BEAUTY ADVERTISEMENT AND CREATION OF IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

Our study aims to investigate how young people react to Femvertising and to research if they perceive a link between their own identity formation and the content of advertisements they are exposed to. This was done by focusing at four sociological theories which are respectively Anthony Giddens, Thomas Ziehe, Axel Honneth and Erving Goffman. Each theory looks at identity formation in the late modern society, we also used one marketing theory called: Brand-cause fit. The scientific paradigm of the project was based on social constructivism, and the method of the analysis was the hermeneutic circle.

A sample of the population was selected, and eight young adults took part in the focus group study. The respondents were divided into three groups. The first group had all the respondents together, second group was with the four female respondents only, while the third group was with the four male respondents. This differentiation was done to enable us to observe how each gender group feel about the subject. Responses were analyzed using the hermeneutic circle which is considered as a process of interpretation.

Our finding shows that young adults perceive messages about gender identity in advertisement in the same way, but with different enthusiasm level. The male respondents were unhappy about how men were labeled, and the female were unhappy about the stereotypical assumptions. It was observed both when Femvertising was used as a tool and the same for the commercial that used the traditional marketing tool for gender. The reactions were similar for both gender as they saw a link in their own identity formation processes.

The results showed that there is a link between identity formation in the young adults, and the content of advertisement they are exposed to. The male respondents had formed opinion about female been weaker in sports because of television commercials, while the female respondents never saw anything wrong with been labeled with certain characteristics, because they have been made to believe it is normal by the society.

1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of our research is to investigate whether there is a connection between young adult's identity formation in late modern society and the constant media influence, specifically focusing on the signals that the beauty industry sends out through their advertisements in relation to gender.

Cause related marketing has become the new trend in the media through promotion, sponsorship. and other communication activities. Female empowerment advertisement has turn out to be very popular in relation to addressing social issues, for companies to appear more socially responsible and ethical while influencing customer decision making (S Champlin, 2019).

This thesis deals with the advertising industry's new trends and concepts, and what effect these have on the individual's identity formation, and we have chosen to focus on young adults over 18 years of age. The starting point will be how society has so far produced norms and values for gender with a focus on how the traditional norms and values for the individual are now starting to change.

This will be put in relation to how society has shifted during the technological development that has taken place in the late modern society in the western world. Our thesis will focus on how young adults react to the shifted norm and boundaries within gender, and how the individual receives these new messages, which the advertising industry makes greater use of. Focus will be on how these new trends affect young people's identity formation, and the view they have of themselves and the society we are moving towards.

The individual has always sought acceptance and recognition from the people they are surrounded by. The late modern society has given the individual bigger freedom through the increased individualization. Traditional norms and expectations that have previously existed for the individual have been moved in a new direction (Kaspersen, 2005).

The increased individualization has not only given the individual a bigger freedom. It has also helped to make the individual more reflexive in relation to himself or herself. The media has had a significantly bigger influence on society, and the individual is influenced by the knowledge of the media in relation to how they understand the world (Kaspersen, 2005).

The project wants to investigate if this change in society affects the individual's identity formation. Young adults use the internet and social media as part of their ordinary everyday culture, and they are therefore daily exposed to the advertising industry's many new ideas, in the form of being told which new products to buy, how to look and behave.

The individual must constantly relate reflexively to these many inputs and must therefore also sort themselves into what they think is relevant to them (Kaspersen, 2005). The project will make use of some marketing and sociological concepts, and therefore a list of terms has been made.

1.1 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Young Adult: A person whose age is between 18-22 years old.

Femvertising: Female Empowerment Advertising.

Commercial: Paid advertisement.

Advertising: A marketing communication tool used to promote products, services or ideas.

Gender: The differentiating factors between male and female.

Whistle blowing: It is a disclosure made by a person on illegalities or wrongdoing.

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility.

Body image: how a person perceives his or her body.

Body positivity: A social movement drive targeted at empowering people to embrace themselves no matter how they look physically.

Identity: The quality that makes or defines a person.

Stereotype: Having a generalized perspective about a specific type of people.

Objectification: Means making people to look like objects. It is used in advertising to put women on display as sexual objects.

Subjectification: It is used in advertising to present women as not seeking men approval but pleasing themselves.

2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDIA

In time past, messages were delivered physically from one person to another through verbal and non-verbal communication. Cullen (2014) simplifies this by saying 'Time and space were shared'. However, early media technology can be traced to the use of signs and symbols and were also used as a medium of passing across messages such as whistle blowing, drawings, or even drumming in a particular way which was used to send warning messages. According to Cullen (2014), from the

earliest days of human civilization, there was always more than one way to communicate. In the nineteenth century, cylindrical presses made it possible to blanket the world in print, and the age-old craft of theater became a form of mass entertainment. Humans have always seemed to have an instinct to communicate widely, to reach many people across time and space simultaneously.

Hall & Ellis (2019) are of the opinion that a relationship with technology is central to being human, but it is not well understood. However, humans create technology and have done so since the earliest times, and this is commonly taken as a sign of what distinguishes humanity from the sub-primates (Hall & Ellis, 2019). The earliest communication technology was the development of publishing through the printing press from which newspapers, magazines, and book publishing evolved. However, new media was also emerging making it possible to distribute sound and image, and this is what has led to the development of mass media such as radio, television, photography, and broadcasting. This probably is why Hall & Ellis (2019) argue that our technologies create us, enabling the activities and experiences and forms of social organization that make us who we are.

When the media is used as a means of communication, it is important to go through the process of effective communication which is from the sender to the message before getting to the receiver. Most of the time, the interpretation or meaning given to a message by the receiver is influenced by factors like race, class, gender as well as culture, which can decisively shape responses, and sometimes lead to diametrically opposite ones (Hall & Ellis,2019). Thus, making it difficult to gauge audience reaction and that is why all works of popular culture have a specific audience (Hall & Ellis,2019), who have similar interest and understand the language being spoken. However, human choices are shaped by unseen and often unknown forces that play a big role in our notions of personal taste. These forces are the people who make decisions on the content of what we hear, read, see, feel or imagine in the media (Hall & Ellis,2019), as well as impact of social influencers in social media who have more power and access in moving the media in a particular direction.

It is important to note that market capitalists play a role in the development of the media, starting from the invention of the printing press from which Benjamin Franklin made a fortune in printing and publishing (Hall & Ellis,2019), to exhibitions in museum, where businessmen like P.T Barnum sold the story of George Washington through the stories told by a nanny who used to work for Washington. So, business people of modern civilization understood very early that it is important to convey some kind of message to people that you hope would eventually buy what you are selling. Advertising plays a big role in the growth of popular media. It does not exist for its own sake to

communicate an idea, vision, or sense of beauty – though it may do all three – but rather for the purpose of selling something else (Hall & Ellis,2019).

According to Hall & Ellis (2019), mass media long preceded the era of United States' global power, and they will probably long survive it. But the global media, as well as the messages of modernity they transmit, have been decisively shaped by the American experience through popular culture. Popular culture can be defined as material aspects of any culture that are transmitted orally, by observation, or by imitation in industrial society through the mass media which reproduces and distributes information using machines and computers (Hall & Ellis,2019).

The mass media through advertising support democracy and the capitalist economy, and both the media and advertising will have to transform themselves if they want to survive in the 20th century (Hartley, Burgess, & Bruns, 2013). The most affected medium is the newspaper, which has historically set the agenda for public debate such as policy issues, because it helps to determine which story should be on front page. According to Hartley, Burgess, & Bruns (2013), newspapers evolved as agenda setters in the twentieth century because editors and publishers established standards for objective and fair reporting, while simultaneously erecting a "wall" between advertising and editorial departments to prevent advertisers from exercising influence over editorial matters. However, in this late modernity there is a slim line between advertising and editorial content using product placement and digital sponsorships of online content.

2.1   ADVERTISING

Advertising can be traced to the earliest forms of commerce, but with the industrial revolution and mass production came the beginning of mass marketing and by mid-19th century, there was a formulation of agencies, clients and media (McDonald & Scott, 2007). Advertising, according to Stanton (1984), is a marketing communication that employs an openly sponsored, non-personal message to promote or sell a product, service, or idea. It has always served to inform, persuade, and remind consumers though it was less persuasive then, because there was limited media and a limited number of goods available for trading (McDonald & Scott, 2007).

Today, there is a lot of focus on the internet, but comparable levels of attention were given to the introduction of television, radio, telephone, magazines, and newspapers (Leckenby, 2004). Though it might seem like the introduction of a new media diminishes the old, this is not the case, as there is always some kind of partnership that exists among the media. The new medium can therefore be said to be an improvement on previous technology which still needs input from the earlier

technology to function well. Leckenby (2004) argues that sometimes the old medium melts into the new, making the new medium something other than it might have been, radio and the web for example (Leckenby, 2004).

The main advertising media types are posters or outdoor media which came first, then the newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, and then the internet, which is the most recent mainstream medium. Furthermore, the old media might seem less important, but they all possess their unique attributes (Leckenby,2004), though they are mostly one way communication. However, the new media have improved interpersonal communication to a greater extent than their forerunners (Cathcart and Gumpert, 1983). In the words of Leckenby (2004), the new media disrupted existing patterns and trends, appealing to new social groups (i.e., audiences) and encouraging new uses based on novel technological properties. However, there are other media types such as cinema and sports clothing designed to be seen on TV. Almost anything that moves, and many things that cannot, now carry advertising (Leckenby, 2004).

Advertising has its root in providing information, as most advertising in the 20th century focuses on providing information as a news content (Leckenby,2004). By the 21st century, there was the need for enhanced originality and creativity, which led advertising to appeal to emotions. According to Marchand (1985), advertising increasingly views human nature as instinctive and non-rational with growing beliefs that audience members would respond more to emotional appeals than logical arguments and probably the reason why advertising is increasingly entertaining without selling (Beard, 2005). Rothenberg (2005) opines that products have life cycles and can die, but brands, if properly managed, can last forever. Therefore, the difficulty of maintaining product differences in an age with high production technology, shifted attention from product to brand differences which by their nature are more subtle (Leckenby,2004).

There are differing opinion about whether advertising is a mirror of society or an agent of change. Advertising will always adapt to current culture, pressures, and conditions (Leckenby,2004). Pardun (2013) opines that if advertising were a mirror of society, then the advertising industry is not really to blame for all the problems associated with bad advertising. It reflects societal culture in which we belong, and the advertisement is only going in that direction because it is what people want. Moreover, as an agent of change, it means that advertising can change our views about a particular product and eventually contribute significantly to what we purchase. This probably is why social

movements are now using advertising as an agent of change in order to influence and effect a change in the society.

The pros and cons of advertising have been debated ever since advertising emerged as the means to support the growing mass media consumption habits. Advertising can provide important information about products, but the controversy is when the advertising moves beyond information (Pardun, 2013). Advertising as an industry grew alongside businesses during the industrial revolution, as it was used to make a choice between similar products and to help create the needs for the different choices (Pardun, 2013). Advertising has been instrumental in the growth of some companies as it is used by brands to inform the potential consumer about the existence of the brand and its new products by letting the consumer know how things ought to be from the advertiser's perspective.

2.2 ADVERTISING AND GENDER

Advertising has always used gender as a tool. In 1969 Denmark was the first country in the world to publish pornographic images. Though before then, there has been a strong interest in using gender as a tool in advertising. Not just the gender itself, but a sex fixation of the gender. The pornographic expression, which was especially expressed through the display of the female body, has had many critical feminists argue against it, but is still to this day one of the most used tools in advertising. (Alexandersen, 2011).

Today, however, there is also increased criticism of this portrayal, in which gender has been treated as a sex object. In addition to the pornographic portrayal of women in particular, the issues also deal with the liberation of women from men. The problem lies in the fact that the body and the female gender are used as a commodity which is made available to the other gender, namely "men". In addition to this, the female bodies and beauty ideals that are presented in various advertisements are often not natural, as very beautiful and thin women are often shown with their breasts pushed up, and with a lot of make-up. There is not much of the natural woman left. This display of the female body has also created an unnatural image of how a man can expect a woman to look and behave (Alexandersen, 2011).

Advertising has also affected the way society views many things such as gender roles around which society has created some norms. Arguably, one can see advertising as contributing to printed rules and expectations for how a man should behave and what a woman should look like. As such, they can be seen as expressing the idea that there are rules for what is socially accepted in society. The

gender role in our society must be regarded as some norms, and some expectations of how a person of a certain gender should behave (Sheila Bakhshi, 2015).

2.3 INDIVIDUALIZATION AND THE MEDIA

From the 1980s onwards, the media has created a huge influence on our society. Medialization has created a societal development and has made the individual freer in many ways. The world has become smaller in the sense, that technological development has created some symbolic worlds in the form of various media, which has helped the individual to get a broader understanding of the outside world. The society has been mediated, which also means that society is increasingly becoming dependent on the media and the worldview they create. (Hjarvard, 2008).

The proliferation of television, satellites, and the internet has created an independence and globalization of the world. The media have created their own institutions, which the individual today uses to obtain knowledge. The media have therefore also gained a significantly bigger power, as they have a huge effect on the individual, and a massive influence on how the individual views the society (Hjarvard, 2008).

The media have gained a power to create norms for the society and it also affect the way the individual create their opinion about themselves as an individual, and about the world around them. Social media has also left a huge mark on the modern individual, as most of the online communication between people happens there. The media is also used to create and maintain networks. The broader the individual can commit within these media, the more enlightened the individual will become (Hjarvard, 2008).

The increased medialization has also meant that the individual in the western world has slipped further away from the traditional norms and values in terms of societal norm for the gender. The importance of religiosity and the church has become less important to the individual compared to before the medialization of society had taken place. In the past, the church helped to create community for the individual, and set a framework for the meaning of life. This function of the church has been taken over by the media, as society today is based on other values than religiosity (Hjarvard, 2008).

The media helps to create an image of the society we live in today. This takes place both through TV news, but also through media-created stories, that show how one should live as a successful individual. Companies use advertising and marketing to create new consumption needs and new

values for people, which also means that the individual today has different needs and goals with life than they have had before. Although the media has helped to create needs, that man has not had before, it has also helped to give people a larger and more detailed view of the world and it also give new opportunities for the individual (Hjarvard, 2008).

2.4 PROBLEM FORMULATION

The goal of the project is to investigate whether there is a connection between young adult's identity formation in relation to gender in the late modern society and the constant media influence, where the concepts from Femvertising is now used instead of traditional commercials in relation to gender roles. The investigation is centered around the advertising concepts of Femvertising and how young adults perceive and relate to these types of advertisements.

Problem formulation:

In what way do young people react to Femvertising as a tool in advertising, and how do they link this to their own identity formation?

Research Questions

- *How do young people perceive messages about gender identity in advertisements, when Femvertising is used as a tool and when it is not?*
- *How do they link it to their own identity formation processes?*

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this project, we want to look at some of the newer advertising concepts which is Femvertising and Body Positivism. This new concept of advertising is become very popular to use in late modern society. The goal of the investigation for the thesis I therefore to see how these concepts affect the individual's identity formation. The literature review is necessary to have a critical and in-depth evaluation of previous research. Therefore, in this, we present recent research on the Body Positivity movement and Femvertising which aim to clarify which new trends have emerged in the advertising industry. These two concepts are relatively new within the advertising industry and they both go against the traditional stereotypical images of how the individual should look in terms of appearance, as well as what character traits one should have.

3.1   HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON BODY IMAGE

Thomas F. Cash and Linda Smolak (2011), professors emeritus in psychology, explain the historical and contemporary perspectives on body image. This includes social-cultural, evolutionary, genetic and neuroscientific, as well as cognitive behavior and feminist objectification theory. The writers describe the development of body image across the lifespan. Emphasis was made on understanding the unique body experiences from childhood, adolescence to adulthood in both males and females. The influence of cultural media, family systems, and the impact of sexual abuse in interpersonal relationships make it possible to further understand adaptive and dysfunctional body image experiences. The assessment of body image among children, adolescents, and adults in terms of perceptual body image and attitudinal body image construct makes it possible to understand methodological, psychometric, and practical issues in measuring body images (Cash & Smolak, 2011).

A historical understanding of body image requires a recognition of the influence of culture and personal experiences. There is also the body image diversity relating to gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. According to Cash & Smolak (2011), body image problems can essentially cause eating disorders, threaten quality of life, and cause depression. Some ways to prevent these problems include a school-based psychoeducational intervention, computer-based interventions, as well as ecological and activism approaches, and changes in public policy to prevent consequences in body image problems. The writers explain that body image is much more than a singular experience. It depends on the state of the body and mind and entails gender, ethnicity, and culture. Hence, it is complex and multidimensional and age dependent. This is one reason why we would like to research the changes that have potentially occurred in beauty advertisement and the creation of identity in young adults.

3.2   BODY IMAGE AS PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Body image has also been discussed from the perspective of health and general body wholeness. Body image is described by Healey (2014) as the perception that a person has of his or her physical appearance. Justin Healey in the book *Positive Body Image* claims that body image can be influenced by different factors such as a person's individual thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors regarding their own body as well as the cultural and societal perception of what counts as the ideal body type. Some of the factors highlighted as contributing to issues in body image are sexual abuse or trauma, relationships with family and peers, stress or trying to copy the lifestyle of

others, feeling a lack of control in one's life, as well as media emphasis and fixation on the ideal body, negative self-talk and low self-esteem (Healey, 2014).

In many societies, the female body is sexually objectified which, Healey claims, affect girls as they begin to mature physically and psychologically. Girls begin to internalize the objectified cultural ideals and view their bodies as an object to be evaluated and judged for its beauty and aesthetic appeal. The shift to viewing the female more as a person and less as a body is one of the reasons why we would like to have a discussion on whether social movement has brought of changes in advertising content and invariably the media and how it affects identity formation in young adults.

According to Healey (2014), if the society is serious about improving girls' body image, we need to shift the focus from appearance to function and teach girls to value more than just looks. Healey explains that the male body has also become more exploited and commodified leading to body image pressures in young men. Though less is said in the media and research about the male body, it has been represented, evaluated, and dissected as an aesthetic product that has to be lean, buffed and muscular, argues Healey. Healey also observes that the perceived attractiveness of muscular men has grown since the 1950s and is linked to the western cultural views of masculinity and the masculine gender role which expects men to be powerful and strong. The preference for a muscular body in men starts as early as seven years and is associated with exercise to build muscles. This is mainly caused by exposure to media depictions through advertising. Healey sees modern metrosexual ideals, which is described as when urban man is concerned about his grooming and appearance, and the media is guilty in promoting these images.

3.3   SOCIAL MOVEMENT MATTER

Hague and Harrop (2013), have described Social movements as groups emerging from society to pursue non establishment goals through unorthodox means, having broad objectives and challenging existing elites. It can also be a process of freedom because it gives us the sense of taking practical actions. Cox (2018) explains in his book that movements can be understood in simple terms as something ordinary people do in numbers. Such as consuming some kind of food, wearing particular clothing, reading particular books etc. Movements come together to challenge the way things are. However, a movement could also be formed by an organization, individual, or a group on a particular issue (Cox, 2018).

