Brand Identity
An Investigation of the LEGO Group and Its Exposure of Brand Identity

Af Camilla Laigaard Bak

Vejleder: Sanne Schioldann Haase

Department of Language and Business Communication
Aarhus School of Business
Aarhus University
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Abstract

Title: BRAND IDENTITY – An investigation of the LEGO Group and its exposure of brand identity online

Author: Camilla Laigaard Bak

Field of study: Marketing and Management Communication (MMC)

Institute: Aarhus School of Business (ASB)

In recent years an increased focus on the terms of brand identity has influenced the “world” of brand development and branding strategies. The companies of today are competing not only on products but also on the brand’s inner inspiration and identity. Thereby, it is no longer sufficient solely to focus on product attributions as the key to successful brand-customer relationships is to know the consumers.

The overall objective of this report is to explore the concepts of brand identity in a communicative context and, moreover, provide an investigation of the LEGO Group and its exposure of brand identity online. In order to begin the investigation the importance of building strong brands is argued and outlined in the first part of the report. In fact, it can be difficult for companies to build and create strong brands in today’s dynamic and competitive marketplace, but by understanding how to build a brand identity it is doable. The concepts of brand identity is outlined as the last section in part one. In this section relevant theoretical frameworks developed by David A. Aaker and Jean-Noël Kapferer are stated and explained. Despite their different approaches to the field, the two theorists touch upon basic elements which turned out somehow interrelated.

Secondly, the case study of the LEGO Group is outlined in part 2. In this part the brand and website are stated in order to create a basis for the investigation of the LEGO Group’s brand identity set out to explore in this report.

The last part of the report constitutes the analysis and investigation of the LEGO brand and the brand identity developed by the company. This part consists; first, of a thorough analysis of the company brand based upon the theories stated in part one and, second, of an analytical discussion putting the matter into perspective. In addition, the analytical discussion concluded, that the LEGO website encompasses a detailed level of information regarding the company and brand and
thereby made it possible to consider all concepts in accordance to the theoretical perspectives investigated. Furthermore, Aaker’s and Kapferer’s theoretical frameworks generated an understanding of the how and why of the LEGO brand identity and provided a deeper context to the concepts of brand identity.

Conclusively, it would be fair to argue, that this report presents the reader to a relevant insight into the investigation of the LEGO Group and its exposure of brand identity online. Furthermore, the analysis provided the report with consistency between the theories and the brand identity developed by the LEGO Group.

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1. Introduction

The tendency within consumer behaviour of today has provided the companies with a wakeup-call as the understanding of consumer behaviour is good business\(^1\). This statement is quite important when linked to the understanding and development of brand identities. In the business of today, companies are competing not only on products but on brand identity as well. The customers have higher expectations towards the brands and are not satisfied with standard products fulfilling basic needs. If the brand does not promise or offer something special the customers may turn to the competitors. “(...) the strongest brands are the promise-keeping ones. Failing to keep those promises leads to an embarrassing exposé. Good branding leads to sincerity while failure to use branding principles leads to collapse”\(^2\).

The overall aim of this report is to explore the definitions and concepts developed in the field of brand identity in a communicative context and, in addition, link the theoretical concepts to a relevant case study. In the report the LEGO Group will be used as a case study and an investigation of the company’s brand identity will be constructed. Moreover, the report will examine the different approaches linked prior and during the development of brand identities as well as highlighting the importance of the concept. Furthermore, the report will generate a discussion towards a possible consistency between the theoretical frameworks used for the analysis and the actual brand identity exposed by the LEGO Group.

1.1. Problem Statement

This report is set out to investigate;

*How does the LEGO Group expose brand identity seen from an external communicative perspective? (www.lego.com) and is there consistency between the theory written by Aaker and Kapferer (in the field of brand identity) and the brand identity exposed by the LEGO Group?*

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\(^1\) Solomon, Micheal (2006): *Consumer Behaviour; A European Perspective*. p.8

\(^2\) Ind, Nicholas (2003): *Beyond Branding – How the new values of transparency and integrity are changing the world of brands*. p. 208
1.2. Methodology
The problem statement will be answered based on a theoretical discussion of relevant theories and an empirical analysis of the case study. In other words, the project will be answered through a deductive method. The deductive method moves the project answers from general theory to particular examples - using the case study. Furthermore, the empirical analysis will be supported by theoretical frameworks, which creates an understanding and interpretation of potential findings.

1.2.1. Theoretical Framework
In order to write a structured report, I have been decided to describe the theorists and their conceptual work when dealt with respectively. Part one of the report; the theoretical discussion, will thus explain and discuss the theoretical framework vital for the case study of the LEGO Group in part two and the analysis of the LEGO Group and its exposure of brand identity in part three. The report will be based on two main theorists David A. Aaker and Jean-Noël Kapferer. They are both well-known and widely cited for their contribution to the field; especially Aaker’s Brand Identity System$^3$ is extensively used in the academics and by practitioners. Also Kapferer’s notion on how to build brands and his version of what constitutes a brand identity is used as well. Hence, it has been assumed, that both theorists are relevant and professionally qualified for the report.

The theoretical framework in part one will constitute:

- Section 2. Building strong brands
- Section 3. The concept of brand identity.

1.3. Structure
As stated in the theoretical framework, the report is structured in three major parts. Section two and three constitute the first part of the report. Section two will touch upon the importance of creating a strong brand and why it is vital to businesses of today. Section three will account for the definition of brand identity. In this section the theoretical framework will be discussed based

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on the two main theorists Aaker and Kapferer. These two sections, providing an overall theoretical discussion on the importance of creating strong brands and the concept of brand identity, will ultimately constitute the theoretical framework for the case study of the LEGO Group.

Part two is the case study of the LEGO Group, which is dealt with in section 4. In this section the LEGO Company will be outlined in terms of company profile and brand as well as a description of the website. This part of the report and the theoretical discussion in part one will generate the foundation for the analytical part of the report.

Part three will consist of section 5 and 6. This part will generate the analysis of the LEGO Group’s brand identity exposed online based on the theoretical frameworks outlined in section 3. Finally, section 6 will provide the report with an analytical discussion and thus putting the matter into perspective.

1.4. Choice of Empirical Data

In this report the Danish LEGO Group has been chosen as a case study. The LEGO Group is an interesting international business, which today, in terms of sales, is the world’s sixth-largest manufacturer of toys. This development has made the company an interesting part of the international businesses world of today. In this connection the company website will be analysed in terms of its relation to branding seen from an external communicative perspective. Furthermore, the analysis will feature a discussion in relation to the concept of brand identity.

As the overall goal of this report is to investigate the LEGO Group and its exposure of brand identity online, the company will not be contacted during the process. This investigation will thereby represent an external view and perception through the company website (www.lego.com). Thereby, the LEGO website constitutes the basis for the analysis and provides the communicative material used for the investigation.

1.5. Delimitation

The greater perspective on branding offered through academic literature of today has made it necessary to delimit the focus and main perspective on the brand identity concept and select the
most suitable theorists to provide theoretical frameworks that embraces the scope and problem statement of this report. Hence it has been acknowledged that the framework in this report is a requirement for developing an insight on the concept of brand identity. Recognizing the great amount of frameworks and complex concepts developed in the field of branding and hence those concepts could be approached in many different ways, several fields of interest have been found less relevant in the creation of this report. A few examples could be the notions on storytelling, consumer behaviour aspects and branding concepts including; positioning and branding strategies, which has been excluded.

The choice for using the LEGO Group and its exposure of brand identity online has highlighted the challenge of making a case study based just on the external communication efforts. In this connection it would be relevant to state that the use of www.lego.com only represents one external communication media and that other types of media such as; TV commercials, customer magazines, printed advertisements etc. could have been relevant as well. Using the LEGO website, a link to online-branding in general terms could have been relevant to investigated, however, this will be delimitated in this report.

