with brands in particular categories.

In the discussion, the results of this research are discussed more in-depth, with the existing literature in mind. The discussion indicated various theoretical contributions and interesting suggestions for further research. The results of this research are relevant for academics in the field of marketing, brand management and psychology. Furthermore, this research contributes to managerial practice, through offering specific managerial recommendations. However, especially since this research is focused on children, it is important to highlight that the results of this research should not be misused. The results should be considered and used in an ethical way.

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## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, brands are everywhere. It has become almost impossible to spend a day without being exposed to numerous of brands. Consumers are exposed to up to 10,000 brand messages every day (American Marketing Association, 2017). A brand can be defined as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (Kotler, 1991, p. 442). Not only adults, also children are bombarded by brand messages every day. It is indicated that the younger children become aware of brands, the stronger their brand associations will be when they grow older and make their own choices as a consumer (Ross & Harradine, 2004).

Although there is an extensive amount of literature about consumers’ approaches and mindsets of brands, it largely focuses on adults (Dotson & Hyatt, 2005; Valkenburg & Buijzen, 2005). Children’s brand awareness and brand associations are not much studied. Among the few articles that do focus on children’s brand knowledge, it is shown that children are able to recognize brands and form brand associations. Children as young as three years old show a certain level of brand awareness (Aktaş, Taş, & Oğul, 2016; McAlister & Cornwell, 2010). Later on, while age increases, brand awareness also increases (Aktaş et al., 2016). In middle childhood children start to comprehend brands conceptually and begin to form more abstract brand associations around user stereotypes, personality traits and reference groups (Achenreiner and John, 2003). Children consider the morality of the actions of brands and based on that they define brands as either “good” or “bad” (Lopez & Rodriguez, 2018). In addition, children start to develop self-brand connections in middle childhood (Chaplin & John, 2005). There is even an indication that children develop relationships with brands (Ji, 2002).

Overall, these findings indicate that brands play a role in the life of children, that children are aware of brands and that children have a set of associations about brands. Exploring the richness and types of children’s brand associations and possible brand relationships will be interesting, because this is not much studied yet, despite the fact that children will be future key brand users. In addition, children already represent three markets (McNeal, 1992). Children represent a primary market, spending their own pocket money or income. Children represent an influencer market, by giving their parents directions about desired purchases. Ultimately, children represent a future market for all products and services.

Specifically, this research will focus on children’s brand knowledge and relationships, regarding brands that are not in typical children categories, but which they are regularly exposed

to. Examples of these brands are household brands, retail store brands, car brands and electronic brands. Children are exposed to a lot of these brands and children's first experiences might function as final influences on their brand decisions when they are an adult (Guest, 1942). However, there is no single study that explored children's brand knowledge and brand relationships, focusing on these types of brands. The few articles about children's brand knowledge and brand relationships, discuss all types of brands, brands which are and which are not in typical children categories, without making a difference between them (Achenreiner & John, 2003; Aktaş et al., 2016; Chaplin & John, 2005; Ji, 2002; Lopez & Rodriguez, 2018; McAlister & Cornwell, 2010).

The aim of this research is to fill in the gap in the current literature, by exploring the brand knowledge and brand relationships of children, focusing on brands that are not in typical children categories. Hence, the following research question is formulated:

*“To what extent do children develop brand knowledge about brands, that are not in typical children categories, and what type of relationships, if any, do they develop with these brands?”*

By ‘type of relationships’ the extent to which children develop these relationships and where these relationships are based on (e.g. brand affections, self-brand connections) is meant. This research will further focus on children in the age category of seven to eleven years old. Concerning their cognitive development, children in this age category are in the *concrete operational stage* (Piaget, 1985). Children in the concrete operational stage are not only able to consider observable objects, they start to think about numerous dimensions of a stimulus simultaneously and begin to relate these dimensions in a more conceptual way.

Regarding their stage of consumer socialization, children in this age category are in the *analytical stage* (John, 1999). This stage contains essential progresses in consumer knowledge. Children's thoughts become more symbolic instead of perceptual (Piaget, 1985) and their information processing abilities become more advanced (Roedder, 1981). These developments together result in a higher level of understanding of the marketplace and more complete and complicated thoughts about advertising and brands.

This exploratory research contributes to theory by filling in the gap in the existing literature about children's brand knowledge (brand awareness and brand associations) and brand relationships (brand affections and self-brand connections). While exploring children's brand knowledge and relationships, this research focuses, unlike other studies, on brands that are not in typical children categories. The results of this research will indicate the extent to

which children develop knowledge about these specific types of brands. In addition, the results will give indications about children's development of relationships with these brands and where these relationships are based on. The results are relevant for academics in the field of marketing, brand management and psychology. Based on the results, areas for further research are discovered. Specific theoretical implications and suggestions for further research will arise based on the results. Therefore, these are written down afterwards, in later sections (Section 7 and 9).

Furthermore, this research contributes to managerial practice. As stated before, children represent a substantial segment and will be future key brand users. Therefore, it is essential for brand managers to understand how children perceive their brands. It is interesting for managers, of brands that are not in typical children categories, to understand to which extent children already develop brand knowledge about their brands. In addition, it is interesting for these managers to realize what type of relationships children already form with their brands. Based on the results some specific managerial recommendations will be mentioned in a later section (Section 7). However, especially since this research focuses on children, it is important to highlight that the results of this research should not be misused. Managers should use and consider the implications in an ethical way.

The following section contains the literature review, which forms a theoretical basis to explore children's brand knowledge and brand relationships. Thereafter, in section three, the research methodology is described. In section four, the results of this research are presented. In section five, a conclusion is formulated. In section six, the results of this research are discussed more in-depth, with the existing literature in mind. Section seven contains the theoretical and managerial implications of this research. Section eight discusses the limitations of this research. Lastly, section nine provides suggestions and propositions for further research.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Cognitive development

Before exploring children's brand knowledge and brand relationships, it is essential to create an understanding of children's cognitive development. Children have a different understanding of the things around them than adults and children's cognitive abilities develop over time. The most well-known theory about the development of cognitive abilities, is Piaget's theory of cognitive development (Piaget, 1985).

This theory about cognitive development describes four stages of cognitive development. The first stage is the *sensorimotor stage* (birth to two years). The second stage is the *preoperational stage* (two to seven years), children in this stage develop symbolic thought. However, they are only able to consider observable objects and tend to focus on a single dimension. The third stage is the *concrete operational stage* (seven to eleven years), children in the concrete operational stage are not only able to consider observable items, they start to think about numerous dimensions of a stimulus simultaneously and begin to relate these dimensions in a more conceptual way. In addition, children in this stage are beginning to use mental processes that assist them in ordering, combining, separating and transforming activities and objects. The last and fourth stage is the *formal operational stage* (eleven through adulthood), children in this stage begin to think more like adults and are capable to think in a more complex way about concrete objects. This research will focus on children within the age category of seven to eleven years old, thus this research focuses on children in the concrete operational stage.

Depending on children's age and their level of information processing skills, children could be assigned to three segments. Namely, strategic processors, cued processors, or limited processors (Roedder, 1981). Cued processors, children within the age category of seven to eleven years old, are able to use strategies for storing and retrieving information. Examples of these strategies are rehearsal, verbal labeling and the use of retrieval cues. However, in contrast with strategic processors, which are children of twelve years and older, cued processors still need to be helped with directions or cues.

Based on the two theories above and other cognitive and social development theories, a classification of three stages of consumer socialization has been made (John, 1999). The first stage is the *perceptual stage* (three to seven years), children in this stage show some understanding of brands and retail stores. However, this understanding is basic and limited. The second stage is the *analytical stage* (seven to eleven years), thus the age category where this

research will focus on. In this stage, a lot of social and cognitive changes take place. This stage contains essential progresses in consumer knowledge. Children's thoughts become more symbolic instead of perceptual (Piaget, 1985) and their information processing abilities become more advanced (Roedder, 1981). These developments together result in a higher level of understanding of the marketplace and more complete and complicated thoughts about advertising and brands. Children in this stage analyze and distinguish brands based on more than one dimension or attribute (John, 1999). In addition, children in this stage adjust their negotiations about the products they want, based on their competence to think from the viewpoints of others. The third stage is the *reflective stage* (eleven to sixteen years), in this stage children's knowledge about brands becomes even more refined and children use a more thoughtful way of thinking and reasoning.

## **2.2 Brand knowledge**

It is essential to understand the structure of brand knowledge, because brand knowledge determines where consumers think about when they are exposed to a certain brand (Keller, 1993). One conceptualization of knowledge structure is the associative network memory model (Raaijmakers and Shiffrin, 1981). This model visualizes knowledge as a set of nodes and links. Nodes represent stored information. Nodes are connected by links which differ in strength. Ultimately, a spreading activation process from node to node regulates the degree of memory retrieval. Consistent with the associative network memory model, brand knowledge is conceptualized as "consisting of a brand node in memory to which a variety of associations are linked" (Keller, 1993, p.3). The two dimensions distinguishing brand knowledge are brand awareness and the brands associations in consumer memory. Little prior research has been conducted on children's development of brand knowledge.

### **2.2.1 Brand awareness of children**

Brand awareness can be described in terms of brand recall and brand recognition. Brand recall refers to the ability of consumers to think about a brand when a certain product category is mentioned. Brand recognition is determined by the ability of consumers to confirm prior exposure to a given brand (Keller, 1993).

Children as young as 3 years old show a certain level of brand awareness (Aktaş, Taş, & Oğul, 2016; McAlister & Cornwell, 2010). Three-year-old children are able to tell both the brand name and the product after seeing a brand's logo, packaging and character. Though children at this age category are aware of brands, age seems an important predictor of brand

awareness regarding the number of brands that children are aware of. While age increases, brand awareness also increases (Aktaş et al., 2016). Next to age, children's exposure to television is positively related to brand awareness (Valkenburg & Buijzen, 2005).

Children in the age category of three till five years old, are able to recognize brands in typical children categories (McAlister & Cornwell, 2010). Possible explanations might be the features of brands that are aimed at children (e.g. striking colors and fonts), the experience that children have with these brands, or the fact that these brands are marketed more directly to children (McAlister & Cornwell, 2010).

The present research focuses on the brand knowledge of children about brands that are not in typical children categories. According to McAlister and Cornwell, children in the age category of three till five years old are less likely to recognize brands that are targeted to adults. However, this research focuses on children in the age category of seven to eleven years old and an increase in recognition of brands, that are not typical children brands, appears when children's age increases (John, 1999).

### ***2.2.2 Brand associations of children***

Brand associations are informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and describe the meaning of brands for consumers (Keller, 1993). There are three types of brand associations in consumer memory, which are attributes, benefits and attitudes (Keller, 1993).

Attributes can be defined as “descriptive features that characterize a product or service – what a consumer thinks the product or service is or has and what is involved with its purchase or consumption” (Keller, 1993, p.4). Brand attributes can be product-related or non-product-related. Children within the age category of 4 till 7 years of age use perceptual cues (e.g. shape, package or color) to describe brands (John & Sujana, 1990). Older children, within the age category of 8 till 10 years old use non-observable conceptual cues (e.g. taste) as a basis for classifying products (John & Sujana, 1990). This indicates that children who are part of this research, within the age category of 7 to 11 years of age, will probably use non-observable conceptual cues to describe products. Children in the age category of 7 to 11 years old are in middle childhood. In middle childhood children start to comprehend brands conceptually and begin to form more abstract brand associations around user stereotypes, personality traits and reference groups (Achenreiner & John, 2003). Accordingly, the use of abstract brand associations can be expected in this research.

Benefits can be described as “the personal value consumers attach to the product or service attributes – that is, what consumers think the product or service can do for them” (Keller,

1993, p.4). Benefits are separated in three groups, functional benefits, experiential benefits and symbolic benefits (Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis, 1986). Functional benefits refer to intrinsic benefits, which are related to basic motivations, for example psychological and safety needs (Keller, 1993). Experiential benefits refer to the feeling of using a product or service, while symbolic benefits refer to the desire to be socially approved, to personally express yourself and outer directed self-esteem (Keller, 1993). The last benefit category, symbolic benefits, is related to brand symbolism. Brand symbolism understanding can be defined as “an understanding of the meaning attributed to a brand name. It includes an appreciation of the ways in which a brand name symbolizes user qualities (e.g., popularity, user image) as well as information about the products or services encompassed by the brand (e.g., perceptions of brand use)” (McAlister & Cornwell, 2010, p.204). Gender plays a role in children’s discussions about branded products, children make a distinction between ‘girls’ and ‘boys’ brands (Nairn, Griffin & Wicks, 2008).

Attitudes can be defined as “consumers’ overall evaluations of a brand” (Wilkie, 1987). Children consider the morality of the actions of brands and based on that they define brands as either “good” or “bad” (Lopez & Rodriguez, 2018). The study of Lopez and Rodriguez focused on children in the age category of 8 till 12 years old. Therefore, there is a probability that children in this research will also define brands as either “good” or “bad”.