Cox (2018) claims that conflict is what determines the term movement. That is a sense of 'WE' as opposed to a 'THEY' which could be the state, corporations, a social group, or a form of behavior.

Social movement has to do with the relationship that exist between the people involved in the activism. Social movement participants are agents of change who look beyond themselves and their activities are targeted at benefiting not only oneself but others as well. Cox (2018) believes that long term dedication to something that goes beyond oneself is what makes a real difference because it involves putting oneself at risk to help others, this could be a risk in form of mockery or contempt or losing out financially.

Further, Cox (2018) sees Social movements as a form of collective self-creation which are able to meet human needs. Humans are always in the process of remaking themselves on a continuous basis whether consciously or influenced by forces outside of ourselves. Such as the objectification of both the male and female gender, exposure to advertisement makes us want to be more attractive, when we try to fit in into a group just to have a sense of belonging, or when work pressure tries to make us more competitive.

3.4   BODY POSITIVIST MOVEMENT

The Body Positive movement started in the 2000s' as an activism to protest the objectification of women in media culture and selective nature of western beauty ideals (Darwin & Miller, 2020). In the journal of Feminist Media Studies, two sociologists, Darwin and Miller wrote a discourse analysis on a blur of boundaries of various feminism movement within Body positivity and concludes that body positivity is far from being unified. This has given rise to tensions within the body positive movement in North America, they claim, and in their text, they further identify four social movement frames which are; Fat Body positivity = Body positivity, radical body positivity, mainstream body positivity, and body neutrality (Darwin & Miller, 2020). These four frames are each characterized in the following way:

Firstly, Mainstream Body Positivity is characterized by postfeminist sensibility and it constructs individual choice as the primary means of personal empowerment, while embracing ideals of beauty and sexiness as key elements of positive body image. **Mainstream Body Positivity** argues that women need to engage in more self-love as a psychological act of resistance against their objectification in society (Darwin & Miller, 2020). Secondly, **Fat Positivity** is focused on the systemic discrimination that fat women experience instead of the body image issues that women experience more generally This frame amplifies the significance of fat women exclusion from Western beauty ideals, spurring substantial online discourse about the differential impact of fat

stigma and how to operationalize fatness in the first place (Darwin & Miller,2020). Though emphasis and contention surrounding Fat Positivity = Body Positivity revolves around size. However, Scholars within Fat Studies have argued that Fat Positivity should not be used synonymously with Body Positivity (Cooper, 2016).

Thirdly, Darwin & Miller, discusses about **Radical Body Positivity** and argue that the movement's focus should be on combating systemic rather than individual experiences of oppression. Though, Radical Body Positivity proponents disagrees that the focus of Body Positivity should be explicitly on fat, they however extend Body Positivity to all axes of oppression and often criticizes whitewashing which is a deliberate attempt to conceal unpleasant or incriminating facts about something within both Mainstream Body Positivity and Fat Positivity = Body Positivity frames Darwin &Miller,2020). The goal of of Radical Body Positivity is to shift the movement's focus away from the individual towards systemic change by centering the voices and experiences of multiply marginalized subjects.

The fourth faction of Body Positivity as discussed by Darwin & Miller (2020) is **Body Neutrality**. This faction focuses on individual psychological transformation, but contests the Mainstream frame's focus on self-love, advocating instead for an adjusted goal that is sometimes referred to by activists as body acceptance (Darwin & Miller,2020). Pproponent's of body Neutrality argue that Body Positivity must embrace this more attainable psychological goal. As Fabello (2015) explains, "We've got to help people survive before we can expect them to thrive." Body Neutrality therefore focuses on individual body image and relys on neoliberal notions of choice regarding one's relationship with one's body even while acknowledging that systemic forces impact one's ability to engage in self-love (Darwin & Miller, 2020). This frame also encourages self-surveillance, with the goal of maintaining an emotional neutrality toward one's body. The tension between factions is caused by inability of the activists to agree on what the focus of the social movement should be (Darwin & Miller, 2020).

So, the question arises as to whether to focus on individualized, psychological issues like body image, or structural concerns like size discrimination. According to Sastre (2014), the Body Positive movement encompass a variety of loosely connected networks and campaigns taking place across numerous cultural arenas and some of them do not have a relationship with one another. Benford and Snow (2000) opines that successful movements should mobilize their followers behind a coherent objective collective action frame. They argue that activists must engage in three

overlapping processes which are: 1) discourse between participants, 2) alignment of strategies, and 3) debate between activists, followers, and opposition to clarify the goals of the movement (Benford & Snow, 2000). The argument makes Darwin & Miller (2020) to suggest that there should be a set of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimatize the activities and campaigns of movement organizations and participants.

A sort of body positive movement was witnessed in the 1960s with the emergence of Fat Acceptance movement and other identarian movements (Darwin & Miller,2020). Along the decades, because of rise in women's liberation movements, there was the rise of sex positivists who promoted body positive approaches to sexual and reproductive health, as well as the struggle for the liberation for people of color through the Black is beautiful movement (Ingrid Banks, 2000). These different approaches were labelled Body Positivity with the emergence of the internet in the 2000s (Darwin & Miller,2020). New digital technologies have enabled body positive activists to organize online campaigns that will have a cultural change and reclaim selflove such as the #metoo. Online media platforms are used by body positive activists to debate their varied relationships with beauty culture. However, corporate organizations through their brands are taking advantage of this in their advertising campaigns. This, Amara Miller (2016) says, is leading to a greater risk of fractioning within the broader movement.

3.5   POST FEMININIST SENSIBILITY

In the *European journal of cultural studies,* Rosalind Gill (2007) argues that post feminism are debates about the transformations in both feminism and media culture and their mutual relationship. The term post feminism has different meanings and there is no agreement as to what it is, and the term is used in various ways to signal a theoretical position which is a type of feminism after the second wave or a regressive political stance (Gill,2007). One of the things that make the media today different from early 1980s is because feminism is now a part of the cultural field where feminist discussions are expressed within the media rather than external or independent (Gill,2007).

Gill (2007) is of the opinion that it will be wrong to say that the media has become feminist by adopting feminist perspective, but rather it offers contradictory patterned constructions. Angela McRobbie (2004) has referred to feminist ideas as the contemporary double entanglement of neoliberal values in relation to gender, sexuality, a family life, and a feminism that is part of

common sense yet also feared, hated, and fiercely repudiated. The entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist ideas is what makes contemporary media culture postfeminist.

Post femininity should be seen as a sensibility that characterizes increasing numbers of films, television shows, advertisements, and other media products (Gills,2007). However, post femininity is seen historically as a political position in the wake of feminism encounter with difference, historical shift within feminism, and as a backlash against feminism (Gill,2007). Furthermore, Gill says postfeminist debates is made up of themes which co-exist and are structured by inequalities and exclusions that relate to race and ethnicity, class, age, sexuality as well as disability and gender. Firstly, is the notion that femininity is a bodily property, secondly, the shift from objectification to subjectification, thirdly is the emphasis on self-surveillance. There is also monitoring and discipline, focus on individualism, choice and empowerment, the dominance of a makeover paradigm as well as resurgence in ideas of natural sexual difference, sexualization of culture, and an emphasis on consumerism. A few of these will be discussed below:

3.5.1   FEMINIMITY AS A BODILY PROPERTY

The female body is presented as a source of women power which requires constant monitoring, surveillance, discipline, and re-modelling to conform to ever narrower judgements of female attractiveness (Gill, 2007). Further, Gills (2007) says femininity is defined as a bodily property rather than a social, structural, or psychological one and having a sexy body is presented as a woman's source of identity. Women bodies are evaluated, scrutinized, and dissected by not only women themselves but by men also. The female body in postfeminist media culture is constructed as a window to the person's real life. For instance, in the 1996 novel on Bridget Jone's Diary by Helen Fielding, Bridget Jones smoking of forty cigarettes in a day, or the consumption of excessive calories is reflected as a psychological indication of her emotional breakdown. Gill (2007) is of the opinion that the body should be seen as a canvas for an image which may have little to do with how one feels inside.

3.5.2   THE SEXUALIZATION OF CULTURE

Sexualization refers to the proliferation of debates about sex and sexuality across all forms of media (Gills, 2007). This can be seen as part of the striptease culture and the increasingly frequent erotic presentation of girls, women, and men bodies in public spaces. There is an uneven distribution on

debates about sex which is important to understanding the subject of sexualization. Girls and women are seen as the monitors of all sexual and emotional relations while men are hailed as pleasure seekers who just want to have sex (Tincknell et al., 2003). For instance, in straight women magazine, men are presented as complex, vulnerable humans while magazines targeted at men portrays as always discussing about their underwear, sexual fantasies or body parts (Gill,2007).

3.5.3   RESURGENCE OF SEXUAL DIFFERENCE

In the 1990s, the idea of equality between the male and female and basic similarity was dispersed with and gave way to a resurgence of natural sexual differences across all media (Gill,2007). For instance, during the debate about masculinity, the idea of the 'New Man' was attacked by both men and women as inauthentic and fake. It was understood by many as an act that had come up through what was presented as the hegemonic dominance of feminism with little to do with what men are like (Gill,2007). Developments in genetic science nurtured discussions on sexual differences as it promises to locate a genetic basis for all human characteristics (Gill,2007). Also, an increase in self-help literature which addresses why the battle of the sexes continued despite feminism, which Gill (2007) says is because men and women are fundamentally different. According to John Gray (2002), feminism lost its way when it tried to impose its ideological prescriptions on a nature that did not fit. What was needed was a frank acknowledgement of difference rather than its denial.

3.5.4   FROM OBJECTIFICATION TO SUBJECTIFICATION

According to Goldman (1992), women are not objectified in a straight-forward way but are portrayed as active desiring sexual subjects who choose to present themselves in a seemingly objectified manner because it suits their liberated interest to do so. This shift is important towards the understanding of postfeminist sensibility as it represents a modernization of femininity called a new *technology of sexiness* (Radner, 1999) in which sexual knowledge and practice are central.

Also, Gill (2007) argues that a shift to subjectification represents the way power operates which is from an external male judging gaze to a self-policing narcissistic gaze and is a deeper form of exploitation than objectification. Therefore, power is not imposed from outside but constructs our very subjectivity. According to Myra Macdonald (1995), older women, bigger women, women with wrinkles etc. are never accorded sexual subjecthood and are still subject to offensive and sometimes vicious representations. So, this shift to neoliberal subjectivity in which sexual objectification can

be represented not as something done to women by some men but as the freely chosen wish of active, confident, and assertive female subjects (Gill,2007).

3.6   THE RISE OF FEMVERTISING

In an era of brand responsibility and in response to increased societal focus on issues of gender equality, Femvertisment are featured on cable television, large-scale print, and outdoor media, as well as through online platforms such as YouTube and Instagram (Champlin et al., 2019), thereby making Femvertising popular in advertising practice and research. Therefore, Femvertising is when adverts that feature female empowerment alongside commercial brands, also known as 'Femvertisment', aim to confront female stereotypes and societal stigma (Akestam, Rosengren, and Dahlen 2017). However, advertisements like these were once limited to feminist-oriented magazines such as Bust (D'Enbeau, 2011).

With the emergence of the internet and social media platforms, the fourth wave of feminist dialogue became entangled in body positivity and was moved online in the 2010s (Evans & Chamberlain, 2015). Herein, Baer (2016) argues that the oppressive nature of neoliberalism and the potentially toxic environments of online spaces can restrict the formation of solidarity among diverse activists.

A lot of the things that we do and say are influenced by the media and what the society expects of us irrespective of our gender. Body image is feeling good about yourself. When we do not feel good about ourselves, we tend to look for validation from other people. "Body positivity" refers to the movement to accept our bodies, regardless of size, shape, skin tone, gender, and physical abilities (Laboeuf, 2019). The movement is often implicitly understood as the effort to celebrate diversity in bodily *aesthetics* and to expand our narrow beauty standards beyond their present-day confines. Hopefully with the aim of limiting body shame to proper body pride (Laboeuf, 2019).

Many corporate organizations in a bid to support social movements such as body positivity have rebranded their core values to include social responsibility. Hence the term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which is grounded in an understanding of business being part of society (Khan et. al., 2012). So, through advertising corporate organizations now have an important role as agents of social change. According to Khan et.al., (2012), this has important effects on environmental and social issues, eradication of poverty, employment creation and labour practices, education, and human development.

One of such issues is the feminist movement on objectification of the female body which has brought about Female Empowerment Advertising (Femvertising) by corporate organizations. According to Rodrigues (2016), the intersection of feminist theory and current societal trends lays the groundwork for the rise of Femvertising which is focused on the role of women in modern society, the evolution of gender equality and changing shopping patterns. Rodrigues (2016) describes Femvertising as a marketing and communication strategy used by brands by means of which they seek to inspire and empower women of any age though pro-female messages while promoting their products and generating greater brand engagement. The trend of Femvertising as a beauty culture has received significant attention through advertising and has been made popular with the 1994 Dove Campaign on Real Beauty.

3.7 FEMVERTISING AS A SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER

In the Feminist Media Studies journal, Neema and Kumar (2020) attempt to gain an understanding of where the increasing social acceptance and cause of Femvertising comes from, and the impact this has on both society and the average person. The increased focus on feminists and the female gender through advertising is a very successful form of marketing strategy. However, the question is whether consumers can see through the exploitation of feminism themes from companies to make a profit versus the companies that really have a deeper message (Neema & Kumar,2020).

Looking at previous research, one can see that there has been a shift in terms of the focus on empowered women, as well as on how Femvertising is a potentially rewarding area for future research, one of the major issues with Femvertising, however, is that it is difficult to create a generalized female target group as women contextualize advertisements differently based on their different backgrounds and ages (Neema & Kumar, 2020). This can create an increased false feminism on the part of the media, whereby instead of supporting companies that have a real interest in the area, it instead becomes a support for the consumer culture.

Having said this, some researchers believe that Femvertising has some positive impacts. Firstly, by "selling feminism" in the media, a greater focus will also come on the empowered woman. Secondly, making women stronger also becomes an improvement in attitudes towards women (Neema & Kumar, 2020) The participants that the article has used have been exposed to various forms of Femvertising through commercials as well as various forms of traditional advertising. The researcher's choice was based on the methodological approaches which were subject searching, reference tracking, citation searching, other research studies as well as reviews of websites, blogs,

and media articles of leading publications relating to Femvertising. The result turns out that Femvertising has a positive influence and creates a good attitude towards the brands that have used this. This applies both to customers who are already supporters of the selected brands, as well as customers who do not have a previous relationship with them.

According to Neema and Kumar (2020), increased Femvertising is not only due to a simple cause, but instead a combination of five factors. Firstly, the growing activism around the better representation of women in advertising which is caused by the media representations of gender roles. So, discriminatory and sexist representations of women in media especially advertising have been instrumental in increasing awareness about its harmful effects and ushering favorable messages on women empowerment (Neema & Kumar, 2020). Secondly, increasing adoption of brand activism and conscious capitalism, female empowerment advertisements elicit positive attitudes to ads and brands featured, as well as higher purchase intentions (Victoria E. Drake 2017). Women are also more likely to be loyal to companies sharing their values (Cone Communications, 2017). Therefore, brand activism seems to be a timely response to a new generation more actively engaged in social causes such as feminism (Neema & Kumar,2020). Thirdly, the criticism of corporate and commodity feminism is possible because the internet has provided a free and safe space for consumers to react to advertising and the customers' ability to talk back and challenge companies to lift their standards (Dee Madigan 2015).

Ccommodity feminism can be described as a kind of advertising style which makes advertisements vehicles of commodity narratives (Goldman et al. 1999). Femvertising has been criticized as a pure commodity feminism strategy wherein consumers get a notion of self-empowerment from engaging with Femvertising brands, which causes them to use their purchasing power as a form of activism (Neema &Kumar,2020). The fourth is the increasing awareness of gender stereotyping, Gender role assumptions are very commonly seen in advertising. Ads have been criticized for not genuinely portraying society from a woman's point of view. Studies have shown that advertisements have a self-activating effect and can affect the way individuals evaluate themselves (Debra A. Trampe, Stapel and Suero 2010). The two main criticisms on the spaces occupied by women in media have been portrayals as sex objects and in stereotyped roles (Rajiv Ranjan Dwivedi 2014). Therefore, recent studies on gender roles in advertising prove that it is beneficial for companies to embrace counter-stereotyping and other forms of subversion of the traditional views of women in society, encouraging corporate action. The final driver of Femvertising is the increasing scrutiny by regulatory bodies on gender role representations in advertising. In 2017, the UK Advertising

Standards Authority (ASA) report summarized the detrimental effects of advertising on women's rights and empowerment into three main areas: stereotyping, body shaming and objectification, and sexualization (The Advertising Standards Authority 2017). Also, The Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) proposed restrictions on gender stereotypes in 2018 on advertisements likely to cause harm or serious or widespread offense. Therefore, specific regulations and growing communication on proper codes of conduct are also playing a role in re-educating the public and promoting genuine Femvertising.

3.8   THE IMPACT OF FEMVERTISING

The impact of Femvertising, rather than the movement, is the focus of Akestam, Rosengren, and Dahlen (2017) in the journal of *Psychology and Marketing*. To understand these effects, they are compared to the effects of the female portrayals typically used in traditional advertising. Femvertising, compared to traditional advertising, reduces advert reactance which is a negative reaction to advertisement. This in turn enhances advert and brand attitudes among a female target audience (Akestam et al., 2017).

Since Dove's campaign Evolution in 2006 (Davidson, 2015), advertising those challenges gender stereotypes and empowers women has grown immensely in popularity. In April 2017, "Femvertising" generated about 46,000 hits on Google, including major media outlets such as CNN, The Guardian, and Huffington Post. By 2015, it received its own category in the Cannes Lions awards thereby suggesting that contemporary brands perceive Femvertising as a successful strategy for targeting female audiences (Akestam et al., 2017).

Ciambrello (2014) argues that the term "Femvertising" initially gained acceptance in 2014 and is typically attributed to the lifestyle site SheKnows, where Femvertising was used as a label for contemporary advertising campaigns questioning traditional female gender stereotypes used in advertising. Although female liberation has been part of advertising themes dating back as far as to the 1960s if not longer, Femvertising can be considered novel in that it focuses on questioning female stereotypes acknowledged to be partly created by advertising (Akestam et al., 2017). The move to proactively challenge such stereotypes can be considered a major change in the way brands advertise, as previous research has shown that advertising historically has followed societal

norms and stereotypes rather than challenged them (Eisend, 2010). So, Femvertising clearly breaks with the type of female portrayals typically found in advertising (Eisend, 2010).

Akestam et al. (2017) compares Femvertising to an advertising appeal which is frequently used in advertising campaigns that set out to generate sales, while simultaneously empowering women and girls by avoiding perpetuating female advertising stereotypes (Ciambrello, 2014). Femvertising typically employs several features simultaneously such as body size *and* attractiveness and is thus concerned with the overall or holistic impression of the female portrayals used in advertising (Akestam et al., 2017). Though there are claims that gender stereotypes in advertising tend to develop in cycle with societal values and gender roles, previous research shows that advertising has historically been mirroring, rather than challenging, female stereotypes and roles in society (Eisend, 2010).