Despite delimitations, the report strives to present a theoretical framework suited for the case study of the LEGO Group as well as answers to the questions set out to explore.
2. Building Strong Brands

In the business of today companies are competing not only on products but on brand identity as well. The customers expect more form a product than just the fulfilling of some basic needs. Hence, the brand identity has, or at least should have, high priority when it comes to the company’s strategic planning and future branding strategies.

Looking into the field of classical brand-theorists names as David A. Aaker and Jean-Noël Kapferer shows. As mentioned in the introduction, they are both well-known and widely cited for their contribution to the field and will create basis for the theoretical frameworks used in this report.

According to Aaker it can be difficult for companies to build and create strong brands in today’s dynamic and competitive marketplace. In fact he links the management who strives to develop a strong brand to a golfer playing on a course with heavy roughs, deep sand-traps, and vast water barriers. No matter how great a golfer the player is it is difficult to score high in such conditions. Because of that the brand builder can be inhibited by significant pressures and barriers.

Today, the idea of identity has developed rapidly and the development does not surprise. The problems nowadays are more complex than ever and the need for refined concepts that allow close reality connections has increased. According to Kapferer, we cannot overemphasise the fact of a society saturated in communications. All people want to communicate and the budgets in advertising are higher than ever. Nowadays communication means two things; first, sending out messages, and second making sure they get received. Another factor, which makes the understanding of brand identity vital is the brand pressure. “We have now entered an age of marketing similarities”. Meaning, when a brand innovates, the competitors needs to follow in order to stay in the race.

Additionally, Aaker states that it is a fact that building successful and strong brands is difficult, but it is doable. “One key to successful brand-building is to understand how to develop a brand identity – to know what the brand stands for and to effectively express that identity”.

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4 Aaker, op.cit., p. 26
6 Ibid., p. 173
7 Aaker, op.cit., p. 35
Based on the above statements it would be fair to argue that building strong brands is essential if companies want to survive in the business environment today. Furthermore, it is important to mention that brand building may be time-consuming and difficult to understand. However, when the correct brand identity is built, the company ends up with strong brand equity.
3. The Concept of Brand Identity
The two theorists David A. Aaker and Jean-Noël Kapferer have both succeeded in creating relevant theories and frameworks in the field of brand identity. In this section Aaker and Kapferer will be used in order to describe the concept and thereby the bases for the case study analysis in section 5 and 6. Concepts from both theorists will be used and discussed in order to define the “brand identity” in a comprehensive manner. Furthermore, similarities, differences and potential contradictions will be highlighted and argued in a theoretical discussion.

3.1. What is Brand Identity?
According to Aaker a person’s identity serves to provide direction, purpose and meaning for that exact person\(^8\). Furthermore, important questions such as; what are my core values? what do I stand for? etc. are closely linked to that identity. Looking at brand identity it also provides direction, purpose and meaning for the brand. “Brand identity is a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organization members”\(^9\). Moreover, brand identity should be created in order to establish a customer-brand relationship by generating value propositions\(^10\).

Kapferer, on the other hand, argues that a brand is not just a name. Instead it is the vision that manages the creation of products and services under a certain name\(^11\). Furthermore, brand identity is one of the two essential tools of brand management, which the modern competition of today calls for. The other essential tool is brand positioning which will be delimited in this report.

3.1.1. Brand Identity - A Necessary Concept
Like the ideas and statements on brand vision and purpose, the concept and terms of brand identity is recent. According to Kapferer, it started in Europe and the perception of its vital importance has gradually gained worldwide recognition\(^12\). Today the concept and word “identity”

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\(^8\) Aaker, David A. (1996): p. 68
\(^12\) Kapferer, Jean-Noël (2008): p. 171
has different meanings and is used in various ways. Some people speak of ‘identity cards’, we hear of ‘identity of opinion’, and psychologists speak of ‘identity crisis’. In this connection it would be fair to argue that ‘brand identity’ may be a recent notion, but a notion that by companies has been developed and used effectively in organizational terms. “…we can infer that having an identity means being your true self, driven by a personal goal that is both different from others’ and resistant to change”

In order to create and define a clear and precise brand identity Kapferer has developed a range of questions, which should be considered. When the management finds the answers it could constitute the brand’s charter. This charter could be an important management tool and may help simplify future communication and extension issues. Before developing the visual expression and graphics of a brand it is vital to define an explicit definition of the brand identity. Furthermore, Kapferer states that many companies unnecessarily constrained their brand because they did design their graphic charter before defining their identity.

In Kapferer’s framework on brand identity he highlights the question; why speak of identity rather than image? It would be fair to argue that this question is of high relevance when it comes to exposure and development of brand identity as well as the company’s overall image. Looking into the terms of brand image and brand identity, brand image is on the receiver’s side whereas identity is on the side of the sender. Image research focuses on the way people perceive products, brands, people etc. and in that connection the image refers to the way these people decode the signals emanating from a given product, service or/and the communication covered by the brand. Identity, on the other hand, has the purpose of specifying a certain brand’s meaning, aim, and self-image. “Image is both the result and interpretation thereof”. According to Kapferer, and in terms of brand management, brand identity precedes image. In that connection it would be fair to state that before projecting an image to the open, the companies should think carefully what precisely they want to project.

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13 Kapferer, op.cit., p. 172
14 Ibid., p. 172 - See appendix 1
15 Ibid., p. 174
16 Ibid., p. 174
3.2. The Six Facets of Brand Identity

Inner deep inspiration is according to Kapferer the key in order to become a ‘passion brand’ or ‘love mark’. Meaning, the brand must not be hollow, but instead have character and its own beliefs, and thereby help the consumer discovering his or her personal identity\textsuperscript{17}. It would be fair to argue that brands speak about products, and are perceived as being the source of products and services, thus communication theory is vital and relevant.

3.2.1. The Identity Prism

According to Kapferer, brand identity has six facets and is divided into the brand identity prism model, which should be represented by a hexagonal prism\textsuperscript{18}.

1. Facet: Physique: The first facet is about the brand physical specialities and qualities – called the brand physique. The brand physique consists of a combination of either salient objective features or emerging ones. Moreover, the physique is the backbone and its tangible added value. It would be fair to argue that the first step in developing a brand is to develop its physical aspects. This highlights questions such as; what is it concretely? and what does it look like?\textsuperscript{19}.

2. Facet: Personality: When the company and brand communicates, it gradually builds up a brand character. According to Kapferer the term and concept of brand personality has been the main focus of brand advertising since the 1970’s. In that connection numerous American agencies have made it a prerequisite for communication as well as opened the idea of having famous characters representing brands. In order to create an instant personality it is an easy method linking a spokesperson to the brand, whether real or symbolic.

3. Facet: Culture: “\textit{There is no cult brand without a brand culture}”\textsuperscript{20}. The brand should build its own culture from which its products drive. However, the products are not the only actual representation of the brand culture, but also a means of communication. In this facet the culture furthermore, means the set of values, which feeds the brand’s inspiration. Moreover, it refers to the basic principles governing the brand in the way of outward signs – through products and

\textsuperscript{17} Kapferer, op.cit., p. 182
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 182 – See appendix 2
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 183
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 184
communication. “This essential aspect is the core of the brand”\(^{21}\). The brand culture should as well be the key point for the consumers to see the differences between brands in competition. When the consumers choose between brands the culture is often of high relevance; e.g. brands with counties of origin or brands differentiating on culture when it comes to relationships could bring pivotal value to the consumer.

4. Facet: Relationship: The brand often functions as the crux of transactions and exchanges between people. This facet and brand relationship has been used in many ways by different brands. Some link love and uniqueness to their brand whereas others use the term of service as their brand relationship. “This facet defines the mode of conduct that most identifies the brand”\(^{22}\). Furthermore, the relationship facet has a number of implications, which determine the way the brand acts, delivers service, and relates to its customers.