## **2.3 Brand relationships**

Interacting with brands can result in solid, close and enduring relationships with brands (Blackston, 1992). Several researchers even propose that individuals develop relationships with brands similarly to developing relationships with the people around them (Aggarwal, 2004; Fournier, 1998). Little prior research has been conducted on children’s development of brand knowledge.

### ***2.3.1 Children’s development of brand affections***

Children’s brand stories indicate that children, as young as seven years old, develop relationships with brands (Ji, 2002). Relationships between brands and children can be socially influenced, for example by children’s family, friends and (social) media. Children seem to like brands which their parents like and use (Ji, 2002).

It appears that parents influence child-brand relationships by learning their children about the importance of particular brands. They also guide the possibility of their children to use or consume certain brands (Ji, 2008). Next to that, family members influence one another

via the conversations they have about brands (e.g. discussing advertisements). Results of another study by Lopez & Rodriguez (2018) indicate that children feel like they have broken up relationships with several brands.

### ***2.3.2 Children's development of self-brand connections***

Consumers use associations about brands, for example reference groups, personality traits, user characteristics or personal experiences, to integrate them into their self-concepts. In this way, connections between consumers' self-concepts and brands are formed. These connections are so-called self-brand connections (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). The development of self-brand connections starts in middle childhood and the total amount of self-brand connections that consumers have increases while age increases (Chaplin & John, 2005). In addition, younger children connect with brands based on what they know about a brand or based on the fact that they own a certain brand. When children become older, they start to connect with brands on the basis of a brand's personality, user stereotype, or reference groups.

## **2.4 The gap in the literature**

This section reviewed the literature about children's cognitive development, brand knowledge and brand relationships. It appeared that little prior research has been conducted on both the children's development of brand knowledge and children's development of brand relationships. Only a few articles show indications about children's development of brand awareness, brand associations, brand affections and self-brand connections. It is remarkable that no single study has focused on brands that are not in typical children categories. The aim of this research is to fill in this gap in the existing literature. Therefore, the following research question is formulated:

*“To what extent do children develop brand knowledge about brands, that are not in typical children categories, and what type of relationships, if any, do they develop with these brands?”*

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Qualitative research**

The aim of this research is to explore the brand knowledge (brand awareness and associations) and brand relationships (brand-self connections and the brand affections) of children. The exploratory approach of this research best fits with a qualitative research method, because a qualitative research method does not depend on a statistical basis of assumed relationships (Vennix, 2016).

Specifically, this research relies on in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are useful when a researcher wants to obtain detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviors and/or wants to explore new issues in depth (Boyce & Neale, 2006), both are the case. In addition, in-depth interviews are particularly suitable for this research, since children within the age category of seven to eleven years might need to be helped with directions or cues to retrieve information. Besides, children in this age category cannot write or read well yet, so a survey is no option. The in-depth interviews of this research are semi-structured, because it is important that children have the freedom to come up with their brand associations, experiences and brand meanings. However, some structure is desirable for several reasons. First of all, to ensure that the in-depth interviews cover all themes in the literature review. Secondly, to help the children with directions for retrieving information. Finally, to support staying on the topic.

#### **3.2 Data collection**

The semi-structured in-depth interviews with children were focused on brands that are not in typical children categories, but which they are regularly exposed to. Examples are household brands, retail store brands, car brands and electronic brands. For these interviews, an English interview guide was developed (Appendix 2). However, since the interviews were conducted in Dutch, the interview guide was also developed in Dutch (Appendix 3) In addition, the parents of the children were interviewed. For these interviews, an interview guide was developed as well (Appendix 4). This interview guide was also developed in Dutch (Appendix 5).

The aim of the interviews with the children's parent(s), was to investigate brands (apart from typical children categories) that their child is regularly exposed to. The brands and brand categories that they mentioned were used as a basis for the interview with their children. In addition, the parents were asked to what extent they think their children recognize these brands, develop associations with these brands and form relationships with these brands. At the end of

the interviews, the characteristics of the sample were registered. These are discussed in the following paragraph (Paragraph 3.3.)

Thereafter, relying on semi-structured in-depth interviews, the children were interviewed. Brands out of the brand categories that their parents mentioned, were discussed with the children. The questions were based on the topics of the literature review, which are the following: brand awareness, brand associations, brand affections and self-brand connections.

Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed. All interviews were recorded, since it was allowed by all parents and children. Recording the interviews made it possible to transcribe and code the interviews afterwards. The transcripts made it possible to look for patterns and themes among the responses of the informants. Moreover, it offered the possibility to identify responses that seemed to be more enthusiastic, in contrast with responses that consisted of only a few words (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

The interviews were conducted in Dutch, because children within the age category of seven to eleven years old probably would not be able to (fully) express themselves in English. Depending on the children's preference, parents attended the interviews with the children. However, parents were asked not to interrupt the interviews, to ensure that the results would be based on the children's own perceptions.

### **3.3 The sample**

Several informants were recruited from the researcher's circle of connections. This created the possibility that similarly informants would participate in this research, which in turn could impact the generalizability of the results. However, these informants were not only recruited from the inner circle of connections, they were also recruited through second degree connections. The researcher did not know these people personally. In addition, snowball sampling was used. When children and their parents participated, they were asked if they knew more people that probably would be willing to participate. Moreover, informants were recruited through a primary school. In total, five children from this primary school participated in this research.

Initially, the aim was to collect a sample that consisted of a minimum of fifteen children. In the end, eighteen children were interviewed. The eighteenth interview did not deliver completely new information anymore. Thereafter no more interviews were conducted. This is in line with the general rule about interviewing (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

Several characteristics of the sample were registered. In total eighteen children were interviewed. The age of the children ranged from seven to eleven years old. The average age of

the children that participated in this research is nine years old, which is exactly in the middle of the selected age category. Exactly half of the children that participated in this research were girls, the other half were boys. All children that participated have at least one brother or sister. The children that participated in this research live in seven different cities/villages. Eight of the children that participated in this research live in villages, ten of these children live in cities. The average length of the interviews with these children is twenty minutes.

Eighteen interviews were conducted with the children's parents or caregiver. From these interviews, seventeen interviews were conducted with the parent(s) of the children. One of these parents forgot the interview appointment but managed to write down the answers to the questions. In addition, from one of the children, his caregiver was interviewed. It should be mentioned that, from now on, all these informants (also the caregiver) are referred to as parents. This choice has been made, to make the interpretation of the results less complicated than necessary. The highest level of educations from both of the parents of the children was registered. From most parents, sixteen in total, the highest level of education is mbo. From thirteen parents the highest level of education is hbo. From two parents the highest level of education is university. From one of the parents the highest level of education is mavo. Because one of the children's caregiver was interviewed instead of his parents, the highest level of education from his parents could not be registered. The average time of the interviews with the parents was also twenty minutes. An overview of all informants and their characteristics can be found in the appendix (Appendix 1).

### **3.4 Data analysis**

To make it easier to interpret the obtained data, all interviews were transcribed in Microsoft Word. This resulted in 332 pages of transcripts. During the transcriptions, the names of the informants were changed to fictional names, in order to secure confidentiality. After transcribing, the interviews were examined and patterns among them were explored. Based on the discovered patterns, the transcripts were coded in ATLAS.ti. Coding the interviews made it possible to group the results in different themes. These themes formed the basis for the results section (Section 4).

### **3.5 Procedure**

To increase the level of validity, confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed to the informants. Letting the informants know that the results will be reported anonymous has

probably supported them to speak openly. In addition, the semi-structured character of the interviews probably (further) supported the probability that the informants spoke openly.

An interview guide was set up (Appendix 1) to ensure consistency between interviews. This increases the reliability of the findings. In addition, a pretest of the interviews was done, to ensure that every informant would interpret all the questions in the same way as the other informants. This led to minor improvements. Based on the adjustments, the questions were tested again. To further increase the reliability, the researcher assisted the children during the interviews, when they did not understand a question or interpreted a question in another way. This has been decided, since children in this age category (seven to eleven years old) are able to use strategies for retrieving information, however they might need to be helped with directions or cues. By helping children to interpret all questions in the same way as the other informants, the results probably turned out to be more reliable.

### **3.6 Research ethics**

This research adheres to ethical principles, in order to protect the dignity and rights of all participants. First of all, this research followed the informed-consent rules (American Psychological Association, 2003). Informants voluntarily participated in the research. The researcher informed every participant about the overall purpose of the research, the expected duration of the interviews and the procedure that followed. Participants had the freedom to withdraw from the research at any given time. To give the participants the possibility to contact the researcher with questions, all parents received the contact information of the researcher.

Secondly, anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed to the informants. Before starting the interviews, children's parents were informed that the results of the interviews would be written down anonymous. In addition, the parents and children were asked for permission to record the interviews. It was explained that these recordings would be used (only) by the researcher to transcribe the interviews. In case the parents preferred to receive the research results, the results were shared with them afterwards.

To close with, this research explores children's development of brand knowledge and brand relationships. This research will be of interest for brand managers and marketers. However, it is important to highlight that the results of this research should not be misused. Brand managers and marketers should use and consider the implications in an ethical way.

## 4. Results

In this section the research results are presented. Paragraph 4.1 focuses on the brand knowledge (including brand awareness and brand associations) of children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, about brands that are not in typical children categories. Paragraph 4.2 describes the results regarding the type of relationships (including brand affection and self-brand relationships) that they form with these brands. These results are followed up by several additional findings, which are presented in paragraph 4.3. Lastly, complementary results from the interviews with the children's parents are presented in paragraph 4.4. The results are supported by quotes from the interviews, in order to give comprehensive and detailed insights. For every quote the fictional name, the number, the gender and the age of the informant are given, in combination with the brand category or brand that was discussed. An overview of the informants can be found in the appendix (Appendix 1).

### 4.1 Children's brand knowledge

During the interviews with the parents, brands were discovered that are not in typical children categories, but which their children are regularly exposed to. The categories of these brands formed the basis for the brand awareness questions for their children. All brand categories that came forward during the interview with the parents were discussed with their children. Most of the times around six brand categories in total were discussed. In case children were able to recall a brand from a certain category, that brand was discussed during the rest of the interview questions. In case the children mentioned more than one brand, they selected a brand to discuss. If children were not able to recall a brand, it was explored whether they did recognize the brand their parents mentioned. In case they did, that brand was discussed, if not, the next brand category was discussed. This approach applied to all brand categories.

#### 4.1.1 Brand awareness

##### 4.1.1.1 Brand recall

Children in the age category of seven to eleven years old seem to be highly aware of brands that are not in typical children categories. All children that participated in this research (18) showed that they were able to recall brand names when given a certain brand category. Most children (10) were able to recall a brand name from each category that was discussed, they often even mentioned several brands in one brand category. One of the children even discussed the whole alphabet of car brands, as is shown by the quote below.

*“The A is from Audi, Alfa Romeo. Uhm yes, I will go from A, B, C. B is Bugatti, C is Citroen, D is Dacia, from the E there is not one. F is Ferrari and Ford, G is uhm there also is not one. H is Honda, and Hyundai is one. J is Jaguar. K is Kia uhm L is uhm Lexus and Lamborghini, M is Mazda uhm and Maserati. N is uhm, there is not one. O is Opel, P is uhm P... Q there also is not one, R is uhm Renault uhm P, did I already discuss P?” (Rens, #15, M, 10 y/o, car brands)*

After the child of the last quote was remembered which letters he had already discussed and which were the following, he continued the alphabet until Z.

Some children (8) were not able to recall a brand name from one or more particular categories that were discussed. Most of them (6) just mentioned that they did not know any, or that they know some brands but did not know the names of them. A couple of children (2) added some clarification after they said that they could not mention a brand. One of them thought that the brand was not on the product, the other child said that she did remember the visual characteristics of a brand.

*“No, I do not know, that is not on it.” (Tim, #19, M, 10 y/o, cornflakes brands)*

*“I do know what the icon looks like.” (Elin, #23, F, 8 y/o, car brands)*

#### **4.1.1.2 Brand recognition**

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, some children (8) were not able to recall a brand from one or more particular categories. After showing them the logo of the brand, which their parents mentioned in that particular category, most children (5) did recognize the brand.

*“Adidas, dad also has them.” (Elin, #23, F, 8 y/o, shoe brands)*

*“Yes, that is KitKat.” (Eefje, #27, F, 8 y/o, chocolate brands)*

Only a few children (3) did not recognize the logo of only one brand. These brands were Kellogg’s (a cornflakes brand) and Gazelle (a bicycle brand).

#### **4.1.2 Brand associations**

Next to brand awareness, the brand associations of children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, about brands that are not in typical children categories were explored. During the analysis it became clear that their brand associations could be divided into the three categories (attributes, benefits and attitudes), which were described in literature review, as

proposed by Keller (Keller, 1993). However, also an additional type of association was found, which is included in the additional findings (Paragraph 4.3). Below the children's brand associations that could be divided into to the three categories (attributes, benefits and attitudes) are interpreted.