Hence, the characteristics of female portrayals in advertising tend to lag when compared to those of females in society at large, which can be seen in the way females are more likely to be portrayed in roles that are characterized by dependence and in occupations within the home (Akestam et al., 2017). Indeed, Eisend (2010) writes that using gender stereotypes in advertising becomes problematic when they lead to expectations and judgments that restrict life opportunities for subjects of the social category portrayed. Instances are when stereotyping physical characteristics such as beauty ideals lead to reduced body satisfaction, also, stereotyping role behaviors in women being caring and dependent may restrict opportunities of self-development and stereotyping occupational portrayals can lead to disadvantages in women's careers (Akestam et al. (2017). So, the negative effects of using stereotypes and the positive effects of challenging them are a central concern of gender policy and a social objective in many societies which will lead to having equal life opportunities for all genders in different spheres of life.

Akestam et al. (2017) has defined Femvertising as *advertising that challenges traditional female advertising stereotypes* and their potential effects on brands and consumers. Therefore, this twofold approach to what constitutes a successful advertising campaign (one that empowers brands and consumers simultaneously) certainly puts advertising practitioners in a new position, where they need to be aware of the societal role of advertising, as well as its direct effects on consumers. Akestam et al. (2017) has argued that marketers have much to gain from adapting a more proactive

and mindful approach to the female portrayals they use in their adverts. Their research shows that challenging female stereotypes should not be only beneficial to a narrow set of advertised products but to a wide range of product categories, such as from cars to underwear, sportswear, and shampoo, across all advertising media and across stereotype attributes such as physical characteristics, roles, and occupations.

4 METHODOLOGY

In this section, we will elaborate on the methodology used in the project by explaining our scientific paradigm, social constructivism, and why we have chosen to use this view in our investigation. Likewise, we will explain the choice of the hermeneutic circle as our analytical framework whilst elaborating on the strengths and weaknesses of this approach.

4.1 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

The scientific paradigm of the project will be based on social constructivism. The basic idea of social constructivism is that phenomena should not be considered immutable and eternal. In contrast, phenomena are created through social and historical processes. Man is considered to be a co-creator in social constructions and therefore cultural norms will be created though time. So, knowledge is created through social and collective processes (Collin, 2012).

Social constructivism is based on the notion that reality is shaped by the realization we have of it. By this is meant that all human cognition is socially constructed. It is also important to know that within social constructivism, societal phenomena should not be considered as eternal and immutable but have instead arisen through social processes (Collin, 2012).

Social constructivism is therefore relevant in relation to the investigation, as we want to analyze the students' attitudes to the representation of gender in advertising using the concepts of femvertising. Since we in our thesis have chosen to do a qualitative focus group interview with the young adults, this also requires that we look at the relationships that exist between the individuals, which the young adults have produced between them.

We can illuminate the socially constructed reality of young people, when we observe how they answer the questions asked. Here we can also see how they interact with each other, and whether they perceive the questions in the same way or reach a kind of agreement on how the questions should be answered.

It is precisely through these interactions between the young adults, that we can see how the constructed reality of the young adults is connected, even though the this also means that we as interviewers have a form of power, as it is us who set the framework for the interview. We have some knowledge about the subject that the students do not have, which also makes us appear "wiser" in the field than them. We do not want students to feel overwhelmed by us. We try to avoid this by setting up as natural a set-up for the young people as possible, by conducting the conversations at their own school together with the classmates they know.

As we work from the social constructivist point of view, we as researchers and interviewers are also characterized by our own cultural and social understanding, which is created from the social reality, we ourselves live under. Truth becomes a product of the social processes, and so do the societal phenomena. Though the girls in the group had been told that we were going to talk about female empowerment, we as researchers must be careful not to put words in the mouths of young adults, as they may have a different reality than us. The truth must therefore be regarded as being intersubjective and dependent on the community one is attached to.

In the project, we want to shed light on how the contemporary societal view of what the norms for gender look like today. Are there any traits that are recurring in relation to the old norms, or has society begun to move in a new direction? It is not only the phenomenon around gender itself that is interesting, but also how the young adult's perception of reality of the phenomenon looks like.

4.1.1   ONTOLOGICAL & EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

As we work from a social constructivist paradigm, we as researchers are aware that knowledge and social phenomena are governed by the social and cultural background we have. Knowledge is created through the social contexts and the social interaction we find ourselves in. Knowledge is therefore also constantly changing. Since we see the world from a social constructivist epistemology, we as researchers believe that all knowledge is socially constructed. There is thus no "true knowledge", as we as researchers are influenced by social factors and so are the students.

The way we therefore create knowledge and investigate our case is based on being able to create an understanding of the young adult's worldview and the social factors that influence them. This worldview will also be influenced by ours, and thereby we can help create and explore their world based on the preconceptions we have and the new knowledge they give us. The way we as researchers therefore intend to conduct our interviews is to let the young adults speak and express

themselves as much as possible. We want to understand the world of young adults without affecting them by our social world.

We therefore want to be able to observe and listen to the young adult's answers and ways of explaining themselves, without putting words in their mouths, in the form of attitudes and opinions about what the young people should say and think in relation to the questions we ask them during the interviews. We want to let the young adults use their own words and understandings of the phenomena. This is done to gain a deeper understanding of their social world.

4.2 HERMENEUTICS

The analysis of the thesis will be based on the hermeneutic working method, including the hermeneutic circle. Hermeneutics is also called an art of interpretation, and has been used since the 17th century, and was used as a term for a systematic activity of interpreting sacred scriptures. Hermeneutics derives its meaning from the Latin "hermeneuein" and contains 3 meanings. These three are 1: to express oneself, 2: to interpret and 3: to translate. These three elements are part of the hermeneutic interpretation process (Sørensen, 2012).

This has been chosen, because we want to analyze the young adult's identity formation in relation to gender, and also how the young adults perceive the selected commercials. The hermeneutic analysis method is therefore relevant as understanding and interpretation is a basic condition for being able to understand our own social world.

From the point of view of hermeneutics, man is considered to be an interpretive being. Man is an interpretive being who wants to understand the world in which one is placed. Man will always try to understand and investigate new phenomena, and thereby try to form an opinion through an interpretation. This is done by putting the studied phenomenon in relation to the context in which it is put (Sørensen, 2012). In the project we used that in terms of trying to gain and understanding of the students own world, and the context they were put in when we as strangers came to do an interview with them.

As mentioned before, hermeneutics has an interpretive point of view, which means that one interprets texts from the societal context in which they appear. However, an interpretation will always be characterized by the interpreter's own subjective attitude, and this is also why we as researchers have chosen to look at young adults from a social constructivist approach. Social constructivism, as mentioned before, believes that reality is based on a man-made interpretation and

social processes. We thus distinguish between our own worldview, which is social constructivist, and the method of analysis we want to use, which becomes the hermeneutic circle.

As mentioned before, the analysis of the thesis will make use of the hermeneutics approach, where the hermeneutic circle will be used as the method. The hermeneutic circle must be considered as a process of interpretation, which is in constant motion between "part" and "whole". The hermeneutic circle works on the basis that to be able to understand, and make sense of a single statement, one must see the statement in relation to the context in which it is included (Sørensen, 2012).

The picture below shows how the hermeneutic circle is used as an analysis method, where there is an interaction between "part" and "whole" to achieve new understanding.
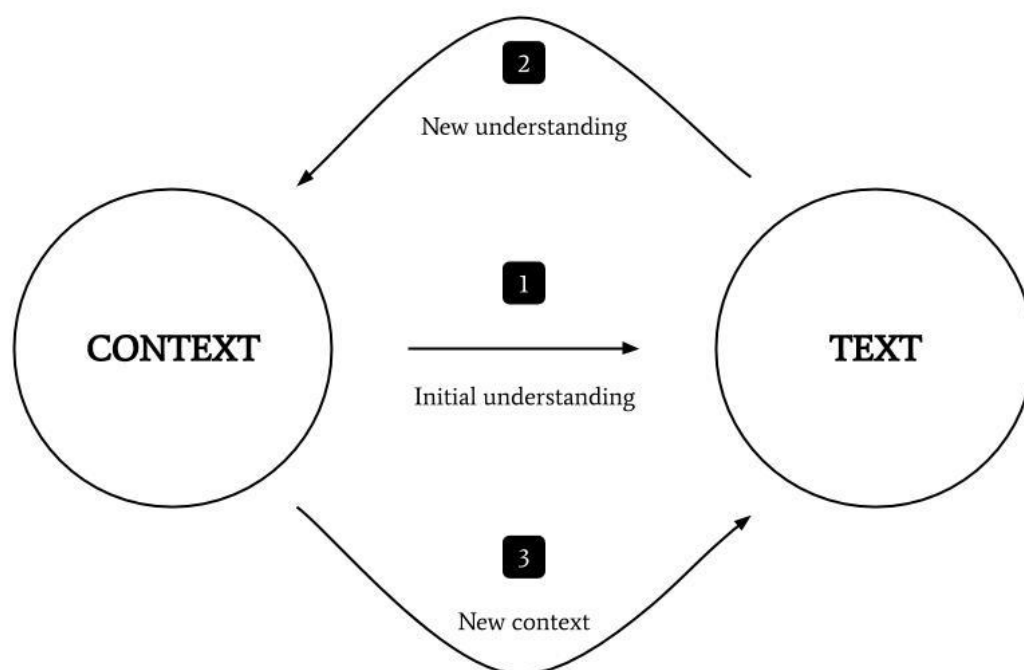
(Cunff, 2021)

It is important to understand that "part" and "whole" presuppose each other. Once these two elements are addressed, an interpretation can subsequently take place. The interpretation also depends on the context in which the investigated phenomenon is placed. The cognition and the interpretation thus take place as an interaction between part and whole. Through this interaction, a clearer and more coherent understanding of the interpretive work will systematically emerge. (Sørensen, 2012).

The individual is considered to be an acting being in interaction with the social world in which he finds himself. One can therefore not say that one can attain a true form of knowledge, since man is both an acting and thinking being, on the other hand, the goal can be to attain a preconception of meaning context (Sørensen, 2012).

Since we have chosen that our analysis method in the project should be done through the hermeneutic circle, it is because we want to analyze and understand the young people's answers based on the context they have. We want to be able to create a picture of their worldview and thoughts on the topics discussed. It is therefore important for us to be able to relate all the small sub-elements in the interview guide to their societal background and the thoughts and norms they underlie. This is done with the aim that we gain a greater understanding of the young persons' thoughts about the commercials shown, and what feelings it evokes in them in relation to gender ideals and identity formation. We would also like to see, if the new trends in advertising like Femvertising have a different impact on the young adults, than the traditional advertising tools.

The idea in the hermeneutic circle is that one wanders between a part perspective and a whole perspective. This also means that the deeper you dive into a small part of the whole, the deeper you also must dive into the whole itself. This is where the interaction between part and whole arises. The reason why you interact between part and whole is that the deeper understanding you get of the simple parts of the whole, the greater the understanding you also get of the whole. By making an interaction between part and whole, a deeper understanding is created for each individual part, and for the whole itself (Sørensen, 2012).

The interaction does not just go in circles, but instead a new interpretation is formed of the simple parts, which then creates a new understanding of the whole, and the interaction therefore helps to create a new understanding of the phenomena studied. The deeper you go into the interaction the more knowledge and new understanding you can reach. Understanding a phenomenon is therefore about being able to relate parts to a whole (Sørensen, 2012).

In relation to the thesis, part and whole is very relevant, because of the pre-understanding we have as researchers. That means also that we have some expectations of what will happen during the interviews. This is because we as researchers have read and selected some theories for our thesis, which we want to keep our interview questions up against, and therefore have some expectation to what answers our informants must come with. It is therefore important that we as researchers always remember that the students' pre-understanding and reality can be different from our own.

During the actual conduct of our interview, we also saw this. All of the High School students who participated in our focus group interview where all very well behaved and interested in the questions we asked throughout the whole interview. However, we were met with some preconceptions on their part that we had not even had in mind before setting up the interview appointment.

One of the preconceptions was, that one could feel in the students, that they had assumed that we could not understand Danish. The students had been told by their teacher that we were international university students from Aalborg University. The presentation of us took place in English, where their English teachers talked a little about the project, and we told a little about what our purpose with this was. Likewise, we both do not have a Danish appearance, and our skin are darker than the 'typical' Dane. These factors have most likely created a preunderstanding on the part of the students that we did not speak or understand Danish.

The way we figured that out, was when the students said small things to each other in Danish. During the interviews themselves, small remarks were made in Danish, which based on our assessment was not something the students intended to share with us.

In this way, it can be said that we as researchers therefore had a kind of power over the students, as they assumed that we did not understand what they were saying to each other, which one of us did. This also meant that we received information about the students that we would not have received if they had known that we spoke Danish. This is also the reason why we in the project have chosen to keep the name of the high school anonymous. The ethical consideration for that will be addressed in the etic section of the project.

5 METHOD

In this section, an in-depth review of the chosen method will be made, through which the project's choices and opt-outs will be explained. Throughout the chapter reflections on the process of data collection and analysis hereof is made, including considerations regarding ethics and quality.

The progress of the project will be based on the figure below:

| INTRODUCTION |
| PROBLEM AREA |
| LITERATURE REVIEW |
| METHODOLOGY |
| METHOD |
| EMPIRICAL FOUNDATION |
| THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK |
| ANALYSIS |
| CONCLUDIN DISCUSSION |
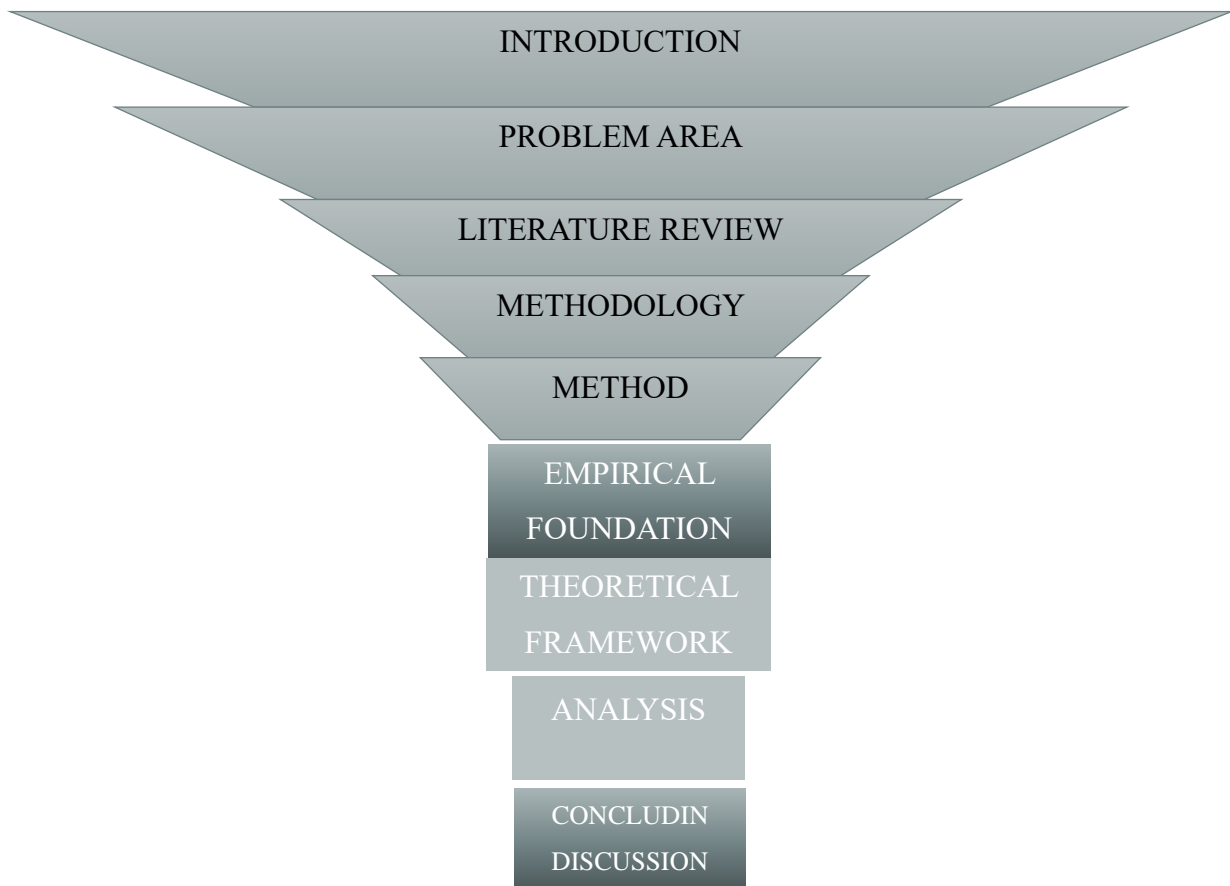
Through the literature review, the concepts of Femvertising and Body Positivity has been elaborated. We would like to examine these concepts to see whether these have an impact on young adult's self-image and identity formation. This is the reason why social constructivism has been chosen as our scientific paradigm, since within social constructivism, phenomena are seen as created through social and historical processes (Collin, 2012).

We would therefore investigate how the young adult's own social world and idea of gender are experienced from their own perspective, which we would like to analyze from their reaction and spoken thoughts about the chosen commercials. The selected commercials are chosen because of their different and conflicting ways of showing gender.

The first commercials represent traditional gender norms in advertising. The second commercial, on the other hand, represents the new trends that the commercials use more often today, in the form of Femvertising. Both advertisements give their bid for what is socially accepted, and each communicate their opposite message about what the gender ideals should look like. Social

constructivism comes into play here, as we want to examine young adult's image of gender norms today, and how they perceive the two conflicting messages in the different commercials.

Based on the various sociological theories about individual identity formation, and the literature review's information about the new concept and perspective on body and gender, which advertising are using more often today, we want to investigate how young adults perceive advertising, which instead of the traditional advertising are using Body Positivism and Femvertising as their tools.

We want to see if the message from these advertisements gives young people a more positive approach to themselves, or whether these new effects in advertising still make it difficult for the individual to achieve some form of satisfaction with themselves.

The perspective in the project will therefore be based on the individual's reaction and self-image in relation to the feeling and perception they get, when they are exposed to advertisements that use these new advertising trends such as Body Positivism and Femvertising. To see if there is a greater difference in the way the individual receives the new trends in advertising, they will therefore also be exposed to an example of traditional advertising, where the traditional values and instruments are not characterized by Body Positivism and Femvertising.

We will use the hermeneutic circle as our method of analysis. After the focus group interview, we will therefore through our analysis see if there are any links between the use of Femvertising and the young adult's identity formation. We will look at the young people's answers and see if we can create some threads between our theories. Here we will make use of part and wholeness that the hermeneutic circle uses to understand the young people's answers and what thoughts and backgrounds lie behind these.

Validity is closely related to the causality of our research and thereby the legitimacy of our conclusions. It is important to differ between the various types of validity, where the relevant one's in our case is: measurement validity, internal validity and external validity (Smith, 2011).