5. Facet: Reflection: As a product communicates and gets built over time, the brand always tends to build a reflection or image of the consumer which it seems to be addressing. According to Kapferer reflection and target often get mixed up. The target describes the potential buyers and consumers of the product. Reflection, on the other hand, should be linked to the way the customer wishes to be seen as a result of the brand.

6. Facet: Self-image: Kapferer states that reflection is the target’s outward mirror and thereby self-image generates the target’s personal internal mirror. In that connection our attitude towards certain brands develops an inner relationship with ourselves. In other words, when people for instance buy a piece of a high fashion design they create an attitude towards that certain brand and kind of lifestyle and may prove to themselves that they have the ability to buy such high-priced products. Other examples could be the prestige the product offers or a link to certain communities.

After stating the six facets of brand identity it would be fair to argue that all facets of the brand identity prism are interrelated and generates a well-structured entity – the content of one given facet echoes that of another. Furthermore, it is vital for brands to communicate if they want to exist. Conclusively, the brand identity prism helps us understand the essence of both brand and company identities.

\(^{21}\) Kapferer, op.cit., p. 184
\(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 185
3.3. The Brand Identity System

3.3.1. Brand Identity Traps

In order to create a strong brand it is vital to focus on the brand identity traps, which demonstrates the value of expanding the concept as well as providing insight into what a brand identity is and is not. The brand identity traps are divided into four approaches\(^\text{23}\). The four brand identity traps are representing approaches, which could lead companies into developing ineffective and dysfunctional brand strategies.

The brand image trap concerns knowledge on customers and necessary background information in order to create the brand identity. In this trap it is important to state that the companies have to focus on more than what their customers want, but also reflect the soul and vision of the brand.

The brand position trap occurs when the search for brand identity becomes the search for brand position, stimulated by a practical need to give objectives to the developing of communications. In that connection the goal becomes an advertising tag line rather than a brand identity. This trap reduces the progress of a full-fledged brand identity, as the management weeds out aspects that they feel are not worth communicating. Furthermore, there is often no space to consider brand personality, organizational associations, or brand symbols.

The external perspective trap occurs when companies fail to realize the role brand identity has in order to help an organization understand its basic values and purpose. “It is hard to expect employees to make a vision happen if they do not understand and buy into that vision”\(^\text{24}\).

The product-attribute fixation trap is the most common. In this trap the strategic and tactical management of the brand is focussed exclusively on product attributes. In this connection it would be relevant to state that a brand is more than a product and that companies who are only on product attributes usually leads to developing less than optimal brand strategies.

Looking at the four identity traps they suggest how a brand identity may become limiting and ineffective. “A key to developing a strong brand identity is to broaden the brand concept to include other dimensions and perspectives”\(^\text{25}\). In order to avoid brand identity traps Aaker has

\(^{23}\) Aaker, op.cit., p. 69
\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 72
\(^{25}\) Ibid., p. 76
developed a model, which provides a broader perspective on brand identity planning (BIP). The central part of the model is the brand identity system. Here the brand identity provides value proposition to the target audience, which furthermore, leads to the goal of the system: a strong brand and customer relationship.

3.3.2. Four Brand Identity Perspectives

As mentioned above the BIP-model helps the brand manager to create a brand identity which has texture and depth. In that connection four brand identity perspectives should be considered. It would be fair to argue that the four perspectives are quite different and may not all be suitable or relevant for all brands. On the other hand, their common goal is to help the management consider the different possibilities and brand elements that can help clarify, enrich, and differentiate an identity. For some brands, simply one perspective is relevant.

**Brand-as-product:** Even though brand managers should strive to avoid the product-attribute fixation trap, product related associations are more or less always part of a brand identity as they are directly linked to brand choice decisions as well as the use experience. “A core element of a brand’s identity is usually its product trust, which will affect the type of associations that are desirable and feasible.” In addition, it would be relevant to consider with what product a brand is associated? If the company manages to create a strong link between its brand and the product class the brand will have a fair opportunity for being recalled when the product class is cued. On the other hand, the goal of linking a brand with a product class is not to gain recall of a product class when the brand is mentioned. Looking into the attributions directly related to purchase or use of a product it might provide functional and perhaps emotional benefits for the customer. E.g. a product-related attribute may create a value proposition by offering something in addition; like features or services, or by simply offering a better product. Furthermore, the quality element is vital when it comes to product-related attributes. Value is also related to quality as it enriches the concept by adding a price dimension. Associations with “use occasions” or with “users” are also commonly used. Some brands effectively attempt to own a particular use or application, making

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26 See appendix 3
27 Aaker, op.cit., p. 78
28 Ibid., p. 78
29 Ibid., p. 78
the competitors’ work around their reality or to position the brand by type of user. According to Aaker, a strong user-type position can imply a value proposition as well as a brand personality.

**Brand-as-organization:** This perspective focuses on attributes of the organization instead of those of products or services. “Such organizational attributes as innovation, a drive for quality, and concern for the environment are created by people, culture, values, and programs of the company.” Looking into the organizational attributes they are more enduring and resistant to competitive claims than products attributes. E.g. it is easier to copy a product than an organization with people, values, and programs, or because organizational attributes such as innovation is hard to evaluate and communicate, it is hard for competitors to demonstrate that they have overcome any perceived gap.

**Brand-as-person:** When companies use brand-as-person they want a brand identity that is richer and more interesting than one based solely on product attributes. Just like people, a brand can be perceived as competent, trustworthy, fun etc. Furthermore, a brand personality may create a stronger brand in numerous ways; first, it can help create self-expressive benefits that may help the customer express his/her own personality. Second, as human personalities affect relationships between people, brand personality can create a relationship between the brand and the customer. Third, a brand personality may help communicate a product attribute and thereby give a functional benefit.

**Brand-as-symbol:** If a company manages to create a strong symbol it can provide cohesion and structure to an identity, which will lead to recognition and recall by the customers. Anything linked to a brand can be a symbol however, three types of symbols is highlighted in the brand identity planning model; visual imagery, metaphors, and the brand heritage. E.g. symbols involving visual imagery can be memorable and powerful. It would be fair to argue that each visual image captures much of its brands identity as the connections between the symbol and the identity elements have been built up over time. In other words, it should just take a glance to be reminded of the brand. According to Aaker, symbols are more meaningful if they involve a metaphor, with a symbol or a symbol characteristic representing a functional, emotional, or self-

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30 Aaker, op.cit., p. 81
31 Ibid., p. 82
32 Ibid., p: 82
expressed benefit\textsuperscript{33}. Conclusively, a vivid, meaningful heritage sometimes also represents the essence of a brand.

### 3.3.3. The identity Structure

Aaker states that brand identity consists of a core identity and an extended identity\textsuperscript{34}.

\textbf{The core identity} represents the timeless essence of the brand. In other words, the core identity should represent the center that remains after peeling away layers of an onion. Furthermore, the core identity contains the associations that are most expected to remain constant as the brand expands. It should also be more resistant to change than the extended identity. Meaning, the brand position and communication strategies may change over time, just as the extended identity, but the core identity should stay constant and timeless. In addition, the core identity should include elements, which create a unique and valuable brand.

\textbf{The extended identity} includes elements that provide texture and completeness to the brand. “\textit{It fills the picture, adding details that help portray what the brand stands for}”\textsuperscript{35}. An extended identity could e.g. include; the product, a company slogan, and a brand personality. It would be fair to argue, that each of these elements has a certain role to play as a driver of the brand identity, but they do not represent the core identity as such. Moreover, the core identity generally does not possess enough information to perform all of the functions of a brand identity.