#### 4.1.2.1 Attributes

It seems that children in the age category of seven to eleven years old form a lot of associations about brands that are not in typical children categories. They particularly form brand associations around attributes. All children (18) used attributes to describe brands that are not in typical children categories. Attributes were in comparison to the other types of brand associations most mentioned (123). Attributes can be product-related or non-product-related. Children in the age category of seven to eleven years old seem to mostly use product-related attributes to describe brands that are not in typical children categories.

*“That those are speakers where you can play music on and, yes, that they have a really good sound and most of the time they are not so big, but really small.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, JBL)*

*“That it is a car with a blue and white logo and that they come in several colors and, uhm, that in my opinion, most BMWs go at a maximum of 230 kilometers per hour or so, according to me.” (Jason, #13, M, 11 y/o, BMW)*

*“Uhm a drink with bubbles and it is yellow, it is from oranges.” (Rens, #15, M, 10 y/o, Fanta)*

*“When I think of Adidas, I immediately think of shoes.” (Tim, #19, M, 10 y/o, Adidas)*

Children in the age category of seven to eleven years old also appear to use non-product-related attributes to describe brands that are not in typical children categories. A lot of children (10) mentioned price (e.g. expensive, not so expensive), mostly in combination with their thoughts that the brands that were discussed are expensive.

*“That it is quite expensive.” (Eefje, #27, F, 8y/o, Ford)*

*“Yes, uhm that often, the clothes and shoes are expensive.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, Nike)*

Overall, children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, do not seem to associate brands, that are not in typical children categories, with non-product-related attributes like

packaging, user imagery, or usage imagery. Nevertheless, there is an indication that older children within this age category, do form associations consisting of these types of attributes. Some children (6), who are either ten years old or eleven years old, mentioned these types of non-product-related attributes.

*“No actually, I really liked the taste and the packaging uhm also looks nice.” (Jade, #35, F, 10 y/o, Fuze Tea)*

*“Yes, only the boys, not the girls.” (Tyler, #25, M, 10 y/o, Playstation)*

*“It is sold very well that bike and I think especially among the elderly let’s just say, but also, it is a bit the same as Cortina, it is just a very good brand.” (Nina, #11, F, 11 y/o, Gazelle)*

*“Uhm, because I also think, the clothes that he designs, are really special clothes, with which you cannot easily walk on the streets in summer, without getting anything thrown at you. Yes, some people just don't appreciate that.” (Lauren, #1, F, 11 y/o, Mart Visser)*

#### 4.1.2.2 Benefits

Children in the age category of seven to eleven years old seem to develop associations, around benefits, about brands that are not in typical children categories. A relatively large number of children (13) mentioned benefits. However, benefits were far less mentioned (37) than attributes. From the children who mentioned benefits (13), all children mentioned at least once experiential benefits.

*“In my opinion it is a shampoo that is really nice to use, and it really smells super nice.” (Merel, #29, F, 8 y/o, Andrélon)*

*“Uhm I am actually used to it, but I also think it is a really nice brand.” (Nina, #11, F, 11 y/o, Samsung)*

*“That they are comfortable.” (Tim, #19, M, 10 y/o, Bugatti)*

*“And usually you can use it for much longer than other phones.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, Apple)*

In addition, from the children who mentioned benefits (13), some of them (2) also mentioned benefits that could be interpreted as symbolic benefits. Interestingly, both associations belonged to Nike. From the children who mentioned benefits (13), only one child also mentioned a functional benefit, which referred to a basic motivation.

*“Then I feel longer, I just grow a centimeter longer.” (Rens, #15, M, 10 y/o, Nike)*

*“Uhm yes I think the shoes are pretty and the clothes are nice.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, Nike)*

*“And that people can also earn money from it.” (Lauren, #1, F, 11 y/o, YouTube)*

#### 4.1.2.3 Attitudes

Analyses further indicated that children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, develop attitudes about brands that are not in typical children categories. All children (18) mentioned attitudes about brands that are not in typical children categories. A large number of attitudes (72) have been discovered. However, the attitudes that the children form about these brands seem to be on a more superficial level.

*“Nice [laughs].” (Noor, #7, F, 10 y/o, Ikea)*

*“I do not like the taste of most of them.” (Rens, #15, M, 10 y/o, Tony’s Chocolonely)*

*“I think it’s pretty nice, but some things are also very weird, well I once saw such a lipstick bag and I find it a bit weird.” (Eefje, #27, F, 8 y/o, Coolcat)*

*“Well I think it is very nice and uhm sometimes it makes a very nice sound and that car itself is also very nice.” (Jason, #13, M, 11 y/o, BMW)*

Only a few children (#) showed some more profound attitudes about brands that are not in typical children categories. However, this leaves room for interpretation. The reason for describing these brand attitudes as more profound, is that these children reflected on the performances and activities of these brands.

*“Yes, pretty good, because it cannot get any viruses.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, Apple)*

*“Uhm I think it works really nice [sigh] because I get a nice fresh mouth from it and I don’t like spicy toothpaste very much, this one is not too spicy, but also not very spicy, but also not too little so to speak.” (Merel, #29, F, 8 y/o, Aquafresh)*

*“I like the Jumbo and that is because they have fun advertisements.” (Jade, #35, F, 10 y/o, Jumbo)*

*“I think, for a telephone or so, it has a good quality.” (Lauren, #1, F, 11 y/o, Samsung)*

It is noteworthy that one of these children mentioned that she liked the advertisements. This

indicates that children in the age category of seven to eleven years old are able to considerate the commercial activities of brands that are not in typical children categories.

The findings further indicated that children in the age category of seven to eleven years old are able to think from the perspective of someone else. If it appeared that children found it hard to explain what they thought about a brand, or on the other hand, when children loved to speak about a brand, they were asked what they thought their parent would think about this brand. This resulted in the following statements.

*“Really nice, my mother buys a lot of things for herself.” (Roy, #17, M, 7 y/o, Nivea)*

*“I think she likes to use it, otherwise she wouldn't buy it.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, Apple)*

*“I think he thinks it is a nice car, but this one is also very old, so I think we will soon look for a new Peugeot and find out how it drives, because we have already looked once, but that car its, that steering wheel was not nice to use according to dad.” (Tyler, #25, M, 10 y/o, Peugeot)*

*“I think mwah uhm half because mama is never really a fan of it, because she never watches YouTube.” (Jade, #35, F, 10 y/o, YouTube)*

In addition, these quotes indicate that children in the age category of seven to eleven years old consider which brands their parents buy, whether their parents like that brand or not and for what reasons.

## **4.2 Children's brand relationships**

The following paragraphs describe the results regarding the type of relationships that children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, develop with brands that are not in typical children categories.

### **4.2.1 Children's development of brand affection**

#### *4.2.1.1 Brand affection feelings*

Most brands that are not in typical children categories, do not seem to create a special feeling for children in the age category of seven to eleven years old. All children (18) were asked how they feel while interacting with brand that was discussed. They all (18) stated for most of the brands that they just felt normal, did not feel special, simply liked it, or felt as usual.

*“Not per definition a feeling, I think it are just shoes.” (Lauren, #1, F, 11 y/o, Adidas)*

*“Just normal.” (Rens, #15, M, 10 y/o, Lidl)*

Nevertheless, some (7) children did mention that interacting with some (1 or 2) of these brands gives them a specific feeling. These feelings seemed quite basic, in the sense that it does not seem that these feelings feel really special for them. However, these feelings can indicate a little bit of brand affection.

*“It makes me happy, because it is super nice.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, JBL)*

*“Then I feel uhm good.” (Tim, #19, M, 10 y/o, Adidas)*

*“Then I feel happy, that is also because it gives me back energy in my body.” (Rens, #15, M, 10 y/o, Fanta)*

*“Uhm then I just feel happy.” (Tyler, #25, M, 10 y/o, Tuc)*

#### 4.2.1.2 Reasons for (no) brand affection

Children in the age category of seven to eleven years old seem capable of clearly explaining what they like and do not like about brands that are not in typical children categories. All children were specifically asked what they like and do not like about each brand that was discussed. The results give an indication about the reasons they have for developing (no) brand affection with brands that are not in typical children categories.

The analysis revealed that all children (18) said that they like something about at least one brand that was discussed. Half of the children (9) even like something about each brand that was discussed. The other half of the children (9) could not tell what they like about only one or two brands. From the children that mentioned one or more reasons for liking particular brands, the reasons are very clear. Furthermore, these reasons seem most of the time related to characteristics of the products of these brands.

*“Yes, the scent is very nice to smell.” (Merel, #29, F, 8 y/o, Andrélon)*

*“In my feeling, it just has a little bit better quality compared to other phones.” (Lauren, #1, F, 11 y/o, Samsung)*

*“Yes, that they have air max, the shoes.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, Nike)*

*“Yes I always like it very much uhm when they have those promotions, Vitamini’s, those are cuddly toys and then you get a stamp with every ten euros that you pay and if you have fifteen uhm stamps then you may choose a Vitamini.” (Rens, #15, M, 10 y/o, Lidl)*

However, an interesting reason, apart from the characteristics of the products, came forward. The last quote above shows that one of the children mentioned the brand promotion of a brand (Jumbo) as something that she liked very much. This is noteworthy, especially in addition to earlier statement that has been shown, of one of the children, about advertisements.

Secondly, analysis revealed that all children (18) could not mention what they did not like about at least one brand that was discussed. Often this even applied to more than two brands that were discussed. The answers mainly revealed that there was nothing that they did not like about the brand that was discussed. However, one thing that was mentioned by several children (6), is related to the non-product related attribute price. Children that mentioned this, sometimes even mentioned this for more than one brand. It is noteworthy that one of the children seemed to understand that particular brands have higher prices, while another child fantasized about the possibility that products were offered for free.

*“Uhm yes, it is usually expensive, but I also understand it because you want it to be very good, and you can also use it for a longer time.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, Apple)*

*“Yes that all games can be free, because if you have a Playstation plus you have to pay for it every month or so and then you can download all the games for free, and I don't have a Playstation plus I have a normal Playstation [...]” (Tyler, #25, M, 10 y/o, Playstation)*

*“That Nike Air is very expensive, really 105, these were uhm, Marnix had searched for it, what he always does, 145 euros.” (Rens, #15, M, 10 y/o, Nike)*

*“It is so expensive.” (Jasmijn, #9, F, 7 y/o, Coop)*

Overall, this indicates that some children in the age category of seven to eleven years old considerate the price of the products of brands in their overall evaluation about whether they like or do not like a brand.

Additionally, something that is remarkable is that there is an indication that children in the age category of seven to eleven years old consider health issues. when evaluating brands that are not in typical children categories. A couple of children (2) mentioned this.

*“It is uhm unhealthy for your teeth.” (Roy, #17, M, 7 y/o, Coca Cola)*

*“Just that it's just not good for you, but sometimes you use it because you are very tired, for example, but you should not just drink it every day.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, Redbull)*

If it seemed that children found it hard to explain what they did not like about a brand, or on the other hand, really liked to speak, they were asked what they would change about a brand, in order to (indirectly) discover what they did not like. This resulted in some well-considered and/or creative ideas.

*“Uhm, more electric, because there are also a lot of exhaust gasses.” (Tim, #19, M, 10 y/o, Bugatti)*

*“Uhm mwah, maybe now they have Max Verstappen all the time and I'm not a big fan of Max Verstappen, but that does not matter.” (Jade, #35, F, 10 y/o, Jumbo)*

*“Well it is not really that they have to, but it would be nice if they also have uhm body shampoo, that you also have it for your body. And yes, if that would happen then you also smell a bit the same, because mixed with the shampoo usually it does not smell super nice.” (Merel, #29, F, 8 y/o, Andrélon)*

*“That you for example uhm that when it is very hot and when you sit in the car that you do not burn your buttocks, because uhm I experienced that also today, when I sat in my father his car [...]” (Jason, #13, M, 11 y/o, BMW)*

The second quote might need some explanation. Jumbo is a Dutch supermarket brand. Jade talked about the commercials this brand broadcasts. They use Max Verstappen, a Formula 1 driver, as their brand icon in their commercials. She told that she was not a big fan of Max Verstappen. Later on, she was asked whether she preferred someone else to play in the commercials of this brand, she did and even mentioned an alternative person (Dylan Haegens) who is a YouTube vlogger.

#### 4.2.1.3 Attachment

Children in the age category of seven to eleven years old do not seem to be (really) attached to brands that are not in typical children categories. All children (18) mentioned, for most of the brands that were discussed, that they would not mind if they were not available anymore. Some even indicated that there are also substitutes available.

*“No, because we have an iPad and a tablet.” (Sem, #3, M, 7 y/o, Apple)*

*“That is not the end of the world or something.” (Lauren, #1, F, 11 y/o, Adidas)*

Interestingly, a couple of children (2) mentioned that they would not mind, but that their mother probably would. This indicates that children in the age category of seven to eleven years old

are not only able to consider which brands their parents buy, whether their parents like that brand or not and for what reasons, as was described in the paragraph about attitudes, but that they also consider whether their parent(s) would mind if these brands were not available anymore.