Measurement validity refers to the degree of certainty by which we measure the concept we are trying to (Smith, 2011). Even though this is mainly used within quantitative studies, it is still relevant to our research, since we have adjusted the design of our focus group interview to enhance the degree of certainty by which we do in fact measure our concept. Internal validity refers to how certain we are of the results of our investigation and thereby also our conclusion based on the measurements and the cause-effect relationship between femvertising and identity formation of the young adults in our focus

group. The interview guide was developed to ensure clear boundaries between identity formation and gender roles, and we also made room for questions during the focus group to clarify any uncertainties, while Femvertising was not mentioned to let the young adult's form their own opinion. One potential pitfall could be the fact that the first time the young adults defined their view on gender was in the full group where both genders were present, while the second time was after dividing the groups by gender, since we purely wanted to measure was how seeing the femvertising commercial affected this.

Another pitfall could be the effect of seeing the commercial showing the more traditional gender roles. External validity refers to whether our results can be generalized to the entire population, which is not the case, nor the intent, in our investigation, since we are seeking to add nuances to the existing knowledge base within the research area of Femvertising related to identity formation and gender.

Reliability refers to the consistency and whether it is possible to achieve the same results at a different time. Since the identity formation process is complex and the young adults are in a particularly changing stage of their life, the stability of the study is most likely middle range, and it is highly possible that some of the answers will be slightly different already within a six-month period. However, the core of their expressed beliefs is likely to stay the same, whereby the stability level is acceptable for the investigation within social constructivism.

The external reliability of the study is affected by the scientific paradigm since the production of knowledge is highly dependable on the intersubjective formed understanding, even with the same young adults, different researchers might get different results and it will therefore not be possible to achieve full replicability, despite the detailed description of the method supplemented by the inclusion of the full interview guide. Since we both took individual notes about our observations during the focus group study, it was possible to achieve interobserver reliability, which is one of the two types of inter-rater reliability.

5.1 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

The method that will be used in this project consists of a qualitative focus group interview. This type of method has the power to be particularly well-suited to be able to understand how opinions, attitudes, identity, etc. are created through people's relationships in a social interaction. (Lotte Bloksgaard, 2012).

The focus group interview is, as a research method, is a way in which data is collected through group interaction on a specific topic. The interaction and group dynamics are the tools used to obtain the desired knowledge about the social phenomenon being investigated. During a focus group interview, the focus is on a specific topic. The interaction between the interviewees is what forms the starting point for the production of data. (Lotte Bloksgaard, 2012).

In our focus group interview, we have chosen to create a semi-structured interview guide, which we use as a starting point, when we talk to our informants. Here we have chosen to have 15 questions that deal with gender ideals, identity formation and their experience of the different instruments and tools used in the selected commercials. This has been chosen as we want our problem formulation and research question to be answered.

The participants in a focus group interview are most often formally invited. The degree of structure and number of participants can vary but usually say 6-10 participants. As mentioned, the focus group interview is particularly suitable for analyzing various attitudes, opinions and identities. In the project, it is mainly relevant, as there has been a strong development in the understanding of the formation of attitudes, opinions, and identity, especially during the 80s and 90s within sociological theories of identity formation. It has gone from a more traditional view, where attitudes and identity were more essentialist and uniquely localized in the simple individual, where there has now been a movement towards an anti-essentialist understanding of attitude and identity (Lotte Bloksgaard, 2012).

The project's focus group consists of 8 informants, 4 boys and 4 girls. This has been chosen as we therefore believe that we have a sufficient selection of candidates who can express their opinions and views on the topics discussed. Likewise, there is room for some to talk more than others and at the same time make room for everyone to say something if they want to. We have chosen to have 4 of each gender, as it is then possible to see whether the two different genders have different images and attitudes around the topics discussed, or whether there are some common features and similarities.

Looking back on the 1950s, attitudes and identities were considered to be something that could be understood as a statistical quantity and that could be observed in verbal and behavioral responses. Here, the perception was that different individuals have different attitudes, which can be measured via a scaled questionnaire. Today there has been a shift in this, as social constructivist perspectives have created a more dynamic understanding of both attitude, opinions, and identity, which now

instead also arises and develops in interpersonal relationships both within and outside specific social contexts (Lotte Bloksgaard, 2012).

When choosing to use a focus group interview as a method, it is important to know what the strengths and weaknesses are of this method. A strength of this form of interview is that it allows the researcher to understand the interaction of social groups and the formation of norms and interpretations (Lotte Bloksgaard, 2012).
This is relevant in relation to the project, as we want to gain an understanding of the young people's self-image and identity formation when they watch the commercials shown. It is also interesting here to look at how they, through the interactions with each other, reach agreement or disagreement about what the advertisements for them make them feel and think when they see them. One of the significant strengths of this form of interview is the opportunity it gives the researcher to understand how people influence each other.

A disadvantage of a focus group interview is that there may be a tendency for the group effect to create a form of negative social control. By this is meant that group dynamics can at times prevent people from expressing their sincere opinion. If there is a threat in the group that one's response may be negative towards the overall authenticity of the group, this may influence the participants not to share their own perceptions and opinions if it goes against the order in the group.
(Lotte Bloksgaard, 2012).

During our interviews, we have chosen to divide the interview guide into questions about the students views and ideals for gender. These questions are being asked before they have seen the two selected commercials. In the beginning of the interview, we have chosen that the whole group of 8 students is gathered, to be able to see if we can observe some group norms and cultural ways of talking that the students use. After these introductory questions, the total group of 8 informants is divided into two. One group consisting of 4 boys and the other group consisting of 4 girls. Here, the two groups are shown the two commercials separately and then they are asked the same questions. The two groups are not in the same room during this, as we want to hear each group's own thoughts about the commercials shown and the questions, we ask them. This is done to see if there is a difference in the way the girls perceive the gender ideals compared to the boys, and if there are similarities and differences in their answers.

When working from a perception that the individual's opinion and identity are created in social interaction, opinions and attitudes will therefore always be influenced by the contexts in which the individual is involved. This also means that the social pressure and the norms that can arise in a focus group interview should not differ much from the group norms that are created naturally in social contexts. The biggest difference will be that the focus group method provides a setting where group norms are encouraged, observed, and analyzed (Lotte Bloksgaard, 2012).

5.2 THE MODERATOR ROLE

The moderator's task is to present the topic to the informants so that focus is created on the right elements. The moderator also has the task of creating an atmosphere so everyone in the group feels comfortable to discuss and express conflicting opinions, and at the same time get informants to stay within the chosen topic (Brinkmann, 2009).

During our interviews, we have chosen that we should both be present and therefore both should appear as moderators. We have chosen one of us who asks the questions and is the one who conducts the conversation with the young people. The other sits and observes the young people in the meantime and can step in at the same time if a deeper explanation of the questions asked is needed.

The young adults' mother tongue is Danish, but the interview itself was conducted in their English class, and therefore the interviews were also conducted in English. We as researchers have different backgrounds, as one of us only speaks English and uses this as a mother tongue, and the other one speaks Danish as a mother tongue and has English as a second language. This has the advantage that we have been able to speak and explain the questions in English without too many misunderstandings, but at the same time have been able to step in with a deeper explanation in Danish if necessary.

For the moderator, the biggest challenge is often to get the group to stay focused and control the group process. A moderator must therefore appear to be curious and human, and not appear as an expert, as this can create a formal atmosphere that is not desired. An important tool for the moderator is an interview guide, which must ensure the themes and the dynamic flow in the interview situation itself. It is therefore important that the interview guide reflects the problem area of the study (Michael Hviid, 2012).

In our project, as mentioned we have chosen that both project group members must be present and participate as moderators during the interviews. This is because we both have different backgrounds, one of us speaks only English and another of us speaks both English and Danish. This can be an advantage as we can therefore observe things each other does not see. We can also elaborate on some of the questions in Danish if there are some in the group who do not fully understand the meaning of the questions.

We will try to create a natural flow during the interviews themselves, so that we can observe the participants' behavior without interfering too much. However, we will also be able to control the themes that we want to shed light on for the project if the conversations should take a whole different turn. The interviews are determined under the various themes, where we both want to shed light on our thematic aspects of identity formation, and how the informants see the different messages in the advertisements shown, including their perception of brand-cause fit (or lack thereof).

5.3 ETHICS AND QUALITY CRITERIA

The purpose of our focus group interview with the young adults is to enable us to gather data needed to analyse our work. We therefore ensured that we had a responsible data collection. We did not only focus on gathering data using the interview guide prepared, but we also observed the situation in the interview environment and noted down our observations. According to Dahler-Larsen, P. (2008), the researcher must reflect about the observational situation because it co-constitutes results. The interview guide contained mainly open-ended questions and we left room for follow up questions as needed.

Also, we protected the confidentiality of our respondents by not mentioning their names but rather using gender to describe them. This is to ensure that the privacy and dignity of respondents were well protected. At the beginning of the interview, we got the respondents' permission to record their voices which they granted. We explained to them that the purpose of the recording is purely for academic purpose and their identities will not be revealed in any way to anyone.

When we first contacted the school to request for the total number of girls and boys needed for the focus group interview, the principal connected us with the English teacher who promised to discuss with the students and revert to us later. The teacher later wrote an email to us that 4 boys and 4 girls had shown interest to participate. She, however, reemphasises this when she introduced us to the class, and asked the students who had willingly shown interest to be part of the interview to join us

in the interview room. The relationship between the teacher and the students seemed cordial, however, because it was an English class and they were expected to communicate in that language, they were quieter in the class and did not ask questions or talk much when asked for feedback or questions during the introductory meeting.

The students have been told that we came from Aalborg University from an international English study programme, and that we would ask them questions in English. When we were introduced by the teachers to the students, it was also done in English.

However, by the time the students joined us for the interview, they seemed chattier among themselves and were speaking Danish because they thought we did not understand. This was the mood when the interview started, as they would first talk together in Danish before answering our questions. During the interviews themselves, one could sense that they had the perception that we did not understand Danish. We had not said that one of us understood Danish, and during the interviews, there were also small discussions in Danish that one of us could understand. We chose not to say anything unless it became necessary, as we did not want to influence the way they interacted with each other.

Since it was during the interview itself that it dawned on us that they had assumed that we did not understand when they spoke Danish, it came as a bit of a surprise to us. When the girls started talking to each other in Danish, we therefore made a choice not to tell them that we understood what they were saying. We did this so that they would not be embarrassed by their side remarks to each other. If the conversation had gone in a direction where the girls came with deeper personal things about each other, we would have told them that we understood them, so that they would not feel that their boundaries were being exceeded.

When we noticed this trend during the interview with the girls, we told the boys to be comfortable in whatever language they wanted to talk, since it is not an English class where they would be graded. Later, only the boys realised that one of us could understand all their side comments. However, the boys talked a big part of the interview in Danish. When we spoke Danish to them for the first time, we could see they were a bit surprised, that we understood them.

Before and during the interview we were socially responsible by ensuring that all government regulations put in place to protect and reduce the spread of Corona virus pandemic. This we did by

wearing our masks, sanitizing our hands, and keeping 2-meter distance between us and the respondents.

Furthermore, all legalities in terms of age limits were followed. The respondents used were 18 years old and could take informed decisions as to whether they wanted to take part in the focus group interview or not. They had given a verbal consent since they did not require the permission of their parents to participate.

5.4 LIMITATIONS

The importance of limitation in a research is to help define the limit of the research. Oden (2020) explains that mentioning the limitations found in a research help to increase the credibility and validity of the result obtained. Therefore, the limitations expressed below will clarify the reflections which the limitations are based on and how this will influence the investigation and conclusion. We have chosen that our sources should primarily consist of recognized sociologists and professionals. in our source criticism, we have therefore opted out of articles written by students, non-recognized authors as well as non-professionals on the subject.

Firstly, we have chosen that the selected commercials have a clear message that does not take time to interpret. This has been chosen as the intention is to examine identity formation in relation to how gender is presented, rather than a deeper interpretation of the advertisements itself.

Secondly, is the language barrier. It affected the quality of the data collected. So, when they say certain things in Danish, they find it difficult to get the right word or expression to use in English. Though we later told the students, especially the group of boys, that they could speak in Danish, we probably would have gotten a more nuanced result if they had been allowed to speak in Danish from the beginning of the interview.

Thirdly, we were not able to go deep into other areas of the research that might need investigating, and this makes us to wonder if we might have gotten a different result if for instance, we had to interview young adults living in the bigger cities as opposed to the small town of Hobro, where the data was collected. The reason for our choices is because the recent Covid-19 pandemic lockdown has made it nearly impossible to get access to the schools in the big cities because of the larger population and unfavourable government regulations. Moreover, we had limited time in our study and did not have time to collect data in multiple sites.

In addition, the sample size used in this study is ideal for a good focus group but not a good representation of the population. The conclusion in this study cannot be generalized to young adults everywhere but is rather specific to the area where the study took place. However, our intention was not to generalize but to add to knowledge.

This also does not mean that another researcher would be able to perform the exact same study and get the same results even if the procedure were the same. This is because we have chosen to work within hermeneutics and social constructivism, which means that even if it were done in the same way as ours, other factors such as social backgrounds could have changed the result in the end. Another researcher may therefore have had some other nuances in the results than those we have obtained.

Finally, the goal of our investigation was to find out if new concept like Femvertising is influencing young adults in relation to their identity formation. However, we got some not expected results, which will probably change the course of our conclusion. This limitation is not common to our research only but to almost all qualitative research (Oden, 2020) because the dynamic nature of qualitative studies is for the researchers interact with people.

5.5   INTERVIEW QUESTION

Based on the selected theories, project formulation, and research questions, the following interview guide has been prepared, which are the questions that will be taken as a starting point during the focus group interview itself.

Problem formulation:

In what way do young people react to Femvertising as a tool in advertising, and how do they link this to their own identity formation?

Research Questions

- *How do young people perceive messages about gender identity in advertisements, when Femvertising is used as a tool and when it is not?*
- *How do they link it to their own identity formation processes?*

Question 1-6 will be asked before watching the Videos. All 8 students are together
1.When you hear the word "A girl", what comes into your mind?
2. When you hear the word "A boy", what comes into your mind?

3. What qualities would you say describes a female the best way?
4. What qualities would you say describes a male the best way?
5. Are there any expectations that are expected only of girls?
6. Are there any expectations that are expected only of boys?
Question 7-12 will be asked after showing the commercial to the students. *The group is divided into 4 girls and 4 boys, and the last questions will therefore be asked to the boys only, and to the girls only.*
7. After seeing the commercial (1) – Did you notice any reference to gender roles? If yes – Please explain?
8. After seeing the commercial (2) –What is your opinion about this video?
9. Did you notice any differences between the two commercials? If any - please describe.
10. After watching the commercials, has it influenced the way you see gender roles now? – Please explain.
11. Do you think the commercial (2) reflects our society today, in relation to gender?
12. When you think about commercials from your everyday life, do you see some new trends in the way that the commercial perceives gender today? If so, what is the new trends that you see?
13. If you were able to change the name of the commercial (2), what name what would it be?
14. Do you see a relation between the commercials and what the brand represents?
15. Do you think brands have a responsibility for how they present gender roles?

6 EMPIRICAL FOUNDATION

In this section, the two selected commercials that will be shown to the young people during our focus interview will be described.

6.1 CASE COMMERCIALS

As mentioned, in the project, two different commercials have been selected, which are the two to be discussed during the focus interviews. The two commercials are carefully selected since they (in our

view) represent two conflicting views on the body and gender. One is characterized by the traditional images of man and woman, whereas the other advertising is characterized by Femvertising and Body Positivism.

The commercial that in the project has been selected to be used as a representation of the traditional types of advertising is the commercial "Gillette - Fusion Proglide from 2013".

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjbCZvldSGQ

The advertisement that, on the other hand, will represent the new trend within Femvertising and Body Positivism is the commercial "Always - Like a girl from 2014".

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs

In the literature review, a review has been made of the new trends that take place and are represented in the commercial "Always - like a girl", as this is the commercial that represents Femvertising and Body Positivism.

The second commercial" Gillette-Fusion Proglide" represents the old norms and values that the older traditional commercials have made the most use of. In the traditional commercials, there are some different male and female roles that often recur in the commercials. Women appear more often in advertisements than men, which is since the woman is the main responsible for the household's purchases and care of children. In addition, the woman is also often used as an "eye-catcher" where the woman's body is presented as a form of bait for the male consumer. The female body is often shown as a whole, whereas the male is often shown with close-ups. Women are often presented as a sex object, where the focus is on a seductive beauty and sexuality is used as the power the woman has over the man. Women are most often slim and attractive in such traditional commercials (kvindemuseet.dk, 2021).

These features can also be seen in the selected commercial from Gillette used in the project which represent the traditional values between man and woman. The woman appears as a mysterious and seductive beauty who looks up to the successful businessman.

A stereotypical male role, most often used in commercials, is the story of the very "successful and masculine" man. The man most often appears to be muscular and an expert in an area that is related to the "product" that advertising wants to sell. The man appears to be successful and is in control of

both career and love. You often see the man with a beautiful woman by his side (kvindemuseet.dk, 2021).

All these features are also something that is seen in the selected advertisement from Gillette.

6.1.1   GILLETTE – FUSION PROGLIDE 2013
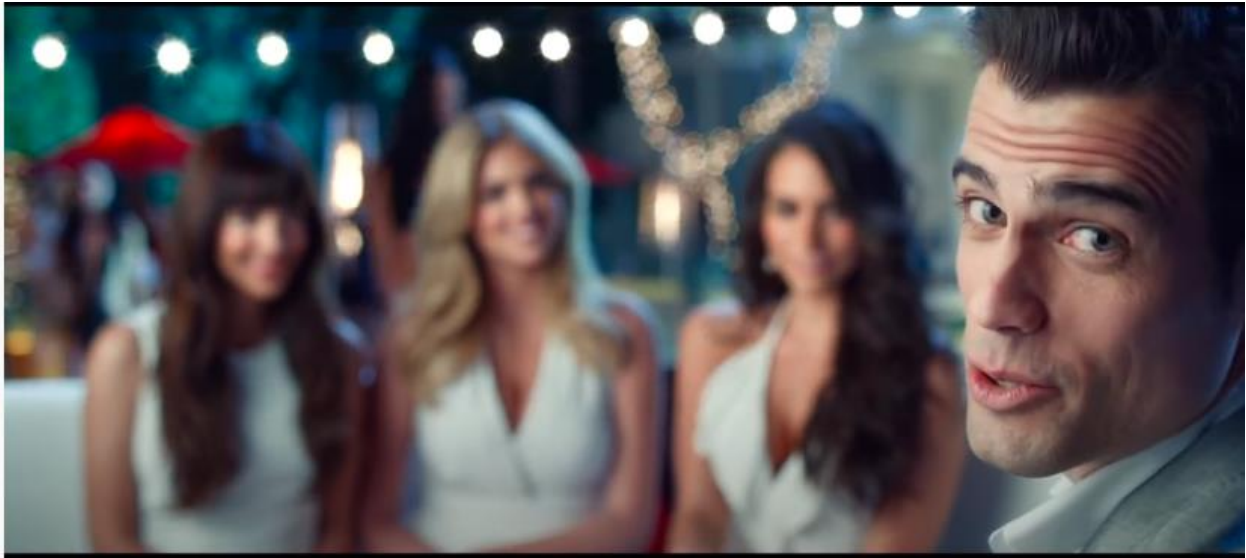
(Gillette, 2021)

Link to video on Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjbCZvldSGQ

As mentioned before, the "Gillette – Fusion Proglide 2013" campaign is used to represent the old values and trends that advertising traditionally used. Precisely this advertisement has been selected, as this one particularly well shows how men and women were presented in a purely stereotypical way.