### 3.3.4. Providing a Value Proposition

According to Aaker a brand identity needs to provide a value proposition to the customer. “A brand’s value proposition is a statement of the functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits delivered by the brand that provide value to the customer. An effective value proposition should lead to a brand-customer relationship and drive purchase decisions”\textsuperscript{36}.

\textbf{Functional benefits} are based on product attributes and provide functional utility to the customer. This type of benefits usually relate directly to the functions delivered by the products or services

\textsuperscript{33} Aaker, op.cit., p. 85  
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p. 85  
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 87  
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 95
for the customer. Furthermore, the functional benefits are often linked to customer decisions and use experiences.

**Emotional benefits** provide the customers with a positive feeling. This type of benefits adds richness and depth to the experience of purchasing or using a certain brand. Emotional benefits are often linked to a brand through slogans or use experiences. When a company wants to link an emotional benefit to their product the focus of research should be on feelings. How do the customers feel when they are buying or using the product? and what feelings are engendered by the achievement of a functional benefit? Furthermore, Aaker states that the strongest brand identities consist of both functional and emotional benefits\(^{37}\).

**Self-expressive benefits** are used in order to make the customer fulfil his or her need for self-expression. The consumer behaviour researcher Russell Belk once wrote, “That we are what we have is perhaps the most basic and powerful fact of consumer behaviour”\(^{38}\). By this statement he meant that brands and products can easily become symbols of a person’s self-concept.

### 3.3.5. Building a Brand-Customer Relationship

Building a brand-customer relationship is the bottom-line in the mid-section of the BIP-model and is often based upon value propositions. If the companies manage to develop and select the right value propositions the customers may be more loyal towards the companies and their products. According to Aaker, many brand-customer relationships emerge when the brand is considered as an organization or as a person, rather than as a product\(^{39}\). E.g. highlighting concerns for customers or the environment, which is an organizational association, may create basis for a relationship.

### 3.4. Theoretical Discussion

The understanding and management of brand identity are vital keys to building and maintaining strong brands and thereby creating brand equity. In the above section, theoretical frameworks

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\(^{37}\) Aaker, op. cit., p. 98  
\(^{38}\) Ibid., p. 99  
\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 103
developed by Aaker and Kapferer has been outlined and explained. In this section, similarities, differences and potential contradictions will be highlighted and argued.

Looking at the theoretical frameworks outlined in this report Aaker and Kapferer have developed two individual brand identity concepts. However, it would be fair to argue that they both, to some extent, use similar concepts and methods of analysis. Aaker developed the brand identity traps as a tool to avoid ineffective and dysfunctional branding strategies. Furthermore, it demonstrates the value of expanding the concept as well as providing insight into what a brand identity is and is not. Kapferer, on the other hand, developed the brand identity questions as part of a brand’s charter. These questions, when answered, will clearly help define the brand identity and thereby, as Aaker’s brand identity traps, create basis for an effective brand identity. In this connection, it would be fair to argue, that Aaker’s brand identity traps and Kapferer’s brand identity questions are different in content but somehow similar in purpose.

When developing the “core” brand identity Aaker and Kapferer use different approaches and perspectives. Aaker, on the one hand, developed frameworks such as; the brand identity perspectives, the identity structures, and value propositions etc. By using Aaker’s theoretical perspectives and guidelines the brand identity will be considered step-by-step in details and end up with a relevant brand identity foundation. Kapferer on the other hand focuses on the importance of creating the right brand identity through concepts such as; brand identity charters, brand identity vs. image, and the six facets of brand identity. Here Kapferer’s approaches to brand identity are somewhat different from the ones developed and used by Aaker. First, Kapferer highlights the importance of creating brand identity before developing the graphic charter visualizing the brand. Furthermore, Kapferer states the importance of sending the right message/brand identity and ensuring it is received correctly with the intended purpose. As mentioned, Kapferer developed the identity prism containing the six facets to brand identity. In this framework he divides brand identity into; physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection, and self-image. Linking Kapferer’s six facets to the frameworks developed by Aaker, similar perspectives shows. E.g. Kapferer’s second facet: personality could be linked to Aaker’s four brand identity perspectives, particularly brand-as-person, as both frameworks focuses on the personality of the brand identity. Another example could be the fourth facet: relationship. In this facet Kapferer defines the mode of conduct that most identifies the brand. Aaker highlights

40 Kapferer, op.cit., p. 172
relationship as the last element in the brand identity system, and defines it as the outcome of using the right brand associations. In this connection it would be fair to argue that both theorists use “relationship” as a key element in the brand identity process and want companies to emphasize that exact aspect.

Looking at some of the differences between Aaker and Kapferer a few important aspects could be worth mentioning. Kapferer touches upon the sender and receiver role, which Aaker does not directly emphasize. Aaker on the other hand strive to link the brand to the four brand perspectives\(^ {41}\), create a core and extended identity as well as provide the brand with a value proposition\(^ {42}\). Meaning, Aaker uses different theoretical frameworks as a guideline to make the companies consider possible brand associations. Kapferer on the other hand uses elements in his identity prism such as; physique, culture, reflection, and self-image, which Aaker does not directly employ.

Conclusively, it would be vital to state that both Aaker and Kapferer agrees on the importance of building a core brand identity and that it should be resistant to change. According to Kapferer, brand identity is the value of the brand and company. Brand identity is being your true self, driven by a personal goal that is different from others and resistant to change. Additionally Aaker states that a brand identity consists of a range of brand associations that create a promise to the customers. That promise should help establish a brand-customer relationship.

### 3.5. Summary

In order to investigate the LEGO Group and its exposure of brand identity online, relevant theory has been outlined and explained in the above sections. From what have been concluded in these sections, it is quite complicated and demanding to develop and maintain a brand identity. On the other hand it would be fair to argue, that a company without a carefully worked out brand identity would be hard to survive in the business world of today.

Nevertheless, the frameworks developed by Aaker and Kapferer demonstrated, independently, several similar approaches to the concept. Both theorists agree on the fact that the brand identity is a necessary concept and that the concept should be developed in all companies in order to

\(^{41}\) Aaker, op.cit., p. 78  
\(^{42}\) Ibid., p. 95
generate a successful brand and future branding strategies. Kapferer developed the brand identity questions as the foundation for creating a clear and precise brand identity. Similarly, Aaker’s brand identity traps were designed to avoid dysfunctional and ineffective brand identities. Likewise, Kapferer and Aaker developed individual frameworks on the development of the brand identity; Kapferer – the six facets of brand identity, and Aaker- the brand identity system. In this connection it would be fair to state that even though similar concepts are developed they still provide different interpretations to the concept of brand identity. Conclusively, the theoretical discussion highlighted similarities and differences on the above statements.
4. The LEGO Group Case Study

In this report the LEGO Group will be used as a case study. The following two sections will state information on the LEGO Group and brand as well as a description of the website.

4.1. Company Profile and Brand

The LEGO Group\(^{43}\) was founded in 1932 by Ole Kirk Christiansen. The company has been a family business since its starting point and has passed from father to son and is today owned by Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen, a grandchild of the founder\(^{44}\). The name “LEGO” is an abbreviation of the two Danish words “leg godt” meaning “play well” which is also the company ideal.

The vision and purpose of the LEGO Group is to motivate the target audience to explore and challenge their individual creative potential. In order to accomplish that vision the company is offering a line of high-quality products, which are fun and centred on building systems. In that connection it is essential that the products inspire the children to feel the uniqueness of the LEGO play as well as experiencing it as fun, creative, engaging and challenging at the same time\(^{45}\).

