

# 'We all have the same 24 hours': exploring the prevalence and impact of 'hustle culture' amongst young people.

## INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

This project examines the shift in hustle culture from the traditional 9-5 workday to serious leisure activities. It highlights the portrayal of hustle on social media and in the advertising of global sporting goods corporation, Nike, who use emotional marketing to promote leading an aspirational, more fulfilling, and successful life.

Hustle culture was discussed heavily after a Steven Bartlett, Diary of a CEO podcast with Molly-Mae Hague where she stated 'we all have the same 24 hours' and that 'if you want something enough, you can achieve it and it just depends to what lengths you want to go to get where you want to be in the future'. The notion that we should be productively and actively using all 24 hours in a day has resulted in the further permeation of hustle culture into all aspects of life, utilising the daily 24 hours, especially through people's leisure activities, making even them into more serious, purposeful pursuits. This highlights the duality of hustle culture and creates an obvious paradox of choice many experience due to their awareness of needing to rest whilst also being addicted to the rewards received from constantly working.

## METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted through the consultation of online materials, interviews, articles, and podcasts relating to the discourse surrounding hustle culture and serious leisure in order to understand the prevalence of this phenomena within society, especially for young people. The initial research into literature based sources surrounding hustle culture and Robert Stebbins' depiction of serious leisure provided an understanding of the discourse surrounding these cultures within society. This encouraged me to consider how these phenomena are currently presented to young people which informed the contexts of Nike's advertising campaigns such as their influential slogans 'There is No Finish Line' and 'Just Do It' as well as timeless campaigns such as 'Find Your Greatness'.

Throughout this research I was constantly forced to challenge the existing discourse surrounding hustle culture, especially as the majority had been focused around work places.

## HUSTLE CULTURE

Hustle culture is the addictive notion and societal glorification of relentless hard work and the constant strive for success, which has the potential to encourage unhealthy habits and an always-on lifestyle driven by the demands of the digital world. It has become an aspirational continuation of an all work, no rest mentality to succeed. However, since COVID-19 many people, led by Generation Z, have begun to take ownership of their time and reject the traditional notion of hustle using it to fulfil their passions.

## SERIOUS LEISURE

Serious leisure involves pursuing activities offering personal fulfilment, identity enhancement, and a sense of purpose, distinct from casual leisure due to the significant effort and perseverance necessary to obtain the long term benefits. Engagement in serious leisure enables individuals to set boundaries between the work, home, and leisure realms of life and redirect their hustle mentality. This involvement encourages people to find greater satisfaction, self-fulfilment, and purpose through meaningful challenges.

## NIKE

Nike expertly leverages emotional marketing to align their brand with the ideals of greatness and serious leisure using powerful slogans and advertisements that resonate with individuals' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for self improvement and success. By incorporating Aristotle's rhetoric - ethos, pathos, and logos - Nike creates persuasive campaigns, inspiring consumers by juxtaposing hero and villain archetypes encouraging consumers to constantly pursue excellence.

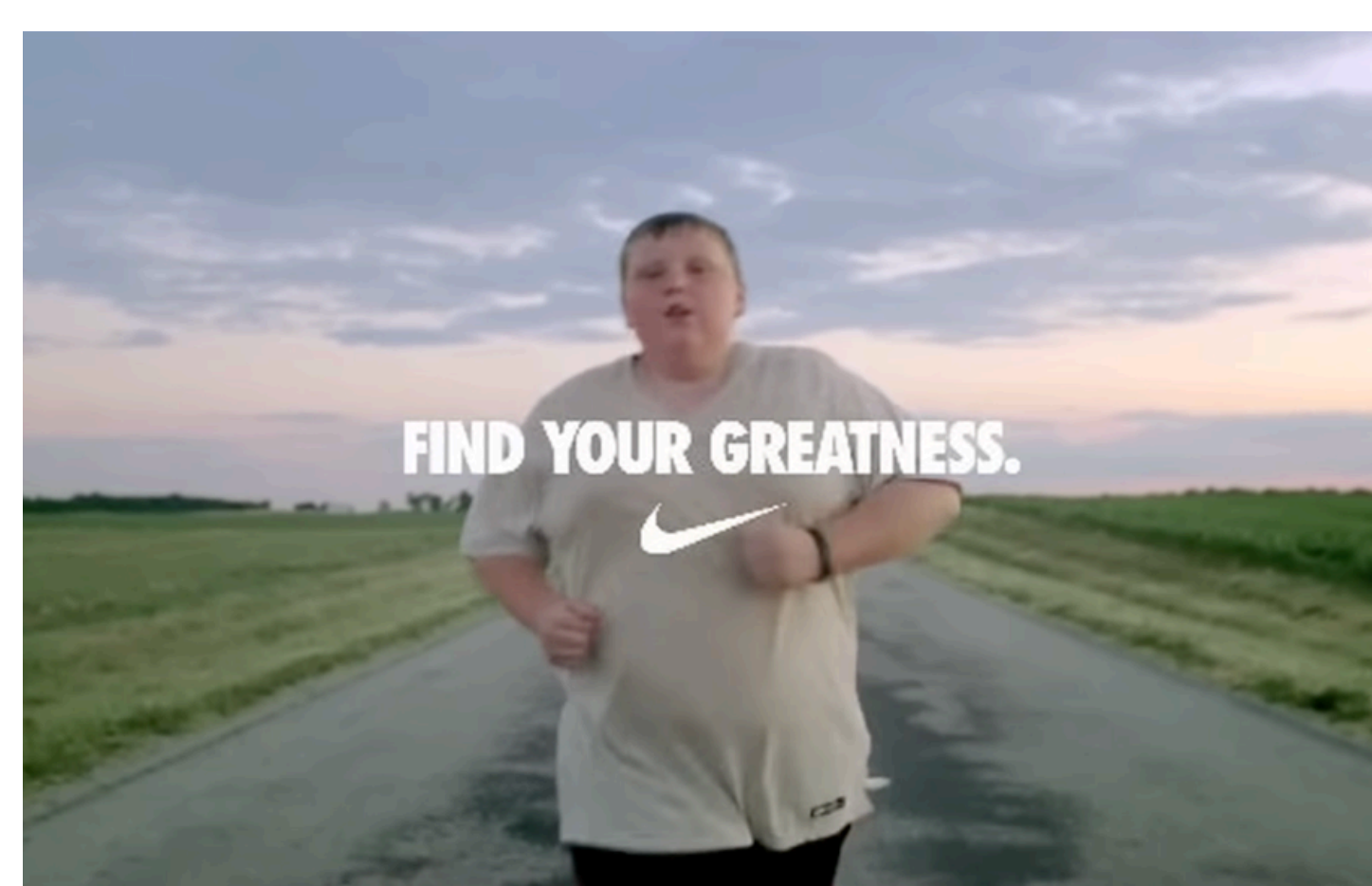
## 'THERE IS NO FINISH LINE' AND 'JUST DO IT'



Nike's swoosh and iconic 'Just Do It' slogan that features across their website and advertising.

Nike's evolution from their 1977 slogan "There Is No Finish Line" to the current 'Just Do It' originating in 1988, reflects a significant glorification of hustle culture, emphasising relentless effort and the pursuit of limitless potential. John Hoke, Nike's Chief Design Officer, articulated that this statement 'is not a lazy reference to an unending grind or destination less journey, but rather an expression of our belief in the limitless potential of sport and design' (Nike Inc, 2023). This description plays on the duality of human emotions by framing limitless potential in a positive light so that it can be an aspirational goal. While these slogans inspire individuals, they also suggest that one can never be fully satisfied, reinforcing the hustle mentality in both sport and life. Nike's iconic imperative "Just Do It" slogan epitomises this mindset by playing on the paradox of choice and encouraging decisive action and self-agency, simplifying the intrinsic struggle between ambition and satisfaction into a powerful call to strive for greatness.

## 'FIND YOUR GREATNESS'



Screenshot from the 'Find Your Greatness' campaign of 'The Jogger'.

Following the loss of the London 2012 Olympic sponsorship to Adidas, Nike's 2012 "Find Your Greatness" campaign marked a significant shift in their marketing by featuring ordinary people instead of elite athletes. The campaign, particularly through "The Jogger" advertisement, redefined greatness by emphasising that it is attainable by anyone willing to work for it, portraying the rise and grind mentality in a positive, aspirational light. By showcasing individuals taking steps toward self-improvement, Nike promoted the idea that greatness through sport is accessible to all, reinforcing their inclusive message that "if you have a body, you're an athlete." The setting of this scene plays into the narrative of the rise and grind mentality by portraying it at sunrise, along an empty path, before anybody else is awake, therefore providing inspiration for consumers to use their intrinsic motivations and hustle towards a goal. Throughout this advertisement the camera moves away from 'The Jogger' as he moves towards it, depicting the constant hustle needed to achieve greatness or athlete like qualities. This advert plays into Nike's underlying messages that 'There Is No Finish Line' and promotes the chase for greatness as he has taken the first step to self-improvement and fulfilment however it is something he will continually be aiming to reach which promotes that greatness is achievable for anyone if they 'knock on it's door'.

## 'WINNING ISN'T FOR EVERYONE'



Nike's summer tagline of 'Winning Isn't For Everyone' used for the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Nike's summer 2024 campaign "Winning Isn't for Everyone" contrasts the hero and villain archetypes of humanity and demonstrates its association to hustle culture. It features elite athletes like Kobe Bryant, Eliud Kipchoge and Serena Williams alongside narration that lists traditionally negative traits like being "obsessive" and "selfish." The campaign emphasises that relentless dedication and sacrifice are necessary for success, portraying the duality of hustle by acknowledging both the costs and rewards of such a mindset. This honest depiction of success through the juxtaposition of traditionally bad qualities and elite athletes encourages consumers to reflect on their own lives, highlighting that the pursuit of greatness involves difficult choices, applicable not only to athletes but to anyone striving for success. Nike's evolution from "There Is No Finish Line" to the 2024 campaign "Winning Isn't for Everyone" has increasingly glorified hustle culture, promoting the idea that relentless effort and self-improvement lead to great rewards. While these slogans emphasise limitless potential and self-agency, they also suggest that one can never be fully satisfied, reinforcing the hustle mentality in both sport and life. Nike's iconic "Just Do It" slogan epitomises this mindset, using emotional branding to inspire consumers to take decisive action, embodying the hero-villain struggle within themselves.

## CONCLUSION

Hustle culture has shifted from a workplace rite of passage to serious leisure amongst young people, encouraging them to channel their drive into fulfilling personal pursuits. Nike highlights both the rewards and challenges of this mindset through their advertising campaigns, whilst framing it in an overwhelmingly positive light. They champion self-improvement while cautioning against the potential toxicity of relentless hustling, urging individuals to seek fulfillment over societal validation. Recognising the paradoxical nature of hustle culture is therefore essential in ensuring we do not play into the toxic narratives of hustle that exemplify societal rewards and instead follow intrinsic motivations and self-fulfilment to reap the benefits of hustle culture in our own lives.

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