*“Uhm not me, but mom would.” (Rens, #15, M, 10 y/o, Tony’s Chocolonely)*

*“No, but my mom maybe would mind.” (Ian, #5, M, 10 y/o, Santos)*

Among the children that would not mind if a certain brand leaves, a remarkable finding is that some of them (2) indicated that children in the age category of seven to eleven years old are capable to think about how they would feel if a particular brand is not there anymore when they grow older.

*“Not bad, that’s nice, but not when I grow up.” (Roy, #17, M, 7 y/o, Albert Heijn)*

*“Because I want a BMW myself, later I want a BMW.” (Jason, #13, M, 11 y/o, BMW)*

Although most children did not seem to be really attached to most brands, as illustrated above, the answers of several (8) children indicated that they were attached or used to one or more particular brands. However, these answers ranged from being used to the brand that was discussed, to thinking that it would be (really) terrible if the brand would not be available anymore. One of the answers indicated that children’s reasons for being attached to a brand are very diverse. This is illustrated in the last quote below. This was mentioned by a who played a role in the commercial of ‘G’woon’, a supermarket brand. He mentioned that he would experience it as really terrible if that brand would not be available anymore, this was because of the fact that he played a role in the commercial.

*“Well because I am used to it, and if I am used to it, and if I have to use it for example, and uhm I have the use the Samsung phone of my father or something like that, then I have to ask myself how that works [...]” (Jason, #13, M, 11 y/o, Apple)*

*“Too bad because then I have to look for something else and uhm I would not know so well what that would be.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, JBL)*

*“Yes, terrible because I like Nike, I just really like it and uhm yes oh there are also Nike balls and those are also very nice to play with.” (Rens, #15, M, 10 y/o, Nike)*

*“Really terrible, just as bad, uhm a little less than Ajax but, slightly less than Ajax, one point less, because I played in the commercial myself.” (Roy, #17, M, 7 y/o, G’woon)*

Some children (3) mentioned that they have a favorite brand in a not typical children category. They were not asked if they have one, they just told it.

*“Uhm Nike, that is my favorite brand!” (Sem, #3, M, 7 y/o, Nike)*

*“My favorite brand is Koenigsegg,” (Rens, #15, M, 10 y/o, Koenigsegg)*

*“Fuze Tea with peach flavor that is my favorite drink.” (Jade, #35, F, 10 y/o, YouTube)*

The child of the first quote above that he had favorite brands in several brand categories that are not typical children categories. As shown above, Nike is his favorite brand, but he mentioned that Adidas is also one of his favorite brands and that Lamborghini is his favorite car brand. These children (3) show an indication that children in the age category of seven to eleven years old can have favorite brands that are not in typical children categories.

#### **4.2.2 Children’s development of self-brand connections**

Since it did not seem realistic to directly ask children (in this age category) about their self-brand connections, children were asked how important the brands that were discussed are for them to have, how they would feel if they could only have substitutes and what others would think about them if they use or interact with these particular brands. The results are presented in the following paragraphs.

##### **4.2.2.1 Brand importance**

It appeared that children in this age category do not feel the importance to have these kinds of brands. All children (18) mentioned for most brands, that these brands were not important for them to have. Most children (10) even indicated that all brands that were discussed were not important for them to have.

*“Not really important.” (Ruben, #21, M, 10 y/o, Nike)*

*“No, as long as there is just a car.” (Lauren, #1, F, 11 y/o, Toyota)*

Some children (8) indicated that only particular brands are important for them. However, these reasons do not seem to be related to self-brand connections. Their reasons why it is important for them to have these brands seem to be more related to the use of these brands and not to their self-concepts.

*“Yes, a bit, because I'm used to the Peugeot brand and not to another brand of cars.” (Tyler, #25, M, 10 y/o, Peugeot)*

*“Yes, I think it is nicer to use than Samsung for example.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, Apple)*

#### 4.2.2.2 Acceptance of substitutes

In order to discover whether any self-brand connections existed, it was also explored whether children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old would accept substitutes. Most children (18) seem to accept substitutes for most brands. Some of them even mentioned the availability of substitutes themselves.

*“Hm I am fine with that.” (Ruben, #21, M, 10 y/o, Nike)*

*“No problem, as long as I have clothes.” (Jason, #13, M, 11 y/o, Tommy Hilfiger)*

*“Uhm not so bad, because then I can choose an Xbox.” (Tyler, #25, M, 10 y/o, Playstation)*

*“That would not matter to me so much because that is exactly the same, just a different name.” (Lauren, #1, F, 11 y/o, Netflix)*

Only some children (6) mentioned about particular brand categories, that they prefer the brand that was discussed. However, most explanations of these children do not seem to be related to self-brand connections. Only two children gave answers that could be interpreted as related to self-brand connections. These answers are presented in the two quotes below. The first quote shows that only some substitutes would be acceptable. Hyundai was not acceptable, while Range Rover or McLaren would be acceptable. The second quote shows that a substitute would be acceptable only for a short period of time.

*“Uhm yes that depends on which car the other car would be.”*

*“Uhm Hyundai is not ok, I cannot stand Hyundai.”*

*“Range Rover sport or McLaren.” (Rens, #15, M, 10 y/o, Koenigsegg)*

*“Maybe that if I for example, if I then uhm had a BMW and if there is something wrong with it or something and I get a loan ca rand that is a Toyota, then I would not mind, but I prefer uhm, just, just always BMW” (Jason, #13, M, 11 y/o, BMW)*

Regarding children’s brand affections for brands that are not in typical children categories, this indicates that some children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, only accept particular substitutes, or substitutes for a shorter period of time.

#### 4.2.2.3 *What these brands say about them*

In order to further explore whether any brand-self connections existed, the children were also asked what other people would probably think about them when they are using, or interacting with, the brand that was discussed. All children (18) mainly mentioned that they did not know or mentioned that it was really normal to have the brands that were discussed. In addition, they also said that they would not care what other people would think about that. Nevertheless, in this way (e.g. saying that it is normal to use), they did indicate that they could reflect on what others thought about them.

*“Then they will think, ok.” (Tim, #19, M, 10 y/o, Adidas)*

*“That we are just normal people.” (Eefje, #27, F, 8 y/o, Lidl)*

There were children (6) that mentioned about only one brand, that others probably also wanted to have it too if they were consuming a brand. It should be noted that this mostly (5) applied to food and drink brands. It was only one time (indirectly) mentioned for a fashion brand. However, these statements do not seem to be related to self-brand connections.

*“That the other person wants it too.” (Tyler, #25, M, 10 y/o, Tuc)*

*“Just nice, or uhm, I want to have it too!” (Roy, #17, M, 7 y/o, Coca Cola)*

Only some children (6) thought about one particular brand that others could or would think something about when they are interacting with or using a particular brand.

*“Uhm, some people will think that is an ugly car, but some others will think wow, it looks cool and some others will think okay it's just a car.” (Ian, #5, M, 10 y/o, Tesla)*

*“That it is quite expensive, and some people will think it is nice and some will think it is not nice.” (Eefje, #27, F, 8 y/o, Ford)*

*“Maybe the person thinks it is very ugly, or beautiful but.” (Jason, #13, M, 11 y/o, Tommy Hilfiger)*

*“That he is very rich and cool.” (Tim, #19, M, 10 y/o, Bugatti)*

The quote about Bugatti, refers to what this child thought of someone else that drives a Bugatti, since his parents do not own a Bugatti. It seems that children in the age category of seven to eleven years old are able to think about the opinion of others. However, whether these results mean that children in the age category of seven to eleven years old interact with these brands to incorporate them into their self-concepts could not be really determined. There is only a slight indication that some children (6), in this age category start to develop brand-self connections, with brands that are in either car categories or fashion categories.

### **4.3 Additional findings**

#### **4.3.1 Understanding the concept of a brand**

The first interview questions were more general and asked to explore whether children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, understand the concept of a brand. All eighteen children were asked if they know what a brand is. Some children mentioned that they thought it would be difficult to explain. However, all children (18) gave an answer, none of the children said that they did not know. The answers of the children can be broadly divided into four different types. First of all, some children tried to explain what a brand is based on one or more examples of brand categories. Besides, some children tried to explain what a brand is based on one or more examples of brands. Some other children tried to explain what a brand is based on their knowledge of characteristics of brands. One of the children simply showed the t-shirt he was wearing that day.

*“Hmm, a brand is a founder, or something from, from something from a sweater or from a car.” (Ian, #5, M, 10 y/o)*

*“Uhm, a brand for example Adidas or something, that makes clothes and then it is a certain brand that sells it.” (Lauren, #1, F, 11 y/o)*

*“Yes, a brand is actually, you have got an expensive brand and a cheap brand and then uhm.” (Nina, #11, F, 11 y/o)*

*“For example, this [shows his t-shirt].” (Jason, #13, M, 11 y/o)*

### 4.3.2 What children know about brands in general

The follow-up question focused on what they know about brands in general. It appeared that the children, in the age-category of seven to eleven years old, do know some characteristics of brands. Children seem to know that there are different brands in one category, that brands differ from each other and that brands provide some information on the products they offer. One of the children told that you can make a brand out of almost everything.

*“Uhm that brands are placed on something and then you can discover from that because for example if you have two different jars of chocolate butter then you can have one Nutella for example and the other another brand.” (Jade, #35, F, 10 y/o)*

*“That they uhm explain from what they are and how they so to say uhm yes how they uhm are and from what it is from which factory or from which, from which store.” (Tyler, #25, M, 10 y/o)*

*“That every brand is different.” (Tim, #19, M, 10 y/o)*

*“You can make a brand from a stone, also uhm draw, you can also draw a brand.” (Roy, #17, M, 7 y/o)*

### 4.3.3 Children’s examples of brands in general

Interestingly, most children already mentioned brands that are not in typical children categories, when they were asked if they could give some examples of brands, at the beginning of the interview. It was not asked if they could mention a particular type of brands, only if they could give some examples of brands. Only two children mentioned ‘Intertoys’ as a brand, that actually is a store. Most brands that were mentioned are from either the car category or the clothes category. The two brands that were the most often mentioned are Adidas (4) and Nike (6). One child made an interesting comment, which is showed in the quote below.

*“Yes but, uhm, I know a lot of brands, but I am not sure if you also know them” (Jason, #13, M, 11 y/o)*

### 4.3.4 Context

In addition, the analysis indicated that children in the age category of seven to eleven years old get in touch with a lot of brands, that are not in typical children categories, through their family. When the children were asked where they know a particular brand from, all children (18) severally mentioned (39) that they knew the brand because of their family. In a way this makes sense, since this research focuses on brands that are not in typical children categories. However,

this could have been different, and it is noteworthy on what basis children develop their brand knowledge and brand relationships.

*“Well uhm yes, my father has it, my uncle, my other uncle has it uhm, all my uncles have it, uhm my father, and only one uncle has another car and all those others have BMWs. My grandfather had a BMW and uhm my other grandfather also had a BMW.” (Jason, #13, M, 11 y/o, BMW)*

*“Yes, I have, we have, almost only Apple, we have Apple on our tv, mom her phone is Apple and we have the Apple iPad.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, Apple)*

Children mentioned their family way more often than their friends and children from school (9), thus people in their age category. There are also other sources where children know these brands from. It appeared that some children know these brands because of advertising (3). Other children (4) know these brands because of online brands and media such as YouTube and Netflix. One of the children played a role in a commercial of a supermarket brand, ‘G’woon’. For all other brands it was simply mentioned that they knew it from the situations in which they buy or consumed the brand (e.g. the store, the mall, the distance from home, birthday parties).

Furthermore, it was explored whether children actually interact with these brands or get in touch with these brands, by asking them how often they see the brands that were discussed. The findings indicated that children interact with these brands. In case they did not own certain brands themselves, it appeared that they interacted with these brands via friends or the internet.

#### ***4.3.5 Confusing brands with brand categories, other brands or other categories***

There is an indication that younger children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, sometimes confuse brands that are not in typical children categories with the categories that these brands are part of. This indication is based on the comments (13) of several children (5), who are either seven or eight years old, on questions about both brand knowledge and brand relationships.

The quotes below might need some clarification. The first quote comes from the question whether this child thought it was important that ‘Jumbo’, a supermarket brand, existed. She mentioned that we need food and drinks. However, there are a lot of other supermarkets. The second quote below shows the answer of one of the children, when he was asked whether he could mention a brand in the category sandwich fillings. He mentioned chocolate paste and the brand ‘Nutella’ and thereafter mentioned that those are actually the same. The third quote comes from a girl who was asked what she did not like, or wanted to change, about the brand

'Ford'. She mentioned that she wishes that there is no gasoline anymore, however this is not a thing that 'Ford' can accomplish. The last quote is about this girl her attachment to 'YouTube', she was asked how she would feel if YouTube would not be available anymore, she answered that she would not like it. When she was asked why she did not like it, she mentioned that if that would happen, she could not watch movies anymore. However, substitutes of YouTube are available.

*"Yes, you need food and drinks." (Elin, #23, F, 8 y/o, Jumbo)*

*"Chocolate paste and Nutella are actually the same." (Roy, #17, M, 7 y/o, Brands in the sandwich filling category)*

*"Uhm that there is no gasoline, then uhm the earth does not heat up." (Eefje, #27, F, 8 y/o, Ford)*

*"Because then I can no longer watch movies." (Lizzy, #33, 7 y/o, YouTube)*

Some children (3) confused the brand that was discussed with other brands. For example, the child of the quote below was asked what he thought about Samsung. He mentioned that thinks it is a nice 'iPad'. However, iPad is a product of Apple, not of Samsung.

*"Yes, it is a good, I..., uhm yes a nice iPad." (Sem, #3, M, 7 y/o, Samsung)*

Furthermore, one of the children confused brands to be in another category. When asking her whether she could mention a supermarket brand, she mentioned 'Hema' and 'Primera', which both are not supermarket brands.

#### **4.3.6 Associations about experiences**

Next to children's brand associations in the three category's attributes, benefits and attitudes, as proposed by Keller (Keller, 1993), children also seem to form associations that could not be linked to any of them. Several children (8) mentioned experiences as associations (13), which are not directly relatable to the brand or its products.

*"Once, someone had smashed our window. We do not know who did it. Our neighbor went to bed very late, uhm long time to bed, but he also but he had also had not heard anything, and we were the third in the neighborhood." (Elin, #23, F, 8 y/o, Peugeot)*

*“Very tasty, we also have our own peach tree there.” (Jade, #35, F, 10 y/o, Fuze Tea)*

#### **4.3.7 ‘Attachment’ with the category**

Children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, do not seem to be attached to brands, as shown in paragraph 4.2.1.3. Remarkable here, is that children initially seemed to be attached to the brand that was discussed. However, when asking further questions, it often seemed that they would not mind if the brand was not available anymore, but that they would mind if all brands out of that category would not be available anymore. This indicates that children are ‘attached’ to the category and not so much to the brand. Here is controlled for in the findings of paragraph 4.2.1.3. This could further indicate that they, again, confused the brand with the brand category. However, this could not be directly derived from the answers.

#### **4.3.8 Brand relationships because of secondary brand applicability’s**

Interestingly, it became clear that children feel attached to a certain brand, or like a certain brand because of its secondary applicability’s. This either related to brands of electronic devices or to YouTube. They really seem to be attached to some electronic brands, because of the fact that these brands are suited for the games they like to play or the vloggers they like to watch. The first quote below is about a girl who really likes YouTube vloggers, but not so much YouTube as a brand. The other quote below illustrates that one of the children would not mind if he had a substitutable brand, but it was important that he could play Fortnite (a game) on it. He can play this on Playstation and Xbox, but not on Wii.

*“Yes, especially a certain Youtuber who, for example, can do all sorts of cool tricks on the trampoline, double sideflick and things like that, I also think that is cool to see.” (Lauren, #1, F, 11 y/o, YouTube)*

*“Also, nice but I like a Playstation, yes, because uhm the controllers are nice and there are more games on it. By the way, I would not mind having an Xbox, I would also like that, because you can also just play Fornite on it and all those games that are on Playstation, but you cannot play them on Wii.” (Silas, #31, M, 11 y/o, Playstation)*

#### **4.4 Complementary results from the parents**

The parents of the children were also interviewed. Based on these interviews complementary results were found. Some parents, for example, mentioned some interesting statements of their

child about brands that are not in typical children categories. Still, the focus of the research is on the children and therefore only complementary results are included. In this way, this paragraph adds to the results of the interviews with the children that were described in the previous paragraphs.

#### ***4.4.1 Background information***

When asking the parents which brands their children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, are regularly exposed to, most brands they mentioned were not brands in typical children categories. It was not, yet, said that they should mention brands that were not in typical children categories. Therefore, they often did not have to be additionally asked what types of brands, that are not in typical children categories, their child was regularly exposed to, since they already mentioned enough brands in several brand categories.

In total all parents together (18) mentioned 160 brands that were not in typical children categories and 27 brands that were in typical children categories. Within these totals, some brands were mentioned more than once. This adds to the result that children also mostly mentioned brands that are not in typical children categories when they were asked if they could give some examples of brands. Together these results indicate that children interact a lot with brands that are not in typical children categories.

The parents were also asked what they expected their children to know about brands in general. Some (2) of their comments add to the results that were obtained from the interviews with the children.

*“Yes, he knows, for example, that is quite special, he looks a lot at soccer shoes. And he was last year, at the moment he is in a team, but with the F-pups and then there were around twenty twenty-five, and then he knows for every boy which shoes he has.” (Mila, #7, about Sem 7 y/o)*

*“He does say, ‘oh, that is a big brand’, and ‘oh, they do it that way for that and that reason’. He does think about it uhm, yes, that is what every father says, but he is a smart guy.” (Marnix, #6, about Ian 10 y/o)*

The first quote might need some clarification. This mother told that her son, who is seven years old, knows from every boy in his soccer team which kind of shoes they have. This is remarkable. The second quote indicates that children in this age category are able to think about the scope of certain brands and reasons why brands make certain choices.

#### **4.4.2 Brand knowledge expectations**

Regarding brand recall, most parents (17) expected their child to be able to recall a brand when discussing the brand categories that were mentioned. Only one parent did not expect both her children, who are twins, to recall fashion brands.

Furthermore, most parents (16) expected their child to recognize the logo of every brand that was discussed. Only a couple of them (2) did not expect their child to recognize the logo of one brand that was discussed. Indicating that the parents expected their children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, to recognize brand that are not in typical children categories. Both, the parent's expectations about brand recall and the expectations about brand recognition support the results about the children's brand awareness.

*“Uhm and I am thinking about car brands now, he knows them all. That is the game on the road if we are on the highway and, then he can uhm, he has an eye for everything, than we are a long way from here and then he says ‘hey, oh that is the car of the father of uhm a classmate’ and then he says ‘oh no I see it, other hubcaps’.”*  
(Marit, #16, about Rens 10 y/o)

All parents (18) expected their children to develop associations about brands that are not in typical children categories. They mentioned brand associations linked to attributes, benefits and attitudes.

*“With my car.”* (Emma, #2, about Lauren 11 y/o, Toyota)

*“I think he thinks it is cool, yes, I think that it represents some sort of status for them or something like that”* (Nienke, #14, about Jason 11 y/o, Calvin Klein)

*“Yes, he always thinks it is a cool shoe but beyond that...”* (Romee, #32, about Silas 11 y/o, Nike)

#### **4.4.3 Brand relationship expectations**

All parents (18) thought their child(ren) would probably like something about most of the brands that were discussed. However, the answers indicated that their children probably liked some simple things about brands that are not in typical children categories. Answers were often combined with ‘just’ or ‘simply’. Apart from the things the children mentioned they liked about brands that are not in typical children categories, some (3) parents mentioned that their child would probably like brands because of their products that are electric. This reason was not mentioned by the children. However, one of the children based his attitude on the fact that a brand was electric. Another child mentioned, that if he could change something, he would like

Bugatti's to be electric. Furthermore, this seems to be in accordance with the result that children reasons for liking brands are mostly related to the characteristics of products of brands.

*“Because they are electric, he likes that.” (Marnix, #6, about Ian 10 y/o, Tesla)*

*“[In unison] that it is an electric bicycle [laugh].” (Janneke and Teun, #12, about Nina, 11 y/o, Gazelle)*

The father of the first quote further explained that his child also likes electrical bicycles in addition to electric cars. The other parents (2) mentioned that this applied to cars. Overall, this shows that some children, in this age category, like cars or bicycle brands because they offer electrical products. Besides, there were no additional, remarkable comments mentioned by the parents of the children about something that their children would like about brands that are not in typical children categories.

In addition, the parents were asked what their children probably would not like about the brands that were discussed that are not in typical children categories. Here it was mentioned several times (17) by a large number of parents (14) that they thought there would be nothing that they do not like about particular brands.

This indicates, that their children would probably take into account the likeable aspects of brands that are not in typical children categories more often, than the things they do not like. This also has been shown in the previous section. Here, more additional results came forward. However, these were not directly related to the brands that were discussed and therefore not directly related to the development of brand knowledge or brand relationships. For this reason, these results are included in paragraph 4.4.4.

Taking into account the development of brand relationships, it was also explored to what extent the parents expected their child to be attached to brands that are not in typical children categories. All parents (18) mentioned for most brands that their children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, probably would not mind if the brand would leave. Additionally, a couple of parents (2) thought that their children probably did not realize or are too young to exactly realize what this would mean.

*“No, I don't think she really realizes that yet.” (Thamar, F, about Jasmijn 7 y/o, all brands)*

*“No, yes ... What ... yes, no, he is of course a bit young, but yes, he really likes it, but if it was not there, he would choose something else, yes, I think so [laughs].”*  
(Mila, F, about Sem 7 y/o, Nike)

Notably, there were only a handful of parents (5) that mentioned, only eight times in total, that a particular brand would probably be important to have for their child. What is notable here, is that these were all brands were all in the online entertainment category (YouTube, Netflix), phone category (Apple, Samsung), clothing category (Levi’s, Calvin Klein) or in the car category (BMW).

*“Yes, he is really looking forward to get one too.”* (Marit, #16, about Rens 10 y/o, Apple)

*“YouTube maybe a little more than Netflix, but uhm.”* (Emma, #2, about Lauren 11 y/o, Netflix)

The interviews with the parents indicated that their children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, will accept substitutes for most brands that are not in typical children's categories. No questions were specifically asked about this, however some parents mentioned this when asking if the brands were important to have for their children. This supports the results that were found previously.

Regarding self-brand connections, most parents (18) did not expect their child to develop self-brand connections with brands that are not in typical children categories. An interesting finding here, is that parents did expected that this would differ per category, according to them, their children start to develop self-brand connections with brands that are in fashion categories. Indicating that clothing brands could already play a role in the development of self-brand connections.

*“Yes, yes maybe even more, I think that mostly applies to her shoes, because then she thinks, yes, Adidas and Nike are really something that the big children wear, I am eight years old and I already have that.”* (Pam, #28, about Eefje 8 y/o, H&M)

*“Yes, I think so, yes, he thinks Nike is really cool, and then he can show his new shoes or whatever and then he will think that it is really cool that it's Nike.”* (Mila, F, about Sem 7 y/o, Nike)

#### 4.4.4 Additional findings obtained from the parents

##### 4.4.4.1 Context

All parents (18) mostly mentioned that their children know brands, that are not in typical children categories, because of their family. This further supports to the previous results of the children. An interesting complementary result is that one of the parents mentioned that children learn about advertising and brands at primary school.

*“Yes, I chose it and we picked it up together, so we drove there and drove past the building. Also ‘Let us have a look, the wall says van Moof’. ‘Yes, yes, yes... where is that all sold?’ [...]” (Marnix, #6, about Ian 10 y/o, van Moof)*

*“Yes, I expect that he can name a lot of brands, he recently learned about advertising, brands. Yes, that is a topic they are currently working on, so he knows that uhm advertisements are meant to make people excited, so that they will ask their parents, in a way that parents will buy it.” (Mila, F, about Sem 7 y/o, Nike)*

In addition, parents (13) also made statements (54) that could be interpreted, directly or indirectly, as family influences. The most mentioned is that they (the parents) were or were not brand sensitive (and that this probably influenced their child). This is noteworthy, because if you think about this further, this could influence children’s development of brand knowledge and brand relationships, regarding brands that are not in typical children categories.

*“Hm, I don't think so, yes uhm, I also think they know they do not even have to start about it, you can ask me, ‘do you want to buy the Mars brand from now on’? Then I say bad luck, yes, that will not happen” (Marit, #16, about Rens 10 y/o, Apple)*

*“Yes, he wants to..., yes, he thinks things like that..., but he really has that from his father, by the way [laughs]. Because he, too, Roy, he also has a lot of Superdry for example and also Adidas, he is a big Adidas fan, he has 20/25 pairs of sneakers [...]” (Mila, F, about Sem 7 y/o)*

Another complementary finding, that can be interpreted as an influence on children’s development of brand knowledge and brand relationships, is that some parents (4) limit their children’s use of brands that are not in typical children categories. This applied either to brands of soft drinks or electronic brands. One of the parents, mentioned that limiting her child, made it probably even more interesting. His sister was allowed to consume this brand.