According to the LEGO Group the brand is more than just a familiar logo as it represents the expectations that people have of the company. These expectations include both the products and services provided by the company as well as the accountability towards the world\(^{46}\). Children are not only the target audience of the company but also its role-models and vital for the company mission. The company has a definite approach to quality and wants to be the greatest and most credible player in the toy business. According to the LEGO Group, the LEGO brick is the most important product and was launched in 1958. During the years the products have undergone extensive development but the basis still remains the “old” traditional LEGO brick. Furthermore, the “old fashion” and unique LEGO brick is the reason why the company twice have been named “Toy of the Century”\(^{47}\).

Conclusively, it would be fair to argue that the company has developed rapidly over the past 70 years - it started as a small carpenter’s workshop and today the company is represented as a

\(^{43}\) See appendix 4
modern, worldwide business, which, in terms of sales, is the world’s sixth-largest manufacturer of toys.

4.2. The Company Website

As the aim of this report is to investigate the LEGO Group and its exposure of brand identity online it would be necessary to consider and analyze the company website\(^{48}\). Thus this section will outline the main points of the website in order to continue the analysis in section 5 and 6.

On the company website, as visitor you find a universe of products, games, virtual entertainment etc. as well as information concerning the LEGO Group. The front-page as well as the navigation-pages are all colourful and easy to navigate as the website is divided into different categories; home, products, play and shop. Besides the four main categories the website has some consistent similarities and characteristics. All important information regarding the LEGO Group is placed in the foot of all navigation pages. This information is divided into; customer service, about us, educators, parents, LEGOLAND, site index, and legal notice.

The above information and the general impression of the LEGO website will generate the basis for the analysis of the company’s exposure of brand identity. Furthermore, the theoretical frameworks outlined by Aaker and Kapferer will provide the report with a theoretical perspective.

\(^{48}\) See appendix 5
5. The Lego Group and its Exposure of Brand Identity Online

In this section a detailed analysis of the LEGO Group’s exposure of brand identity will be outlined provided by the theoretical frameworks developed by Aaker and Kapferer stated in section 3. Thereby the analysis will generate the answers to the questions set out to explore in this report.

5.1. The Beginning of the Brand Identity Process

5.1.1. The Brand Identity Questions

As stated in section 3, Kapferer developed a number of questions important when creating the basis for a company’s brand identity. The first question highlights the brand’s particular vision and aim. According to the LEGO website the purpose and vision of the company is to inspire children to explore and challenge their own creative potentials.\(^\text{49}\) In order to achieve this vision the LEGO brand offers a range of high-quality and fun products, which is centred on the building systems formed by the company. Furthermore, in the hands of children, the LEGO products is set out to inspire the unique form of LEGO play that is fun, creative, engaging, and challenging at the same time.\(^\text{50}\) The LEGO Group states that doing this supports the children and provides accomplishment. Furthermore, the process develops a set of relevant future capabilities such as creative and structured problem-solving and interpersonal skills etc. as well as highlighting the concept of “learning through play”.\(^\text{51}\) Looking more at the aim of the LEGO brand it strives to stimulate the child in all people. “We have a definite approach to quality, and we want to be the best and most credible player in the toy business. We strive constantly to develop innovative products which promote creativity and fun-packed play”.\(^\text{52}\)

Question two focuses on what makes the LEGO brand different? As mentioned in the quotation above the company wants to be the best and most credible player in the toy business and strives to develop innovative products, which promote the creative and fun-packed play the company offers. “LEGO play for all”.\(^\text{53}\) According to the LEGO Group the products is developed

\(^{49}\) \url{http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=vision} - Appendix 7

\(^{50}\) \url{http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=vision} - Appendix 7

\(^{51}\) \url{http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=vision} – Appendix 7

\(^{52}\) \url{http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=brand} – Appendix 8

\(^{53}\) \url{http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=lifelong} – Appendix 10
in order to suit all ages and stages of development. Moreover, the LEGO factory website offers another perspective in the building process as the visitor is able to build with virtual bricks and develop their own LEGO models.\footnote{http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=lifelong – Appendix 10}

Question three is about \textbf{needs}. In specific, this question is about which particular needs the brand is fulfilling. In that connection it would be relevant to state that the LEGO brand fulfill different needs for different people as the company offers products to a wide target. However, some of the most basic needs could be the need for challenge, creativity, fun playing, and development.

The fourth question highlights \textbf{the brands permanent nature}. The permanent nature of the LEGO brand could be linked to the brand personality and thereby represents the essence and the heart and soul of the brand. As mentioned above, the LEGO Group strives to inspire children to explore and challenge their own creative potential and therefore, it would be fair to argue that the permanent nature of the brand is to keep developing innovative and creative products fulfilling that vision. However, the most important aspect is the LEGO brick and the building systems. According to the company, the LEGO brick has since its launch in 1958 been the most important product.\footnote{http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=brick – Appendix 9}

The fifth question is based on \textbf{the values connected to the brand}. Looking at the values connected to the LEGO brand aspects such as; entertainment, learning-through-play, excitement, the ability of creating own LEGO models, developing interpersonal skills, innovative playing etc. are worth mentioning.

The next question is about \textbf{the field of competences and legitimacy} linked to the LEGO brand. As the LEGO Group was founded in 1932 and since has been managed as a family business, the company has developed unique and significant competences. In this connection it would be fair to state that the main competence of the LEGO brand is the ability to the LEGO Group as a living dream. Moreover, the 77 years in the toy business has unquestionably established a stable and healthy approach to the toy business. Additionally, this competence has made it attainable to develop a range of quality products providing the target with “learning through play”. Moving on to the field of legitimacy the LEGO Group has since its foundation developed a range of CSR activities.\footnote{http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=corporate – Appendix 11}

The LEGO Group has right from the beginning focused on improvements of issues
both internally and externally. \textit{”Only the best is good enough” was the motto of Ole Kirk Christiansen, founder of the company and inventor of LEGO bricks, and today we still involve that spirit in every way we operate”}\textsuperscript{57}. According to the LEGO Group this means that the company strives to create a positive impact on areas such as: human rights, work environment, anti-corruption, charity etc\textsuperscript{58}.

The last question is about the \textbf{signs making the LEGO brand recognizable}? Visually the LEGO brand has changed its logo over the years\textsuperscript{59}, however, the name and content has remained the same. Furthermore, some recognizable signs are the LEGO bricks and LEGO figures.

After analyzing the seven questions according to the LEGO brand it would be fair to state that some questions are interrelated. Thereby, some connected answers occur in different questions.

\textbf{5.1.2. The Brand Identity Traps}

Another important approach in the development of a brand identity is Aaker’s brand identity traps. However, it would be fair to argue that this framework is somehow complex to incorporate as the considerations should be taken before developing the brand identity. On the other hand, it would be relevant to mention some of the considerations the LEGO Group should discuss before the creation of the brand identity.

\textbf{The brand image trap} will be avoided by making sure that the LEGO Group develops innovative toys, which suit the target audience and remains focus on the soul and vision of the brand. In that connection it is not enough “just” to know what the customers want, but just as important to maintain the brand vision and mission. Thus the LEGO Group has to focus on developing toys that make the target audience inspire to explore and challenge their creative potentials by offering a range of high-quality and fun products.

In order to evade the \textbf{brand position trap} the LEGO Group has to distinguish between the brand identity and brand position. Meaning, when developing the LEGO brand identity the advertising tag line should not be the first thing to consider. Instead it would be important to reflect about brand personality and brand symbols.

\textsuperscript{57} \url{http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=corporate} – Appendix 11

\textsuperscript{58} \url{http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=corporate} – Appendix 11

\textsuperscript{59} See appendix 12
The third trap is the **external perspective trap**. In order to avoid this trap the LEGO Group has to ensuring that the whole workforce knows what the brand stands for and how it should be perceived. As the LEGO Group contain divisions such as educators and customer service it would be fair to state that the company strives to make all employees engage in the spirit of the LEGO brand. Furthermore, as the company wants to be the best and most credible player in the business, it is vital that all employees “live the brand”.