The commercial takes place in a residential area where a pool party is being held. The most significant person in this advertisement is a handsome and presentable man in a suit, probably in his 30s.

He says at the beginning in the commercial ''The age old question, what do women want?", After which he presents a woman and says "*This is Kate, she likes a man with little hair on his chest*". The woman responds to this with : *"But definitely not on his back"*.

The man presents another woman, where he says: "This is Hannah, she likes a guy with a smooth stomach to show off his six pack." For this, the woman flashes with one eye in a seductive way into the camera.

Eventually he goes to another girl where he says: "And this is Genisis. She likes men completely hairless. No, she doesn't think that's weird", to which she responds "No I don't", while also looking with a seductive gaze into the camera. The commercial then ends with a voiceover that says "The one tool you need, to get the look she wants" and ends with the man sitting with all three women and smiling and ending by saying: "The night is yours".

The whole set-up of the advertisement is characterized by the man appearing to be the dominant one in relation to the women. It is the man who speaks and presents all three women, and the women just confirm the man's statements about them either by short answers or just an affirmative glance.

The women all wear a completely white dress. They appear more like an eye-catcher and a kind of prop, and it is the man who is the one who leads the word. The stereotypical traits that men often have in the traditional commercials such as dominant, successful and experts are all some that are found in this commercial.

The man is dominant in the things he says to the women. He appears to be successful, as he is dressed in a suit and finds himself at a party with a pool and other well-dressed people. He also appears as an expert; in this case he is an expert in what a woman wants in terms of shaving.

The stereotypical characteristics that women often have in traditional commercials are also present. The women in this film are used as eye-catchers and all three women appear as beautiful and sensual. They all show a kind of submissiveness as they just confirm everything the man says. The women are all attractive and slim with a sensual look in their eyes.

Both the man and the woman in the commercial is characterized by body image. There is an established expectation that a man should be shaved and hairless and at the same time look good, be trained and have a lot of ladies around him. The man has come in a box where the framework is set for how a successful man should look and behave.

The same goes for the three ladies. As mentioned before, all three ladies are attractive, slim and with a sensual appearance. Here, body image is also expressed as this, just like the man, creates an image of how a real woman should look and behave. In this case, be thin, beautiful and stand behind the man.

(Always, 2021)

Link to video on youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs

The setting of the 2014 always commercial is a recording studio, where both girls and boys are asked various questions about 'What does it mean to do something like a girl'. The first set of people were young adults, and they were given different actions to do. Some were asked to run like a girl, some were asked to show, how to fight like a girl, while others were asked to throw like a girl. All the actions portrayed by the young adults portrayed weakness. The scene was changed and younger girls between 10-12 years were given the same task which they did differently by showing strength. The commercial revolves around the central idea of building confidence in girls by asking them to not accept stereotypes but to rewrite the rules.

 The first girl who was asked to run like a girl and actually did it the way we all expect a girl to run, which is soft and weak, was later asked: "If she were asked "to run like a girl", would she have done it differently? She says' I would do like myself'. This section of the advert reflects how the female themselves are subjectifies and allow themselves to be put in a box, thereby stereotyping how a girl is expected to run.

In the second scene, asking some of the participants to show how a girl fights, you could see the young adults portraying the weak way in which girls fight. Surprisingly, one of girls even show that

girls care more about their physical appearance by complaining about her hair during the act. They all portrayed a girl as someone who is weak and defenseless.

However, when the same questions were asked from preteen girls they answered differently. They seem to show more confidence in who they are, and what it means to be a girl, and believe in themselves. One of the girls said she knew she was not weak though she is a girl, and when she was asked to show what it means: "to run like a girl", she showed focus, strength, and stamina in her act. Her actions show that she knew what she was doing. Another preteen was asked to throw like a girl, you could see the smartness with which she did it. When one of the preteens was asked what she understood when she was asked to run like a girl, she says it meant for her to run as fast as she can. She did not see herself as being a girl or boy.

When the anchor of the show asked one of the boys if he felt he has insulted his sister and girls with the way he portrayed what a girl can do, he said though he insulted girls, he did not insult his sister. He probably said this because he sees his sister as a weaker side and girly.
Later in the commercial, one of the young adults comes up to say it feels as if you are humiliating someone without thinking about the effect this will have on the parties concerned which are the girls who have been put in a box.

(Always, 2021).

The Always commercial reflects one of the ways in which corporate organizations are supporting social movement activities through femvertisment commercials towards a social change. This the commercial reflects in the last line which says "let's make #like a girl mean amazing things". The always commercial was targeted at encouraging girls that no matter what people say about them they should keep being themselves. They should keep doing what they are doing, they should keep on walking in the way they are walking, jumping the way they are jumping, or fighting the way they are fighting as long as they have success in whatever they do, because at the end of the day it is the happiness of each person that matters, irrespective of what others might say.

6.2 PRESENTATION OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

The selection of the respondents was based on purposive sampling which is a non-probability form of sampling where the researcher does not seek sample participants on a random basis (Bryman, 2012). We use purposive sampling because of the strategic way participants are sampled. In purposive sampling, those sampled are relevant to the research question and are different from each other in terms of key characteristics relevant to the research question (Bryman,2012).

we selected a high school in Hobro, which is an area in Northern Jutland, in Denmark. In the project, we have chosen to anonymize the selected high school, and we therefore do not call the school by name. This is because we want to keep the students' identities completely anonymous.

The language of study was in English, since we were allowed to do our interview in the English lessons, which was important because the interview was to be conducted in English. Also, the selected commercials were in English. The hight school was selected purposively in line with our focus on investigating if young adults perceive a link between their own identity formation, and the content of advertisements they are exposed to. Before this selection, we wanted to do a netnographic study which is a type of online ethnographic study of comments and online reactions to Femvertisements. Then, we also looked at the option of having a virtual focus group with University and Technical college students, as well as to whether we could interview respondents via virtual tools of Zoom, Skype, or on Microsoft team.

We opted out of netnographic, as we wanted to have a dialogue with our respondents on a deeper level in the form of a conversation and an opportunity to be able to deepen our questions, which would not have been possible if we had used netnographic, where we instead looked at commentary tracks for the commercials.

In selecting the respondents, we looked at the age, the ability of the participants to make decision without their parents' consent as well as students who have a good command and understanding of the English language. The respondents for the focus group participants were selected based on a varied number of factors which made the school to give us the students in their second year who are using English as their mode of teaching and the student should be 18years old or older.

The informants were contacted through the principal of their school by email. We contacted the school principal of the high school, by email and requested the school to give us eight students with an equal mix of gender and have different social economic and cultural background. The setting for the focus group which is an important part when doing an ethnographic study will take place at their own school as a part of their own English language class.

The framework of the selected focus group is against the background of the group interviewing in an ethnographic qualitative research study. According to Alan Bryman (2012), ethnography is not a straightforward process. It is much more than joining a group, watching what goes on, making some notes, and writing it all up. In this research therefore, we are going to immerse ourselves in the social setting of the students at the high school, make observations of the behaviour of the respondents, listen and engage in conversations, as well as interview respondents on issues that are not directly observable, develop an understanding of the students' behaviour, and finally write up a detailed account of that setting.

7   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This project will be focusing at four theories from four different sociologists, as well as the role of brand-cause fit's impact on consumer choices Each theory looks at identity formation in the late modern society, which are respectively **Anthony Giddens, Thomas Ziehe, Axel Honneth, Erving Goffman**. The content of their theories will be compared to points raised in the literature review about "body image advertisement" and "femvertisment" as presented above. The aim of the theory chapter is thus to develop theoretical approaches suitable to investigate to the relationship between beauty advertisements and young adult's identity formation from a sociological perspective, and also to see if the new trends in advertisement actually have an effect at young people.

7.1   ANTHONY GIDDENS (1938-)

Anthony Giddens is a British sociologist, and the man behind the concept of the late modern society, which he describes as the society and the time we live in today. This society, he argues, is

characterized by a great detraditionalization of old norms and values, as well as an increased individualization of the individual. In his analysis of the late modern society, there are three changes he puts the greatest focus on, which according to Giddens have had the biggest influence on late modern society (Kaspersen, 2005). These three are:

1. **Time-Space separation**
2. **Dis-embedding mechanisms**
3. **The reflexive character of modernity**

7.1.1 TIME-SPACE SEPARATION

Time-space separation is the first major change Giddens mentions. In the old days, all communication took place from mouth to mouth, and was therefore dependent on time and space, which means that one had to be physically present to communicate directly with other people. Today, one communicates in many more ways. Mobile phones and the Internet have made it possible for people to speak and write independently of time and space. One can today sit at home at their own computer and write with people on the other side of the earth, without having to be physically present in the same place. The distance between people is therefore no longer an obstacle to communicating and maintaining social conditions. The possibilities within transport have also improved significantly, as cars, buses and planes have made it possible to travel from place to place in a very short time. The separation between time and space is thus in late modern society not an obstacle for the individual and does not set limits for the formation of social conditions. One is no longer limited to the immediate family or circle of friends (Kaspersen, 2005).

7.1.2 DIS-EMBEDDING MECHANISMS

Dis-Embedding Mechanisms is another of the big changes in the late modern society. In the former society, before the separation between time and space, institutions and actions were ingrained in the local community. In the late modern society, this has changed, as social relations do not only take place in the small local communities. Giddens distinguishes here between two different mechanisms, both of which have helped to create the late modern society. He calls the first "symbolic tokens" and the second "expert systems" (Kaspersen, 2005).

The symbolic tokens are described as development funds that go between the individual and institutions. An example of which is money, as these represent a value, which can later be redeemed for a purchase of a product. According to Giddens, the symbolic tokens break with the perception of space, as transactions can be made between individuals who never meet each other, and this creates

new opportunities for interaction and creates patterns, which take place across both time and space (Kaspersen, 2005).

An example of **expert systems** is transport, as today one can get on a bus that runs from a to b. In this case, the individual gets into a network of expert systems, which has made it possible to develop the traffic system itself without one as an individual need to have knowledge of how the whole system works. This increases the radius of movement of the individual. (Kaspersen, 2005).

7.1.3   THE REFLEXIVE CHARACTER OF MODERNITY

The Reflexive Character of Modernity is the last major change that Giddens mentions. In the traditional society, it was not necessary for the individual to make lots of individual decisions and choices. In the late modern society, this has changed. The late modern society is constantly confronting the individual with new information and choices to be made. This is everything from education, love relationships, self-identity etc. (Kaspersen, 2005).

Giddens explains that there are two forms of reflexivity, which are both on a personal level and an institutional level. The individual in late modern society is constantly gaining new knowledge about the world. This is due to the proliferation of the mass media, where the Internet is constantly coming up with new technology and information on how the world looks like, and how the individual should live his life. Since the individual is constantly under a technological knowledge pressure, one as a human being must constantly be reflexive action-regulating. This means that the individual is under a constant process of reflection, as it is difficult to assess what is true knowledge and what is false. Since the individual is constantly under pressure for new knowledge, it also gives the individual an insecurity to make the wrong choices and appear in the wrong way (Kaspersen, 2005).

7.1.4   APPLICATION OF GIDDENS' THEORY

In relation to the project, Gidden's theory, and his view of what characterizes late modern society, will be used to see how these changes as well as new opportunities for the individual can have an impact on young people's identity formation. According to Giddens, globalization and industrialization have broken down the safe framework for the individual, creating an uncertainty and fear of failing or appearing wrong. Social media and the use of the internet have become an established part of young people's everyday lives. The Internet is the primary tool used to maintain social relationships.

The importance of being part of a social network and the creation of young people's identity formation is crucial for young people's self-perception. Young people have learned via social media that they post and like each other's posts. You follow famous people that you look up to and try to live up to their living standards. Advertisements are also a big part of the young people's everyday lives, as they are constantly shown pictures of beautiful top models and how the celebrity's dress. Many young people follow famous bloggers who inspire them to their own lifestyle. The social network on the internet is all crucial for how young people perceive themselves and the world they live in. Being part of a community provides security, but also a responsibility to appear correctly to the outside world.

According to Giddens, the reflective process of the individual is a constant process, and the identity formation is created based on the social circle one is in. This is relevant in relation to the project, as it looks at how young adult's identity formation is affected by the fashion and beauty industry's many inputs, which they experience through advertising and social media.

7.2 ERVING GOFFMAN (1922-1982)

Erving Goffman was a Canadian sociologist and is especially known for his theory regarding the individual's dramatization of himself in everyday life. According to Goffman, a large part of the individual's identity is not established. Identity is both dynamic and changeable when we interact with other people. Goffman has developed a theory regarding identity formation and self-staging, where he uses concepts such as frontstage, backstage, roles and the concept of impression management. Goffman looks at how people interact and act differently depending on what situation they are in. Goffman believes that all individuals self-stage themselves both consciously and unconsciously with the aim of presenting themselves in a certain way to the outside world. Which way you present yourself depends on which roles you want to fill in the given context.

When one individual is introduced to another, attempts are made to obtain information about each other. This is done both to be able to form an image of the other individual, but also to be able to define the situation you are in. When people interact, they try to clarify the situation in order to also be able to see what role they are playing in the given situation (Goffman, 1959).

Reality is something that is created in context with other individuals and depending on which people we are in connection with, we as individuals play many different social roles. These roles should not be seen as being fake, even though we have many different ones, but instead they show different sides of ourselves. As an individual, we want to control what other people think of us, and

therefore we as individuals also try to behave in a certain way to feel accepted and recognized. Goffman uses the terms frontstage and backstage from the theater world to describe the individual's ability to change his identity in different social roles (Goffman, 1959).

7.2.1   FRONTSTAGE

The concept of frontstage is explained by Goffman as the identity we take on (on stage). It is the identity that we present to other people. It is the identity we show to the outside world, where we present ourselves as we would like other people to perceive us. Props are also often used during frontstage, and in the real world this can be both clothes, make-up and shoes, the language we use etc. Through the props and the way, we present ourselves is also the way we as an individual idealize ourselves (Goffman, 1959).

7.2.2   BACKSTAGE

The term backstage is used for the side of our identity where we relax (behind the scenes). Here we do not have to show ourselves in a certain way to the outside world, as this is where we can retreat and recharge. There are not many people you as an individual show your backstage identity to, often it is the close family who is in this zone, as this side of the identity is more private (Goffman, 1959).

7.2.3   APPLICATION OF GOFFMANS' THEORY

Goffman's theory of identity and self-staging is relevant in the project, as his theory may help explain how young people are affected by the fashion and beauty industry's many inputs. Goffman believes that the individual tries to adapt and play different roles, depending on the contexts in which they are placed. Many young people try to live up to the many beauty ideals and lifestyles that they are presented with through social media. They try to live up to some ideals that they believe are socially accepted.

Goffman's distinction between frontstage and backstage is particularly relevant when looking at the roles young adults try to play and show of themselves in different social contexts. They play a certain role with friends, another with parents and many more roles in other situations. The young adults have learned to create many different facades, and in relation to the project this is relevant, to find out whether the young adults are influenced by the many beauty ideals that the media sends out to them daily. Goffman's concepts of self-staging, as well as frontstage and backstage can therefore be used as tools in the preparation of the analysis.

Thomas Ziehe (1947) is a German professor of pedagogy. He is dealing with a new youth culture, which he believes has emerged under late modern society. Like Giddens, Ziehe also look at the late modern society and highlights the new opportunities created for the individual, and how these new opportunities can create an uncertainty for the individual's identity formation.

This is because there is an increased focus on the individual's own thoughts and attitudes. This has led to a change in past norms and values in society. It is especially three cultural tendencies that Ziehe mentions, which he believes have had an impact on the individual's self-image and identity formation. These three are:

1. **Cultural release**
2. **Formability**
3. **Overheating of the subjectivity**

7.3.1 CULTURAL RELEASE

Cultural Release is a phrase Ziehe uses to explain how the individual in late modern society has been set free. Here he talks about a cultural liberation of the individual, as the individual is no longer bound by old traditions and authorities, which also means that the individual today must create his own identity. In connection with this comes the concept of "Formability" (Ziehe, 2002).

7.3.2 FORMABILITY

Formability means that the individual today must create and shape his or her own life based on his or her own dreams and wishes as a human being. This also applies in relation to the way you as an individual want to live your life and how you want to appear to others. The individual has a much greater ability to shape himself, examples of this can be girls who go in fashion clothes, to appear in a certain way, or boys who train to gain bigger muscles.

According to Ziehe, the increased individualization also creates insecurity among especially young people, which can create three different reaction patterns, which are Subjectivation, Ontologization and Pontization.

Subjectivation: This pattern of reaction is the need to be able to involve others in one's own emotions. The increased formability gives an uncertainty to the young adults, as they themselves have to make their own choices. This can create a huge need for the individual to talk about himself, as well as get others to talk about one.

Ontologization: Is about being and finding purpose in life. The many choices the individual is faced with and the uncertainty of taking the wrong one creates a need to make something make sense. They therefore search for security and purpose in life. This can be anything from religious groups, and other social networks where there are some clear norms and rules of morality and action (Ziehe, 2002).

Pontization: is the last reaction pattern that Ziehe mentions, and it deals with the ability to feel "that one is alive". This reaction can come if the individual tries to avoid his own insecurity. It is the emptiness that also fills here, and this can, for example, be filled with activities of an intense nature. This can be anything from extreme sports to wild parties, drugs etc. It is the senses that need to be stimulated, and the feeling of being able to feel oneself and one's body. They search for intensity chasing the wild moments. This leads us on to the last third and final cultural trend that Ziehe mentions - Overheating of the subjectivity (Ziehe, 2002).

7.3.3 OVERHEATING OF THE SUBJECTIVITY

Overheating of the Subjectivity is based on the many new possibilities and choices the individual faces. These many new opportunities put a lot of pressure on young adults. Information technology constantly comes with new knowledge that the individual must relate to. Young adults spend a lot of time in front of the computer, and they always have a mobile with them with access to the Internet, which constantly comes with new knowledge and information about how to live your life, how to look and what choices to make in order to appear correct as a human being (Ziehe, 2002).

This has a major impact on young adult's identity formation and creates a great deal of pressure, as it creates a fear of failing or appearing wrong. Identity formation therefore comes under great pressure, as young people constantly must decide how to react and present themselves in a given situation in order to appear most socially accepted. The fear of failing makes the individual extremely vulnerable, as the fear of failing is related to the feeling of whether one is accepted as a human being or not (Ziehe, 2002).

7.3.4 APPLICATION OF ZIEHE'S THEORY

Ziehe is relevant in relation to the project, as he also believes that late modern society has created significant changes. Ziehe's theory can also be used to explain why the young people today are more likely to compare themselves to advertisement from the beauty industry. The pressure from the society creates a more superficial self-picture, which seems to make especially young people more likely have low self-esteem.

It is especially his three main concepts: Cultural release, Formability, Overheating of the subjectivity which for the project may be relevant in relation to seeing and understanding how and to what extent young people are influenced by advertisements from the beauty industry. The release of the individual means that especially young adults who are influenced by social media and advertising can shape and model their own identity as much as they want on a daily basis, in order to appear in a certain way.

When the young people create and shape their own identity, Ziehe talks about different reaction patterns that can occur when there is an overheating of the subject. Here, it can be intriguing to examine how these reaction patterns take place and how they are expressed.

7.4 AXEL HONNETH (1949 -)

The final sociological theory we have chosen to include is the German professor and philosopher Axel Honneth's Theory of Recognition. According to Honneth, man should be considered as a recognition-seeking being. With this, Honneth makes it clear that he does not believe that the struggle for recognition should be interpreted as a struggle for self-maintenance, but rather a struggle to establish a common and mutual relationship of recognition to others. The individual is not driven by an egocentric interest. In contrast, the need for recognition is motivated by intersubjective reciprocity (Honneth, 2006, s. 7-8).

The need for recognition must be considered a natural basis for every human being. Recognition is crucial for the individual to form an analytical foundation, and thus be able to understand the motives behind a social action. Honneth also explain this from the quote below:

"Individuals can only become members of society through the experience of mutual recognition, (….). Recognition is two-pronged: on the one hand, individual possibilities for a positive self-relationship depend on conditions that are social in nature, as they are in accordance with normatively regulatory forms of mutual recognition. On the other hand, the success of a given society depends on its ability to organize relations of recognition in a way that allows the individual development of these positive relations to the self " (Honneth, 2006, s. 10).

According to Honneth, the individual is not able to form a personal identity without recognition. An individual cannot become a complete individual, and thereby come to terms with his or her own inner self, unless there is a recognition. (Honneth, 2006, s. 7-10).

7.4.1 THE THREE SPHERES OF RECOGNITION

Honneth divides his concept of recognition into three different spheres. These three are:

1. The private sphere

2. The legal sphere

3. The sphere of solidarity

The first sphere which is the "Private Sphere" includes family and friends. "The Legal Sphere" and "The Solidarity Sphere" cover both cultural, labor and political communities. Honneth believes that love is a prerequisite for the subject's fundamental self-confidence. When this is achieved, a form of general respect is given based on the rights one has, which also gives a self-respect as a citizen. Solidarity provides a self-esteem based on common values and norms which is also the creation of basic self-esteem of the individual (Honneth, 2006, s. 11).

5.7.2 THE PRIVATE SPHERE

The Private Sphere is, according to Honneth, where the basic relations happens and where the individual learn to love and feel loved. This sphere stands out from the others, as this sphere is a prerequisite for the others to function at all. Love is a prerequisite for being able to enter into an intersubjective relationship. The focus in this sphere is that love creates the individual's fundamental self-confidence, which arises from the fact that there is an interdependence between two individuals. The individual will experience that this kind of recognition will be covered through the existence of "the correct other" for example the love between a mother and a child. This can also be between married couples, brother and sisters as well as friends. By achieving these connections, a symmetrical relationship is created, where the individual can create familiarity and recognition with their own opinions and values and feel accepted for who they are. Honneth call this for the emotional recognition form, and this is important for the individual to have to be able to interact in a bigger conflicted world outside the private sphere (Honneth, 2006, s. 11-12)

5.7.3 THE LEGAL SPHERE

The Legal Sphere refers to rights of the individual in society. In this sphere, the recognition takes place in the fact that the individual sees himself as an equal member of society. By feeling equal in society, the individual will also be able to develop self-respect, and thereby be able to realize themselves. If an individual does not feel equal to the other individuals in society, for example by

not having the right to vote, or not having access to the same civil rights as others, this can this have a negative impact on the individual's self-esteem. It is important for the individual to feel like a free and acting human being (Honneth, 2006, s. 12).

7.4.2 THE SPHERE OF SOLIDARITY

The Sphere Of Solidarity is the third and last recognition sphere. This form of recognition occurs through a relationship with a community or group. This arises when the individual achieves a recognition of his or her participation and positive presence. When the individual is part of a community of which one can see oneself as a part, and gain recognition for one's presence and contribution to the group, it will give a feeling of being valued and being a distinctive insider (Honneth, 2006, s. 12).

7.4.3 APPLICATION OF HONNETH'S THEORY

According to Honneth, the above three spheres are something that the individual must be able to realize to achieve the good life, and thereby become whole as a human being. If these conditions of recognition are not achieved, a kind of imbalance will be created for the individual. The private sphere is a prerequisite for being able to create social conditions and is based on emotional bonds and reciprocity. It is the requirement of a mutual dependency, that creates the emotional recognition and is built on physical interaction between individuals. The same applies to the sphere of solidarity, as recognition is built based on an interaction with others in the form of social relations, whereas the legal sphere instead covers a system of rules governed by the individual's own logical sense, inspired by the norms that the individual experiencing in society. However, it can be said that the sphere of solidarity is a mixture, as it is both the emotional bond, and the human sense that creates the feeling of togetherness for a group.

Honneth is relevant in relation to the project, as the importance of recognition for the individual's development and personality is crucial for the individual to be able to achieve "the good life". The recognition young adults receive from each other, their parents and society help to influence young people's personality, self-esteem, and self-understanding.

When young people try to live up to certain beauty ideals, and gain recognition for wearing the right clothes, wearing the right make-up, and looking a certain way, a positive self-realization is created. According to Honneth, young people who, on the other hand, do not live up to these demands and therefore do not achieve recognition for their worth, must instead be marked against a negative self-realization.

Honneth's theory is relevant in terms of understanding why young people are influenced by social media and advertising from the beauty industry, as young people just want to be recognized for who they are, and thereby achieve social recognition from both social circles and society.

7.5 THE ROLE OF BRAND-CAUSE FIT

Brand responsibility, which is an offshoot of Corporate Social responsibility, is a growing practice in the advertising industry, where brands and clients align themselves with social issues to appear more socially responsible, transparent, and ethical (Champlin and Sterbenk,2018). In the *International Journal of Advertising*, Champlin, Sterbent, Windels, and Poteet (2019) write that Brand-cause fit, the concept that a brand and a social issue match together conceptually, has been a topic of great interest, yet it is not fully understood due to inconsistent findings and limited theoretical development. However, the current brand advocacy trend is an extension of cause-related marketing (S Champlin, 2019).

Varadarajan and Menon (1988) define cause-related marketing as a way for companies to profit while doing good, through a blend of philanthropy, promotion, sponsorship and other communication activities. As a brand management tactic, the use of activism sets brands apart from others and contributes to consumer decision making (Aaker, 1997). Furthermore, Edelman (2017) argues that brands that position themselves as socially responsible profit in bottom line sales, have more positive brand attitudes, and overall positive reception of their advertising messages Castaldo et al.,2009).

Champlin et al. (2019) argue that at these times of political divisiveness, corporations also feel pressure to take stances on political and social issues, using advertising as the most direct and widely distributed channel for these messages. According to Sheikh and Beise- Zee (2011), brand advocacy as an aspect of marketing that is a part of an overall CSR can impact brand loyalty both positively and negatively by creating brand associations with a specific cause. Champlin et al. (2019) identifies some ways through which a brand can fit with a cause or social issue in some of the following ways: 1) a functional match where the functions of a product sold by a brand are connected to the cause; 2)an image match where the type of personality or similar features a brand conveys, such as activism, match the image of the social issue; and 3) a target audience match where the current consumers of a brand coincide with those who would be interested in supporting the social issues.

According to Zeisler (2016), gender equality mainly surrounding topics relating to women has become a mainstay of activist advertising. Despite the known importance and value of brand-cause fit, research that examines consumer responses to this practice is mixed (Barone, Norman, and Miyazaki, 2007). In Femvertising, when a brand that typically targets women aligns with a female-focused social issue, it is assumed that it should similarly produce positive evaluations due to this match. But what happens when a brand that typically targets male advertising decides to support a female social issue, as can be seen in the 2019 Gillette advertising on the *best a man can get*? The negative male outrage that arose because of the Gillette advert seems like a pointer that brands which are comfortable and have a history of talking with women as their target audience have a high target audience fit when it comes to simultaneously promoting female empowerment as a social issue (Champlin et al., 2019).

In the context of cause related marketing, Robinson, Irmak, and Jayachandran (2012) suggest that a brand that exhibits a clearer match with the social issue might be viewed as more equipped to truly support the initiatives. So, female-focused brands might be more likely to 'know' women (Champlin et al., 2019). According to Aaker and Keller (1990), a lot of existing research supports the notion that a salient match between a brand and a cause will produce more positive consumer responses compared to a low fit match.

A brand's decision to engage in activist advertising can be a risky one, and the brand may find it difficult to manage the balance between marketing strategy and social issue messaging. This is why Femvertisements are often subtle messages and focus on internal empowerment that is inclusive of all females for large scale audiences (Champlin et al., 2019). For example, Pepsi released a commercial featuring a famous model and celebrity, Kendall Jenner, who joins a protest and hands a Pepsi to the stone-faced police officer blocking the streets. Upon receiving the Pepsi, the police officer breaks character and takes a sip as the crowd of protesters cheers. While the brand hoped to bring awareness to racial inequality and social justice, many viewers were outraged in response to the brand's use of a wealthy model with no previous history of fighting or speaking out on racial injustice, as well as the suggestion that a Pepsi was a simple answer to long-standing, controversial instances of police brutality across the US. Champlin et al (2019) argues that these kinds of advertisements ultimately trivialized these initiatives by posing the brand as a solution to these

complex issues and raises questions about which topics brands should speak about, and how they should address complex social issues in their advertising messages.

However, in a recent survey on the role of brands in Femvertising messages, there is an argument by female consumers who believe that any brand can pair their products with a female empowerment message (Castillo, 2014). Thus, in women's eyes, no specific brand or product category 'owns' rights to the Femvertising space or fits better with this issue (Champlin et al., 2019). When evaluating how brand-cause fit plays out in advertisements, researchers can gain insights on the current practices for this advertising strategy and add to the literature on the impact of brand-cause fit, which is necessary to establish much needed best practices for brand advocacy advertising, a rapidly expanding and critical trend in the advertising industry (Champlin et al., 2019).

Champlin et al., (2019) has observed that in Femvertisements, the way in which women and gender inequality is depicted is consistent among brands of high or low brand-cause fit and therefore suggests that the level of fit between a brand's target audience and a social issue should shape the overall advertising message. In building brand advocacy advertisements, advertising practitioners should consider how they might communicate the brand's authentic and thorough understanding of the social issue, before 'claiming' the issue as part of the brand's positioning strategy.

7.6   INTERRELATION OF THE THEORIES AND BRAND-CAUSE FIT

All the theories used in our project fit together, as they all talk about how societal norms and how the people, we interact with influence the individual identity formation. However, they use different approaches to explain it. Anthony Giddens who is the man behind the concept of the late modern society, argues that the late modern society is characterized by a great detraditionalization of old norms and values, as well as an increased individualization of the individual. According to Giddens, the reflective process of the individual is a constant process, and the identity formation is created based on the social circle one is in. Erving Goffman agrees with this in his theory, where he discusses about how the individual dramatizes himself in everyday life. He believes that a large part of the individual's identity is not established in advance, because identity is both dynamic and changeable when we interact with other people. Goffman believes that the individual tries to adapt

and play different roles, depending on the contexts in which they are placed. Many young people try to live up to some ideals that they believe are socially accepted.

Ziehe also believes that late modern society has created significant changes. Ziehe's theory can also be used to explain why the young people today are more likely to compare themselves to advertisement from the beauty industry. The pressure from the society creates a more superficial self-picture, which seems to make especially young people more likely to have low self-esteem. Axel Honneth's theory can be said to relate to Ziehe's, because a person who has low self-esteem will always be seeking self-recognition. According to Honneth, the individual is not able to form a personal identity without recognition. An individual cannot become a complete individual, and thereby come to terms with his or her own inner self, unless there is a recognition.

At first glance, it seems the brand-cause fit opposes all the above theories in approach, because it focuses on how social changes are influenced by corporate organizations thought their products advertisement.

It is a marketing theory rather than a sociological theory, like the first four theories presented. This means that the theory of brand-cause fit aligns itself with giving independence to the individual without relying on the society for recognition, acceptance, or the creation of identity. According to the brand-cause fit theory, it is no longer the society, but corporate organizations through product advertisement.

The four sociological theories all explain how the individual needs the society in one way or the other to get accepted, as well as the role of the society in creating self-identity. Brand-cause fit, on the other hand, is a social tool used by corporate organizations to lend a voice to social issues to appear socially responsible, transparent, and ethical. Brand responsibility, which is an offshoot of Corporate Social responsibility, is a growing practice in the advertising industry.

The way our marketing theory and our sociological theories complement each other is in the way in which the individual is influenced by external factors that help to shape their identity formation. Although the brand cause-fit theory is based on the influence of companies on the individual, this theory draws on many of the aspects that the sociological theories make use of.

An example of this is the way in which brand cause-fit uses some of the concepts of sociological theories to present their message. An example of this can be when companies in the form of their commercials set up some ideals and images of how the individual should behave and feel when

buying a particular product. It can be argued here that in the form of their marketing, they use the dramatization from Goffman's theory of frontstage.

The companies create an image of how they think the individual should act (frontstage), and this is what they externally try to show the consumer. At the same time, companies also want recognition that Honneth talks about, in the form of consumers buying their products.

7.6.1 RELEVANCE OF THE THEORY TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In relation to the interview questions, the theories are all relevant. The first section of the interview guide contains questions that the respondents were asked before watching the commercials. The response from the respondents shows how the society and people around them are instrumental in shaping how an individual view himself or herself. The individual tends to do certain things because it is expected of him in his quest towards achieving self-recognition, acceptance, and identity creation. Likewise, the second section of the interview guide contain questions about the viewed commercials and the role of brand-cause fit in influencing a societal change in an individual. For instance, after watching the Gillette commercial, the girls realized how men must feel pressured because of the way the female gender expects them to fit in by looking or behaving in a certain way. While the second commercials made both the boys and girls to realize how insulting it is to label girls as weak just because of their gender.

8 ANALYSIS

In this section we will prepare an analysis where we try to seek an answer to our problem formulation:

Problem formulation:

In what way do young people react to Femvertising as a tool in advertising, and how do they link this to their own identity formation?

Research Questions

- *How do young people perceive messages about gender identity in advertisements, when Femvertising is used as a tool and when it is not?*
- *How do they link it to their own identity formation processes?*

Through analysis, we want to be able to be answering the problem statement. This is done both from a sociological approach with identity formation as the focus, as well as from a marketing perspective, to see if Femvertising has a different effect on young adults rather, than the traditional advertising tools.

In the first part of the analysis, we will therefore look at whether we can draw a common thread between the selected sociological theories, and the way in which the students look at themselves in terms of identity formation and gender. In the second part of the analysis, we will look at the effect the commercials have from a marketing perspective.

8.1 IDENTITY FORMATION

In this part of the analysis, we will look at how the students react and interact with each other and us during the focus group interview. We will examine whether we can draw some points from our selected sociological theories, in order to see how young adults, look at themselves, how they look at the society, and how this affects their identity formation. This is done based on the prepared focus group interview, as well as the two selected commercials, and the reactions and answers the students give us through this.

According to Giddens, the separation between time and place also means that the individual has many more options. This means that the individual is not only dependent on the society in which one grew up, but also the world around. The Internet makes it possible to get information from the other side of the world. The use of the media makes the world smaller in many ways, and this has also affected the traditional norms in society. According to Giddens a de-traditionalization of the old norms and value has happened (Kaspersen, 2005).

To see if there has really been a de-traditionalization in relation to the norms for gender roles, the students are asked what they define as a real man and a real woman. This is being asked before they have been shown the two selected commercials.

"Interviewer: When you think of the word 'A boy' what comes to your mind?

Girls response: Boyfriend, Masculine, strong

Two Girls whispering to eachother: En stor pik

Translate to English: A big dik

Boys response: Boys are strong…. Em… em..

Interviewer: So what comes to your mind?

Boys response: A big person, football"

It is clear to see, that even though Giddens believes that there has been a de-traditionalization of the gender, this is not clearly shown in the answers which the students provide. A man is described as strong, masculine as well as a large person, which forms an image of the male gender very traditional and influenced by the traditional society's norms of what a 'real man' contains.

Two of the girls even whisper in Danish that a real man should have a big dick. This is not something that the girls share with us interviewers, because at this stage they are still unaware that one of us understands Danish, but this little comment that the girls bring to each other also shows how society is still affected by the gender role distributions, but also how gender is still affected by the advertising industry's traditional tools, where body image especially emerges and objectifies gender. Identity formation is especially also affected, as these images set a kind of printed rule for gender for how one should be.

According to Erving Goffman, when people are together, they interact to be able to clarify what role they are playing in the given situation (Goffman, 1959).

Goffman's idea is clearly seen in the way that the boys and girls interact with each other. Both the boys and the girls seem to be very forward in their shoes, while defining what is typical for a boy and typical for a girl. It is clear to see how the girls and boys play some kind of role towards each other in terms of being a little smart and cheeky in their remarks.

Interviewer: What qualities would you say describe a female in the best way?

Girls response - Smart. (Everybody laugh…) think about Danish class. We think a lot about our feelings. Very emotional and intelligent.

Boys response: I disagree. Emotional yea…

Girls response: hey guys, you are the strong persons, we have the brain (Everyone laughs).

According to Goffman, reality is something we create in context with other individuals and depending on which people we are together with, we as individuals play a lot of different roles, in different social contexts (Goffman, 1959).

It is clear to see how the students play different roles towards each other, especially in the way the boys and girls interact with each other. By the small remarks that the students say to each other makes it clear to see how the societal norm for the gender still divides the boys and girls apart.

Although we can see the influence that young adults are still under from the old norms and traditions of the gender, we still want to see if these norms have not been changed at all, so we ask what thoughts rather than qualities they think of when they hear the word "a girl".

According to Thomas Ziehe, the individual in the modern society is culturally released and is no longer bound by old tradition (Ziehe, 2002). Ziehe therefore agree with Giddens about the detraditionalization. Both theorists believe that there has been a shift, so we try to dig a little deeper into the students' thoughts and reflections on the word "a girl":

Interviewer: When you hear the word 'A girl', what comes to your mind?

Boys response: A description of gender sounds weird. I think of partner.

Girls response: Well, it is a very broad question and it is kind of hard to know what you think but..

Although the first descriptions of the gender seemed a bit superficial, one can also see from the above quotes that the boys not only objectifies the female gender. They even mention that they think it is a strange question, and answer that a girl makes them think of a partner. Arguably, the boys put themselves on an equal footing with the girls by calling them a partner. Moreover, the question is also difficult for the girls to answer, which also shows that some kind of shift is taking place, as the answers do not come to them right away.

After some thought, however, the girls reach an agreement that girls still contain some typical features:

Girls response: yea. Hmm well, probably we think a lot about our physical appearance and don't have much to show for it. Girls are expected to have a lot of feelings…

Interviewer: So girls are expected to have a lot of feelings because that's what the society expects?