*“It is not allowed by his parents [laughs].” (Romee, #32, about Silas 11 y/o, Red Bull)*

*“Yes, it could even be..., I still do not approve cola, I think sinas or sprite are ok, I do approve that, yes. Amber is fourteen years old she may have it, so yes he likes it, but actually he wants cola, so uhm actually by setting cola apart, he thinks it is even more interesting.” (Marit, #16, about Rens 10 y/o, Fanta)*

#### 4.4.4.2 Children confuse brands with other brands

There is an indication that children in the age category of seven to eleven years old, confuse B-brands or products of B-brands with A-brands that are not in the typical children categories. Several parents mentioned (3) that their children perceived a B-brand, or products of a B-brand, as an A-brand. This applies to brands that are either in the food category or in the fashion category. The quotes below might need some clarification. The parent of the first quote told that her son perceives the cookies of Lidl (a supermarket that does not offer A-brands) as Sultana. She further mentioned that they (as parents) also called it Sultana. This further indicates that children may be influenced by their parents, therefore, this adds to the results of the previous paragraph. The parent of the second quote explained that his daughter is not able to differentiate the A-brand of a shoe from a B-brand of a shoe.

*“Yes, and I am now thinking, he brings Sultana’s to hockey, and that is the funny thing, we buy it from Lidl, but he thinks it is Sultana” (Marit, #16, about Rens 10 y/o, Sultana)*

*“. . . Uhm, if you would put them side to side, she will think she own Adidas, she does not see the difference.” (Thijs, #24, about Elin 8 y/o, Adidas)*

#### 4.4.4.3 Importance of the brand category

Next to the result that children seem to be ‘attached’ to the brand category and not so much to the brands, there is an indication that the category and the appearance of products are important to the children and not so much the brand. The interviews with several (10) parents indicated that (particular) brands that are not in typical children categories would not be of importance for their children, but that the category and the appearance of the product would be.

*“Then maybe another brand, but if we did not have a car anymore, she would be sad.” (Emma, #2, about Lauren 11 y/o, Toyota)*

*“Yes, shoes are beginning to be important for her, and clothes as well, by the way, but then it is more about how it looks and not really about the brand.” (Thijs, #24, about Elin 8 y/o, Adidas)*

#### 4.4.4.4 Brand relationships because of the second applicability of brands

Lastly, the interviews with the parents indicated that their children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, would probably develop relationships with some particular brands that are not in typical children categories, because of the second applicability of these brands.

*“On YouTube she really follows those vloggers.” (Emma, #2, about Lauren 11 y/o, YouTube)*

*“If he can..., only if he can play Minecraft on it, he will think that is fine.” (Marnix, #6, about Ian 10 y/o, Apple)*

This also came forward in the results of the children. Therefore, this supports the already mentioned results of the children.

## 5. Conclusion

First of all, several conclusions can be made about the extent to which children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, develop brand knowledge about brands that are not in typical children categories. Children, in this age category, seem to be highly aware of brands that are not in typical children categories. Most children seem to be able to recall a brand from any brand category that is not a typical children category. Children who are not able to recall a brand from particular brand categories, are most of the times able to recognize a brand from these particular categories. In addition, it seems that these children form multiple associations about brands that are not in typical children categories. They particularly form brand associations around attributes, but also around benefits, attitudes and experiences.

Secondly, several conclusions can be made based on the types of brand relationships that children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, develop with brands that are not in typical children categories. Taking into account brand affections, most of these brands do not seem to create a special feeling for children that interact with these brands. However, children, in this age category, seem capable of clearly explaining what they like and dislike about these brands. It seems that children more often like things about these brands than dislike. Besides, children propose suggestions to improve these brands, in a way they like them better. Most children do not seem to be attached to brands that are not in typical children categories. However, it seems that some children feel attached to a certain brand, or really like a certain brand because of its secondary applicability. Furthermore, some children have favorite brands that are not in typical children categories. Taking into account self-brand connections, it seems that most children, in this age category, do not develop self-brand connections with these brands. They do not feel the importance to have these kinds of brands. Most children seem to accept substitutes for most of these brands. In addition, most children do not considerate what other what people would think about them when they are interacting with these brands. Nevertheless, there is a small indication that children start to develop self-brand connections with fashion brands and car brands.

Overall, children in this age category seem to develop brand knowledge about brands, that are not in typical children categories, to a quite large extent. The extent to which they develop brand relationships seems quite limited. Their brand relationships are mainly based on some aspects of brand affection; most children do not seem to develop self-brand connections with these brands. In the following section, the results will be discussed in more detail and compared to the existing literature.

## 6. Discussion

This research explored children's brand knowledge and brand relationships, focusing on brands that are not in typical children categories. In-depth interviews with children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, and their parents were conducted. So far, there was no single study that explored children's brand knowledge and brand relationships, focusing on these types of brands. Therefore, this research makes a unique contribution to the existing literature. In this section, the results of this research are discussed more in-depth, with the existing literature in mind. In a later section (Section 9) suggestions and propositions for further research are developed.

Focusing on the development of brand awareness, the results of this research indicated that children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old seem to be highly aware of brands that are not in typical children categories. Most children, in this age category, seem to be able to recall a brand from any brand category that is not a typical children category. Children who are not, will most of the times recognize brands in these categories. These results are in accordance with the already existing literature, which indicated that children, who are three years old, already show a certain level of brand awareness (Aktaş et al., 2016). However, the new discovery of this research, is that this also applies to brands that are not in typical children categories. Another previous study (McAlister & Cornwell, 2010), indicated that children in the age category of three till five years old are less likely to recognize brands that are targeted to adults. The present research adds to these findings, by indicating that all children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, are able to recognize brands that are not in typical children categories, and that they are even able to recall brands from these categories. Furthermore, the additional results of this research showed that these children already seem able to explain what a brand is and what brands do, on a surface level. When asking children, in this age category, to give some examples about brands, without mentioning a specific category, they interestingly mainly mentioned brands that are not in typical children categories.

Taking into account children's development of brand associations, children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, seem to form multiple associations about brands that are not in typical children categories. They particularly form brand associations around attributes, which are in turn most of the time product-related. Previous studies indicated that children, within the age category of 8 till 10 years old use non-observable conceptual cues as a basis for classifying products (John & Sujana, 1990). The results of this research indicated that children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, do associate brands that are not in typical

children categories, with non-product-related attributes. However, these associations were mentioned far less than those based on product-related attributes. The non-product-related attributes were mostly related to the price of products. Furthermore, previous studies suggested that children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, start to comprehend brands conceptually and begin to form more abstract brand associations around user stereotypes, personality traits and reference groups (Achenreiner and John, 2003). Overall, the results of this research indicate that most children, in this age category, do not associate brands, that are not in typical children categories, with non-product-related attributes like packaging, user imagery, or usage imagery. However, there is an indication that older children within this age category, start to form associations consisting of these types of attributes.

Next to associations around attributes, this research indicated that children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, form brand associations around benefits about brands that are not in typical children categories. However, these associations are developed far less in comparison to attributes. If children develop associations about benefits, it is indicated that these associations are most of the time related to experiential benefits. Only a few children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, seem to develop associations around symbolic or functional benefits, about these types of brands. The literature indicated that gender plays a role in children's discussions about branded products (Nairn et al., 2008). The results of this research showed that there was only one child that included gender in his association about a particular brand. This shows that, using gender in discussions about branded products, applies less to brands that are not in typical children categories.

This research further indicated that children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, develop attitudes towards brands that are not in typical children categories. However, it is indicated that these attitudes reach to just a superficial level. It is indicated that only some children in this age category form attitudes, about these brands, that are more profound. The literature indicated that children consider the morality of the actions of brands and based on that define brands as either "good" or "bad" (Lopez & Rodriguez, 2018). However, the results of this research indicate that children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, do not consider the morality of the actions of brands that are not in typical children categories. The results of this research showed an additional finding around brand attitudes. It is indicated that children, in this age category, are able to consider the brand attitudes of their parents, whether their parents like or dislike certain brands and for what reasons. This adds to the results from a previous study, about children's cognitive development, that stated that children in this age category have the competence to think from the viewpoints of others (John, 1999).

Additionally, this research indicated that children, in this age category, also seem to form associations about these brands, that cannot be linked to one of the categories as proposed by Keller (Keller, 1993). Several children mention experiences as associations, which are not directly relatable to the brand or its products.

Focusing on children's development of brand affection, most brands that are not in typical children categories, do not seem to create a special feeling for children in the age category of seven to eleven years old. However, children in this age category seem capable of clearly explaining what they like and dislike about brands that are not in typical children categories. This research has found that children, in this age category, more often seem to like things about brands that are not in typical children categories than dislike. In both cases, liking or disliking something about a brand, children seem able to clearly explain what that is about. Their reasons for liking a particular brand, most of the time have to do with certain characteristics of the products of these brands. Parents mentioned additional reasons why their children would like a brand, also related to the characteristics of the products. A previous study indicated that children like brands which their parents like and use (Ji, 2002). Although the present research showed that children get in touch with a lot of brands that are not in typical children categories through their family, it could not be derived whether they like brands which parents like and use. Furthermore, children mentioned advertisements in both their associations and things that they like about brands.

The literature indicated that parents influence child-brand relationships by learning their children about the importance of particular brands and that they guide the possibility of their children to use or consume certain brands (Ji, 2008). This research adds to these findings, by indicating that this also applies to children's brand relationships with brands that are not in typical children categories. The results of this research indicated that children know most of these brands because of their family. Furthermore, the results showed that some parents limit their children to interact with certain brands that are not in typical children categories. There is a small indication that some children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, like particular brands, that are not in typical children categories, even more, because of the fact that their parents restrict the use of some of these brands.

This research further indicated that children evaluate the price of the products or services of brands, and health issues, in their overall evaluation about whether they like or dislike a brand. Additionally, children in this age category seem to have creative ideas about how to improve things about brands, that are not in typical children categories, to make sure that they like these brands better.

Additionally, the results of this research indicated that most children in the age category of seven to eleven years old do not seem to be attached to brands that are not in typical children categories. However, some of them into account whether their parents are attached to particular brands. Furthermore, some of them would mind if a brand was not available anymore in the future, also because they want to have particular brands when they are older. Besides, some children in this age category have favorite brands that are not in typical children categories. Interestingly, it became clear that some children feel attached to or like certain brands, that are not in typical children categories, because of their secondary applicability's. This either related to brands of electronic devices or to YouTube. They really seem to be attached to some of these brands, because of the fact that these brands are suited for the games they like to play or the vloggers that they like to watch.

Focusing on children's development of self-brand connections, it appeared that children in this age category do not feel the importance to have these kinds of brands. Some children mentioned that particular brands are important for them. However, these reasons do not seem to be related to self-brand connections. These are more related to the functional use of these brands and not to their self-concepts. Most children seem to accept substitutes for most brands, some of them even mention substitutes. Several children seem to prefer a certain brand. However, most explanations do not seem to be related to self-brand connections. Only a few children that said to prefer a certain brand and mentioned reasons that could be interpreted as related self-brand connections. The present research further showed that, most children do not considerate what other what people would think about them when they are interacting with these brands. Overall, children in the age category of seven to eleven years old do not (yet) appear to develop self-brand connections with brands that are not in typical children categories. However, there is an indication that some of them start to. Based on the results of both the children and the parents, there is an indication that children start to develop self-brand connections with brands in the car category or brands in fashion categories. The literature about children's development of self-brand connections, indicated that the development of self-brand connections starts in middle childhood and that the total amount of self-brand connections that consumers develop increases while age increases (Chaplin & John, 2005).

Children get in touch with a lot of brands, that are not in typical children categories, through their family. Children interact relatively often with these brands and in case they do not own the brand themselves, they interact with these brands via friends or the internet. To close with, the results indicated that the development of children's brand knowledge and brand relationships with these brands can be influenced by the brand sensitivity of their parents.

## 7. Theoretical and managerial implications

First of all, this exploratory research contributes to theory by filling in the gap in the existing literature about children's brand knowledge and brand relationships. While exploring children's brand knowledge and relationships, this research focused, unlike other studies, on brands that are not in typical children categories. The results of this research indicate the extent to which children develop knowledge about these specific types of brands. In addition, this research shows indications about children's development of relationships with these brands and where these relationships are based on. The results are relevant for academics in the field of marketing, brand management and psychology. Some interesting areas for further research are discovered and specific research propositions are developed, which are presented in a following section (Section 9). These propositions offer new angles of approach.

Furthermore, this research contributes to managerial practice. Children represent a substantial segment and will be future key brand users. Therefore, it is essential for brand managers to understand how children perceive their brands. Managers of brands that are not in typical children categories, should realize that children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, already seem to be highly aware of these brands. Additionally, these children already form multiple associations about these brands, develop brand affections to a certain extent and start to develop self-brand connections with these brands. Some specific managerial recommendations are developed. Most children seem to get in touch with brands that are not in typical children categories through their family. Children's parents can be seen as brand ambassadors. Positive brand perceptions of parents might in turn lead to more positive brand perceptions of their children. Managers should take this into account. Additionally, it is shown that children learn about brands in primary school. Brand managers could consider offering these schools 'brand packages' of their brand, which they can use in their lessons about advertising and branding. It further appeared that children take into account the advertisements and promotions of brands. They mentioned that they would like to see brand icons that they like (e.g. popular vloggers) in advertisements. Furthermore, children like promotions that are focused on saving stamps to get a free product. If managers use these kinds of promotions, children would probably like their brand better. Managers of particular brands should consider putting the second applicability of their brand up front, since second applicability's are the reason why children really like, or are attached to, particular brands. However, especially since this research is focused on children, it is important to highlight that the results of this research should not be misused. Managers should use and consider the implications in an ethical way.

## 8. Limitations

This research consists of some limitations. First of all, it should be mentioned that the scale of this research is relatively small. Eighteen children, and eighteen parents, have been interviewed. The last interview did not deliver completely new information anymore. However, it could be that a large number of extra interviews would have result in additional results. This is kept in mind while writing the results, conclusion and discussion, by mentioning ‘it is indicated’ and ‘it seems that’. Furthermore, the interviews were only coded by the researcher. Although they were examined several times, this could have led to wrong interpretations about the comments of the informants. Another limitation is that the interviews with parents explored brands, not in typical children categories, where their children are regularly exposed to. This could have led to higher levels of brand recognition. However, most children showed they were able to recall brands that are not in typical children categories themselves, therefore if this even had any influence, it only had influence on the indications of brand recognition of a few children. Moreover, this research has focused on brands that are not in typical children categories, during the interviews with the parents these brands were discovered. However, sometimes it was hard to determine if the brands they mentioned were in typical children categories or not. At the end, almost all brands were kept in the analysis, since ‘typical’ indicates that the brands should not be mainly aimed at children, most brands where the researcher was not sure about were not mainly aimed at children. However, a few brands had to be disclosed from the analysis. Another limitation is the extent to which further questions were asked when children gave an answer. This could have been done more frequently. Sometimes a child only answered with a couple of words. Asking further about their answer could have given more insights. However, sometimes it seemed that a child was really shy and probably would shut down if any further questions were asked. In these cases, no further questions were asked. In addition, most children formulated relatively short answers. Nevertheless, in most cases questions were asked until the reason behind the answer of the child was clear. At the start, this research did not take into account the possibility that children confuse brands to be part of other brand categories, to be a category, or with other brands. Although here was controlled for in the analysis, as far as possible, it could have partly influenced the results.

## 9. Suggestions and propositions for further research

First of all, further research might explore whether children like the same brands, that are not in typical children categories, as their parents do. Although the present research showed that children get in touch with a lot of brands that are not in typical children categories through their family, it could not be derived whether they like brands which their parents like and use. However, there is a chance that they do, especially in the case of brands that are not in typical children categories.

**Proposition 1:** Children like the same brands, that are not in typical children categories, as their parents do.

Furthermore, children mentioned advertisements in both their associations and things that they like about brands. In further research, it will be interesting to explore whether advertisements play an important role in children's development of brand knowledge and brand relationships regarding these types of brands.

**Proposition 2:** Advertisements play an important role in children's development of brand knowledge and brand relationships, regarding brands that are not in typical children categories.

This research showed a small indication that some children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, like particular brands, that are not in typical children categories, even more, because their parents restrict the use of these brands.

**Proposition 3:** Children like (particular) brands, that are not in typical children categories, even more, because their parents restrict the use of these brands.

It became clear that some children feel attached to or like certain brands, that are not in typical children categories, because of their secondary applicability's. This either related to playing games on brands of electronic devices or vloggers they like to watch on YouTube. Further research might explore the extent to which this second applicability's play a role in children's development of brand relationships with these brands in general.

**Proposition 4:** Children like brands, that are not in typical children categories, because of their secondary applicability's.

There is an indication that some children, in the age category of seven to eleven years old, start to develop self-brand connections with brands in the car category or brands in fashion categories. It will be interesting to explore whether car brands and fashion brands are indeed the first brands, that are not in typical children categories, where children develop self-brand connection with. In addition, it will be interesting to explore whether the number of children's self-brand connections, with brands that are not in typical children categories, increases when children grow older.

**Proposition 5:** Car brands and fashion brands are the first brands, that are not in typical children categories, where children develop self-brand connections with.

**Proposition 6:** The number of children's self-brand connections, with brands that are not in typical children categories, increases when children grow older.

The results of this research indicated that the development of children's brand knowledge and brand relationships, with brands that are not in typical children categories, is influenced by the brand sensitivity of their parents. Further research is required to determine whether the brand sensitivity actually influences children's development of brand knowledge about brands that are not in typical children categories and children's development of relationships with brands that are not in typical children categories.

**Proposition 7:** Children's development of brand knowledge about brands, that are not in typical children categories, is influenced by the brand sensitivity of their parents.

**Proposition 8:** Children's development of brand relationships with brands, that are not in typical children categories, is influenced by the brand sensitivity of their parents.

There are some other suggestions, that do not directly relate to the results of this research. Researchers that conduct a research about brands and children in the future, should bear in mind that children sometimes confuse brands to be part of other brand categories, to be a category, or with other brands. To close with, this research could be conducted on a larger scale.

## Research Integrity Form - Master thesis

Name: Femke Derksen	Student number: s1014553
RU e-mail address: f.derksen@student.ru.nl	Master specialisation: Marketing

Thesis title: Brand (new) knowledge: exploring children's brand knowledge and brand relationships, focusing on brands that are not in typical children categories
Brief description of the study: This qualitative research filled in the gap in the current literature about brands and children, by exploring the brand knowledge and brand relationships of children, focusing on brands that are not in typical children categories.

It is my responsibility to follow the university's code of academic integrity and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of my study. This includes:

- providing original work or proper use of references;
- providing appropriate information to all involved in my study;
- requesting informed consent from participants;
- transparency in the way data is processed and represented;
- ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data;

If there is any significant change in the question, design or conduct over the course of the research, I will complete another Research Integrity Form.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1: Overview of the informants

#	Informant*	Gender	Age	Brothers/ Sisters	Highest Education Of the Parents	City	Length Of The Interview
1.	<b>Lauren</b>	F	11	1 older brother	Mbo (mother) Mavo (father)	Winterswijk (NL)	21:46
2.	<b>Emma (Mother)</b>						14:13
3.	<b>Sem</b>	M	7	1 older brother	Mbo (mother) Mbo (father)	Groenlo (NL)	19:25
4.	<b>Mila (Mother)</b>						23:29
5.	<b>Ian</b>	M	10	1 older sister	Hbo (mother) Hbo (father)	Arnhem (NL)	19:18
6.	<b>Marnix (Father)</b>						28:56
7.	<b>Noor</b>	F	10	1 younger sister (Jasmijn)	Mbo (mother) Mbo (father)	Arnhem (NL)	14:42
8.	<b>Thamar (Mother Noor &amp; Jasmijn)</b>						20:33
9.	<b>Jasmijn</b>	F	7	1 older sister (Noor)	Mbo (mother) Mbo (father)	Arnhem (NL)	10:29
10.	<b>Thamar (Mother Noor &amp; Jasmijn)</b>						18:52

11.	<b>Nina</b>	F	11	1 older brother	Mbo (mother) Mbo (father)	Groenlo (NL)	26:19
12.	<b>Janneke &amp; Teun</b> (Mother & Father)						34:06
13.	<b>Jason</b>	M	11	2 older sisters	Not known	Groenlo (NL)	18:27
14.	<b>Nienke</b> (26-year-old half-sister)						12:42
15.	<b>Rens</b>	M	10	2 older sisters	University (mother) Hbo (father)	Nijmegen (NL)	28:47
16.	<b>Marit</b> (Mother)						30:02
17.	<b>Roy</b>	M	7	3 older brothers	Hbo (mother) Mbo (father)	Arnhem (NL)	32:41
18.	<b>Marielle</b> (Mother)						Written down interview cancelled
19.	<b>Tim</b>	M	10	1 twin brother (Ruben)	Hbo (mother) Hbo (father)	Duiven (NL)	19:12
20.	<b>Charlotte</b> (Mother Tim & Ruben)						21:32
21.	<b>Ruben</b>	M	10	1 twin brother (Tim)	Hbo (mother) Hbo (father)	Duiven (NL)	19:25
22.	<b>Charlotte</b> (Mother Tim & Ruben)						(same as 20, expected the same)

23.	<b>Elin</b>	F	8	1 older brother (T)	Hbo (mother) Mbo (father)	Duiven (NL)	15:19
24.	<b>Thijs</b> (Father Elin & Tyler)						24:58
25.	<b>Tyler</b>	M	10	1 younger sister (Elin)	Hbo (mother) Mbo (father)	Duiven (NL)	13:26
26.	<b>Thijs</b> (Father Elin & Tyler)						10:30
27.	<b>Eefje</b>	F	8	1 older sister	University (mother) Hbo (father)	Duiven (NL)	16:41
28.	<b>Pam</b> (Mother)						23:21
29.	<b>Merel</b>	F	8	1 older brother	Hbo (mother) Mbo (father)	Nijmegen (NL)	20:56
30.	<b>Romee</b> (Mother Merel & Silas)						14:29
31.	<b>Silas</b>	M	11	1 younger sister	Hbo (mother) Mbo (father)	Nijmegen (NL)	19:37
32.	<b>Romee</b> (Mother Merel & Silas)						19:09
33.	<b>Lizzy</b>	F	7	1 older sister (Jade)	Hbo (mother) Mbo (father)	Apeldoorn (NL)	12:27
34.	<b>Elise</b> (Mother Lizzy & Jade)						13:44

<b>35.</b>	<b>Jade</b>	F	10	1 younger sister (Lizzy)	Hbo (mother) Mbo (father)	Apeldoorn (NL)	16:18
<b>36.</b>	<b>Elise (Mother Lizzy &amp; Jade)</b>						16:38

Table 1: Overview of the informants

## **Appendix 2: Interview guide children (English version)**

During the interviews with the parent(s), brands that are not in typical children categories, but which their child is regularly exposed to, are discussed (Appendix 4). The categories of these brands will be the starting point at topic 3. If the child knows a brand in the category his/himself, that brand will be discussed. If not, the brand his/her parent(s) mentioned will be discussed.

Before starting the interview:

- Guarantee anonymity to the parents.
- Ask the parents for permission to record the interviews. Explain that the recordings will be used (only) by the researcher to transcribe and code the interviews.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

[ KEEP THIS SHORT]

- Introduce myself and ask what his/her name is.
- Start a conversation with the child about some simple things (e.g. how old they are, what they did at school today).
- Explain in a simple way what we are going to talk about.
- Thanking the child for participating.
- Ask if he/she wants his/her parent(s) to be present during the interview. In case he/she prefers his/her parent(s) to be present, the parent(s) are asked not to interrupt the interviews.
- Ask him/her for permission to record the interviews. Explain (in a simple way) that the recordings will be used (only) by me to transcribe and code the interviews.

### **2. OVERALL BRAND QUESTIONS**

[CHILDREN IN THIS AGE CATEGORY MIGHT ALREADY KNOW WHAT THE TERM 'BRAND' MEANS. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT A PROBLEM IF THEY DO NOT KNOW]

- Do you know what a brand is?  
(If yes) → What do you know about brands?  
(If not) → [EXPLAIN]

- Could you also give an example of a brand?

[THE FOLLOWING APPLIES TO THE QUESTIONS BELOW: DURING THE INTERVIEW WITH THE PARENTS SEVERAL BRANDS THAT ARE NOT IN TYPICAL CHILDREN CATEGORIES WERE MENTIONED, THE CATEGORIES OF THESE BRANDS ARE THE STARTING POINT OF THE BRAND RECOGNITION QUESTIONS. IF THE CHILD IS ABLE TO MENTION A BRAND IN THE CATEGORY HIS/HERSELF ASK ALL THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS FOR THAT BRAND. IF NOT, ASK THE QUESTIONS FOR THE BRAND THAT HIS / HER PARENT (S) MENTIONED IN THIS CATEGORY]

### **3. BRAND AWARENESS QUESTIONS**

- If you think about (product/service category X), what kind of products/brands do you know?

[IF THE CHILD KNOWS A BRAND IN THE BRAND CATEGORY HIS/HIMSELF, SKIP THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS. IF NOT, ASK ALL QUESTION BELOW FOR THE BRANDS THAT HIS/HER PARENT(S) MENTIONED.

- Do you recognize this? (show the logo of brand X)
- Do you know what the name is?

[IF THE CHILD IS NOT AWARE OF THE BRAND → START AGAIN WITH THE NEXT BRAND: BRAND AWARENESS IS A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR BRAND ASSOCIATIONS].

- Where do you know (brand X) from?
- When do you see (brand X)?
- How often do you see (brand X)?

### **4. BRAND ASSOCIATIONS QUESTIONS**

- What do you think of (brand X)?
- Where do you think of when you use/see (brand X)?

- Are there other things that you think about?

Questions to help/extent (in case this is needed):

- Pretend that I do not know (brand X), how would you explain it to me?
- What do(es) your parent(s) think about (brand X)? Do you agree?

### **5. BRAND AFFECTION QUESTIONS**

- How do you feel when you are seeing/ using (brand X)?
- What do you like about (brand X)? Why do you like that?
- Are there things you do not like about (brand X)? Why do you not like that?
- What would you change if you could change something about (brand X)?
- How would you feel if (brand X) was not available anymore?

### **6. SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS QUESTIONS**

[SOME OF THESE QUESTIONS MIGHT BE ALREADY ANSWERED DURING THE BRAND ASSOCIATIONS QUESTIONS]

- How important is it for you to have (brand X)?
- How would you feel if you did not get (brand X) but another brand/product?
- What do you think someone thinks of you when you have/use (brand X)?

### **7. CLOSING QUESTION**

- Is there anything else you would like to tell me about (brand X)?

[ASK THE QUESTIONS (STARTING AT TOPIC 2) FOR THE NEXT BRAND]

---

### **FINAL WORDS**

- Thank you so much for having this conversation with me.

[GIVE THE CHILD A PRESENT FOR PARTICIPATING]

### **Appendix 3: Interview guide children (Dutch version)**

Tijdens de interviews met de ouder(s), zijn de merken besproken die zich niet in typische kinder-categorieën bevinden, maar waarmee hun kind vaak in aanraking komt (Appendix 5).

De categorieën van deze merken zullen het startpunt vormen van onderwerp 3: de merkherkenning vragen. Als het kind zelf een merk in de merkcategory weet te noemen, wordt dat merk besproken. Zo niet, dan wordt het merk dat zijn/haar ouder(s) genoemd heeft/hebben besproken.

Voor het starten van het interview:

- Garandeer anonimiteit aan de ouder(s).
- Vraag de ouder(s) om toestemming om het interview op te nemen. Leg uit dat de opnames alleen door mij gebruikt worden om de interviews te transcriberen en te coderen.

#### **1. INTRODUCTIE**

[HOUDT DIT KORT]

- Introduceer mijzelf en vraag wat zijn/haar naam is.
- Start een gesprek met het kind over een paar simpele dingen (bijv. hoe oud hij/zij is, wat hij/zij heeft gedaan op school vandaag).
- Leg op een simpele manier uit waar we over gaan praten.
- Bedank het kind voor zijn/haar medewerking.
- Vraag of hij/zij het fijn vindt om zijn/haar ouders bij het interview te hebben. Zo ja, vraag dan aan de ouders om de interviews niet te onderbreken.
- Vraag om toestemming om het interview op te nemen. Leg op een simpele manier uit dat de opnames alleen door mij worden gebruikt om het uit te typen.

#### **2. ALGEMENE MERKVRAGEN**

[KINDEREN IN DEZE LEEFTIJDSCATEGORIE WETEN MISSCHIEN AL WAT DE DEFINITIE 'MERK' BETEKENT. HET IS GEEN PROBLEEM ALS ZE HET NIET WETEN]

- Weet jij wat een merk is?  
(Zo ja) → Wat weet je allemaal van merken?

(Zo nee) → [LEG UIT].

- Kan je ook een voorbeeld geven van een merk?

[VOOR ONDERSTAANDE GELDT HET VOLGENDE: IN HET INTERVIEW MET DE OUDERS ZIJN EEN AANTAL MERKEN NAAR VOREN GEKOMEN. DE CATEGORIEËN VAN DEZE MERKEN VORMEN HET STARTPUNT VAN DE MERKHERKENNING VRAGEN. ALS HET KIND ZELF EEN MERK WEET TE NOEMEN IN DE CATEGORIE, STEL DAN ALLE ONDERSTAANDE VRAGEN VOOR DAT MERK. ZO NIET, STEL DAN DE VRAGEN VOOR HET MERK DAT ZIJN/HAAR OUDER(S) HEBBEN/HEEFT GENOEMD]

### 3. MERKHERKENNING VRAGEN

- Als je denkt aan (product/service categorie X), welke producten/merken ken je dan?

[ALS HIJ/ ZIJ ZELF EEN MERK WEET TE NOEMEN, SLA DAN DE VOLGENDE TWEE VRAGEN OVER. ZO NIET, STEL ALLE ONDERSTAANDE VRAGEN VOOR HET MERK DAT ZIJN/HAAR OUDER(S) NOEMDE(N)]

- Herken je dit? [SHOW THE LOGO OF BRAND X]

- Weet je ook wat de naam is?

[ALS HET KIND HET MERK NIET HERKENT → START OPNIEUW MET DE VOLGENDE MERK CATEGORIE: MERKHERKENNING IS EEN BASISVOORWAARDE VOOR MERKASSOCIATIES]

- Waar ken je (merk X) van?

- Wanneer zie je (merk X)?

- Hoe vaak zie je (brand X)?

#### **4. MERKASSOCIATIES VRAGEN**

- Wat vind je van (merk X)?
- Waar denk je aan wanneer je (merk X) gebuikt of ziet?
- Zijn er nog andere dingen waar je aan denkt?

Vragen om te helpen/ aan te vullen (in het geval dat dit nodig is):

- Stel je voor dat ik (merk X) niet ken, hoe zou je het dan aan mij uitleggen?
- Wat denkt/denken je ouder(s) van (merk X)? Ben je het daar mee eens?

#### **5. MERKAFFECTIE VRAGEN**

- Hoe voel je je wanneer je (merk X) ziet of gebruikt?
- Wat vind je leuk aan (merk X)? Waarom vind je dat leuk?
- Zijn er dingen die je niet leuk vindt aan (merk X)? Waarom vind je dat leuk?
- Wat zou je veranderen, als je iets kon veranderen aan (merk X)?
- Hoe zou je het vinden als (merk X) niet meer bestond/verkocht werd?

#### **6. ZELF-MERK CONNECTIES VRAGEN**

[SOMMIGE VAN DEZE VRAGEN ZIJN MISSCHIEN AL BEANTWOORD BIJ 4/5]

- Hoe belangrijk is het voor jou om (merk X) te hebben?
- Hoe zou je je voelen als je niet (merk X) zou hebben, maar een ander soort merk/product uit (product/service categorie X)?
- Wat denk je dat iemand van jou denkt wanneer jij (merk X) hebt/gebruikt?

#### **7. AFSLUITENDE VRAAG**

- Is er nog iets dat jij mij graag wil vertellen over (merk X)?

[STEL DE VRAGEN (VANAF ONDERWERP 3) VOOR HET VOLGENDE MERK]

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#### **AFSLUITENDE WOORDEN**

- Dit was het. Heel erg bedankt dat je mee wilde doen.

[GEEF HET KIND EEN KLEIN PRESENJTE VOOR HET MEEDOEN]

## **Appendix 4: Interview guide parents (English version)**

The interviews with the parents will take approximately 20 minutes, because these interviews will serve purely as a basis. The brands mentioned by the parents in this interview will be discussed in the interviews with their children.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- Introduce myself.
- Give a short explanation of the aim of this research: exploring the brand knowledge and brand relationships of children, focusing on brands that are not in typical children categories
- Thanking the informant for participating.
- Guarantee anonymity and ask for permission to record the interviews. Explain that the recordings will be used (only) by the researcher to transcribe and code the interviews.
- Say that I would like to start the interview and that it will take approximately 20 minutes.

### **2. EXPLORATION QUESTIONS**

[TAKE TIME FOR THIS PART]

- What are brands that your child is regularly exposed to? (in general)
- What do you expect your child to know about brands?
- Which moment(s) did you realize that your child had an understanding about brands?
- How old was your child at that moment?

[ IN CASE THE PARENT(S) ALREADY MENTIONED SOME BRANDS THAT ARE NOT IN TYPICAL CHILDREN CATEGORIES, REPEAT THEM, IF NOT SKIP THE FIRST QUESTION BELOW]

- You mentioned (.....,.....,.....)
- What are (other) brands, not in typical children categories, that your child is regularly exposed to?

To help imagine a regular day

[THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WILL BE ASKED FOR EACH BRAND THE PARENT(S) MENTION ABOVE]

### **3. EXPECTED BRAND KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS**

- Do you think that, if I would only tell the product category, he/she is able to come up with the name of the brand, or other brands in the product category, him/herself?
- Do you think (name of the child) will recognize (brand X) after seeing the logo?
- Where do you think (name of the child) associates (brand X) with? Why?

### **4. EXPECTED BRAND RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS**

- How much do you think he/she likes or dislikes (brand X)? Why is that?
- To what extent do you think he/she feels some kind of connection with this brand? Why?
- To what extent do you think that he/she likes/dislikes this brand because of what it says about him/her? (If yes) Are there examples that explain this?
- How do you think he/she would feel if this brand was not available anymore? Why?

[ASK THE QUESTIONS FOR THE NEXT BRAND THE PARENT(S) MENTIONED, STARTING FROM TOPIC 3]

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### **5. CLOSING QUESTIONS**

- Is there anything else you would like to tell me about this topic? Would you like to add something?
- Ok, to close with, I would like to write down some basic demographics, is that ok?
  - The age of the child
  - The family size (number of brothers and sister)
  - The highest education of both parents
  - The type of city or village they live in

- Do you have any questions for me?

## **FINAL WORDS**

Thank you very much for participating.

## **Appendix 5: Interview guide parents (Dutch version)**

De interviews met de ouders zullen ongeveer 20 minuten in beslag nemen, want deze interviews zullen puur de basis vormen. De merkcategorieën en/of merken die genoemd worden door de ouders in dit interview, worden besproken in de interviews met de kinderen.

### **1. INTRODUCTIE**

- Introduceer mijzelf.
- Geef een korte uitleg van het doel van dit onderzoek: het ontdekken van de merkkennis en merkrelaties van kinderen, gefocust op merken die zich niet in typische kinder-categorieën bevinden.
- Bedank de ouder(s) voor het meewerken.
- Garandeer anonimiteit en vraag om toestemming om de interviews op te nemen. Leg uit dat de opnames alleen door mij gebruikt worden om de interviews te transcriberen en coderen.
- Zeg dat ik het interview zou willen starten en dat het ongeveer 20 minuutjes gaat duren.

### **2. EXPLORATIE VRAGEN**

[NEEM DE TIJD VOOR DIT GEDEELTE]

- Wat zijn merken waarmee uw kind vaak in aanraking komt? (in het algemeen)
- Wat verwacht u dat uw kind allemaal weet over merken?
- Wanneer merkte u aan uw kind dat hij/zij merken begon te herkennen?
- Hoe oud was uw kind op dat moment?

[IN HET GEVAL DAT DE OUDER(S) AL SOMMIGE MERKEN HEBBEN GENOEMD DIE ZICH NIET IN TYPISCHE KINDER-CATEGORIEËN BEVINDEN, HERHAAL ZE, ZO NIET SLA HET EERSTVOLGENDE OVER]→

- U noemde (.....)
- Wat zijn (andere) merken, niet in typische kinder-categorieën, waarmee uw kind vaak in aanraking komt?

Om te helpen: stelt u zich een normale dag voor....

[DE VOLGENDE VRAGEN WORDEN GESTELD VOOR ELK BOVENGENOEMD MERK]

### 3. VERWACHTTE MERKKENNIS VRAGEN

- Verwacht u dat, als ik alleen de productcategorie noem, dus (merkcategorie X), dat uw kind zelf deze merknaam kan noemen, of andere merken in deze merkcategorie?
- Denkt u dat hij/zij (merk X) zal herkennen na het zien van het merklogo?
- Waar denkt u dat hij/zij (merk x) mee associeert? Waarom?

### 4. VERWACHTTE MERKRELATIE VRAGEN

- Wat denkt u dat uw kind leuk vindt aan (merk x)? Waarom?
- Wat denkt u dat uw kind minder leuk vindt aan (merk x)? Waarom?
- In hoeverre denkt u dat (merk x) een belangrijke rol speelt voor uw kind? Waarom?
- In hoeverre denkt u dat hij/zij dit merk niet leuk/wel leuk vindt, door wat het over hem/haar zegt? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven waar dit uit blijkt?
- Hoe denkt u dat uw kind zich zal voelen als dit merk niet meer beschikbaar zou zijn? Waarom?

[STEL DE VRAGEN VOOR HET VOLGENDE MERK, STARTEND VANAF ONDERWERP 3]

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### 5. AFSLUITENDE VRAGEN

- Is er nog iets anders dat u graag aan mij zou willen vertellen over dit onderwerp? Of zou u nog wat aan willen vullen?
- Oké, om het af te ronden, zou ik graag wat basis persoonskenmerken op willen schrijven, is dat oké?

- De leeftijd van uw kind
- De gezinssamenstelling (aantal, en het aantal broertjes/zusjes)
- Hoogst genoten opleiding van de ouder(s)
- Het type dorp of stad waar ze wonen

- Heeft u verder nog vragen voor mij?

## **AFSLUITENDE WOORDEN**

Heel erg bedankt voor uw medewerking