The last trap to avoid is the **product-attribute fixation trap**. In order to avoid this trap the LEGO Group needs to focus on more than just the products developed by the company. As mentioned in the theoretical section this trap is the most common, and hence the LEGO Group should be careful when dealing with this specific aspect.

After considering both the brand identity questions and the brand identity traps the analysis of the brand identity exposed by the LEGO Group is set to be further investigated. In section 5.2 and 5.3 two different methods of analyzing the LEGO Group’s brand identity will be outlined and explained. Together the theories will constitute a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the LEGO Group’s brand identity.

### 5.2. The Six Facets of the LEGO Group’s Brand Identity

**1. Facet: Physique:** According to Kapferer, the brand physique is the backbone and its tangible added values\(^{60}\) and thus it is essential that the LEGO brand has developed a strong brand physique. Because of its long history, the LEGO Group has developed and grown in various ways. Meaning, as the years has passed and the management has conceded to younger generations the brand has grown and today widely known throughout the world. However, questions such as; what is the brand concretely? and what does it look like? are still relevant and interesting in this connection. The LEGO brand is representing toys and plays which are based on the LEGO bricks and its building systems. Without the bricks the company would have been a completely different brand as the LEGO bricks are the most important product in the company’s product portfolio\(^{61}\). Therefore, it would be fair to argue that the LEGO brick is the physique of the brand and represents the vision and aim of the brand. Furthermore, it would be relevant to state that the

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\(^{60}\) Kapferer, op.cit., p. 182

specialties and qualities of the brand is that it provides the target audience with a unique set of opportunities for engaging in a creative play, developing relevant individual skills.

2. **Facet: Personality**: The second facet to consider is personality. The personality of the LEGO brand is not linked to a specific spokesperson or famous role-model. On the other hand the LEGO brand still produces well-known product-lines in its product portfolio. In this connection Star Wars and Bob the Builder could be mentioned. Moreover, it would be vital to state that the LEGO brand constitutes product-lines for children in all ages and thereby the personality is somehow different and suit the products individually. Meaning, children fascinated by Star Wars sees the personality of the brand according to that specific genre whereas children buying into the concept of Bob the Builder have a different view. On the other hand, the LEGO brand also has a “basic” personality covering all products and the LEGO Group in general. This brand personality represents a company motivated to engage into their mission of being the best and most credible player in the business. This mission is represented by the overall LEGO brand and the external expectations towards it. Conclusively, the yellow LEGO-head is somehow symbolic and representing the brand personality as well. E.g. on the website the head is used as a visual for the PLAY section and for the LEGO-ID.

3. **Facet: Culture**: The culture of the LEGO brand is represented by a set of unique values supporting the motto of the company “*Only the best is good enough*”\(^{62}\). As mentioned above, the LEGO Group has since its founding considered it vital to take part in the progress of issues concerning both the inside of the LEGO Group as well as in relation to the stakeholders outside the company. These stakeholders are representing e.g. the children and their parents, retail shops, vendors and the general society etc\(^{63}\). In order to accomplish the company motto, the LEGO Group and its employees strive to involve the spirit of doing the best in every way they operate. Furthermore, areas such as human rights, work environment, environment, anti-corruption, charity etc. are incorporated in the everyday spirit of the company\(^{64}\). This brand culture should, to some extent, encourage the consumers to buy into the LEGO brand instead of competing products. Moreover, the LEGO Group is offering products which bring value to the consumer as the products e.g. challenge and educate the user.


4. **Facet: Relationship:** The relationship of the LEGO brand is linked to uniqueness and innovative products, which drives the children to develop through educational and fun playing.\(^{65}\) From the LEGO website it is obvious that the LEGO Group wants to offer their customers the best service and company information. On the website the “about us” button provides the customer with information regarding the LEGO Group in general, facts and figures, corporate responsibility etc. Furthermore, the website has a “customer service” part as well as a “parents” section. The “customer service” part provides the customer with basic information on contacts, online shopping support, product recalls, building instructions etc. The “parents” section, on the other hand, informs the parents about different stages in their children’s life\(^{66}\) and offers a whole-child-product-line where products suitable for the child are presented.

5. **Facet: Reflection:** The reflection of the LEGO brand should be linked to the way the customers’ wishes to be seen as result of the brand. In that connection it would be fair to argue that the LEGO brand has two different customers – the parents and the older affluent children. The parents would like to be seen as a quality-conscious and carrying customers and parents, whereas the children want to play with the newest and coolest products. Additionally, the LEGO brand reflection provides the customer with innovative and educational toys, which may lead to affecting feelings towards the brand.

6. **Facet: Self-image:** The last facet to consider is the brand’s self-image. The self-image linked to the LEGO brand should be concentrated in the customer’s personal internal mirror and inner feelings. In this connection the parent as customer is the most important as the children may not be aware of the aspects linked to self-image. It is relevant to argue that the parents as customers, according to the LEGO brand, should feel responsible about their decisions when buying a LEGO product for their children. Meaning, when buying a LEGO product the parent provides the child with a high-quality, fun, and educational product, which develops the child’s creative potential.

The above analysis of Kapferer’s six facets of brand identity highlights the vital parts of the LEGO Group’s brand identity exposed online. In the next section the brand identity will be further analyzed through Aaker’s brand identity system.


5.3. The Brand Identity System

5.3.1. The LEGO Brand Perspectives

Looking into the terms of Aaker’s brand perspectives two concepts are closely linked to the LEGO brand; brand-as-product and brand-as-organization. For all companies it is vital to consider with what product the brand is associated and thus it would be fair to state that the LEGO brand should be associated with the LEGO bricks and its building systems. Furthermore, when creating an obvious link between the LEGO brand and the bricks it strengthens the opportunity for recalls when the product class is cued. Meaning, when customers talk about toys or bricks in particular the LEGO brand has the opportunity of being recalled as the leading brand in that product class.

Looking at the attributions related to purchase or use of the LEGO products it could be argued that the LEGO brand may provide functional and/or emotional benefits to the customer. E.g. as the LEGO brand strives to make children develop and learn through play it may provide the parents with both a functional and emotional benefit. Furthermore, the high quality linked to the LEGO brand is also vital when looking at the product-related attributes. It would be fair to argue that products of higher quality provide the customer with a value proposition by simply offering a better product.

Another perspective closely linked is brand-as-organization as the LEGO Group not only focuses on product attributes but also on the organization. As mentioned above the LEGO Group has since its foundation decided to take part in the improvements of issues both inside and outside the company. This means that the company engages in more than “just” sales and numbers, but cares about human rights, working environment etc. while striving to be the best in the business.

Finally, it would be important to state that parts of the brand-as-person and brand-as-symbol could be linked to the LEGO brand as well. E.g. the strong brand personality created by LEGO could be linked as the brand is perceived as both fun, intellectual, innovative. Furthermore, it creates a relationship between the brand and the customer and a visual imagery is represented by the LEGO logo.

67 The value propositions will be elaborated in 5.3.3.
5.3.2. The Identity Structure of the LEGO Brand

According to Aaker a brand identity consists of a core and extended identity. Looking at the **core identity** signifying the LEGO brand, it represents the timeless essence of the brand. The most important aspects in that connection are the brand’s ability for creating high-quality products, which develops children, and force them to challenge their creative potentials. Additionally, the LEGO bricks and its building systems should continue to be the most important and the core product of the company. The core identity furthermore consists of the target audience and users of the LEGO brand; the children and their parents as well as the LEGO brand name.

