

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF BARBIE'S 360° MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY¹

Ana Canavarro ⁽¹⁾, Irma Imamović ⁽¹⁾,

⁽¹⁾ IPAM - Instituto Português de Administração de Marketing, Porto, Portugal

Submission History

Received: 10/09/2024

Accepted: 30/12/2024

Published: 31/12/2024

Citation: Canavarro, A., & Imamovic, I. (2024). Exploring the Impact of Barbie's 360° Marketing Communications Campaign: A Qualitative Study. *Management in Review*, 2(1), 29-47. DOI : <https://doi.org/10.61282/mir.v2i1.10>

ABSTRACT:

This study explores the emotional responses and perceptions of the target audience to Barbie's 360° marketing communications campaign. Barbie has been a cultural icon for decades, reflecting diversity and inclusivity. The omnichannel Barbie campaign, using artificial intelligence, has influenced Barbie's brand image, values, and identity perceptions. The campaign reached audiences through multiple touchpoints and channels, both online and offline. A qualitative approach was used, with a focus group developed to understand customer perceptions and reactions. The study highlights the success of engaging audiences outside its primary target audience and highlights the power of innovative marketing. It also identifies areas for improvement in future campaigns. Also, the study calls attention to the need for marketing that supports society's values and inclusion and promotes the applicability of an omnichannel marketing communications campaign using artificial intelligence to increase brand awareness and engage audiences in the new technological era.

Keywords: Barbie movie; omnichannel marketing; 360° marketing communication; artificial intelligence

1 INTRODUCTION:

Barbie is more than just a toy. She is a true icon with a long and enduring presence throughout the ages. Unlike other toys, Barbie has been relevant for decades, and her status as a cultural icon has shaped the childhoods of several generations. Over the years, Barbie has changed to reflect diversity and inclusivity, remaining relevant, and trying to meet changes in society and consumer preferences. This study aims to understand how the Barbie movie campaign was carried out, covering all marketing communication channels, and using different communication tools in an omni-channel approach. Indeed, few studies have looked at this specific and important marketing communications campaign, thus the study's objectives are the following:

¹ **Copyright © 2024 The Author(s):** This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution **4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0)** which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

- To explore the emotional responses and perceptions of the target audience towards the Barbie 360° marketing communications campaign;
- To understand how the campaign has influenced the brand's image, values, and identity;
- To examine the effectiveness of the various communication channels used in the campaign;
- To identify potential areas for improvement in future marketing strategies.

To achieve these objectives, a critical review of the existing literature on key concepts, theories, and research findings in relevant related fields of study such as brand equity, brand image, and marketing communication, as well as the historical development and evolution of Barbie over time, was followed by a focus group. The final discussion analyses the impact of this campaign, its specific effects on consumers, and how Barbie and Mattel were able to masterfully be present across all channels and generate high and valuable brand awareness, engagement, and loyalty.

2 THEORETICAL SUPPORT OR LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Brief history of Barbie

A historical analysis shows Barbie has a long and lasting presence throughout the ages. It has been relevant for decades, unlike other toys (Roberts, 2020) and a cultural icon. Barbie, an 11-inch (29 cm) tall plastic doll with the figure of an adult woman, was introduced on 9 March 1959 by Mattel, Inc, a Southern California toy company (Britannica, 2023).

Ruth Handler, who co-founded Mattel with her husband, Elliot, spearheaded the introduction of the doll. It was inspired by the paper doll play of her daughter Barbara. She was presented as a "Barbie teenage fashion model" and revolutionized girls' doll play (Rogers, 1999; Weissman, 1999), as prior to her appearance, dolls had taken the form of babies or toddlers. Barbie's physical appearance was modeled on the German Bild Lilli doll, a risqué gag gift for men based upon a cartoon character featured in the West German newspaper Bild Zeitung. This new physical appearance of a successful woman was a key differentiator for Barbie, making her unique and transforming her into a transnational commodity with great success (MacDougall, 2003).

Indeed, over time Barbie has been seen as an icon of American femininity, a symbol of female liberation (Forman-Brunell, 2009), although not without controversy. If on the one hand, she has been an inspiration to young girls in terms of self-confidence and independence, on the other she has been criticized for allegedly being a sex symbol that cultivates unrealistic expectations (Roberts, 2020).

The decade of the 1960s and its second wave of feminism clearly favored Barbie's market penetration. This movement radically defended women's liberation, equal rights, and opportunities in economic activities, personal life, and politics. As society taught women about independence and equality, Barbie was able to inspire girls' dreams (Dettmering et al., 2015). Mattel continued to adapt Barbie to changing times and trends. In 1971, Mattel launched Live Action Barbie to portray the liberated woman, and in 1975, it introduced an athletic Barbie due to her association with the Winter Olympics Roberts (2020). In the eighties, Mattel introduced the Day-to-Night Barbie to reflect the busy lifestyles of women who were becoming more career-oriented and tech-savvy (Roberts, 2020).

In 1998, the company redesigned Barbie in response to declining sales. This new model appeared with slimmer hips, a wider waist and smaller breasts in an attempt to reflect the society of the 1990s (Weissman, 1999), as Barbie's original measurements were almost impossible for real people. In the years since 2015, the iconic doll has undergone a long term transformation, redefining her place in contemporary society (Welch & Luttrell, 2023).

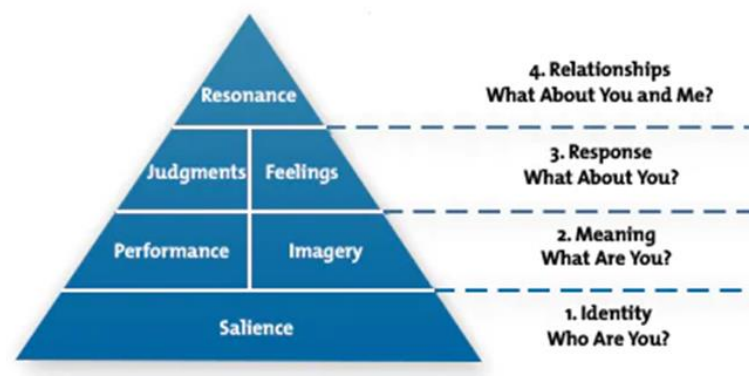
Over the years, Barbie has undergone a transformation to reflect diversity and inclusivity. The Barbie Fashionistas line introduced dolls of different body types, skin tones, and hair textures, promoting inclusivity and breaking stereotypes (Prestini et al., 2023).

2.1.1 Barbie brand image, values and meanings

The concept of brand image isn't agreed upon in the literature. There are variations in the definition of brand image by different researchers, which creates confusion in measuring brand image and assessing brand equity and positioning. Although it's impossible to talk about brand image without first talking about brand equity.

Keller's brand equity model, shown as a pyramid in Figure 1, illustrates the four steps to building strong brand equity.

Figure 1
Keller's brand resonance model



Source: Keller, 2003 'Strategic Brand Management,' New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Keller's four elements of brand image (performance, imagery, judgments, and feelings) overlap, making it impossible to distinguish one element from the other. This model draws two important key distinctions (in terms of brand image & response). The distinction in the duality of brands (in terms of tangible and intangible associations) related to performance and imagery respectively at the brand image level and in terms of rational and emotional responses that type of info might evoke as brand responses at the next level up (Keller, 2026).

Going up the left-hand side of the pyramid can be viewed as a more rational route to brand-building, and going up the right-hand side can be seen as more of an emotional route. It also acknowledges that strong brands go up both sides of the pyramid, while recognizing the importance of cross-over effects (performance associations affect feelings and imagery associations affect judgments).

On the other hand, the concept of brand image has been reconceptualized as the sum of customers' perceptions of a brand, which is generated by the interaction of cognitive, affective, and evaluative processes in customers' minds (Lee et al., 2014).