Girls response - Yea , Yea , Yea, Yea… Girls are expected to not do work that is hard for you.

It is clear to hear, that according to the girls, they are expected to be more sensitive and do less physical work than the men. In addition, the girls also think that they think a lot about their appearance.

Ziehe talks about formability, which means that the individual today shapes her/his own life. The individual can shape the way she/he wants to appear to the outside world. For example, when girls are wearing fashion clothes, and boys training to gain bigger muscles (Ziehe, 2002).

The girls talk about their appearance. It is clear, that it means something to the girls to appear in the right way.

We asked what norms and stereotypes there are for men:

Boys response: Maybe a man can show emotions.

I*nterviewer*: So, how are they expected and behave?

Boys response: They cannot be sad maybe..

Girls response: And can't show feelings, without being weak.

It is clear, that the students before they have seen the two selected commercials are very affected by the traditional norms for gender.

Both the boys and the girls are a little cautious in their statements to begin with. This shows that there may be a little uncertainty between the boys and the girls in terms of what is accepted to say in each other's presence about the other gender.

Honneth talks about "The Private Sphere", which he argues is where the individual learns to love and feel love, and it is also here the fundamental self-confidence arises. It arises between family, and friends, and a symmetrical relationship in this sphere will also create the feeling of being accepted as an individual (Honneth, 2006).

Since there is a little unsecure atmosphere between the boys and the girls, we try to lead them a little on the track by creating a not so serious atmosphere by smiling and joking a little, which makes them quickly relax more.

The uncertainty that students have towards us can come from several things. One reason can be, that they do not know how to handle us, since we are new people that they have never met before, and therefore they may behave in a strange way by holding themselves back, when we are asking them questions.

Boys response: Speaking inaudibly Danish.

I*nterviewer*: So boys you don't have any expectations of girls? (Everyone laughs)…. Such as probably they are should be the one to clean up and cook?

Boys response: Someone might think so but I do not think in such a way, but some do.

Girls response: Also, they are expected to stay in the kitchen and clean the house, take care of the children.

After we have created a slightly lighter atmosphere in form of a little laugh and humor, they feel more comfortable. This shows that the students feel that they are being put into a new situation (context) than they are used to, even though we are in their own safe environment, since we are at the students' own school.

According to Honneth, the Sphere of solidarity arises when the individual achieves a recognition of her/his participation. When the individual is a part of a community of which one can see oneself as a part, and gain recognition for one's presence and contribution to the group, which will give a feeling of being valued and being a distinctive insider (Honneth, 2006).

They way that we as the interviewers were handling the students in the beginning seemed to be a little too serious. By appearing less serious, and more smiling makes the students see that we are also human beings on an equal footing with them.

After we have talked a bit with the students about what they have of thoughts and images of the different genders, they are sent out and divided into two groups with boys and girls, respectively.

They are now shown the two selected commercials.

According to Anthony Gidden's theory of late modernity, the individual in late modern society must behave critically and reflexively in relation to her/himself. The individual is constantly exposed to new information, and knowledge that the individual must relate to (Kaspersen, 2005).

Interviewer: Did you notice any differences between the two commercials?

Girl 1: Well the first commercial was definitely showing girls in a very bad way and the way they want their men to look, while the second commercial is about empowering women.

The girls are quick to decide that commercial 1 from Gillette, shows the female gender in a wrong way. This also shows that there is a shift within norms for the gender, as the girls agree that the

female gender should not be shown in a way where they just do what the men tell them to do. They also agree that it is not okay that they are presented as sexual objects by the advertising industry.

Girl 3: the first commercial was very superficial while this second one is like you get people to realize that you have been insulting someone.

*Girl 3***:** *Maybe we think more about how insulting they are. It you see the first commercial, it's like very insulting.*

It is clear that the girls think that the commercial 2 "like a girl" is interesting, and that they have heard the term used before throughout their childhood. The girls approach the subject critically and reflexively, and it can be seen that it has an effects on them that the term "like a girl" is used positively, instead of condescendingly, as they have heard throughout their childhood.

Girl 1: I thought it was a very good video it was very interesting topic. '' Like a girl' That's a thing that we kind of heard before as children. So it was interesting to hear and also that it should be seen as a good thing, and it shouldn't be a bad thing to "run like a girl" or "do anything like a girl" . I thought, I thought it was very interesting.

Giddens believes that society has created a de-traditionalization of the traditional norms and values, and that the individual has the opportunity to create the life he or she wants. However, this also means that we are constantly confronted with new choices, which we must consider as an individual (Kaspersen, 2005).

Girl 3: And then, it's always been like a natural thing just to say, 'you kick like a girl' and I will be like oh I will do better next time, or if a guy says it. I have never thought about it as an insult ….but it is an insult.

The girls show incredible understanding of the commercial and relate it to their own lives. One can sense that their sense of justice also comes into play, as they have many times heard the comment "throw like a girl", and although they have not before thought of it as an insult, they are very aware of how condescending they feel this is now.

Overheating of the subjectivity is according to Ziehe a reaction to all the many new opportunities and pressure that young people can feel, because of all the new knowledge and many possibilities that the individual faces (Ziehe, 2002). This overheating of the subjectivity can be seen very clearly

by the girls, and the why they really think about the commercials, and all the feelings, that the girls express afterwards.

After the girls have seen and talked a bit about the commercial "like a girl", there is one of the girls who seems very emotional and says:

Girl 2: I got a little bit emotional. The girls are aggrieved with this. The insulting of girls is just wrong, because what if we say you kick like a man. It's something different if you say you kick like a girl is kind of like a bad think.

The girl is very much influenced by the commercial, and this suggests that it is something she herself has experienced and can relate too, and that she feels this insult herself.

Ziehe talks about a pressure from society, which has a huge impact on young people's identity formation and creates a pressure and a fear of failing or appearing wrong (Ziehe, 2002). The pressure the girls has been exposed to during their childhood, has also affected them, especially when they now can see how wrong "doing something like a girl" makes them feel.

We start asking about their answers, that they gave us before they watched the two commercials, to understand why they said, what they said before.

Interviewer: You said previously that a boy is expected to be strong while girls are expected to have feelings.

Girl 1: I think that we felt like that before also but maybe not in a strong way but now I definitely feel that and we will think about it. The second commercial, It was really a good one because it got me thinking.

Girl 2: and it was emotional.

Girl 3: Maybe we think more about how insulting they are. If you see the first commercial, it's like very insulting.

Girl 4: it is also definitely important that there should be made more commercials like the last one we saw. It will open more peoples' eyes I think.

The increased individualization can also create insecurity among young people, which according to Ziehe can create different reaction patterns. One of these reaction patterns is "Subjectivation", which is a need to be able to involve others in one's own emotions (Ziehe, 2002).

One of the girls keep pointing out how emotional she is about the commercial "like a girl" which also shows how important it is for her to share her feelings about it with us.

We also played the commercials for the boys only, to see if they had another perspective to the videos than the girls.

Interviewer: Did you notice any reference to gender roles?

The boys looks confused

Interviewer: Do you want us to play it again?

Boys response: Yes, yes

(Playing the commercial again)

According to Honneth, man should be considered as a recognition-seeking being (Honneth, 2006).

The boys do not seem so sure of what to say compared to the girls, who were very influenced by the commercials. One of the reasons may be that their English speaking was not as good as the girls', and they therefore felt insecure about how to formulate themselves. According to Honneth, man is an acknowledgment being, and seeks recognition from others in their social strata. The boys do not feel they can perform and formulate themselves properly and are therefore more insecure about themselves.

Boy 1: Can we maybe discuss it together first in Danish?

Interviewer: Yes, you can – just speak you so we can hear you.

Boy 2: Der til sidst, der viser manden vel sådan lidt den muskuløse mand frem, gør han ikke?

Translation to English: In the end, the man shows the man a little muscular, doesn't he?

Boy 3: yes

Boy 4: Er det ikke det?

Translation to English: Is it not that?

Boy 1: Der er da ikke noget der sådan viser det og skelner det, er der?

Translation to English: There is nothing that shows it and distinguishes it, is there?

Boy 2: *Er det ikke lidt sådan som om der er et krav til mænd? Men det er der jo ikke.*

Translation to English: *Isn't it a bit like there are some requirements for men? But that's not how it is.*

Boy 3: *Noget med kønsroller…*

Translation to English: *Something with gender roles…*

The boys are allowed to discuss in Danish, which makes them feel more secure. Even though they are allowed to discuss in Danish, they still seem significantly more insecure about themselves in relation to the girls. We speak English to the boys, even though they discuss with each other in Danish. They do not know that we can understand Danish, so it surprises them a little when they find out about this.

According to Honneth, recognition is crucial for the individual to form an analytical foundation, and thus be able to understand the motives behinds social actions (Honneth, 2006). We as interviewers are trying to understand why the boys feel so much more insecure than the girls, therefore we allowed them to speak in Danish to each other.

Commercial 1: *Did you notice any reference to gender roles?*

Boys response: *Silence – not sure what to say.*

Interviewer: *So .. Time is going.- It is fine. What you said in Danish, we have it.*

Boy1: *Så I forstod det?*

Translation to English: *So you understood that?*

Interviwer: *Ja, Jeg gør.*

Translation to English: Yes I do.

Boy 1: *Nå okay, okay.*

Translation to English:

Boy 1: *Ah okay, okay.*

The boys are surprised that we have understood their discussions in Danish, but it also seems that it makes them more comfortable, that they now know that they can talk in their own language.

According to Honneth, recognition is important for the individual's self-esteem, and the boys have not felt safe in relation to their English language, which has made them hold back.

The individual is not able to form a personal identity without recognition, and the individual cannot become a complete individual and thereby come to terms with her/his inner self (Honneth, 2006)

Commercials 2 – Always "like a girl"

The boys' attitudes and thoughts about commercials 2, are very much influenced by their own environment in which they grew up. This is seen in the fact that one of the boys first states, that the female gender was the weakest from the start, after which he is interrupted by one of the other boys, who states that this is not the case anymore.

Boy 1: *It shows that the female gender was weak from in the start, because ..*

Boy 2: *It shows that because you are a girl you are weak, but that is not how it is. That is maybe what most people think. When they say throw like a girl, then it's a bad thing because they think you can do better. But that is not how it is.*

This also shows how their worldview has been affected by the shift that is apparently underway. They have experienced that gender roles have been more stereotypical, but also that they have changed over time.

The girls' statements about the same commercial "like a girl" also show how there has been a shift in the way gender roles look today. The girls have experience the change in society themselves.

Girl 1: *Yes, I think so because there has been a huge change in how women are looked upon and from the last few years, women are starting to get empowered and we want women to stand up together. The advert is from Always and apparently talks very much about empowering women, which has been a big thing in these last few years, I think.*

According to Giddens, the increased individualization gives the individual greater freedom to live the life they want. This can also create a more dubious reality (Kaspersen, 2005) Which will also make the individual more confused about his surroundings and himself.

The girls are very reflective of the empowerment of women that is happening. It is very clear that the gender stereotypes are starting to change significantly. Both the boys and the girls see the

changes, even though the girls seem to be more affected by it, which also makes sense since it is the female gender, which is the main focus and has been changing the most in relation to equality.

The boys feel and see the changes too, but they are not that personally affected by it like the girls. This can also be seen in the way that the boys use more time thinking about the questions than the girls. Here another factor can also be that the girls' English is better than the boys.

Interviewer: Does commercial 2 reflect how our society is today in relation to gender role?

Boy 1: Yes to some degree, because it is a common phrase to say "Throw like a girl". It is not unusual to hear, and it is connected with the negative vibes to do things like a girl.

The statement from one of boys shows again that it is a common phase to say "throw like a girl", so even though both the boys and the girls fell and see the changes, the society is still affected by the traditional stereotypes.

One further observation of the girls alone was how engaged and serious they were in our discussion. The girls were very much in favor of them as women getting more equality and not being degraded because of their gender. Although the girls were very engaged and are in favor of this equality, it is observed that all the girls were wearing fashion clothes and make up. It is clear, that they have done something out of themselves, instead of appearing natural as a woman.

According to Goffman, the individual plays different roles in different social context, which does not mean they are fake, but instead shows different sides of the individual (Goffman, 1959).

Girl 2: and you also see women who work in big businesses and have empowered themselves. They stand up for women and say you can do everything if you just believe it. So, I think that girls are getting more and more powerful and are allowed to speak about it.

According to Goffman, "Frontstage" is the identity we take on, and it is therefore the identity that we present to other people. Props are often used, as especially clothes, make-up and special language (Goffman, 1959).

Even though the girls really seem to mean and feel what they are saying, you can also see that they may seem a little over-engaged in the debate. They want to appear themselves as some of these free and empowered women that we are talking about, but at the same time you can also see that they are also influenced by the fashion industry in terms of make-up and modern clothes.

Girl 3: it has become more important to show women how they are and empower different kind of women. I don't know if that's a trend. It has become a bigger thing to empower women and also show different types of women that you don't have to look in a specific way to be better or something like that.

The girls also focus on the fact that even though there are several commercials that empower women, the commercials are also still very much influenced by the sexualization of women by the advertising industry.

Girl 2: I think that there is a lot of commercials about getting your boobs done or gets plastic surgery will you see models for perfume commercials and like really skinny girls and of course that affects the female gender if you can say that.

This also shows that they well know that there is still a long way to go, and in addition to putting this into words, their appearance, their clothing choices, and the use of make-up also show this too.

8.1.1   RESULTS OBTAINED IN RELATION TO IDENTITY FORMATION

In this part of the analysis, the results we have reached in relation to which factors come into play and influence the identity formation of the students will be reviewed. We will also review similarities and differences between boys and girls.

Through the analysis, it has been clear to see that both the girls and the boys have noticed that from their childhood until now, there has been a shift in relation to how the stereotype for men and women is today.

Right from the start, the students had to figure out how to handle us, and it was clear to see how both during the interviews where the girls and boys were gathered, and also where they were divided into boys and girls, respectively, that they tried continuously reading each other, in relation to the answers they came up with.

It was clear, that there was a kind of social order. This could be seen through the small comments, witty remarks they made to each other, and uncertainty through the way they interacted with each other during the focus group interview.

It was especially clear to see during the focus group interview, where both the boys and the girls were present at the same time, that there was a kind of ping pong between the girls and the boys.

This was shown by small comments about each other's gender, with focus on what stereotypically defined one gender from the other.

When the boys were alone, the mood quickly changed. They seemed far more insecure about themselves. They leaned on each other a lot in terms of getting approval and creating agreement around the interview questions. Their uncertainty came to the fore, especially when, instead of speaking English, they continued the conversations in Danish. The boys took significantly longer to talk and think about the questions than the girls.

During the interview where only the girls were present, it was a completely different dynamic. The girls answered the questions significantly faster and were very engaged in the subject. The girls seemed significantly more confident, and their English was also a lot better than the boys'.

8.1.2   DO THEY SEE A LINK TO THEIR OWN IDENTITY FORMATION PROCESSES?

THE BOYS:

As mentioned before, during the focus group interview with the boys alone, they seemed very reluctant and insecure about the topic being discussed. They leaned a lot on each other, and it also ended up that they were allowed to discuss some of the things in Danish.

The boys spent significantly longer time thinking about the questions than the girls. This also shows that they were not quite as reflective in relation to the norms set for gender. This might also show that they have not been quite as affected by this shift in gender norm, as the girls felt much more clearly about the issue.

However, the boys all agreed that they have often heard, or even used the term "throw like a girl". The boys have not thought further about how degrading this sounded, but after they had seen the commercial 2, they were significantly more focused on how it was not the way it should be.

The boys themselves felt a little pressure in relation to the norms set for the male gender in the form of being masculine and strong, having control of their working life and being surrounded by ladies from the commercial 1. They said that the commercials were very superficial, even though the boys themselves before seeing the commercials describes the male gender as being a "big person", "the one who takes care of the woman", "masculine" and "strong".

The boys also concluded that gender relations in general should have been more equal, as the female gender, according to the boys, was just as valuable.

In relation to whether the changes in gender norms have affected their identity formation in relation to the changes in society, in relation to gender norms, it must be said that they have partly noticed the change, but compared to the girls, they have not as such had any deeper personal experiences with this.

However, it is clear to see that the shift in ideals also affects the boys, in the sense that they want the girls to be on an equal footing with them.

THE GIRLS:

There was no doubt, that the girls through their childhood, and until now have seen and experienced that there has been a shift within the stereotypes for gender.

The girls were very touched by the commercial 2 "Like a girl". It was clear that the girls themselves were trying to be independent and empowered women. This could be seen as they talked about the topic with a lot of positivity, and one of the girls was even emotionally affected by the commercial, as she thinks it was very touching.

Although the girls were incredibly positive and engaged in the subject in commercial 2, it could be observed that the girls were still influenced by the traditional stereotypical norms of women, as their clothes were influenced by the fashion industry's norms in terms of their style of dressing. In addition, all the girls were also wearing make-up.

One could sense that there was a kind of division between the girls, in the form of what they said and the way they looked. However, this also shows that the gender stereotype of women is still undergoing a process, where women are still working to push the boundaries and norms that have been set in the past.

It was clear to see, that the girls related themselves a lot to commercial 2, and therefore were also affected by this. Their identity formation must therefore be said to be influenced by the way that society today tries to change the gender ideal, especially for women. The girls created during the conversation a reflective distinction between how society has used "like a girl" as a derogatory term, rather than something positive. They put a lot of emphasis into the message in the commercial, and was very insulted at the society, to look at the female gender in that way.

Although the girls seemed very much affected by the changes within the gender norms, and also themselves had the attitude around being empowered women, one could see a split. The girls were

showing a split in the form of their physical appearance, as the beauty ideals of the fashion industry especially emerged in the form of the way they were dressed. It is clear to see, that their identity formation therefore has both an influence from the traditional norms and values and also the new tendencies from Femvertising.

In addition, it was also clear to see how the girls acted differently during the interview questions, as both the boys and the girls were present at the same time. The girls played more up to the boys, and their responses about the other gender were also largely influenced by the stereotypical norms and values of the gender. When the girls where alone they were more influenced by the commercial using Femvertising and showed that they themselves were supporters of empowering women.

The girls were very critical of the way in which commercial 1 showed the gender, here especially the female gender. They were against the way the female gender became a sexual object for the men.

GIRLS AND BOYS

When working with the hermeneutic circle, the use of text and context is important. In the analysis, we saw how text and context played a big role for the students. From the start, the students had to analyze the situation, to find out how they should act in relation to us. Here it was clear to see, how text and context were expressed. The students were very careful at first and held themselves back, in relation to not saying too much. This may be because we have seemed a bit intimidating to them, as we were both older and seemed more professional in our clothes. In addition, it must be said, that they thought we could not speak or understand Danish, which has also could create a kind of restraint on their part.

When the boys and girls were together, one could clearly see how they acted differently, than when they were divided and were interviewed separately. It was clear that there was a different game between the students, from when they were together to when they were separated.

Here one can see how the influence of the other's gender made the students more cheeky towards each other, and was also more influenced by the traditional norms for the gender in the interaction with each other. An example of this was, when one of the girls stated to the boys, that the boys were the strong ones, and the girls were the smart ones.

When the boys were alone it was clear to see a completely different picture of them. Here text and context reappeared, as their interaction became much more reluctant and hesitant, compared to what

they were supposed to say. Especially for the boys, it seemed that even though they had recently discussed the first issues with the girls, it made a big difference that the girls were now not present. They leaned a lot on each other, and the focus from our part was more on making it work and making them talk about the topic in the form of allowing them to speak in Danish, to make them feel more confident.

After the boys had seen the commercials, their way of talking about gender also changed, as they were significantly more in agreement with the way that commercial 2 presented the female gender, although the first questions they were asked were more influenced by the norms of commercial 1.

During the interview with the girls alone, text and context also emerged. When the boys were not present, one could feel that the girls became more serious. They were markedly more focused and engaged in the subject. This may be since the girls could relate to this themselves, but also maybe to show each other that they took their school very seriously and would like to achieve a good result by practicing their English. The girls seemed more confident in each other's company than the boys did. This was also reflected in the fact that the girls themselves kept the conversation going with us, without us having to interfere too much and help them on the right track.

From our interviews, one can clearly see how text and context constantly affect the way the students interacted with each other and us. It was clear that there was a difference in all three parts of the interviews, and that the students changed character and behavior every time there was a new shift.

8.2 BRAND CAUSE-FIT

As earlier discussed, brand responsibility, which is an offshoot of Corporate Social responsibility, is a growing practice in the advertising industry, where brands and clients align themselves with social issues to appear more socially responsible, transparent, and ethical. Varadarajan and Menon (1988) have defined cause-related marketing as a way for companies to profit while doing good, through a blend of philanthropy, promotion, sponsorship, and other communication activities.

In this section of the analysis, the research question will be divided into parts. We will first look at how young people perceive messages about gender identity in advertisements. Then we will look at what happens when Femvertising is used as a tool and when it is not. Later, we will analyze the impact of brand responsibility, and finally check to see if the young adults see a link between the commercials and their own identity formation. We will therefore discuss about the perceptions of the girls and the perception of the boys.

The perception of the young adults about gender role in commercial 1- Gillette Fusion

GIRLS: When the girls were asked if they noticed any gender roles in commercial 1 – Gillette Fusion, they responded by talking about how the advert reflects on the stereotypical impression of how the society understands the need of a woman and how her man should look. They also discussed how this puts pressure on the man to be who he is not. The emphasis on body types in the advert was noticed by the girls, as men are expected to look in a certain way. The subject of sexualization was also raised by the girls, as a woman is objectified and made to look like a sex tool. Like one of the girls said '*'The advert contains a lot of sexuality and made it seem as if sex is all that a woman wants.''*

BOYS: However, when the boys were asked if they noticed any reference to gender roles in commercial 1, they talked together in Danish about how the men in the commercial 1 showed off their muscles. They also noticed that there were subtle references to gender roles, though they did not say much about it when asked to explain further.

Commercial 1 is a typical example of traditional advertising and how subjectification is portrayed through sexuality in the media by using advertising as a tool. The women can be seen willingly subjectifying themselves to be used as instruments of sexuality with the way they dress and talk in a seductive manner. Also, there is objectification of the male body. References are made to body parts, especially the chest and the men could be seen trying to fit themselves into a box and thereby body shaming men who do not fit into this category. In addition, the female was objectified by how the society has described a woman.

 It is assumed that all a woman wants is a man that looks in a particular way. The issue of subjectification and objectification are some of the reasons why body positivity and Femvertising are on the rise in advertising, as many brands are supporting social issues as a way to be seeming socially responsible. The Gillette commercial used in this project is from 2013, and Gillette has since changed the content of their advertising copy to fight against societal discrimination and objectification by creating positive commercials about the female gender.

BOYS: The perception of the young adults about gender role in commercial 2- Always: Like a girl

When the boys were asked about how they feel watching commercial 2, they seemed surprised by how the commercial moved from what they were familiar with to something new. One of the boys said the commercial shows that the female gender was weak initially. Another boy says that the commercial shows that '*because you are a girl you are weak, but it is not how it is'*. So, the female is seen to be weaker than the male, because the boys agrees that when a boy is said to throw like a girl then he is being insulted. ''it is a bad thing, because they think you can do better. But it is not how it is.''

GIRLS: While the girls, when asked how they feel about commercial 2, were very emotional and could relate to it, because it was the kind of things, they were familiar with as children while growing up. One of the girls said ''*Like a girl, that's a thing that we kind of heard before as children.''* Another girl says *''I have never thought about it as an insult .... but it is an insult.''* While another one says *''the insulting of girls is just wrong''.* From their responses, the girls seem pretty upset when they realised that ''Like a girl' could be an insult when said in a derogatory manner.

8.2.2 RESULTS OBTAINED WHEN FEMVERTISING IS USED AS A TOOL IN BRAND CAUSE-FIT AND WHEN IT IS NOT

GIRLS: The girls were asked if they noticed any difference in the two commercials, they responded by saying that women were shown in a very bad way in commercial 1. One of the girls says *''Well the first commercial was definitely showing girls in a very bad way and the way they want their men to look,''* They also saw commercial 1 as superficial and not a real representation of what a girl wants.

BOYS: The boys also replied in the affirmative that they noticed differences in the two commercials. One of the boys says commercial 1 was superficial. '*'.... more like it was about sex.* The boys were able to identify that the target group for commercial 1 was the men, and *the second one, the target group was women.* The Gillette Fusion commercial is an example of a traditional advertisement used in showing superiority in gender relationships and objectification of gender. It is also an example of when Femvertising is not used as a tool in brand-cause fit.

GIRLS: In the Always Like A girl commercial, from their expression, we could see that the girls were very upset about how an expression they have known all their lives is actually a representation of weakness by not realising that it was not right. One of the girls said *''it's always been like a natural thing just to say 'you kick like a girl' and I will be like oh I will do better next time, or if a*

guy says it. I have never thought about it as an insult …. but it is an insult.'' This comment shows how the girls had moved from accepting and conforming to societal rules and values to having an independence to be who they are without label.

The commercial 2- Always like a girl, has changed the perception of the girls by moving them from subjectification of self to a state of awareness by identifying with their personality as to who they really are. Before watching the commercials, we had asked them about what comes to their mind when they think of the word 'A girl', one of the descriptions used by them was '*Feeling*'. Femvertisment, as imbedded in the commercial by the Always brand, has helped to address the social issue of subjectification and objectification, and just as expressed by a female respondent *'So it was interesting to hear and also that it should be seen as a good thing, and it shouldn't be a bad thing to run like a girl or do anything like a girl.'*

BOYS: In the commercial 2, which is the 'Always Like a girl', we asked the boys if watching the commercial has influenced how they see gender roles. One of the boys says '*I think, that we now know that is quite stupid seeing them as weak, because they can do the exact same*.'' Another boy says, *'Just the terms "kick like a girl" when you play football, should not be a bad term, because a girl can kick better.''* From this, it can be seen that though the boys did not comment so much about commercial 1, they were able to identify the insults in commercial 2 because the brand used femvertising as a tool. This according to Champlin et al. (2019) in brand-cause fit is known as a functional match where the functions of a product sold by a brand are connected to the cause.

8.2.3 THE IMPACT OF BRAND RESPONSIBILITY

Brand advocacy as an aspect of marketing is a part of an overall CSR that can impact brand loyalty both positively and negatively by creating brand associations with a specific cause.

GIRLS: In their response, one of the girls says '*Always is obvious about women pad brand. So, it makes sense that they want to empower women and show women that they should be strong. The Gillet one is about men razors. It also kind of make sense with the downgrading women and making men kind of stronger*.' The girls believe that brands have a responsibility in how they present gender roles. They said it has become a bigger thing, and more brands should do it. The girls are happy with commercial 2 and how Always used Femvertising to empower women and they hope that more brands can have commercials like that. According to one of the girls *'definitely in the commercial 2 way. Empowering women!'*

BOYS: When the boys asked if brands have a responsibility on how they present gender roles, one of them was actually surprised and asked *'.... Didn't they?* Another boy wondered why brands like Gillette made it seem as if women have different requirements as to what a man should look like. The boys were quick to identify the target groups of the commercials. One boy says, 'Gillette is a man thing.' While another boy says '*And Always is for girls*.' They are of the opinion that the Gillette Fusion commercial portrays the man a little bit though that is not all that a man is. However, there are too many expectations from the man. '…. like how we should look.' The boys further explain that brands like Gillette should have some kind of responsibility in how they represent gender role in adverts because they have influence. One of the male respondents says *'In the Gillette they give like expectations on how we should look. It is not as positive as the Always.*

8.2.4 DO THEY SEE A LINK TO THEIR OWN IDENTITY FORMATION PROCESSES?

BOYS: The boys noticed a link between the commercials that they have been exposed to and their identity formation. Before watching the two commercials used as a case study, the boys were of the opinion that men are expected to be strong and doing sports. While girls are emotional and are seen as a partner. One of them says in sports, '…. *that it has always been used, the fact that they are not very good at sport. There has been no such thing against boys or men.'*

Another boy recount how growing up as a child, there was a sport commercial where the woman was made to look dumb because she did not understand anything about football. He says, he had just assumed that all girls are like that 'because it is a common phrase to say, "Throw like a girl". It is not unusual to hear, and it relates to the negative vibes to do things like a girl.' However, the boys opine that though they saw girls as weak before, Femvertisements has now influenced their opinion. '…. *We see them as strong as the boys now', we also see them as strong persons now.'* One of the male respondents says 'I *think that we now know that is quite stupid seeing them as weak, because they can do the exact same.*

GIRLS: When the girls were asked the same question about if they see links between the commercials and their own identity formation, some of the girls did not notice any link to their own identity formation. One of them says *'I am not sure actually it's not something I've thought that much about actually. But only it's because I don't get to really see that many commercials*.' However, another one of them says '*When I see a commercial like that, I think oh that's nice, oh I need to buy it and I don't think of that when I watch commercials. So, it is a little weird*.' According to another of the girls, *A lot of commercials, I think that there is a lot of commercials about getting*

your boobs done or gets plastic surgery, you will see models for perfume commercials and like really skinny girls and of course that affects the female gender if you can say that'.

BOYS: When the boys were asked to rename either of the two commercials watched, the boys choose to change the Always Like a girl commercial by renaming it 'Prejudiced' because they felt that girls are not properly portrayed in the media and are seen as the weaker gender. One of the male respondents says '……*there is a lot of it about girls, maybe because they are not very good at sports.'*

GIRLS: The girls were also asked to choose one of the commercials to rename, they also choose the second commercial and tagged it *'Be yourself, be strong'.* To these girls, they believe that it has become more important to show women how they are and empower different kinds of women. One of them says '*I don't know if that's a trend. It has become a bigger thing to empower women and also show different types of women that you don't have to look in a specific way to be better or something like that.'*

9   CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The purpose of our study was to investigate how young people react to Femvertising. Do they perceive a link between their own identity formation and the content of advertisements they are exposed to? To help us answer the research questions on how young people perceive messages about gender identity in advertisements, we showed examples of advertisements where Femvertising is used as a tool, and where it is not. Then we asked, "do they see a link to their own identity formation processes?" We used qualitative methods to observe the sample population through a sample selection of eight young adults. Here we did focus group interview as our data collection tool. Though the results obtained cannot be generalized, the processes used in this research can be applied to other social concerns like for example the #metoo movement and gender acceptance. Therefore, the findings from this research can be used as a step for further in-depth study of identity formation through brand cause fit.

Findings from our study suggest that young people do not really notice Femvertisements as a marketing strategy, though they perceive a link between their own identity formation and the content of advertisements they are exposed to. One of the male respondents noted that he had always assumed that girls did not know anything about sports, because of the type of commercials

he was exposed to as a child while growing up. The commercials from his childhood made females look as if they did not have a clue about sports.

As discussed in our literature review, traditional adverts are known to be synonymous with male and female body objectification, and sexuality is celebrated (Smolak, 2011). As noticed in the Gillette commercial case, the female models were skinny and had sensual looks while the men were muscular and showing off their bodies. This is a stereotypical assumption of how the male body should look. This media fixation on the ideal body type has contributed to issues in body image such as low self- esteem, body shaming and body labeling. According to Healey (2014), if the society is serious about improving girls' body image, we need to shift the focus from appearance to function and teach girls to value more than just looks.

The Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman was probably right when he said a large part of the identity is not established and can change depending on who we are interacting with. There is therefore a link between identity formation and self-staging, using the concept of frontstage and backstage. This was also noticed among our respondents, especially the females. The concept of frontstage has to do with the identity that we present of ourselves to other people (Goffman, 1959). This was displayed by the female respondents, when they seemed offended by the implication in the Gillette case commercial that what a woman wants, is a man that looks in a particular way. However, we were able to see their backstage identity when they were whispering to themselves and assumed we did not speak Danish – presumably because of the color of our skin. So, when answering a question during the pre-exposure to the case commercials about what comes to their mind when they think of the word 'A boy', the girls had whispered in Danish and giggled to themselves '*A big dick'*, Though answering the question differently in English. In the backstage, people tend to have a different type of identity which is not shown in a certain way to the world, but only to those who are friends with them (Goffman, 1959). However, what we wondered was if they would have talked about this if the male respondents where not present in the room.

According to Gills (2007), femininity is defined as a bodily property rather than a social, structural, or psychological one, and having a sexy body is presented as a woman's source of identity. Our findings during our research suggest that the respondents supported an increase in commercials that are more socially responsible, and which are not a show of superiority or gender labelling. Therefore, it may be that more training of media professionals is needed, when it comes to how gender expression, female imagery, and empowerment could be depicted in advertisements, and

brands should see themselves as responsible for communicating about social issues (Champlin, Sterbenk, Windels, & Poteet, 2019). The female respondents expressed this by talking about how a female is expected to get a surgical procedure to enhance different parts of her body in order to look beautiful. Thereby fitting into societal acceptance of the perfect body type. This, the female respondents agree, is caused by the social media content they are exposed to.

From our research, the doubt raised by Neema & Kumar (2020), as to whether consumers can see through the exploitation of feminism themes from companies to make a profit versus the companies that really have a deeper message can conveniently be answered. All the respondents used in our study especially the girls, were physically shaken and emotional after watching the *Always like A girl* commercial. The girls said they had goose bumps, while the boys felt remorseful as they never really thought that they were insulting girls. Neither group talked much about the brand, but more about the content of the message.

One of the results of our research turns out that Femvertising has a positive influence and creates a good attitude towards the brands that are using it as a marketing strategy. As observed by one of the female respondents, she never thought about brands and what they represent when she buys toiletry, but after watching the *Always like A girl* commercial, she says "it will always be on her mind". Likewise, the male respondents all agree that there should be more adverts like the *Always like A girl*.

It can also be seen in our research that the respondents had a negative reaction to the Gillette commercial, as it represents a typical portrayal of a traditional advertisement. The male respondents felt the commercial puts pressure on them, as it put a label on what a man ought to look like, while the female respondents were not too happy with the half nudity displayed by the female models in the commercial and the impression that all a woman wants is a man. All the respondents clamor for more adverts like the Always like A girl, which shows that challenging female stereotypes is not only beneficial to a narrow set of advertised products, but to a wide range of product categories, such as from cars to underwear, sportswear, and shampoo, across all advertising media and across stereotypical attributes such as physical characteristics, roles, and occupations.

Previous research in advertising shows that advertising has historically been mirroring, rather than challenging, female stereotypes and roles in society (Eisend, 2010). Though, there are claims that gender stereotypes in advertising tend to develop in cycle with societal values and gender roles. In our study, one of the female respondents said, being told that she does things like a girl is

something that she grew up with and never really saw it as an insult. However, the female respondents were happy with the new trends in advertising that are helping to change stereotypes through Femvertising, which Akestam et al. (2017) has defined as *advertising that challenges traditional female advertising stereotypes* and their potential effects on brands and consumers.

In relation to the influence of the selected commercials and the young adult's identity formation, it was clear to see that for the students, especially the girls, it was a sore topic after seeing the commercial "Like a girl" from Always. Both the boys and the girls had through their upbringing and until now heard the quote "Throw like a girl". Although they had not until now seen it as an insult, they were all aware of how condescending it was. Giddens talks about how the individual in late modern society is more reflexive and this is clear in the form of the young people being critical of this (Kaspersen, 2005). They were also critical of the way the Gillette commercial drew a picture of the sexes from the stereotypical picture of man and woman. They all agreed that the stereotypical image of man and woman was not right, and that a woman was more than just appearance, and a man more than just muscle.

Honneth talks about how the individual seeks recognition the other people with whom they surround themselves (Honneth, 2006). This became clear when both the girls and the boys were together, and they created a slightly sillier atmosphere between them, where they played a little up against each other. When the girls and boys split up, there was a whole new vibe.

The boys were quieter and more reserved, and the girls were more outgoing and talkative. According to Honneth, the individual cannot come forward with his honest opinions and innermost attitudes if they do not feel accepted in the community, they are part of. This suggests that the boys have not had the same sense of acceptance of each other that the girls had.

This could therefore have been exciting to see whether the girls and boys would have responded and acted differently if we had kept them all together instead of dividing them by gender. We saw how the dynamics were different while the boys and girls were together, which also suggests that it would have been different if we had kept them together throughout the interview. We cannot say whether the answers had changed, but there are many indications that the boys might have had a little more courage to say some things if the girls had also been present.

On the other hand, this could also have held the girls back a bit in relation to their attitudes and opinions in the things they stated during the interview with them alone. Erving Goffman's theory that the individual plays different roles depending on who they are with, came out very clearly, in the form that the mood changed markedly during the three different parts of the interview.

In terms of identity formation, one could see the importance of the feeling of being recognized like Honneth talks about. The boys were incredibly insecure, due to the fact that they did not feel that their English was quite as good, which made their vocabulary limited. If we had instead chosen that our interviews should have taken place in Danish, then one would think that this would have made the boys more relaxed in the form that they have not had to think so much about how they should formulate themselves. This would also have allowed us to go more in depth in the conversation and the boys could have a much richer vocabulary to be able to express themselves through. The same could apply to the girls even if they were not hampered by their English language.

Our choice of commercial "Always - Like a girl" was also primarily from a girl's perspective. If we had instead chosen a commercial that was also a little more seen from the boys' perspective, this could also have created a greater interest in them. The girls clearly created a link between the commercial and their identity formation as they had personal experiences with the topic from "Like a girl". The boys did not in the same way create a connection to their own identity formation, but nevertheless, one of the boys said that the commercial from Gillette put pressure on how the man should look and be in the form of being masculine and surrounded by ladies.

So, had we chosen a commercial where Femvertising was used, but seen from the man's point of view, other results and perspectives on the subject could have been revealed, thereby making it easier for the boys to understand and explain themselves. This we suppose would have also provided some other nuances on the subject and answers from the girls.

Therefore, though we have been able to answer our research questions, we cannot say our research is conclusive, as there are other areas which we feel we have not been able to delve into. One of such is whether if we had more time and were able to conduct another focus group, we would have gotten a different result if the male and female respondents were put in the same room and interviewed together at the same time after watching the case commercials.

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