The **extended identity** of the LEGO brand constitutes the company motto “*only the best is good enough*” maintaining that spirit in all future operations as well as the CSR activities developed by the company. The LEGO logo is also part of the extended identity as it functions as the symbol and visual imagery of the company. Furthermore, the brand personality is important to highlight, as the LEGO Group try hard to accomplish the company mission as well as developing product-lines suited for the target audience in accordance with their different needs and preferences.

5.3.3. Value Propositions of the LEGO Brand

**Functional benefits:** The functional benefits of the LEGO brand provides the customer with high-quality products created to engage children to a healthy, fun, and creative play. Furthermore, the website offers the customers functions such as; information on the company, brand, and products, a LEGO Club, different games and plays, a LEGO Shop, the LEGO Factory etc. Altogether, the above functional benefits offer the consumer an educative and innovative way of learning.

**Emotional benefits:** The emotional benefits of the LEGO brand provide the customer with a positive and good feeling when buying and/or using a LEGO product. It would be relevant to state that the LEGO Group places high emphasis on emotional benefits as the company website several times states the positive impacts the LEGO products has on children. From the website, it would be fair to assume, that the parents care about their children when they buy a LEGO product. On the other hand, it would be fair to argue that most parents would want to give their children the best opportunities and prefer to buy products, which act beneficial. The emotional benefits thereby provide the LEGO brand with quite relevant and important value propositions.
**Self-expressive benefits:** The self-expressive benefits in accordance with the LEGO brand are somewhat complex to implement. Meaning, the user and buyer are two different people. Primarily, the consumer of the LEGO products is the children who, depending on their age, prefer playing with toys, which are fun and entertaining and hence, does not pay much attention to the self-expressive benefits.

### 5.4. The LEGO Brand-Customer Relationship

The final aspect in the analysis of the LEGO brand identity is the brand-customer relationship. In Aaker’s brand identity planning model this is the bottom-line and should be based upon the value propositions supporting the brand identity.

In the analysis of the brand perspectives the LEGO brand was linked closely to both brand-as-product and brand-as-organization. According to Aaker, the brand-as-organization perspective could be of high relevance when dealing with brand-customer relationships. As mentioned in the analysis the LEGO Group finds it vital to improve issues concerning both the inside and outside the company as well as create positive impacts on e.g. working environment, charity, the overall environment etc. In addition, the LEGO Group places high emphasis on the functional and emotional benefits provided by the brand. In that connection it would be relevant to argue that both the functional and emotional benefits affect the customers in a positive manner, which generates an appropriate basis for future brand-customer relationships.

### 5.5. Summary

In the above section the LEGO Group’s brand identity has been analysed and augmented through the concepts developed by Aaker and Kapferer. In this connection it would be vital to state that despite different approaches towards the concept the overall analysis turned out coherent and interrelated.

Looking into the analysis of the LEGO brand identity it consists of several concepts. First, the brand identity questions and the brand identity traps were examined. In this section the considerations prior to the brand identity development was discussed. In order to accomplish the next step Kapferer’s framework based on the six facets of brand identity was used in accordance
with Aaker’s brand identity system. Altogether the different approaches used to investigate the LEGO Group’s brand identity exposed online constituted a thorough and relevant analysis.

The most important point discovered in the analysis is the link between the information stated and visualized on the website and the actual analysis of the LEGO brand identity. Moreover, the result of the investigation proved that the company has developed a relevant and appropriate brand identity.
6. Analytical Discussion

The last section in this report will constitute a discussion of the above investigation regarding the LEGO Group and its exposure of brand identity online. In this discussion the question: is there consistency between the theory written by Aaker and Kapferer (in the field of brand identity) and the brand identity exposed by the Lego Group?, will be reflected.

Looking into the analysis outlined in section 5 it constitutes an interesting picture of the LEGO brand identity. Turning back to the first time looking at the LEGO website with analytical intentions and till today after analyzing the brand identity with professional theoretical frameworks the overall impression remains the same. However, the ability to understand the why and how has generated new perspectives. Throughout the investigation, analytical and theoretical tools has been implemented and used in order to reach relevant and useful answers to the questions set out to explore. This leads the report to its next level. Does the analysis of the LEGO brand identity create consistency with the theoretical frameworks outlined in this thesis? The first impression of the LEGO website provides the customer with lots of visual animations and exciting products as well as basic information about the company and brand, when looking at the website. Furthermore, the vision and purpose of the brand is clear and straightforward. After using Aaker’s and Kapferer’s theoretical frameworks in relation to the information stated on the company website the understanding of the how and why of the LEGO brand identity provides deeper context. Though, the basic and overall impression of the LEGO brand still remains the same. Moreover, Aaker’s and Kapferer’s professional tools provide the investigator with answers to thorough and more detailed perspectives. E.g. the analysis underlines how the LEGO brand strives to be perceived as well as why it should be perceived in that exact way. Furthermore, it would be relevant to mention that the LEGO website encompasses a detailed level of information regarding the company and brand and thereby made it possible to consider all concepts in accordance to the theoretical perspectives investigated. After analyzing the LEGO brand identity it would be fair to argue that the company appears professional and in touch with the brand identity exposed. Additionally, it seems that bits and pieces of the brand identity concepts presented by Aaker and Kapferer have been used prior to the brand identity development.

Based on the above discussion and the overall analysis throughout the report it is relevant to state that this investigation has provided the reader with appropriate answers to the questions set out to explore.
7. Conclusion

In order to stay in the business the today’s companies need to be open-minded and aware of consumer behavioural aspects. The consumers of today want more than a product – they want products providing something extra or unique. Building a strong brand identity and maintaining brand equity could be the objectives in order to create a successful customer-brand relationship.

According to Aaker and Kapferer the concept of brand identity is the basis of strong brands and future branding strategies. The brand identity is able to help the company build and maintain a strong, functional, and effective brand and organization. In order to develop the brand identity both Aaker and Kapferer has created relevant theoretical frameworks in the field. Aaker created the brand identity system which included; the brand identity traps, four brand identity perspectives, identity structures, and value propositions. Kapferer on the other hand focused on the importance of creating the right brand identity through concepts such as; the brand identity questions, brand identity charters, brand identity vs. image, and the six facets of brand identity.

From the theoretical section on brand identity it could be concluded, that both Aaker and Kapferer, despite individual approaches, has developed relevant and interrelated frameworks in relation to the concept of brand identity. Additionally, the point of using concepts from both theorists was highlighted and augmented.

The aim and purpose of the report was an investigation of the LEGO Group and its exposure of brand identity online. Thereby, an introduction to the LEGO Group – brand and website, was stated in section 4. In that connection the theoretical frameworks developed by Aaker and Kapferer created basis for further analysis. From the analysis section 5 on the LEGO brand identity it could be concluded, that the brand identity developed by the LEGO Group was build in a relevant and professional manner and highlighted the vision and aim of the company. The company motto “Only the best is good enough” supported the corporate responsibilities laid out by the LEGO Group. Furthermore, it was founded that the production of innovative, educational, and fun products encouraging children to develop creative potentials certainly was not only representing the company vision, but part of the essence of the LEGO brand identity as well.

Finally, the analytical discussion could conclude, that the LEGO website encompasses a detailed level of information regarding the company and brand and thereby made it possible to consider all concepts in accordance to the theoretical perspectives investigated. Furthermore, Aaker’s and
Kapferer’s theoretical frameworks generated an understanding of the *how* and *why* of the LEGO brand identity and provided a deeper context to the concepts of brand identity. Though, the basic and overall impression of the LEGO brand still remained the same. Meaning, the analysis underlined *how* the LEGO brand strives to be perceived as well as *why* it should be perceived in that way.