On the subject under study, it's important to note that dolls aren't just toys. It is known that for children, a major representation of the body is precisely dolls, which are socially acceptable, exhaustively advertised, almost universal, and have the immediacy of a tactile presence (Norton et al., 1996). Through imaginative interaction with dolls, children engage in a creative, exploratory form of imagining themselves and the potential roles they may play in their adult lives. Barbie (with its enormous variety of wardrobe and accessories for every occasion), is the source of these imaginations and sometimes the medium through which they are expressed (Wright, 2003).

It's a fact that a material object can represent a variety of contradictory meanings and that's precisely what happens with Barbie, following this research. According to some authors (e.g. Forman-Brunell, 2009), Barbie endorses conservatism, perpetuating gender roles and at the same time, she embraces change for girls and women.

However, it is important to mention that while Barbie was working in explicitly gendered female occupations, she was still working at a time when few American women were employed outside the home. As always, Barbie reflected the social context of the time and the debate about women's roles (Pearson & Mullins, 1999). Later, Barbie's professions were many and varied: doctor, pilot, businesswoman, astronaut and many more. At the same time, the debate about whether Barbie is a good idea for women and girls has been enduring from 1959 until today.

There are claims that the body image the Barbie dolls represent is inappropriate. These dolls and other cultural "ideals" such as high-fashion models, dancers, and centerfolds present social stereotypes of body image which have been linked to increased incidence of eating disorders (Fleming, 1991; Garner et al., 1980; Lewis, 1987 as cited in. Norton et al., 1996 as cited in Norton et al., 1996).

2.1.2 The 360° Barbie movie marketing campaign

Marketing strategy is a critical factor in the film industry. It is this component that shapes the perception of the film in the eyes of the audience and determines its commercial success (Havrylenko, 2023). The complete, consistent, and multi-channel approach of Barbie's film marketing campaign in 2023 has ensured Barbie's presence in every form of media, which amplified its reach to unprecedented levels (Madhani, 2023).

The Warner Bros film 'Barbie' which premiered in July 2023, written and directed by Greta Gerwig and starring Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling, grossed over \$1 billion worldwide in box office sales (Chance, 2023) and turned the world pink - so much so that there was a shortage of pink paint, setting the pink trend.

At the same time, Barbie's sales have been on the rise, with Mattel's latest quarterly financial update revealing that sales of its best-selling doll were up 16% in the same period last year to \$605m (£477m) -(Forsdick, 2024). About the main theme of the film, the intergenerational fun theme was designed to resonate with people of all ages who have been influenced by Barbie, from baby boomers to Generation Z. The main goal was to create a sense of inclusivity and engagement, ensuring that each demographic could find something tailored to their interests and experiences (Welch & Luttrell, 2023).

In the words of Mattel's chief marketing officer: "We wanted to create art, we wanted to create a cultural conversation." (Forsdick, 2024). The Barbie film proved to be a prime example of how marketing can be used to engage and captivate audiences, playing a crucial role in the film's success. It was a successful combination of nostalgia and innovation, bridging generational gaps and uniting audiences of all ages (Havrylenko, 2023). In terms of physical and digital strategies of communication, the combination of actions on each of these levels helped to solidify Barbie's imagined world and engage audiences, and at the same time became an important lesson for brands.

It all began on 16 December 2022 with a teaser that largely played out the opening scene of Barbie, which mimicked a key scene from the film 2001: A Space Odyssey. A brief montage at the end showed off the film's various colorful Barbie land sets and dance sequences (Laman, 2024). Later, in June 2023, a real-life Barbie dreamhouse was placed in Malibu, bookable through Airbnb, a clear example of experiential marketing. There was also a themed boat cruise setting to sail in the Boston area (Rubbin, 2023). In Malaysia, a Barbie-themed hotel was created, along with pop-up cafes in Chicago and New York City featuring Barbie-inspired food and decor, exclusive merchandise and a roller-skating rink (Hawley, 2023).

Warner Bros. Discovery spent more than \$100 million on marketing campaigns and many brand collaborations, from Pinkberry frozen yogurt to an Airbnb Barbie's Malibu House (Laskowski, 2023). There is also a themed pink boat cruise sailing in the Boston area (Rubin, 2023). Part of the marketing strategy was to re-engage fans, particularly the 20-something demographic and older aficionados who may have previously interacted with Barbie but drifted away as they grew older. This ambitious, multigenerational plan included all major media channels, social media, paid advertising, product synergies, experiential events, and earned

media placements, which have now been acknowledged as one of the most elaborate and impressive in recent memory (Luttrell & Welch, 2023).

Barbie's movie marketing strategy created the year's biggest meme with character posters, featuring brief descriptions, actors' names, and film titles such as the suspense movie "Megan". Their simplicity and large number led to an explosion of Barbie-style character posters online (Foley, 2023). Moreover, the decision to release Barbie on the same day as Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer*, a thriller about the scientist widely credited with inventing the atomic bomb, sparked a viral sensation, with people creating some stunning mashup posters imagining a film called *Barbenheimer* (Foley, 2023). Through their many licensing agreements with other companies and social media efforts, they created successful organic conversations and buzz about the movie and people's experiences with the brand. The screenwriters knew how to use the power of nostalgia and target the generations that grew up playing with Barbie. Previous studies show that around 70% of children develop emotional attachments to objects, such as toys or blankets (Jiang et al., 2013). According to Euromonitor (2018, as cited in Wagner et al., 2020), nostalgia is one of the most prominent trends driving doll sales.

As stated by Welch and Luttrell (2023), the Barbie marketing campaign achieved something intangible and extraordinary - its goal of total ubiquity. The brand dominated the media agenda, and its presence was everywhere in the summer of 2023. This included the marketing team itself, which became the subject of press coverage, social media posts, and even memes. This marketing campaign for the "Barbie" film was a combination of some precious ingredients: the pleasant nostalgia of childhood, high attention to detail, a high-quality film, and competition with Christopher Nolan's cinematic project *Oppenheimer* (Havrylenko, 2023).

There was a clear focus on unconventional channels and creative activations to stand out in a crowded marketplace and boost Barbie's brand visibility and relevance. All these factors contributed to this campaign being remembered as one of the major events of the summer of 2023.

Google has also joined the trend by incorporating glitter into the search engine when a person writes Barbie and press enter. Moreover, Burger King Brazil created a pink sauce, a pink shake, a pink doughnut, and 'Ken fries' and this combo became very popular among Brazilian fans on social media (Foley, 2023). Moreover, NYX Cosmetics created a Barbie makeup collection, knowing that many people grew up playing and applying makeup to their dolls (Burgos, 2023). Interactions with dolls and similar objects are symbolic expressions of social conduct (Wagner et al., 2020).

Neuromarketing played an important role in branding as well, using a pink color to position Barbie in people's minds. Color psychology and brand memorability may be at work in remembering and associating pink with Barbie. Previous studies proved the influence of color on perceptions, brand imagery, and the creation of meaningful relationships between consumers and brands (Cunningham, 2017; Labrecque & Milne, 2011). Brands tend to break through the saturated market by disrupting old patterns, creating comfort in this new space, leading consumers' imaginations, and allowing them to shift their perspectives toward the branding until they cement their trust and associations. On one occasion, when the Barbie team flew to London for advertising, they made the entire city look Barbie-esque, from famous black cabs to the pink London Eye (Sasidharan, 2023).

Another unique characteristic of the Barbie marketing campaign emphasized the unashamed "girly" strategy that allowed audience members of all genders to revel in colors and styles that were previously stigmatized as fundamentally foolish or inferior. Not only that, but it also provided an opportunity for persons of marginalized genders to dress up, go out in public with friends, and feel safe with one another. People were shouting affirmations of "Hi, Barbie!", a method for women to express their support for one another (Laman, 2023). An individual's identity, including race, gender, class, and sexuality is an important lens to consider when evaluating the Barbie marketing and public relations campaign. The movie's messaging and marketing efforts engage numerous groups, realizing the brand's 2015 pivot toward recognizing and implementing intersectionality (Luttrell & Welch, 2023).

Forever 21, a clothing brand, and Mattel jointly created a capsule collection inspired by Barbie that was available in physical stores and the metaverse. The companies have also collaborated with Virtual Brand Group (VBG) to create an AI-driven VR collection that is available on Roblox via the Shop City Barbie Experience (Jenkins, 2023).

Luttrell and Welch (2023) praise Barbie's modest, but effective marketing technique, dubbed as the "breadcrumb strategy." This method entailed releasing small, separate bits of information sequentially, allowing viewers to experience a sense of discovery while gradually engaging with the campaign. The major purpose was to reposition Barbie as a valuable intellectual property and to reshape Mattel's trajectory in the integrated movie marketing domain. The Barbie campaign was investigated using a PESO model, originally developed by Gini Dietrich in 2014. It is a comprehensive framework for developing campaign plans that include four categories of media: paid (promotional activities such as advertising), earned (coverage through media relations), shared (interaction on social platforms), and owned (content held by the organization). By combining different media forms, the Barbie brand team efficiently addressed communication objectives, reaching optimal reach, impact, and engagement levels (Luttrell & Welch, 2023).

The Barbie doll is a global brand that strives to communicate Western symbolic culture to the rest of the world (Wagner et al., 2020). The way Barbie's branding and marketing campaign tapped into the way people play with Barbie dolls and contrasted with standard summer 2023 blockbuster movie marketing tactics was what made it so great. The inspired Barbie trailers and promotional stunts should inspire more inventiveness and confidence in a film's distinctive components. With 100 partnerships worth \$70 million, Mattel diversified its offerings and aimed to ensure Barbie's relevance. The campaign was driven by an intergenerational strategy, focusing on various age cohorts (from Baby Boomers to Generation Z) and utilizing Mattel's extensive history of partnerships (Luttrell & Welch, 2023). Its goal was to foster inclusion and participation, ensuring that any demographic could find something relevant to their interests and experiences. To do this, the brand team concentrated on the "cool and fun factor" rather than nostalgia, according to industry executives (Luttrell & Welch, 2023).

In terms of data-driven campaign evaluation, according to TV outcomes provider EDO, Barbie's creatives outperformed the category's average ad performance by an amazing 146% (Luttrell & Welch, 2023). Furthermore, Barbie has gone beyond social media sensation, with the usage of the #Barbie hashtag on TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram Reels increasing by 145% in the first half of 2023 compared to the previous year (Kemp, 2023, as cited in Luttrell & Welch, 2023).

2.1.3 Digital: The social and artificial intelligence marketing campaign

As mentioned, the Barbie film campaign was also successful online, leveraging social media and creating immersive online experiences for users using technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual and augmented reality. On platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, the #BarbieChallenge was launched, allowing for a deeper connection between the brand and its audience, generating high engagement and brand loyalty (Aprile, 2023).

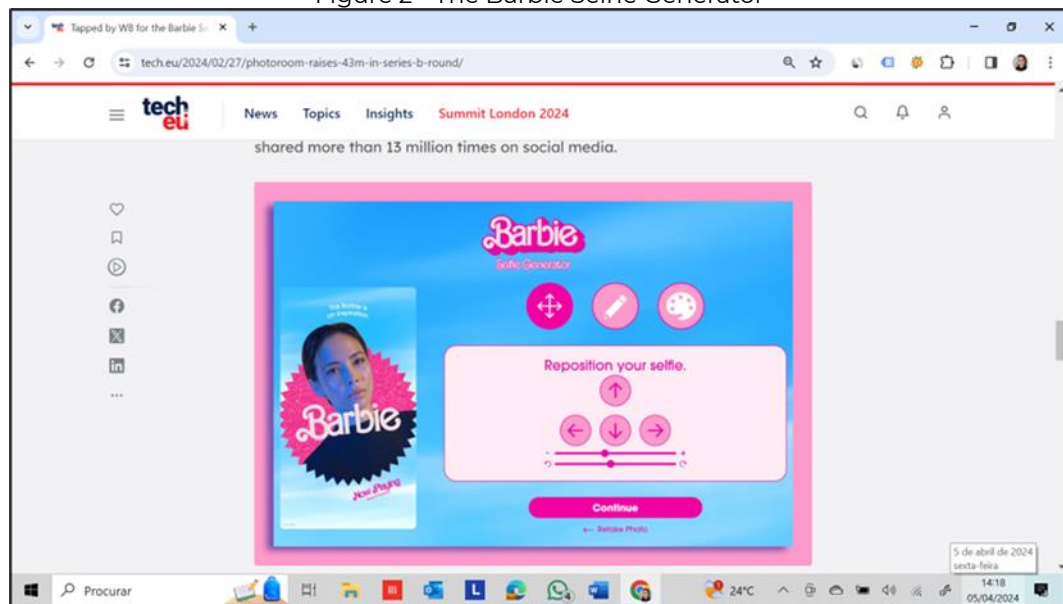
According to global content studio Snack Content, videos with the #Barbie hashtag received an astounding 9 billion views on TikTok alone this year. Finally, internal Pinterest analytics show that searches for "Barbiecore" and "Barbie moodboard" are up 980 percent this year (Kemp, 2023, as cited in Luttrell & Welch, 2023). Barbie World was featured in over 1 million Tik Toks and the original "Barbie Girl" song by Aqua was streamed more than 3.5 million times on Spotify since the release of the film in July (Badich, 2023).

On Instagram, the @BarbieStyle Instagram account allowed users to follow a range of multicultural Barbie dolls around the world – giving audiences worldwide an opportunity to engage with the brand in a friendly and inclusive environment (Badich, 2023). Mattel also launched the tool Barbie Selfie Generator, a user-generated content experience that instantly went viral among netizens (Ranjan, 2023). This AI tool, developed in partnership with

PhotoRoom, an AI-based photo editing app, allowed users to upload their own images, which would then generate character posters and editable text options.

Soon after the images of Barbie posters were released ahead of the release of the Barbie movie, people on social networks began to recreate the pictures with their own photos, with a customized "This Barbie is..." tagline, feeling part of Barbieland, with these memes. The filter works by using PhotoRoom's API to remove backgrounds from user-generated content and replace them with an image that replicates the film's promotional posters (Figure 2). In fact, one of the biggest challenges marketing teams face with user-generated campaigns is maintaining quality and protecting brand integrity, and in this case, it was possible ((PR newswire, 2023).

Figure 2 - The Barbie Selfie Generator



Source: Taylor, 2024 in <https://tech.eu/2024/02/27/photoroom-raises-43m-in-series-b-round/>.

Millions were fascinated with seeing oneself or others transformed into a Barbified version of themselves. Photoroom has developed the foundation model of this AI photo editor and believes it is the next step in empowering businesses to create amazing product photos without the need to be an expert at prompt engineering or photography (Macaulay, 2024).

Other artificial intelligence elements included Google pages turning pink when Barbie queries were searched, and Barbies and Kens cheering when swiping on the dating app Bumble (Badich, 2023). Barbie cast members, including Issa Rae and America Ferrara, were the first to post their selfie AI images on social media. These chosen actors resonated with audiences from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, providing them with meaningful representation (Blavity, 2023).

Moreover, a Dubai-based social media agency, Eye Studio, created a high-quality augmented-reality video of a building-size Barbie doll, featured by Margot Robbie, stepping out of her box next to Burj Khalifa (Burgos, 2023). Another Mattel branding initiative was initiated in April 2023 where the actors posed as their characters on the movie posters, which were wedged between the enormous 'Barbie' emblem and a shimmering pink background that resembled a sticker and Mattel's signs. Viewers soon observed that each Barbie poster featured a tagline depicting the character's involvement in the film. It was a precursor to the release of the Barbie Selfie Generator.

Finally, DreamHouse Tycoon, a new Roblox experience was created from the partnership between Mattel and game developer Gamefam. The experience was the first official Barbie Roblox game, allowing users to design their own DreamHouse, pursue numerous vocations, and dabble in fashion (Baar, 2023).

2.1.4 Influencers and Brand Collaborations

Mattel, the company behind Barbie, has successfully engaged with influencers and collaborated with popular brands to extend her reach. By partnering with influencers and other established brands that share the same values, Barbie reached new audiences and reinforced its position as a cultural icon, extending the brand's reach and credibility.

Let's take a look at some of the influencers behind the Barbie campaign (Izea, 2023):

Table 1- Examples of Influencers of Barbie movie campaign

Influencer	Profession	Channel	Number of followers	Content produced
Issa Rae	Actress and producer	Instagram	4 Million	Sneak peeks into the film
Chris Olsen	Content creator on TikTok	Tik Tok	11.4 Million	Posted a video of the "My Barbie Life" game filter.
Alix Earle	Fashion and beauty influencer	Instagram and Tik Tok	2,8 Million (Instagram) 5,5 million (Tik Tok)	Showcased Barbie's iconic looks through posts that also included movie songs.
Shay Mitchell	Actress	Instagram	36,5 Million	Showcased a new line of luggage themed around the movie as well as her love for the film.
Sarah Jade Bleau	Dancer	Tik Tok	14,2 Million	Showed off new dance moves for Barbie and her classic pink styles
Tabitha Swatosh	Lifestyle TikToker	Tik Tok	13,7 Million	Showcased the ideal hot pink Barbie look.
Leilani Green	Makeup artist	Tik Tok	7,7 Million	Posted makeup looks inspired by the film and beauty brands that partnered with Barbie.

Most of these influencers were also present at the film's premiere, thus creating a fusion of the online and offline worlds. In fact, influencers, as well as ordinary people, became active participants in the Barbie story as they were inspired by the Barbie movement to create user-generated content around the film, making it viral (Neoreach, 2023).

In terms of brand collaborations, several brands have partnered with Barbie. An example is the luggage brand Béis, which has launched a new pink collection (Rambharose, 2023).

An essential factor has been a partnership diversity with products that range from the pink Barbie Xbox DreamHouse console, and Barbie car on the game Forza Horizon 5 to brands such as Gap, Forever 21, Boohoo, Balmain, Crocs, Aldo, and so on (Rubin, 2023). For instance, Barbie has long been associated with fashion, flair, and imagination, and by recognizing the task, prominent apparel retailer Zara also produced a Barbie range. Zara's announcement of a collaboration was surely eye-catching and generated a lot of discussion on social media. Primark also launched a Barbie capsule collection including womenswear, menswear, pajamas and accessories (Rambharose, 2023).

In the clothing and accessories sector, there were also several collaborations (Hicks, 2023):

- Kendra Scott sold Barbie earrings, necklaces and bracelets.
- Alex + Ani sold Barbie jewellery.
- Bloomingdale's had a pop-up Barbie shop with collectible dolls and products.
- Forever 21 sold Barbie T-shirts, swimsuits and pyjama sets.
- PacSun sold Barbie shirts, swimsuits, visors and more.

- Rue21 collaborated with Barbie and Hot Wheels on a range of clothing, including a racing T-shirt.

- Boohoo sold Barbie T-shirts, miniskirts, hoodies and more.
- Gap sold Barbie clothing ranging from "Ken" shirts to hoodies for dogs.

Gap and Mattel promoted their new Barbie clothing line with innovation and impact, using a 3D cinematic experience in the Gap store with the help of Google and Adobe. The immersive AR experience at Gap's flagship Times Square store, using Google's groundbreaking geospatial technology powered by ARCore and the Google Maps Platform, was a success (FWA, 2023). Customers could interact with 3D Barbie dolls, explore their outfits, and shop the new limited edition Gap x Barbie collection.

From fast fashion to food and beverage to department stores, the number of retailers who have taken on Barbie's pink challenge and created a wave of Barbie brand awareness and nostalgia is endless (Barkho & Barkho, 2023). It's important to note that the brands were chosen for their ability to extend the reach of the Barbie film, but also to deepen its appeal (Productions, 2023) by aligning with the brand's values and message and as a means to access new customer bases. This strategy enabled the campaign to reach its target audience in an emotional, powerful and innovative way that went far beyond traditional advertising. This strong cross-brand synergy (PYMNTS, 2023) has also proved to be fruitful.

Following Mattel's expansion in its intellectual property (IP) business in 2023, the Barbie takeover is unsurprising. Mattel's investment in IP licensing deals not only led to a profitable second quarter but also resulted in a 20% increase in sales (PYMNTS, 2023).

3 METHODOLOGY

The study employs focus group interviews, led by a moderator, to gather insights on marketing strategies. These interviews, typically 6-8 participants (Krueger et al., 2001), are used to understand customer perceptions, requirements, and reactions to marketing elements like product characteristics, pricing strategies, advertising messages, and packaging (Cox et al., 1976). Since there are no empirical studies on the Barbie Movie marketing campaign, the focus group interviews are a valuable qualitative research tool for gathering in-depth insights on this particular topic. Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method, is used to select examples based on personal reasons and logic (Saunders et al., 2009). This approach ensures informative and useful data, as participants are chosen based on their knowledge and experiences relevant to the study question. Consent is obtained before the session, and participants are informed about the study's purpose, data usage, and associated risks. The interviews took place in April 2024 in an online session, with focus group questions designed to analyze the topic in-depth and understand the reasons behind participants' answers (Demir & Pismek, 2018).

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

Six females and one male took part in the study. Regarding the education level, five are enrolled in the Global Marketing master's degree program, two are enrolled in the Global Marketing bachelor's degree program, and one works as a marketing and communication manager. Finally, four participants are from Portugal, two are from Italy, and one is from Morocco. The focus group interview lasted around two hours, and the length of the conversation depended on the respondents' time and willingness to share information on the topic. Finally, the interviews were transcribed immediately after the meeting was finished using a Microsoft Teams transcription option.

The "Barbie" movie, released in July 2023, directed by Greta Gerwig, stars Margot Robbie as Barbie and Ryan Gosling as Ken. It delves into Barbie's existential crises and quest of self-discovery in both Barbieland and the real world, tackling issues of feminism, patriarchy, and

identity. The picture, which combined fantasy and comedy, was a box office blockbuster, making \$1.446 billion and gaining critical praise, including eight Academy Award nominations (Lemire, 2023; Haley, 2023). According to the focus group interviews, the opinions about the Barbie movie are mixed. Three respondents reported liking the movie and explaining that they expected a typical movie about a Barbie doll, but it carried another message. They reported that the movie triggered positive emotions, and brought up childhood memories.

"I really loved it because it brought back the memories of me watching that as a kid."

Some respondents also reported the movie's original and engaging music. Its soundtrack is intentionally diverse and plays a big part in the film, demonstrating a successful adoption of the intersectional approach in advertising campaigns (Kaplan, 2023).

Two people had a neutral attitude toward the film, citing its commercial tone and promotional themes. They praised the film's attempt to explore complicated subjects like identity problems, feminism, and equality, which brought complexity to the plot;

"It is a commercial movie with a lot of advertising... and at one point it has difficult storylines about identity crisis, feminism, and equality"

Two participants expressed their discontent with the movie, claiming that it felt more like a marketing tactic for Mattel, aimed at changing women's images to increase sales, rather than a true narrative. They viewed the film as an extended advertisement. Furthermore, the representation of gender equality was criticized, with one viewer believing it was more about showing a battle between genders than advocating equality, coming off as highly politicized.

"I thought I was watching propaganda of the Mattel... They needed relevancy. They needed to portray to the public a new image of the women so they could raise their sales. So, the whole movie was like watching an ad", and,

"I didn't like how they portrayed the gender equality aspect. I felt like it was more of a gender war than a gender equality. I felt it was too political".

In the next part of the session, we explored the emotional responses and perceptions about the Barbie movie marketing communication campaign. Research has demonstrated that emotional storytelling in marketing communications may have a major impact on brand attitude and image, with storytelling outperforming humor advertising (Rhie, 2014). This is further backed by the impact of marketing mix selections on emotional branding, which may aid in establishing an emotional connection with customers and driving brand loyalty (Choudhury, 2019). The importance of brand marketing in influencing customer emotions is also emphasized, particularly in the context of mobile social media (He et al., 2022).

Several research have explored the emotional impact of Barbie movie marketing strategies. Ahmad (2020) discovered that these films can empower women, whereas Xie (2023) employed a social media analytics methodology to investigate the influence of Barbie culture on women's social standing. Both studies indicate a favorable effect on emotions and attitudes. This is confirmed by the findings of Anastasiei and Chiosa (2014) and Niazi et al. (2012), who discovered that emotions such as pleasure and arousal may greatly affect customer attitudes towards advertising and brands. As a result, by eliciting these feelings, the Barbie movie marketing campaign most likely had a good impact on its audience.

One respondent expressed positive emotions upon encountering the Barbie marketing campaign, explaining:

"Initially, I was excited about the film since it was cloaked in mystery to me. The idea of a life-sized, 3D Barbie piqued my interest, and the buzz surrounding it was palpable, connecting strongly with my childhood recollections. The enthusiasm wasn't limited to me; I witnessed many other people getting into the mood by arranging their clothes for the movie premiere, which I thought was completely fantastic. This collective expectation appeared to create a bond between us, rekindling nostalgic feelings tied to our pasts".

Other respondents explained that seeing the various brand collaborations from the campaign added to the overall excitement and brought back a feeling of nostalgia. Reminiscing on their early connection to Barbie and watching the movie reignited their love for the brand. This nostalgic upsurge, now viewed through the adult lens, strengthened their emotional link with Barbie, resulting in a deeper, more favorable attachment to the brand:

"The allure of Barbie and its marketing campaign convinced me that it was perfectly acceptable for adults to adore Barbie too. I vividly remember wearing pink to the cinema. The marketing strategy surrounding Barbie seemed more authentic and resonant with the essence of Barbie herself compared to the actual movie. It evoked a strong sense of nostalgia."

Some respondents have mixed emotions explaining that the initial experience sparked a contemplative question:

"Can past mistakes be forgiven? This question arose from an internal argument about whether the brand's previous activities were real or simply required. Despite the confused thoughts, the ambivalence remained, fueled by a personal liking for pink and the connotation of being a "Barbie girl".

Although the film and its marketing effort were viewed well, the respondents felt that they did not totally correct previous mistakes. The notion was that significant change takes time, well exceeding what a single film and a year-long campaign could accomplish. The brand's evolution, which included addressing gender stereotypes and broadening representation, added complexity to the viewer's connection with Barbie, combining praise and criticism. This contradiction highlighted the ambiguity and roughness of reconciling modern Barbie incarnations with their origins, evoking a dual hatred and admiration for what the brand symbolizes.

One male respondent explained that he showed little interest in Barbie, and the pervasive marketing initially elicited a neutral response. Later on, his emotions shifted from indifference to curiosity, which was amplified by the marketing campaign's escalating visibility, culminating in what became known as the "Barbenheimer" phenomenon. The buzz within cinematography and film communities was hard to ignore, leading to an increased interest in witnessing this unique showdown between Barbie and Oppenheimer. This journey from apathy to intrigue highlights the campaign's success in engaging even those outside its primary target audience, underscoring the power of innovative marketing in broadening interest and conversation around a film.

After, participants were asked if those emotional responses influenced their overall perspective of Barbie as a brand. Some stated that although Barbie was always perceived as a brand for kids, the movie marketing campaign changed that opinion.

"Barbie has always felt like a staple of my childhood, a brand primarily for kids. But after experiencing the movie and observing all the marketing efforts, I began to reconsider. Perhaps Barbie isn't solely for children anymore. It dawned on me that as an adult woman, I can still appreciate Barbie."

Others stated that emotions did not change the Barbie brand perspective;

"I feel like it hasn't really changed much. It just evoked the same feelings I had as a child. It's like I revisited those emotions in a certain sense. So, I don't think there's been a significant change; it's more like I was simply reminded of how things used to be."

In the third part of the session, respondents were asked whether Barbie's marketing campaign successfully reflected the brand's values and image. They were additionally asked to explain if there are any values that they now associate more strongly with Barbie as a result of the marketing campaign. Barbie has long been a complicated icon, embodying elements of fantasy, comfort, sexism, objectification, feminism, and complex cultural impact, enthralling children and people of all ages. In the years after 2015, the famous doll has undergone significant modification, altering her place in contemporary culture.

While Barbie's marketing and public relations activities have been carefully analyzed, industry insiders believe the 2023 Barbie movie campaign is unique in its magnitude, sophistication, and thoughtfulness (Luttrell & Welch, 2023). The Barbie brand's metamorphosis has reflected and contributed to modern society's growing ideals and expectations by embracing inclusion, diversity, and empowerment, as well as altering cultural norms and expectations about gender and identity (Luttrell & Welsch, 2023).

One respondent affirmed the perception of increased discussion of societal injustices experienced by women, and this viewpoint has become inextricably linked with the brand.

"My initial thoughts were entirely different; as a youngster, I thought it was just another ordinary toy. However, the new ad effort has modified my perspective, probably as a result of

growing up. However, I feel that even children may interpret it differently now. Unlike today, I never used to gaze at Barbie and fantasize about who I could become. This alteration in perspective, I believe, provides substantial value to the brand or business."

Other respondents explained that the transition appears to be theoretical rather than authentic. In their perspective, the brand changed its identity due to need rather than honesty. The movie's narrative, which depicts Barbie as seeking change, tired of perfection, and yearning for empowerment and diversity, reflects the brand's storytelling ambitions. They transformed Barbie into a figure that seeks real-world experiences and authority, reflecting the demand for cultural relevance and current societal norms. This shift reflects a recognition that, unlike their predecessors in the 1960s, millennial women want to be recognized as genuine and multidimensional persons:

"Despite the seeming inclusion of a purpose promoting women's boundless potential, I am skeptical of its sincerity. I've seen coworkers in their twenties praise the film for its strong political position and empowerment message. However, my perspective varies; I regard it mostly as a deliberate decision to use certain elements for branding objectives"

Barbie is becoming more than simply a beauty icon; she is also a CEO, athlete, and scientist, defying traditional notions of perfection. This progression may appeal to younger generations who no longer feel pressured to fulfill old ideals of perfection. However, their personal experiences with Barbie were not centered on trying to be a specific kind or reaching perfection; everyone's experience is unique. To them, the film was a successful marketing tactic rather than a transforming experience. It provided personalized contact with the brand, with accessible and interesting information for the audience, ranging from shareable content to upselling chances. This strategy successfully drew the viewers into Barbie's world. In their opinion, these initiatives are laudable for their unique marketing approach, as they serve the brand's interests rather than promoting meaningful change.

Other respondents provided similar responses adding that Barbie's brand image, which was already dominant, appears to have grown even more important. Barbie's marketing methods have had such an impact that they gently shape public opinion without many people realizing it. Barbie-themed efforts were everywhere, thanks to multiple partnerships and collaborations, including with groups outside of their direct cooperation, demonstrating the power of their campaign. People who had not been lovers of Barbie in their adolescence grew to embrace the brand, sporting pink and identifying with the ideals it represented. It's as if the campaign went out to a large audience and changed their ideas, bringing in new supporters who now agree with what Barbie stands for.

Some respondents had opposing views about the marketing campaign explaining: *"Barbie has always been associated with the color pink in my mind, and this notion has not altered. My opinions on Barbie's fundamental worth have not changed either. This consistency in my opinion extends to Barbie's Genesis tale, which I find quite interesting. The invention of Barbie by a lady named Ruth Handler, who envisioned a doll with an adult woman's physique, in contrast to typical children's dolls, struck me as revolutionary. It's intriguing, and somewhat paradoxical, given that Barbie's ambitions may not reflect every woman's desires. The history, with its intricacies and ambiguities, raises issues about whether and how popular opinions of Barbie might change, particularly when additional tales emerge."*

The latest picture and its modern ideals represented a transition, aiming to replace old values with new ones. However, for someone who understands Barbie's historical background, adjusting one's opinion of this famous brand is difficult. Barbie elicits a wide range of reactions, from skeptics to fans, solidifying its role as a cultural icon. Despite the introduction of new principles and storylines, they are skeptical about a meaningful shift in values for those of us who are deeply steeped in the brand's history. Barbie's journey from her pink-centric identity to its present iteration has the potential to capture new generations with diverse ideas. However, for those who are familiar with its history, perspectives are more difficult to change, highlighting the complexities of shifting opinions of a renowned brand.

Another respondent provided a similar response:

"To be honest, I haven't really seen the professed ideals mirrored in the marketing effort. Honestly, it appears more surface-level than really value-driven. For example, the phrase

"Barbie can be anything she wants, and so can Ken" appears to only scratch the surface, lacking depth in value transfer. It appears to be more concerned with generating curiosity than with expressing deeper messages. In my opinion, the marketing efforts appear to focus on factors such as the vast set design rather than any underlying ideals. My interest in Barbie sprang more from curiosity, and based on what I've seen, I didn't notice any important ideals being pushed by the marketing. Of course, this is just my interpretation, and opinions can differ greatly."

The general opinion is that the marketing efforts improved the brand's image, but they fell short of really reflecting its principles. Essentially, while the marketing increased brand awareness, it failed to express deeper values.

Moreover, the participants were asked to describe the Barbie brand in one word. The words are demonstrated in Figure 3:

Figure 3- Barbie words



Source: Author's elaboration

The Barbie movie marketing campaign was a watershed moment in strategic communication, combining traditional and novel approaches to engage people, stimulate extensive discourse, and eventually reinvent the Barbie brand for a new era. The campaign was a huge success, collecting \$162 million in its opening weekend and eventually topping \$1 billion internationally, making Greta Gerwig the first female filmmaker to accomplish this milestone. Over 100 strategic marketing alliances were formed, proving Barbie's enormous power and popularity. The campaign successfully used the PESO model (Paid, Earned, Shared, Owned media), demonstrating new methods such as a viral teaser trailer, targeted billboard placements, a sophisticated social media approach, and engaging experiential events such as a real-life Barbie Dreamhouse (Luttrell & Welch, 2023).

The participants were asked to describe the most memorable communication channels used in Barbie's campaign. Most of them reported that social media played a pivotal role, not just through official channels but significantly through user-generated content and interactions that effectively promoted the film.

"I recall countless instances where people dressed up as Barbies entered public places and greeted each other with a joyful "hi Barbie," echoing the film's mood. This grassroots method of promotion, albeit unauthorized, was extremely effective in spreading the word about the film. These conversations were all over social media, demonstrating the film's tremendous popularity and involvement."

Another participant reported that the most memorable marketing tactic was videos showcasing the behind-the-scenes aspects of creating the movie. They provided insights into the filmmaking process, the strategic partnerships with various brands, and notably, the development of a dedicated soundtrack featuring an array of artists tailored specifically for the film. Another aspect of the successful marketing campaign was fashion and beauty segments, collaborating with brands like Zara and Fenty Beauty. The collaborations went beyond fashion

and beauty, impacting the food realm with themed offers such as Pink Barbie burgers, which added a playful edge to the campaign. Finally, several participants reported that the most striking memory was seeing people dressed in pink, and heading out to various places.

For many, the film itself is naturally in the forefront. Then there's the unmistakable pink color that has painted cities across the world and dominated social media landscapes. One participant reported:

"A highlight event was the Barbie home in Malibu, which provided a unique experience for guests to stay the night and was hosted by none other than Ryan Gosling. The strategic alliances ranged across industries, from fashion collaborations to branded Crocs, demonstrating the brand's adaptability. The campaign used technology and artificial intelligence in an innovative way, allowing fans to totally immerse themselves by making personalized photos and being a part of the movie poster universe. Furthermore, social media was flooded with content in which dolls appeared to communicate, giving an extra element of involvement. This marketing campaign was thoroughly planned, integrating indoor and outdoor, conventional and internet media. The financial investment to marketing was equal to the production budget, indicating that the film's colossal success was inextricably linked to the quality and ingenuity of its promotion. Without such a strong promotion, the film's success would have been unthinkable."

Finally, one of the participants mentioned the Barbenheimer phenomenon.

"The "Barbenheimer" effect compelled me to see both films on the same day, a decision influenced not by any traditional channel but by the buzz it caused among everyone. Conversations about it were ubiquitous, bolstered by savvy alliances and billboard ads. However, in the end, it was the collective activity of individuals that had the most impact on me. I wasn't looking for any particular media platforms, so it's difficult to tell, but the community's effect was undeniable and deeply significant."

The last set of questions was directed toward suggesting areas of improvement. The participants were asked to reflect on the campaign as a whole and identify if any elements could be improved or adjusted for future marketing strategies. Moreover, they were asked if there was any message or aspect of Barbie that was missing from the campaign, which could be included in future efforts to better connect with the audience.

The focus group response emphasizes the significance of matching marketing tactics to the changing demands of a varied audience. While the Barbie movie campaign was mainly successful in terms of enthusiasm and engagement, participants identified areas for improvement that may be used in future efforts. These include a more subtle approach to female representation, scheduling of marketing operations to maintain continued attention, and content distribution that strikes a balance between amusement and depth of message. Furthermore, there is a strong need for marketing that not only sells the product but also represents and supports society's values and inclusion. This feedback provides Mattel with significant insights for developing future advertisements that not only capture consumers but also engage with them on a deeper level, building a more inclusive and engaging brand experience. The key patterns and elaborations are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 - Key suggestions for campaign improvements

Key Patterns	Elaboration
inclusivity and gender representation	participants acknowledged the campaign's emphasis on female empowerment, but voiced a wish for more inclusiveness. the contrast between barbie's image as capable of everything and ken's more restricted representation generated debate over gender roles. suggestions were made to broaden marketing techniques to appeal to all genders and incorporate more inclusive themes that resonate with varied audience segments, including the lgbtq population.
campaign timing and content overload	the opinion was that, while the campaign successfully used all accessible platforms, its simultaneous execution resulted in a short-term emphasis that might potentially reduce long-term brand engagement. some participants uncovered campaign aspects throughout the debate, indicating that a more staggered approach to marketing efforts might maintain interest over time.
message depth vs. entertainment	participants distinguished between the marketing campaign's entertaining and engaging quality and the film's political undertones. while the campaign was acclaimed for its brightness and entertaining approaches, such as influencer

Key Patterns	Elaboration
	marketing and themed items, several critics believed it failed to effectively express the film's deeper meanings. future campaigns may benefit from more closely matching promotional efforts with the film's primary themes in order to convey the spirit of its message.
product focus and social media usage	there was a request for a greater emphasis on the product and its promotion through new collections that represent current ideals, similar to pre-film initiatives such as the gender collection and role model barbies. the value of social media as a promotional tool was questioned, with recommendations for increasing content engagement by avoiding long films that fail to pique initial attention.
cultural significance	reflecting on barbie's historical background and evolution, delegates acknowledged the brand's efforts to adapt to societal changes, emphasising purpose and public conversation on subjects such as diversity and women's empowerment. the campaign's effectiveness in extending barbie's representation was viewed as a step forward, but there was a demand for further efforts to fully embrace and encourage diversity and inclusion in the brand's portrayal.

5 CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS, LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Barbie is more than just a toy. She is a true icon with a long and enduring presence throughout the ages. Unlike other toys, Barbie has been relevant for decades, and her status as a cultural icon has shaped the childhoods of several generations. Over the years, Barbie has changed to reflect diversity and inclusivity, remaining relevant, trying to meet changes in society and consumer preferences.

The concept of brand image isn't agreed upon in the literature. There are variations in the definition of brand image by different researchers, which creates confusion in measuring brand image and assessing brand equity and positioning. Although it's impossible to talk about brand image without first talking about brand equity.

In the case of Barbie, Mattel has developed a strategy to change Barbie's traditional image by introducing new body types and stay relevant. The aim is clearly to appeal to millennials and Gen Z through inclusivity and diversity.

The Barbie 2023 movie marketing campaign was the main subject of this study. The way Barbie's branding and marketing campaign tapped into the way people play with Barbie dolls and contrasted with the standard marketing tactics for a summer 2023 blockbuster movie was what made it so great.

Few studies have looked at this specific and important marketing communications campaign.

The Barbie film proved to be a prime example of how marketing can be used to engage and captivate audiences, playing a crucial role in the film's success and was a successful combination of nostalgia and innovation.

The complete, consistent and multi-channel approach of Barbie film marketing campaign has ensured Barbie's presence in every form of media, which amplified its reach to unprecedented levels.

In terms of physical and digital communication strategies, the combination of actions on each of these levels helped to solidify Barbie's image and engage audiences, while also becoming an important lesson for brands. From several brand partnerships to collaborations with digital and celebrity influencers, to the use of artificial intelligence and a real Barbie house on Airbnb, the campaign was notoriously present in all forms of media.

Barbie has gone beyond social media sensation, with the usage of the #Barbie hashtag on TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram Reels increasing by 145% in the first half of 2023 compared to the previous year.

The goal of the campaign was to reach its target audience in an emotional, powerful and innovative way that went far beyond traditional advertising.

The Warner Bros film 'Barbie' which premiered in July 2023, written and directed by Greta Gerwig and starring Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling, grossed over \$1 billion worldwide in box

office sales and literally turned the world pink - so much so that there was a shortage of pink paint, setting the pink trend.

At the same time, Barbie's sales have been on the rise, with Mattel's latest quarterly financial update revealing that sales of its best-selling doll were up 16% on the same period last year to \$605m (£477m).

This study used focus group interviews with a sample of participants who saw the Barbie film and were exposed to the overall marketing communications campaign in 2023. The interviews took place in April 2024 in an online session. The focus group questions were designed in a way to analyse the topic in-depth and to understand the reasons behind participants' answers.

Regarding the campaign, several participants reported that the most striking memory was seeing people dressed in pink and heading out to various places.

Most of them also reported that social media played a pivotal role, not just through official channels but significantly through user-generated content and interactions that effectively promoted the film.

The general opinion of the group was that the marketing efforts improved the brand's image, but they fell short of really reflecting its principles. Essentially, while the marketing increased brand awareness, it failed to express deeper values.

It was notorious that some focus group participants had conflicting views about the marketing campaign. While the Barbie film campaign was largely successful in terms of excitement and engagement, these participants identified areas for improvement that could be used in future efforts. These include a more nuanced approach to the portrayal of women, timing of marketing activities to maintain ongoing attention, and content distribution that strikes a balance between entertainment and depth of message. There is also a strong need for marketing that not only sells the product, but also represents and supports social values and inclusion.

Indeed, future research could be inspired by this study. It could be, for example, extended to other quantitative studies with a larger sample of participants.

6 REFERENCES

- Aaker, D. A. (2009). *Managing brand equity*. Simon and Schuster.
- Anastasei, B., & Chiosa, R. (2014). Emotional response to advertising. *EuroEconomica*, 33, 49-56
- Ahmad, H. (2020). Influence of Barbie Doll movies on women in Pakistan. *Global Multimedia Review*, III(1), 52–64. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gmmr.2020\(iii-i\).05](https://doi.org/10.31703/gmmr.2020(iii-i).05)
- Aprile, M. (2023, Aug. 29). Understanding The Barbie Movie's Masterful Marketing Strategy. <https://digitalagencynetwork.com/the-barbie-movies-masterful-marketing-strategy/>
- Badich, S. (2023, September 22). Barbie's marketing campaign masterpiece outlined. Click Consult. <https://www.click.co.uk/insights/barbie-marketing-campaign-outlined/>.
- Barkho, G., & Barkho, G. (2023, June 22). ‘There's Barbie fever and people are catching it’; How Barbie collaborations took over retail marketing. Modern Retail. <https://www.modernretail.co/marketing/theres-barbie-fever-and-people-are-catching-it-how-barbie-collaborations-took-over-retail-marketing/>
- Blavity, (2023, August 4). How the Barbie Movie Redefined Brand Collaborations for Black Audiences.
- Britannica (2023, Dez.11). <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Barbie>.
- Chance, Z. (2023, August 8). The Secret of the Barbie Movie's Marketing Success. Yale Insights. <https://insights.som.yale.edu/insights/the-secret-of-the-barbie-movies-marketing-success>
- Choudhury, R. G. (2019). Influence of marketing mix decisions on emotional branding and its effect on customer appeal in *Brand Culture and Identity: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 806–823). n IGI Global eBooks <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-7116-2.ch044>

- Consumer psychology expert discusses Barbie's brand relevance. (2023, August 2). <https://www.newswise.com/articles/consumer-psychology-expert-shares-insight-on-barbie-s-brand-relevance>.
- Cunningham, M.K. (2017) The Value of Color Research in Brand Strategy. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 5, 186-186. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2017.512014>
- Dettmering, S., Grimani, I., Reinauer, A., & Schönström, J. (2015). *Am I a Barbie girl? Mattel's fight for Barbie's reputation*. LBMG Corporate Brand Management and Reputation-Masters Case Series.
- Havrylenko, V. (2023). *The Art of Marketing: How the Barbie Movie Became a Brand an Culture Event*. World Scientific Reports, (4).
- Dittmar, H., E. Halliwell, & S. Ive. 2006. Does Barbie make girls want to be thin? The effect of experimental exposure to images of dolls on the body image of 5- to 8-year-old girls . *Developmental Psychology* 42(2):283–92. doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.42.2.283.
- Etikan, I. (2016). Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1. doi:10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11
- Euromonitor. 2018. Toys and Games Market in Western Europe: The Existence of Substantial Growth Drivers. <https://blog.euromonitor.com/toys-and-games-market-in-western-europe-the-existenceof-substantial-growth-drivers/>
- Forman-Brunell, M. (2009). Barbie in" LIFE": The Life of Barbie. *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 2(3), 303-311.
- Forsdick, S. (2024, Jan. 3.)Mattel's brand chief on Barbie's impact and what's next for the toymake. <https://www.raconteur.net/growth-strategies/mattel-brand-chief-barbie-movie-impact>.
- FWA (2023, August, 31). Gap x Mattel: Barbie's Times Square Takeover - The FWA. (n.d.). The FWA. <https://thefwa.com/cases/gap-x-mattel-barbies-times-square-takeover>
- Goldstein, J., Buckingham, D., & Brougere, G. (2004). *Toys, games, and media*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Haley, C. (2023, September 19). Barbie (2023). Movie House Memories. <https://www.moviehousememories.com/barbie-2023-movie-summary/>
- Hawley, M. (2023, July 28). Think Pink: Lessons Learned From the Barbie Marketing Team. CMSWire.com. <https://www.cmswire.com/digital-marketing/think-pink-lessons-learned-from-the-barbie-marketing-team/>
- He, X., Zhu, L., Sun, L., & Yang, L. (2022). The influence of brand marketing on consumers' emotion in mobile social media environment. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.962224>
- Hicks, K. (2023, July 13). Counting the many, many Barbie collabs. <https://www.marketingbrew.com/stories/2023/07/13/counting-the-many-many-barbie-collabs>.
- Izea (2023, September 27). Top "Barbie" Movie Influencers on Social Media - IZEA. IZEA. <https://izea.com/resources/top-barbie-influencers/>
- Jiang, X. U., E. S. Huebner, & K. J. Hills. 2013. Parent attachment and early adolescents' life satisfaction: The mediating effect of hope. *Psychology in the Schools* 50(4): 340–52. doi: 10.1002/pits.21680.
- Kaplan, A. (2023, July 18). What to know about the 'Barbie' soundtrack — including what songs made the movie. <https://www.today.com/popculture/music/barbie-movie-soundtrack-song-list-rcna9391>
- Kemp, A. (2023, July 18). Best Barbie-fied brand campaigns, from Roku, Pinterest, Bumble and more. The Drum. <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2023/07/12/bestbarbie-fied-brand-campaigns-warner-bros-bumble-stumble-guys-and-more>
- Keller, K.L. (2003). *Strategic Brand Management*. Prentice Hall.
- Keller, K.L. (2001). Building Customer-Based Brand Equity: Creating Brand Resonance Requires Carefully Sequenced Brand Building Efforts. *Marketing Management Institute*, 10(2), 15-19.
- Keller, K. L. (2016). Reflections on customer-based brand equity: perspectives, progress, and priorities. *AMS review*, 6, 1-16.

- Krueger, R. A., Casey, M. A., Donner, J., Kirsch, S., & Maack, J. N. (2001). *Social analysis: Selected tools and techniques (Social Development Papers No. 36)*. The World Bank.
- Laman, L. (2024, January 28). Barbie's Marketing Is Nothing Short of Genius. Collider. <https://collider.com/barbie-marketing-genius/>. Access 21.02.2024.
- Lee, J. L., James, J. D., & Kim, Y. K. (2014). A reconceptualization of brand image. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 5(4), 1.
- Lemire, C. (2023, July 21). Barbie movie review & film summary. Roger Ebert.
- Labrecque, L.I. & Milne, G.R. (2011) Exciting Red and Competent Clue: The Importance of Color in Marketing. *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, 40, 711-727.
- Luttrell, R., & Welch, C. (2023). Campaigning with Confidence: "Breadcrumbs Strategy". *In Case Studies in Strategic Communication Journal*, 8, 24. ISSN 2167-1974.
- MacDougall, J. P. (2003). Transnational commodities as local cultural icons: Barbie dolls in Mexico. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 37(2), 257-275.
- Madhani, S. (2023, Set. 6). 4 Lessons From The 'Barbie' Movie Marketers Can Use. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2023/09/06/4-lessons-from-the-barbie-movie-marketers-can-use/?sh=56fac2782e34>.
- Macaulay, T. (2024, March 14). Barbie selfie startup's \$500M valuation exposes the power of memes. TNW | Deep-Tech. <https://thenextweb.com/news/barbie-selfie-generator-photoroom-funding>
- Mitchell, C., & Reid-Walsh, J. (1995). And I want to thank you Barbie: Barbie as a site for cultural interrogation. *The Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies*, 17(2), 143-155.
- Norton, K. I., Olds, T. S., Olive, S., & Dank, S. (1996). Ken and Barbie at life size. *Sex roles*, 34, 287-294.
- Neoreach (2023, April 18). Barbie Marketing: How the New "Barbie" Movie Went Viral | NeoReach | Influencer Marketing Platform. (2024, March 30). NeoReach | Influencer Marketing Platform. <https://neoreach.com/barbie-marketing/>
- NeoReach | Influencer Marketing Platform. (2024, March 30). NeoReach | Influencer Marketing Platform. [https://neoreach.com/barbie-marketing/ren's Toy Collections in Sweden? A Less Gender-Typed](https://neoreach.com/barbie-marketing/ren's+Toy+Collections+in+Sweden?A+Less+Gender-Typed)
- Niazi, M. a. K., Ghani, U., & Aziz, S. (2012). "THE EMOTIONALLY CHARGED ADVERTISEMENT AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3(1), 265-272
http://www.ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_1_January_2012/35.pdf
- PYMNTS (2023, June 27). The Barbie Phenomenon and Its Impact on Brands and Consumers. <https://www.pymnts.com/news/2023/the-barbie-phenomenon-and-its-impact-on-brands-and-consumers/>
- PR Newswire. (2023, July 20). PhotoRoom and Warner Bros. Join Forces to Create Viral Barbie Selfie Generator Using Cutting-Edge AI Technology. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/photoroom-and-warner-bros-join-forces-to-creat>Labrecque
- Prestini, S., Borghini, S., & Carù, A. (2023). Embracing Diversity and Body Positivity. *Marketing Fashion: Critical Perspectives on the Power of Fashion in Contemporary Culture*. Routledge.
- Productions, A. S. (2023, August 27). Unconventional Crossovers Behind the Barbie Marketing Strategy. Medium. <https://medium.com/@alteredstateprod/unconventional-crossovers-behind-the-barbie-marketing-strategy-34b06d774090>
- Rambharose, A. (2023, July 20). Every Barbie Brand Collaboration Out Right Now. InStyle. <https://www.instyle.com/barbie-movie-brand-collaborations-7558155>
- Rhie, J. (2014). The impact of emotional storytelling on brand attitude- compare to humor advertising. *Journal of Digital Contents Society*, 15(1), 61-68. <https://doi.org/10.9728/dcs.2014.15.1.61>
- Roberts, D. L. (2020). The Economics of Barbie: Marketing the Evolution of an Icon Through the Generations. *The Journal of Applied Business and Economics*, 22(7), 83-88.
- Ranjan, P. (2023, Aug 4). Unravelling the Barbie Movie Marketing Campaign. <https://medium.com/@pranjali.ranjan/unravelling-the-barbie-movie-marketing-campaign-2476f98f8cdf>.

- Roger Ebert. <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/barbie-movie-review-2023>.
- Rogers, M. F. (1999). *Barbie culture*. Sage Publications
- Rubbin, Rebecca (2023, July 23). Inside 'Barbie's' Pink Publicity Machine: How Warner Bros. Pulled Off the Marketing Campaign of the Year. *Variety*. <https://variety.com/2023/film/box-office/barbie-marketing-campaign-explained-warner-bros-1235677922/>.
- Saunders, M. N., Thornhill, A., & Lewis, P. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students (5th ed.)*. Pearson Education.
- Shlaes, A. (2007). Valley of the dolls: as the anti-Barbie, the American Girl doll is an exceptional artifact that combines the commercial with the good, writes Amity Shlaes. Mattel makes money, and kids learn history. *i*(2), 28-31.
- Susina, J. (1999). American Girls Collection: Barbies with a Sense of History. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 24(3), 130-135.
- Wagner, U., Jacob, I., Khanna, M., & Rai, K. A. (2020). Possession Attachment toward Global Brands: How the "World of Barbie" is Shaping the Mindsets of Millennial Girls. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 33(4), 434-451. doi:10.1080/08961530.2020.1813671
- Weissman, K. N. (1999). *Barbie: The icon, the image, the ideal: An analytical interpretation of the Barbie doll in popular culture*. Universal Publishers.
- Welch, C., & Luttrell, R. (2023). Everything Barbie all at Once: "A Marketing Campaign for the Ages". *Case Studies in Strategic Communication Journal*, 8 (2023), 16-39.
- Xie, H. (2023). The research on the social media analytica model apply on Barbie culture influences in society. *Communications in Humanities Research*, 20(1), 228-237. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7064/20/20231377>
- Wright, L. (2003). The wonder of Barbie: popular culture and the making of female identity. *Essays in Philosophy*, 4(1), 28-52.