Conclusively, it would be fair to state that this report presents the reader to a relevant insight into the investigation of the LEGO Group and its exposure of brand identity online. Furthermore, the analysis provided the report with consistency between the theories and the brand identity developed by the LEGO Group.
8. Bibliography

8.1. Literature


8.2. Webpage’s

- The case study:
  
  www.lego.com
  
  - http://www.lego.com/eng/info/
  - http://www.lego.com/education/
• Kapferer’s Brand Identity Prism Model
  o http://www.12manage.com/methods_kapferer_brand_identity_prism.html

• Aaker’s Brand Identity Planning Model:
Appendix

In the following pages the appendixes will be attached.
Appendix 1:

Kapferer’s Brand Identity Questions

- What is the brand’s particular vision and aim?
- What makes it different?
- What need is the brand fulfilling?
- What is its permanent nature?
- What are its value(s)?
- What is its field of competences? Of legitimacy?
- What are the signs that make the brand recognisable?
Appendix 2:

Kapferer’s Brand Identity Prism - Six Facets of Brand Identity
Appendix 3:

Aaker’s BIP-Model
Appendix 4

The Full Version of the LEGO Profile and Brand

Company Profile and Brand

The LEGO Group was founded in 1932 by Ole Kirk Christiansen. The company has been a family business since its starting point and has passed from father to son and today the LEGO Group is owned by Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen, a grandchild of the founder68. The name of the brand and the company “LEGO” is an abbreviation of the two Danish words “leg godt” meaning “play well” which is also the company ideal.

The vision and purpose of the LEGO Group is to motivate the target audience (the children) to explore and challenge their individual creative potential. In order to accomplish that vision the company is offering a line of high-quality products, which are fun and centred on building systems. In that connection it is essential that the products inspire the children to feel the uniqueness of the LEGO play as well as experiencing it as fun, creative, engaging and challenging at the same time69. “This activity supports the child, giving it the special pride of accomplishment. In the process it "automatically" or playfully develops a set of future, highly-relevant capabilities: Creative and structured problem-solving, curiosity and imagination, interpersonal skills and physical motor skills - building with LEGO bricks is thus about "learning through play"”70.

According to the LEGO Group the brand is much more than just a familiar logo as it represents the expectations that people have of the company. These expectations include both the products and services provided by the company as well as the accountability towards the world71. “The brand acts as a guarantee of quality and originality”72. Children are not only the target audience of the company but also its role-models and thereby vital for the company mission. According to the LEGO Group, children are inquisitive, creative and imaginative with an innate urge to learn and in that way it is important to focus on stimulating the “child” in all people. The company has a definite approach to quality and wants to be the greatest and most credible player in the toy

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68 http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=group
69 http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=vision
70 http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=vision
71 http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=brand
72 http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=brand
business. Furthermore, it is of high importance for the company to constantly strive to develop innovative products which continue promoting creativity and fun LEGO play\textsuperscript{73}.

According to the LEGO Group, the LEGO brick is the most important product and was launched in 1958. During the years the products undergone extensive development but the basis still remains the “old” traditional LEGO brick. Furthermore, the “old fashion” and unique LEGO brick is the reason why the company twice have been named “Toy of the Century”\textsuperscript{74}.

The LEGO Group head office is located in Billund, Denmark but subsidiaries and branches are placed all over the world. What is more, the LEGO products are available in more than 130 countries of today\textsuperscript{75}. Conclusively, it would be fair to argue that the company has developed rapidly over the past 70 years - it started as a small carpenter’s workshop and today the company is represented as a modern, worldwide business, which, in terms of sales, is the world’s sixth-largest manufacturer of toys.

\textsuperscript{73} http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=brand
\textsuperscript{74} http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=brick
\textsuperscript{75} http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=group
Appendix 5

The Full Description of the LEGO Website

The Company Website

On the company website, as visitor you find a universe of products, games, virtual entertainment etc. as well as information concerning the LEGO Group and company. The front-page as well as the navigation-pages are all colourful and easy to navigate as the website is divided into different categories; home, products, play and shop. HOME\(^76\) serves the user back to the front-page which gives options for further navigation in the mentioned categories. Furthermore, the front-page offers options such as; a search function, a LEGO ID (sign up, sign in function), a “what’s new” board, and virtual advertisements on games and products. The three main categories; products, play, and shop are all indicated with colourful keys on top of the site as well as in larger visuals accompanied by quick links in the middle of the site. The PRODUCT\(^77\) key navigates the user into the universe of LEGO products. The different products and product portfolio are illustrated in small visuals with different animations in the mid site. The different visual/brand keys navigates the user into a universe of that exact product line. In the right side, the page is divided into three illustrations/subcategories; most popular, just in (new products), and an advertisement for “Castle” (a product line in the product portfolio). The PLAY\(^78\) key guides the user into a world of entertainment. This category features options such as; join the fun (LEGO ID), an online fan club (LEGO club), game talk, featured games, game finder, my LEGO network, movies, a factory etc. Play furthermore is divided into; home, games, comics and movies, downloads, massage boards, club page central, and LEGO club. The SHOP\(^79\) key indicates the LEGO online shop and the world’s biggest LEGO shop. On this site the user is able to search and buy products either by age, theme, or by category. The shop site, furthermore, offers email services, shop features (what is hot, new, exclusives etc), a wish list etc. Additionally, the online shop highlights new products and must-haves, which inform the customer from time to time.

\(^79\) http://shop.lego.com/Default.aspx
The LEGO website is, as mentioned above, uncomplicated to navigate. Besides the four main categories stated in details the website has some consistent similarities and characteristics. All important information regarding the company and the LEGO Group is placed in the foot of the all navigation pages. This information is divided into; customer service, about us, educators, parents, LEGOLAND, site index and legal notice. Customer Service gives the customer information on e.g. building instructions, store locator, online shopping support etc. This function states all general information and contact info of the company. About Us function as the corporate information site. This site states and creates an overview of the company profile and the LEGO Group as well as corporate responsibility, mission, vision, as well as jobs etc. The Educator key is a function where the LEGO Company focuses on learning and developing fundamental skills in the child in terms of the products. Furthermore, the customer is asked to help the LEGO Company to improve the website. The Parents key leads the parents to an information site created to improve knowledge on the children’s product timeline. “As your child moves through the many stages of growth, we offer toys that foster creativity and encourage the development of motor skills, role-playing and problem-solving abilities. Use this site to learn about age-appropriate toys and activities, to read parenting features and to find LEGO play ideas for your children”. The action- and play park LEGOLAND is also linked to the website as well as the Site Index. The last key Legal Notice lead the customer back to the corporate responsibility and the company privacy policy and connection to fair play.

http://www.lego.com/eng/info/
http://www.lego.com/education/
http://www.lego.com/eng/legoland/default.asp
http://www.lego.com/eng/info/legal.asp
Appendix 6:
Appendix 7

[Image of a computer screen showing a webpage with the title "About Us - Corporate Information" and the LEGO Group's website layout, including a section on "Vision" with text about the purpose and vision of the LEGO Group.]

The purpose and vision of the LEGO Group is to inspire children to explore and challenge their own creative potential.

- We strive to accomplish this by offering a range of high quality and fun products centred around our building systems.
- In the hands of children, the products inspire the unique form of LEGO play that is fun, creative, exploring, challenging - all at the same time.
- This activity supports the child, giving it the special pride of accomplishment. In the process of "automatically" or "naturally" developing abilities, creativity and structured problem-solving, curiosity and imagination, interpersonal skills and physical motor skills, building with LEGO bricks is thus about "learning through play".

[End of image]
Appendix 8:

![LEGO Brand Information](image-url)
Appendix 9:
Appendix 11:

Image of the LEGO Group's corporate information page, showing sections like About Us, Corporate Responsibility, and links to the Progress Report.
Appendix 12:

LOGO and Illustrations

http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=brick
http://www.lego.com/eng/info/default.asp?page=group
http://www.epd.org/Germany/Legol6
Appendix 13: