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Breaking Harmful Social Norms: the Effects of Norm-Breaking Advertisements on Brand Image

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Abstract: *Current paper proposes a novel marketing approach that originates from the intersection of social and commercial marketing, suggesting that social and commercial goals have the potential to be combined in advertisement by transgressing harmful social norms. The research was undertaken in order to test the effects of advertisements breaking harmful social norms compared to advertisements following and reinforcing existing harmful social norms with regard to the beholder's perception of the brand image. Two experiments were conducted by using the Dual mediation model as their basis, so as to examine potential effects of advertisements breaking harmful social norms concerning gender-roles and the traditional family-picture. The results suggest that affective reactions elicited and purchase intents are more positive when an advertisement includes norm-breaking elements. When integrating liberal values into the experiments, results indicate that people with higher levels of liberal values are more favourable towards advertisements breaking social harmful norms than people with lower levels of liberal values. The study has theoretical, practical, and social contributions by suggesting that commercial companies can reach commercial success by including elements breaking harmful social norms in their advertisement, in particular if the target group consists of liberal people.*

Keywords: *Social Marketing, Commercial Marketing, Norm-breaking Advertisements, Stereotypes, Gender-Roles, Traditional Family, Brand Image*

INTRODUCTION

Commercial and social goals of marketing actions are often separated into two parts of a business, preventing both fields from merging in academia as well as in practice. By keeping them apart, social aspects are withheld from being brought into the marketing mainstream (Andreasen, 2002; Burchell et al., 2013; Dibbs & Carrigan, 2013; Domegan, 2013; Lefebvre, 2011), in which stereotypes have been used in advertisements in order to tell stories since the early 1950s. *Stereotypes* are often of a negative nature, given that they indicate what is socially acceptable or not, and by establishing impressions of a collective through which the specific individuals is then perceived (Kariya et al., 2013). Stereotypes exist due to current *social norms*, defined as socially shared opinions about required or appropriate behaviour (Paluck, 2009). With the ability to influence consumers' attitudes, values, and behaviours, advertisements using stereotypes possess the power to enhance or transgress existing social norms (Kotler, as cited in Dibbs & Carrigan, 2013; Wymer, 2010). The approach of using stereotypes in advertisements has been known for its convenience, since it enables people to make sense of the world quite easily (Kariya et al., 2013; Chan et al., 2007). However, this technique seems rather out-dated, since society is moving away from an individual focus on family responsibilities towards personal responsibility and pleasure (Manago et al., 2014). Through the reinforcement of social norms by using stereotypes, everyone not living up to them is excluded from the constant flow of commercial messages, giving such advertisements discriminative nature. Stereotype-loaded advertisements can therefore be understood as being offensive or even harmful. The same accounts for advertisements including sexist characteristics. (Kariya et al., 2013; Chan et al., 2007) Advertisements of this nature have the

tendency to reinforce *harmful social norms*, leading to actions and behaviours that are perceived as negative (Amoit et al., 2013), while neither enhancing welfare nor bringing any other positive outcome for individuals and society (Hechter & Opp, 2001).

With individuals engaging in self-improvement and lifelong learning, advertisements have become a major part in the individual learning process in an increasingly knowledge-based society. The reason for this is that ads enable customers to adjust their role in society and educate them on how to improve their quality of life. (Bondrea & Stefanescu-Mihaila, 2014) With the credibility commercial companies thereby possess, they consequently entice the audience to question their personal beliefs that are often being shaped by social norms (Popa et al., 2014). A major step in individuals' self-improvement process is the changing role they hold as a consumer. Ethical consumption is therefore increasingly adopted, which means that public and societal consequences are taken into account when making daily decisions. As a consequence, advertisements bringing undesired meaning into consumers' lives could result in avoidance or other unfavourable reactions towards the brand. (Rindell et al., 2013) Research has shown that ads being perceived as offensive can be disadvantageous for both the promoted product and the brand, since the negative emotions they evoke are often transferred to the brand, which in turn results in lower purchase intentions (An & Kim, 2006; Burke & Edell, 1989). Attempts to violate such harmful social norms are therefore expected to elicit positive emotions such as increased attention, beneficial effects on the memory, and positive influences on behaviour (Dahl et al., 2003). Two harmful social norms, which are often found in the design of advertisements and can thereby be

perceived as discriminative or sexist due to their stereotypical nature, will be the focus of this study and are used to test how they affect customers' perception of brand image: *the social construction of gender-roles* and *the social construction of the picture of a traditional family*.

Research shows that attitudes towards an ad have direct and indirect effects on commercial goals (Karson & Fisher, 2005; MacKenzie et al., 1986) and that including elements that violate social norms leads to greater attention and favourable behaviour (Dahl et al., 2003). With changes in the consumer environment as well as individuals striving for self-improvement (Bondrea & Stefanescu-Mihaila, 2014; Manago et al., 2014), messages enhancing existing harmful social norms hold high risks of evoking negative attitudes toward the advertisements, which could be transferred to the brand and therefore hurt commercial goals. Still, advertisements using stereotypes dominate the market, even though Dahl et al. (2003) argue for the importance of designing advertisements promoting "...ethics and morality in the respect paid to social values, tradition and culture" (p. 348). Up to date, only little research about consumers' attitudes towards advertisements that actually incorporate ethical aspects has been conducted. By excluding stereotypes from advertisements in an attempt to transgress existing harmful social norms, the purpose of current study is to provide this research gap with insights. With advertisements' unexploited potential to merge social and commercial ambitions, this research thereby aims to answer the question: *What are the effects of advertisements breaking harmful social norms compared to advertisements following and reinforcing existing harmful social norms regarding the beholder's perception of the brand image?* By including social goals into commercial advertisements so as to discover if the design leads to more positive attitudes towards a norm-breaking ad compared to a norm-following ad, the current study will provide theoretical insights by bringing light to a so far unexplored area that finds itself in the intersection of social and commercial marketing. This will be done by exploring how consumers react towards advertisements that exclude stereotypes, and thereby also include a social aspect by transgressing harmful social norms in the advertisement design. On a practical level, the results attempt to encourage commercial companies to include norm-breaking advertisements into their marketing communications in order to enhance their commercial goals with social benefits as an outcome. Furthermore, on a social level, the insights and possibly subsequent changes in the commercial advertisement sphere could transgress harmful social norms and thus reduce harmful actions resulting from them.

To answer the research question, theory from social psychology and social marketing will provide an understanding of harmful behaviours and outcomes that can be provoked by constantly reinforcing harmful social norms and stereotypes in advertisements. Moreover, this understanding will be connected to theories from the commercial marketing field that concerns consumers' changing attitudes towards

advertisement. This theoretical angle will explain why norm-breaking advertisements are likely to have positive effects on the brand image. In order to study the brand image, two experiments using norm-breaking and norm-following elements will be conducted so as to measure attitudes toward the advertisement in terms of cognitive responses, affective reactions, and behavioural actions, by applying the Dual mediation model (Karson & Fisher, 2005; MacKenzie et al., 1986). Moreover, the moderating effect of liberal values will be included so as to test its impact on attitudes towards the advertisement. By touching the novel field in the intersection of social and commercial marketing and thus only being accompanied with limited theoretical support, this study's results will offer a solid foundation for future research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Construction of Gender Roles

As society changes to become more technological, commercial, urban, and with more opportunities for more comprehensive education, the individual focus moves from family responsibility and procreation towards personal responsibility and pleasure. This societal transformation also brings changes in the perceptions of gender-roles. (Manago et al., 2014) Social comparison plays a significant role in the society regarding the formation of gender differences. Certain gender attributes are shaped by comparisons within or between gender groups, resulting in men and women defining themselves using stereotypes attached to their gender. (Guimond et al., 2007) Since advertisements have the tendency to picture females and males differently, and are thereby contributing to an emergence of harmful social norms, they indirectly account for the stereotypes individuals use in their process of self-definition and in their definition of others.

Current advertisements are stuck in old habits; picturing women as merely *appearing* meanwhile men are being portrayed as *acting* (Berger, as cited in Rabinowitz, 2013), which objectifies women by assigning them the role of simply being watched (Karuya et al., 2013). Yanni (1990) argues that the asymmetry is shown in the social construction of men and women holding different roles based on gender. Men are portrayed as the ones with all the power, acting, whereas women are liable to men and their power, appearing. Females are in this setting not behaving by force from their own will. Instead, their behaviour is rather a reflection of how they handle their emotions. (Berger, 2011) From a young age, both girls and boys are facing pressure to conform to already existing stereotypical gender-roles anchored in social norms, compelling them to develop into individuals with differentiated gender identities, attitudes, and behaviours (Priess et al., 2009). In the development of advertisements, many commercial companies lack acknowledging that society is moving away from stereotyped gender-roles but is heading towards self-selected and equal gender-roles (Manago et al., 2014).

Social norms that enhance differences between gender groups can cause numerous harmful behaviours, which is why this

paper understands them as being harmful social norms. For instance, gender-based violence is identified as an outcome of gender inequality due to a controlling behaviour of men, the lack of empowerment among women, and laws and policies that reinforce gender-roles (Lundgren & Amin, 2015). Another result of gender stereotypes is that girls are facing higher risks of getting depressed, which is proven to be due to holding low traits of traditional masculinity only (Priess et al., 2009). On the other side, when social norms picture men as having greater levels of independence, strength, and risk-taking behaviour than females (Möller-Leimkühler, 2003), it leads to higher suicide rates among men. This can be explained by the fact that an enhancement of the male gender-role hinders men from seeking for help when noticing symptoms of depression (Pitman et al., 2012; Payne et al., 2007). Moreover, antifemininity norms existing among men with masculine gender-role stress can cause anger and aggression towards homosexual men (Parrott, 2009). Also, gender inequality caused by certain social norms creates an education and labour gap with an underrepresentation of women, which can lead to limited economic development (Hiller, 2014).

By pointing out that social norms regarding gender-roles can result in numerous harmful behaviours, it becomes obvious that transgressing them actually has the capability to put forth a better society. Since advertisements play a crucial role in consumers' self-development process, commercial companies that attempt to transgress such harmful social norms not only contribute to a better society, but also have great potential of retrieving positive commercial outcomes in terms of their brand image. (Dahl et al., 2003; Rindell et al., 2013) The Dual mediation model (further described in the methodology section) provides insights about the design of an advertisement having both a direct and indirect effect on the brand image, based on consumers' cognitive responses, affective reactions, and behavioural actions (Karson & Fisher, 2005; MacKenzie et al., 1986). This means that positive and negative emotions and thoughts triggered by an ad can play an important role in the beholder's attitude towards the brand and related purchase intention, and simultaneous in the beholder's perception of the brand image (An & Kim, 2006; Burke & Edell, 1989; Dahl et al., 2003). In the contemporary knowledge-based society, where consumers increasingly adopt ethical consumption patterns (Rindell et al., 2013) and in which the understanding of gender-roles has changed (Manago et al., 2014), advertisements which are taking social responsibility by initiating to break existing harmful gender norms are likely to evoke more positive cognitive responses, affective reactions, and behavioural actions than those continuing to reinforce stereotypes of appearing women and acting men. Based on the literature review, the first hypothesis is developed and conceptualised in Figure 1.

Hypothesis 1. Advertisements including men portrayed outside their traditionally assigned gender-role cause:

- a. *more positive cognitive responses towards the ad*
- b. *more positive affective reactions towards the ad*
- c. *higher levels of behavioural actions*
- d. *a more positive brand image*

Social Constructions of the Traditional Family

The picture of a traditional family consisting of a heterosexual, married couple with a male provider, a housewife, and two children as it has been common in the 1950s has long been disapproved by a majority of the contemporary Western society. Instead, the construct of a family has especially in the past 30 years changed significantly into widely being acknowledged as a group of people living together as an entity, regardless of being married or single, having children or not, being in a same-sex or opposite-sex partnership, or living in other alternative postmodern relationships. (OECD, 2011; Forbes, 2013) Generally speaking, families are evolving into being socially egalitarian and being more diverse in terms of ethnology, race, religion, and sexuality (Angier, 2013).

Despite such development, a representation of non-traditional family constellations in the marketing communications of big companies remains uncommon, since topics such as homosexuality or blended families are still perceived as being a sensitive theme among some groups of society (Borgerson et al., 2006). Traditional social norms still constitute an important factor in consumer's perception and evaluation of marketing communications that include norm-breaking elements in an attempt to modify the traditional role of the family. In order to accept non-traditional, alternative family structures as being actual families, politics as well as marketing communications need to assimilate to the modern world rather than seeking to change it back to its traditional origins. (The Economist, 2013)

With four out of ten people believing that a single parent can raise a child as good as two parents together, the same amount of people also believes that a homosexual male couple could not do so (National Centre for Social Research, 2008). Legal and cultural barriers such as the out-dated notion that children need to be raised by both complementary roles of the mother and the father persist regarding homosexual couples' attempts to adopt (Steward Johnson, 2013) An example of social norms concerning the family-picture that result in harmful behaviour is one that shows that the current situation for gay couples is far from socially egalitarian. Stress factors connected to self-identification and coming-out have been found to be influential on suicidal behaviour, meaning that homosexual people find themselves at higher suicidal risks (McDaniel et al., 2001; Harris, 2013; Skerrett et al., 2015). Often being exposed to negative reactions of the parents after revealing the homosexual orientation, the perceived stress can harm the person's wellbeing significantly (Machado, 2015). Scandinavian data of suicide rates even shows that men in same-sex partnerships have a suicide risk that is eight times higher than for those living in opposite-sex partnership (Pitman et al., 2012). Living in homosexual families is apparently still not accepted as being normal or even as being proper families,

leading to psychologically harmful consequences for the individuals concerned.

Modern, non-traditional families are a fast-growing customer segment that has been ignored or even discriminated by large parts of current marketing campaigns (Moses, 2012). Nonetheless, a few commercial companies have realized that diversity is inevitable and have therefore started to portray different family scenarios including same-sex couples into their campaigns (Horovitz, 2014). By including such norm-breaking advertising elements into marketing communication, positive reactions have been located. With commercial companies having the power to transgress existing harmful social norms by influencing culture and by that changing existing behavioural patterns, they should acknowledge the positive impacts norm-breaking ad elements can have on society (Hechter & Opp, 2001). Once again, changes in societal structures have turned individuals into more educated and ethical consumers, who use advertisements as a source in their process of becoming their better selves (Burke & Edell, 1989; Dahl et al., 2003; Rindell et al., 2013). Including norm-breaking elements in ads has for this reason the potential to create positive attitudes towards the ad as well as a stronger brand image by provoking positive cognitive responses and affective reactions, which in turn leads to higher levels of behavioural action (Karson & Fisher, 2005; MacKenzie et al., 1986). In addition, since the non-traditional family segment seems to be a hidden gem with great opportunities for commercial aims, both social and commercial benefits could be reached by including ad elements that transgress social norms about the traditional family. Based on the literature review, the second hypothesis is constructed and conceptualised in Figure 1.

Hypothesis 2. Advertisements including gay couples cause:

- a. *more positive cognitive responses towards the ad*
- b. *more positive affective reactions towards the ad*
- c. *higher levels of behavioural actions*
- d. *a more positive brand image*

Level of Liberal Values' Effect on Brand Image

An inclusion of advertising elements breaking harmful social norms is assumed to provoke positive consumer reactions. Anyhow, incorporating elements into ads that represent egalitarian values is not sufficient enough to secure certain behavioural outcomes on a societal level, since members of the society differ according to their convictions and therefore regarding their perceptions of ads. So as to consolidate a sustainable society, Rawls (1997) highlights the citizens' need to possess the natural ability to evaluate beneficial or unfavourable behaviour as well as to hold liberal values, including tolerance, freedom of speech, open-mindedness and sense for equality, independence, empathy for societal needs, and courage. Consequently, a high level of liberal values has the ability to assure desired behavioural structures for society (McTernan, 2014).

Experiments conducted in previous research have shown that people react differently in varying situations (McTernan, 2014). Especially for people with less education, a higher age, a religious background, and conservative convictions, negative attitudes towards evolving sexual identities and gender-roles are more likely to occur (Brown & Henriquez, as cited in Costa et al., 2014; Manago et al., 2014). Since the current study aims to research consumers' diverging perceptions of brand images created from attitudes towards advertisements that include elements transgressing just mentioned harmful social norms, the level of liberal values held by the consumer could be an underlying influence on such perceptions. The reason therefore is that liberal values often have an effect on consumers' cognitive reactions, affective responses, and behavioural actions when being confronted with norm-breaking advertisements. Such liberal values will be used as a moderator in differently manipulated advertisement designs, so as to see if a positive reaction towards norm-breaking ad elements is more likely to be provoked for people having more liberal mind-sets compared to non-liberal ones. This results in the formulation of a third and a fourth hypothesis, which are conceptualised in Figure 1.

Hypothesis 3. When advertisements include men portrayed outside their traditionally assigned gender-role, liberal people, in comparison to non-liberal people, hold:

- a. *more positive cognitive responses towards the ad*
- b. *more positive affective reactions towards the ad*
- c. *higher levels of behavioural actions*
- d. *a more positive brand image*

Hypothesis 4. When advertisements include gay couples, liberal people, in comparison to non-liberal people, hold:

- a. *more positive cognitive responses towards the ad*
- b. *more positive affective reactions towards the ad*
- c. *higher levels of behavioural actions*
- d. *a more positive brand image*

METHODOLOGY

Since the study aims to test hypotheses regarding potential differences between different groups' perceptions of advertisements, an experimental method was chosen. Experiments are preferably used when attempting to discover causal relationship between different variables as this study aims to do, but they also require certain previous knowledge about the topic prior to execution. In addition, a successful manipulation and a random allocation of participants to two experimental groups are crucial in order to generate valid results. If the experimental process falls through on any of these steps, the results cannot be trusted or further used to deliver new knowledge. (Field & Hole, 2003; Söderlund, 2010) The planning process and the design of the experiments was therefore a major part of the study.

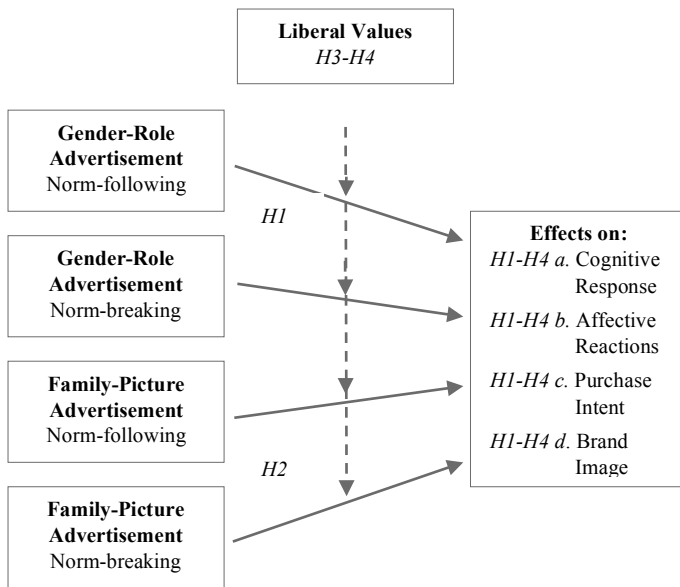


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Study Design and Stimuli Creation

Two experiments were conducted based on a 2 (with norm-breaking elements vs. without norm-breaking elements) x 2 (with liberal values vs. without liberal values) research design. To guarantee valid results, several prevalent steps were carefully taken into the process in order to conduct a proper study design, which included the development of advertisements for the purpose of this study only (Field & Hole, 2003; Söderlund, 2010). In order to initially assure that the target groups perceived norm-breaking and norm-following ads as being different, existing ads formerly used on the Swedish market were presented to 22 students with similar characteristics as the ones used in the research sample. The results suggested that the respondents evaluated the ads differently and in accordance with expectations, and were thus used as a design template for the development of new ads.

For the purpose of this particular study, two different ads were created in two distinguished versions, resulting in four different advertisements. A proper development of the ads had to be undertaken so as to ensure an exclusion of any potential influencing and distracting factors and hence to guarantee that the norm-breaking element is the only difference between the ads to secure the manipulation effect. One norm-breaking and one norm-following ad version were thus designed for harmful social norms, one for the social construction of gender-roles (see Image 1) and one for the social construction of a traditional family (see Image 2).

The advertisements designed for the two experiments were tested among a group of 68 target members to verify the manipulation adequacy. Their input indicated a successful manipulation. With all four developed advertisements in focus, two experiments were conducted to test the effect of norm-breaking advertisements. The first experiment was centred on gender-roles and the second on the family-picture. The experiments were carried out through an online survey, where

two identical versions of a survey were created, which only differed in the advertisements included. The first part of each survey was about gender-roles, whilst the second part was related to the family-picture. For each case, an introductory description of a hypothetical scenarios was given to the respondent to create a stronger visualization of being a potential customer of the advertised products (Söderlund, 2010). The surveys were pre-tested to assure clarity and usefulness of the questions, leading to two items being excluded due to ambiguity. The final surveys can be found in Appendix 1.

Social Constructions of Gender Roles

The product promoted in the experimental ad was baby clothing. With advertisements' tendency to use stereotypes, females are usually portrayed in the parenting role when baby products are promoted, since social norms assign females to the role of being the caring parent. In the design of the norm-following ad a woman holding a baby was therefore portrayed to promote the baby clothes. For the norm-breaking ad on the other hand, a man was assigned the parenting role holding the baby. Everything except the person holding the baby was constant in both ads, such as the way the baby was held, the background, the clothes worn by the parent and the baby, and the facial expression of the baby. To ensure a proper brand logo, an unfamiliar logo was borrowed from a foreign market. In addition, participants were asked to imagine themselves in a given scenario of being the parent of a new-born (see Appendix 1) in order to mentally create a potential purchase situation for baby clothing. The final gender-role ad designs are displayed in Image 1.



Image 1: Gender-Role Ads. Left: norm-following, Right: norm-breaking

Social Construction of the Traditional Family

Two advertisements representing two distinct types of family constellations were created in order to ensure that only the norm-breaking element differed among them. Products targeting families have the tendency to be promoted through advertisements using a stereotyped idea of how a family should look like. The design of such ads is thereby often portraying a heterosexual couple, which was also done for the norm-following part in this experiment. Since the product promoted in the experimental ads was a dietary supplement targeting couples, the norm-following advertisements used a

heterosexual couple being pictured in bed together as its baseline model. The norm-breaking counterpart portrayed an identical environment with the only difference being that the man of the heterosexual couple was replaced with a woman, resulting in a homosexual couple being portrayed. Apart from that, everything else was kept constant including people's appearance, background, as well as objects' placement. To ensure a proper brand logo, an unfamiliar logo was borrowed from a foreign market. In addition, participants were asked to imagine themselves in a given scenario of being in a sexually inactive relationship (see Appendix 1) in order to mentally create a potential purchase situation for the promoted dietary supplements. The final family-picture ad designs are displayed in Image 2.



Image 2: Family-Picture Ads. Top: norm-following, Bottom: norm-breaking

Sample and Procedure

The two final surveys were sent to students at the School of Business, Economics, and Law at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Students were randomly assigned to either the control group, evaluating norm-following ads, or the experimental group, evaluating norm-breaking ads. The experiments utilized a sample of 403 undergraduate and graduate students, but was reduced by four defective cases, leading to a sample size of 399 cases with 205 students being in the control group and 194 students in the experimental group. The sample consisted of 246 (61.7%) females, 152 (38.1%) males, and 1 (.3%) unspecified gender. The majority of participants were undergraduate students (67.4%), followed by graduate students (26.8%) and other students (5.8%). Overall, the control group and experimental group shared the same demographic background.

Variables and Measurement Tool

The independent variable used in this study was the norm-breaking element of the ads presented to the participants. Brand image was chosen as the dependent variable and the level of liberal values acted as a moderator. The approach used in this study is image-congruity, meaning that the way consumers evaluate brands is based on symbolic images of the brand as well as its similarity or complementary to the image customers already hold towards the brand. This approach considers brand image as being an attitude that should be measured by using cognitive, affective, and behavioural concepts. (Cian, 2011) A deeper understanding of factors affecting brand attitudes has been emerging from conceptual and empirical evidence. Cognitive and affective factors predict brand attitudes directly, but also indirectly via emotional connections or cognitive evaluations of advertisements of both informative and emotional nature. (Yoo & MacInnis, 2005) A model that has been widely applied and tested for this purpose is the *Dual mediation model* (see Figure 2). The model considers cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects as having direct and indirect influences on brand attitudes and acknowledges responses to advertisements as a main source. The conscious processing of ad elements, such as copy and presentation style, and the thoughts evoked from them are referred to as *cognitive responses*. Cognitive responses exist towards both an ad (Cad) and a brand (Cb). *Affective reactions* on the other hand are defined as the feelings immediately and automatically elicited due to the presence of certain elements or objects in an advertising context. Affective reactions can be directed towards both an ad (Aad) and a brand (Ab). Overall, in the formation of brand attitudes, both cognitive responses and affective reactions are important factors. Furthermore, purchase intention (Pi) represents the *behavioural aspect*, where the consumer's judgement, based on the overall evaluation, determines the individual intention to buy a certain brand. (Teng et al., 2007)

The Dual mediation model has identified significant relationships among the cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects of an advertisement and a brand (see Figure 2). Evidently, cognitive responses to advertisements (Cad) affect affective reactions towards them (Aad), which indirectly influences affective reactions towards the brand (Ab) via brand cognitions (Cb). Moreover, the model also reveals an indirect relationship between affective reactions towards the ad (Aad) and behavioural action (Pi) via brand cognitions (Cb) and affective reactions towards the brand (Ab). (MacKenzie et al., 1986) Furthermore, the model indicates a direct relationship between affective reactions towards the advertisement (Aad) and behavioural action (Pi) in cases in which the consumers are highly motivated to process advertisements (Karson & Fisher, 2005). Given that the purpose of this study is to measure brand image as a consequence of attitude towards advertisements, the application of the Dual mediation model as a measurement tool is highly suitable. Since the model has proven that attitudes towards an ad affect attitude towards the brand, only attitudes toward the advertisements (Cad, Aad and Pi) will be examined.

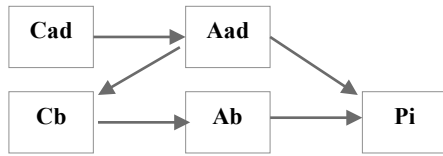


Figure 2: Dual mediation model

Measurements

The measurements used for the experiments including their items are presented below. With all Cronbach's alphas being above 0.7, reliability is given for all measurement scales.

Cognitive Responses towards the Ad (Cad)

By adopting a scale developed by Teng et al. (2007) the cognitions regarding the advertisement (Cad) were measured with a three-item 5-point semantic scale, including very uninformative/very informative, very unpersuasive/very persuasive, and not very meaningful/very meaningful. Cronbach's alpha reliability for this scale was GenderAd_{norm-breaking} .79, GenderAd_{norm-following} .78, FamilyAd_{norm-breaking} .88, and FamilyAd_{norm-following} .85.

Affective Reactions towards the Ad (Aad)

Affective reactions towards the ad (Aad) were measured by using a four-item 5-point semantic scale with items developed by Lutz et al. (1983) and further advanced by Teng et al. (2007) and Xue and Muralidharan (2015). The included items were unpleasant/pleasant, negative/positive, untrustworthy/trustworthy, and dislike/like. Cronbach's alpha reliability for this scale was GenderAd_{norm-breaking} .91, GenderAd_{norm-following} .86, FamilyAd_{norm-breaking} .86, and FamilyAd_{norm-following} .87.

Behavioural action (Pi)

The purchase intention was measured by using a three-item 5-point Likert scale developed by Teng et al. (2007). Participants were asked to indicate if they strongly disagree/strongly agree about absolutely considering to buy, definitely expecting to buy, and absolutely planning to buy the represented brand. Cronbach's alpha reliability for this scale was GenderAd_{norm-breaking} .92, GenderAd_{norm-following} .89, FamilyAd_{norm-breaking} .96, and FamilyAd_{norm-following} .93.

Liberal Values - The Moderator

Respondents were asked to address their position to six given statements. The scale was a 5-point Likert scale developed from Pew Research Centre (2014) but influenced by Baumann (2013), Graham et al. (2009), and Stier (2002) to fit current experiments better. The given statements were assembled from areas of equality, immigration, environment, and family constellations. Cronbach's alpha reliability for this scale was Ads_{norm-breaking} .72, and Ads_{norm-following} .77.

Norm-Breaking - Manipulation check

A manipulation check was included to secure the validity of the study (Field & Hole, 2003; Söderlund, 2010). A one-item

semantic scale ranging from norm-breaking to norm-following was used and placed in direct connection to the different ads. For securing the validity of the results, a T-test validated the significance of the manipulation check. The manipulation was effective in that respondents evaluated the ads including norm-breaking elements as being more norm-breaking than the ones which reinforced existing norms. This applied for both the GenderAd ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = 2.84$ versus $M_{\text{norm-following}} = 3.38$, $F = .40$, $p < .05$) and the FamilyAd ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = 2.17$ versus $M_{\text{norm-following}} = 3.49$, $F = 1.331$, $p < .05$).

RESULTS

This study aimed to identify whether the inclusion of norm-breaking elements of harmful social norms into ads positively affects consumers' perception of the brand image based on their cognitive responses, affective reactions, and behavioural actions. Additionally, the effect of the participants' liberal values was included as a moderator. Due to a non-normal distribution of the data, the analysis was conducted by using a Mann-Whitney U test for *Hypotheses 1* and *2*, and univariate analysis of variances (ANOVA) and independent sample T-test for *Hypotheses 3* and *4*.

Test of Hypotheses

The conceptual model (see Figure 1) was developed on the basis of the Dual mediation model and assumes its validity. The data from the experiments was analysed by using the statistical software *SPSS Statistics*. The p -values were measured on a 95% confidence interval.

Attitudes Towards Advertisements Designed to Break Socially Constructed Gender-Roles (H1)

Hypothesis 1 was formulated to observe if including norm-breaking elements of gender-roles has a positive effect on cognitive responses (*H1a*), affective reactions (*H1b*), behavioural actions (*H1c*), and the brand image (*H1d*). As shown in Table 1, the mean differences are positive for all constructs, meaning that attitudes towards norm-breaking ads are throughout the experiment rated higher than their opposing norm-following ads. Results of the Mann-Whitney U test show that three out of four hypotheses are significant. Testing *H1a* shows that the participants' cognitive responses are more positive towards norm-breaking ads than towards ads reinforcing social norms, but are not statistically significant ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = 2.77$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = 2.65$, $z = -1.72$, $p > .05$). The mean difference of *H1b* between norm-breaking and norm-following ads is significant ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = 3.28$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = 3.06$, $z = -2.58$, $p < .05$), indicating that affective reactions evoked by a norm-breaking ad are more positive than the ones elicited from a norm-following ad. In addition, *H1c* is supported ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = 2.5$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = 2.28$, $z = -2.08$, $p < .05$), indicating that including norm-breaking gender-role elements has positive effects on the beholders' purchase intentions. Finally, the mean difference of *H1d* is significant ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = 2.85$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = 2.67$, $z = -2.46$, $p < .05$), supporting the hypothesis that brand image is perceived as more positively when norm-breaking elements are included in

an ad. Hence, *H1b*, *H1c* and *H1d* are accepted with a small effect size ($p < .05$, $r > .1$) while *H1a* is rejected with no effect size ($p > .05$, $r < .1$).

Attitudes Towards Advertisements Designed to Break the Socially Constructed Picture of a Traditional Family (H2)

Hypothesis 2 was developed with the aim to discover if an inclusion of a norm-breaking element such as gay couples in family-picture ads has a positive effect on cognitive responses (*H2a*), affective reactions (*H2b*), behavioural actions (*H2c*), and the brand image (*H2d*). As presented in Table 1, the mean differences for cognitive responses ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = 2.52$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = 2.66$, $z = -1.53$, $p > .05$), behavioural actions ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = 1.79$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = 1.89$, $z = -1.48$, $p > .05$), and brand image ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = 2.43$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = 2.465$, $z = -.55$, $p > .05$) hold negative values, implying that the norm-breaking element placed in the ad is not having a positive effect within these concepts. However, none of these results are significant. For the affective reactions on the other hand, the mean difference is positive, implying that affective reactions towards ads including norm-breaking elements such as gay couples are more positive than for ads that do not. This means that *H2b* is supported ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = 2.99$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = 2.84$, $z = -2.15$, $p < .05$) yet without proven effect size ($p < .05$, $r < .1$).

Moderator Analysis

Liberal values were included as a moderating variable in order to measure potential interaction effects between such personality-related measurements and the beholder’s cognitive responses, affective reactions, behavioural actions, and perception of the brand image. Participants were grouped according to their level of liberal values, using a mean split at 1.9. Participants with mean values below that threshold were classified as liberal; meanwhile participants with mean values above the split were classified as non-liberal. This resulted in groups of 233 liberals (control group: 128; experimental group: 105) and 166 non-liberals (control group: 77; experimental group: 89).

Liberal Values and Norm-breaking Gender-Role Ads (H3)

Results among the liberal group show positive mean differences between norm-breaking and norm-following ads (see Table 2), meaning that norm-breaking ads were rated higher. Yet, only the mean difference of affective reactions is significant ($M_{\text{norm-breaking, Liberals}} = 3.37$, $M_{\text{norm-following, Liberals}} = 3.13$, $p < .05$). Also, the results of the non-liberal group show positive mean differences between norm-breaking and norm-following ads, but only the mean difference of behavioural actions is significant ($M_{\text{norm-breaking, Non-Liberals}} = 2.55$, $M_{\text{norm-following, Non-Liberals}} = 2.11$, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis 3 tests if the level of liberal values has an interaction effect on the beholder’s perception of advertisements that include norm-breaking elements of gender-roles concerning cognitive responses (*H3a*), affective reactions (*H3b*), behavioural actions (*H3c*), and the brand image (*H3d*). Including liberal values does not result in any significant interaction effects (see Table 2), neither for cognitive responses ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = .13$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = .00$, $p > .05$), affective reactions ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = .20$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = .18$, $p > .05$), behavioural actions ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = -.09$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = .12$, $p > .05$), nor the perceived brand image ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = .08$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = .09$, $p > .05$). Anyhow, liberals value the norm-breaking ad higher than non-liberals do, except in terms of purchase intent, for which a negative relation is found. Also in the norm-following setting, liberals have a more positive attitude towards the norm-following ad, showing that liberals rated the presented ads generally higher, with only one mentioned exception. Hence, none of *H3a*, *H3b*, *H3c*, and *H3d* can be accepted ($p > .05$).

Liberal Values and Norm-breaking Family-Picture Ads (H4)

When comparing mean differences within the liberal group, it becomes clear that they are more positive towards the norm-breaking advertisements for each of the constructs: cognitive response, affective reaction, behavioural action, and perceived

Table 1: Mean Scores of Mann-Whitney U Test

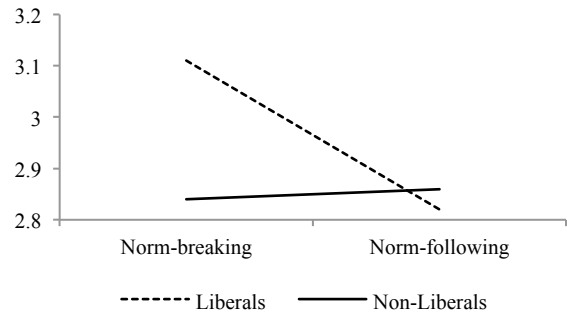
Measurements	M Norm-breaking	M Norm-following	M Difference	<i>p</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>r</i>
H1: Gender-Role						
a: Cognitive Responses	2.77	2.65	.12	.09	-1.72	.08
b: Affective Reactions	3.28	3.06	.22	.01	-2.58	.13
c: Purchase Intent	2.50	2.28	.22	.04	-2.08	.10
d: Brand Image	2.85	2.67	.18	.01	-2.46	.12
H2: Family-Picture						
a: Cognitive Responses	2.52	2.66	-.14	.13	-1.53	-.08
b: Affective Reactions	2.99	2.84	.15	.03	-2.15	.01
c: Purchase Intent	1.79	1.89	-.10	.14	-1.48	-.05
d: Brand Image	2.43	2.46	-.03	.58	-.55	-.02

Table 2: Mean Scores and Interaction Effect

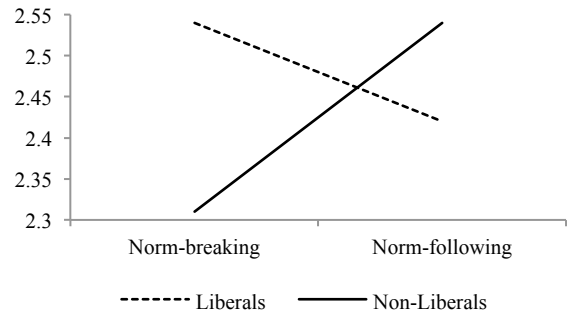
Measurements	Liberals				Non-Liberals				Interaction			
	M Norm-breaking	M Norm-following	M Difference	<i>p</i>	M Norm-breaking	M Norm-following	M Difference	<i>p</i>	M Difference Norm-breaking	M Difference Norm-following	<i>p</i>	
H3: Gender-Role												
a: Cognitive Responses	2.83	2.65	.18	.07	2.7	2.65	.05	.69	.13	.00	.42	
b: Affective Reactions	3.37	3.13	.24	.04	3.17	2.95	.22	.08	.20	.18	.87	
c: Purchase Intent	2.46	2.33	.13	.35	2.55	2.21	.34	.03	-.09	.12	.32	
d: Brand Image	2.89	2.7	.19	.06	2.81	2.61	.20	.08	.08	.09	.90	
H4: Family-Picture												
a: Cognitive Responses	2.64	2.63	.01	.95	2.39	2.71	-.32	.02	.25	-.08	.07	
b: Affective Reactions	3.11	2.82	.29	.00	2.84	2.86	-.02	.84	.27	-.04	.04	
c: Purchase Intent	1.86	1.81	.05	.74	1.72	2.03	-.31	.04	.14	-.22	.08	
d: Brand Image	2.54	2.42	.12	.24	2.31	2.54	-.23	.05	.23	-.12	.03	

brand image (see Table 2). On the contrary, the non-liberal group holds more positive attitudes towards the norm-following ad. However, the results are only statistically significant for affective reaction of the liberal group ($M_{\text{norm-breaking, Liberals}} = 3.11$, $M_{\text{norm-following, Liberals}} = 2.82$, $p < .05$). The non-liberal group on the other hand shows significant effects for the cognitive responses ($M_{\text{norm-breaking, Non-Liberals}} = 2.39$, $M_{\text{norm-following, Non-Liberals}} = 2.71$, $p < .05$), purchase intent ($M_{\text{norm-breaking, Non-Liberals}} = 1.72$, $M_{\text{norm-following, Non-Liberals}} = 2.03$, $p < .05$), and perceived brand image ($M_{\text{norm-breaking, Non-Liberals}} = 2.31$, $M_{\text{norm-following, Non-Liberals}} = 2.54$, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis 4 was formulated to test if the level of liberal values has an interaction effect on the perception of advertisements including norm-breaking elements such as gay couples. To test if liberal values affect cognitive responses (*H4a*), affective reactions (*H4b*), behavioural actions (*H4c*), and perceived brand image (*H4d*), mean differences for the interaction of liberal values and norm-breaking versus norm-following advertisements were examined. As shown in Table 2, all mean differences for the norm-breaking ad are higher for the liberal group in all constructs, meaning that people with a higher level of liberal values hold a more positive attitude towards the norm-breaking ad compared to the non-liberal group. The mean differences for the norm-following ad on the other hand indicate that the non-liberal group is having a more positive attitude towards the norm-following ad. The results show that the interaction effects of liberal values are only statistically significant for affective reactions ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = .27$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = -.04$, $p < .05$) and for perceived brand image ($M_{\text{norm-breaking}} = .23$, $M_{\text{norm-following}} = -.12$, $p < .05$). *H4b* and *H4d* are thus accepted, meaning that higher levels of liberal values have a positive significant effect ($p < .05$) on affective reaction and perceived brand image towards a norm-breaking ad. The resulting interaction effects of the level of liberal values and affective reactions as well as brand image is shown in Graph 1 and Graph 2, respectively.



Graph 1: Interaction effect of Liberal Values on Affective Reactions



Graph 2: Interaction effect of Liberal Values on Brand Image

DISCUSSION AND CONTRIBUTION

Current study aimed to make contributions to the field located in the intersection of social and commercial marketing. To test the effects of advertisements breaking harmful social norms compared to advertisements following and reinforcing existing harmful social norms regarding the beholder’s perception of the brand image, the Dual mediation model was applied. The overall results suggest that the beholders’ attitudes are often more positive towards advertisements including norm-breaking elements than towards those that do not, but that the attitudes differ when the beholder’s level of liberal values is considered. No significant results were found for *cognitive responses*

towards the advertisements, neither in terms of gender-roles (*H1a*) nor the family-picture (*H2a*). This indicates that the way respondents *think* about advertisements does not differ whether or not norm-breaking elements are included. Theory suggests that the contemporary society is characterised by a high level of education and pursuit of self-improvement, which is mirrored in people's negative reactions towards advertisements that are perceived as unwanted as well as in an increasingly ethical shopping behaviour (An & Kim, 2006; Burke & Edell, 1989; Bondrea & Stefanescu-Mihaila, 2014; Dahl et al., 2003; Manago et al., 2014; Rindell et al., 2013). Based on those aspects, this study hypothesised norm-breaking elements to have more positive effects on cognitive responses. Even though this hypothesis was not supported, the results indicated that an inclusion of norm-breaking elements has no negative effects either. Although cognitive responses could not support the theoretical assumption that norm-breaking ads should lead to more positive attitudes, *affective reactions* could. With statistical significance for both cases of gender-roles (*H1b*) and family-picture (*H2b*), the *emotions* evoked by norm-breaking ads turned out to be more positive than those evoked by norm-following ads. Since the Dual mediation model has identified both indirect and direct relationships between affective reactions toward an ad, overall attitudes towards a brand, and *behavioural actions* such as *purchase intent* (Karson & Fisher, 2005; MacKenzie et al., 1986), valuable input for current research can be gathered by implying that the affective reactions elicited from an advertisement are important to reach higher purchase intent. This study thereby suggests that norm-breaking advertisements could lead to higher levels of positive emotions compared to norm-following ads.

Behavioural action was in the current study measured as *purchase intent*, which is according to the Dual mediation model related to affective reactions (Karson & Fisher, 2005; MacKenzie et al., 1986). A positive relationship between those constructs was only observed for the gender-role advertisement (*H1c*), where statistical significance showed that the norm-breaking ad resulted in a higher purchase intention compared to the norm-following ad. This finding supports Dahl's et al. (2003) assumption that a violation of social norms positively influences consumers' behaviours. However, no support for this was found for the family-picture ad (*H2c*), which still does not indicate that norm-breaking advertisements have negative effects on purchase intent. With the Dual mediation model suggesting that positive affective reactions should lead to a higher level of purchase intent, as well as the fact that this applies for the gender-role ad, current study proposes that ad elements breaking harmful social norms could have positive effects on purchase intent, especially when it comes to gender-roles.

The Moderating Effect of Liberal Values

The level of liberal values held by the respondents divided the sample into two groups, which were thereupon referred to as liberals and non-liberals. Since theory suggests that liberal values could have an effect on the attitudes towards norm-

breaking advertisements (Brown & Henriquez, as cited in Costa et al., 2014), they were included in this study as a potential moderator. The results show that the theory was supported, since differences in attitudes could be observed both within and between the liberals and non-liberals.

By analysing the groups in terms of internal differences in their attitude towards the ads, interesting results appeared. In accordance with theory, overall attitudes for the liberal group were more positive towards both norm-breaking advertisements of gender-roles and family-picture compared to their norm-following counterparts. On the other hand, non-liberals also held more positive attitudes towards the gender-role ad, but held more negative attitudes towards the norm-breaking family-picture ad. The fact that non-liberals hold more positive attitudes towards the norm-breaking gender-roles ad could possibly be explained by the manipulation, which was perceived as stronger for the family-picture ad. These findings thereby support the theory that liberals are more tolerant, open-minded, and striving for equality (McTernan, 2014) by suggesting that liberals are having a more open and favourable approach towards advertisements that are more distinct in their violation of harmful social norms than non-liberals have.

The level of liberal values the participants hold was included so as to observe a potential interaction effect with advertisements breaking harmful social norms. No statistically significant results for the interaction were found for the gender-role ad (*H3*), which as mentioned could be explained by the weaker manipulation effect. However, the findings neither indicated that including norm-breaking elements in terms of gender-roles would have negative effects on attitudes. On the other hand, an interaction effect could be observed for advertisements using norm-breaking elements regarding the family-picture (*H4*). It appears that the inclusion of the level of liberal values has a positive moderating effect on attitudes towards the family-picture ad. Respondents in the liberal group seem to have more positive attitudes regarding both *affective reactions* and the *brand image*, compared to respondents in the non-liberal group. One possible explanation for those results might be that the contemporary society has not yet fully accepted homosexuality. This is observable in the number of harmful actions that are caused by external pressure from society. Legal and cultural barriers for homosexual couples to adopt (Steward Johnson, 2013) or even higher suicidal risk of homosexual people due to stress factors connected to self-identification and parental judgement are examples for such harmful actions (McDaniel et al., 2011; Harris, 2013; Skerrett et al., 2015). Non-liberals are in general holding values that are less favourable towards homosexuality, which could possibly influence their attitude towards the advertisement and brand (Brown & Henriquez, as cited in Costa et al., 2014; McTernan 2014). Overall, including elements in advertisements which break harmful social norms are perceived as more positive for people with higher levels of liberal values than for those with lower levels, when the degree of perceived social norm transgression increases.

Theoretical Implications

On a theoretical level, this study's major aim was to bring light to an unexplored research area placed in the intersection of social and commercial marketing. Combining theories from both fields gave rise to four hypotheses, which led to results with the potential to cross-contribute to the fields. From a social standpoint, an understanding of how advertisements using stereotypes enhance harmful social norms and thereby harmful behaviour has provided theoretical implications to the commercial field. By including ethics into the design of advertisements by incorporating norm-breaking elements, social aspects were further brought into the commercial field. Measuring brand image by applying the Dual mediation model, which was originally developed for commercial purposes, commercial methods were in turn brought into the social field. As an outcome of the combined fields, this study led to results supporting present theories regarding consumers' changes in attitudes and their relationship towards advertisement (Bondrea & Stefanescu-Mihaila's, 2014; Manago's et al., 2014; Rindell's et al., 2013). The results also support theories about positive effects advertisements including norm-breaking elements can have on brand image (An & Kim, 2006; Burke & Edell, 1989; Dahl et al., 2003). Since the norm-breaking elements applied in prior research have been of extreme or cultural nature rather than incorporating ethics, this study can contribute by taking a social angle. By proving that advertisements breaking harmful social norms have the potential to bring commercial good, a cross-contribution to the social field is provided from knowledge gained by the usage of commercial methods. At last, this study also supports McTernan (2014) and Brown and Henriquez (as cited in Costa et al., 2013) arguments that different behaviour exists among liberals and non-liberals, by providing results showing that they perceive norm-breaking advertisements differently.

Practical Implications

Concerning commercial goals, designing advertisements which break harmful social norms could in many cases be beneficial, but in other cases damaging for the company. With respect to these findings, terminating the usage of stereotypes that enhance harmful social norms in advertisements seems to actually bring positive outcomes regarding affective reactions costumers elicit. These reactions are further proven to have positive effects on brand image, which includes purchase intent. In other words, commercial companies could stimulate profit by including norm-breaking elements. For commercial benefits, there is no proof that an inclusion of norm-breaking elements has neither positive nor negative effects on consumers' cognitive responses towards an ad. This means that including norm-breaking elements may not lead to positive effects in all aspects, but it does not seem to hurt the brand either. With advertisements' power to transgress social norms (Popa et al., 2014; Kotler, as cited in Dibbs & Carrigan, 2013; Wymer, 2010), commercial companies should consider the potential social good they can bring by excluding stereotypes without hurting commercial goals, which applies only if the target group is holding a higher level of liberal values.

These findings show that the target group's characteristics in terms of the liberal values they hold seem to play a significant role regarding how favourable they are towards norm-breaking advertisement. If the target group consists of liberals, norm-breaking advertisements could be designed, which could result in a stronger brand image, meanwhile for a target group of non-liberals the design could result in hurting the brand image followed by lower purchase intent. Important to highlight is that by designing norm-breaking advertisements, commercial companies could contribute to a more accepted atmosphere towards currently unaccepted scenarios. An example therefore is homosexuality, for which advertisements could change the stereotyped construction of what a normal family should look like. For commercial goals, these actions might initially be harmful if the target group consists of non-liberals, but with an increasing interest in education among the population, this could change. In addition, with advertisements' power to educate people by transgressing social norms (Kotler, as cited in Dibbs & Carrigan, 2013; Wymer, 2010) and by being exposed to the norm-breaking advertisement, non-liberals could change their attitudes towards the promoted norm-breaking phenomenon. This change in attitude is likely to result in a more favourable attitude towards the advertisement. Over time, commercial and social advantages could thereby be gained simultaneously.

Social Implications

As indicated above, transgressions of harmful social norms due to a changed communication sphere could in addition to commercial benefits for the company also bring social benefits. This assumption is based on the matter of fact that social norms guide people's behaviour (Paluck, 2009). By eliminating harmful behavioural outcomes resulting from integrating harmful stereotypes into the corporate communication, positive societal and individual behaviours can be stimulated (Kotler, as cited in Dibbs & Carrigan, 2013; Wymer, 2010).

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, the social construction of gender-roles has a number of harmful behaviours as an outcome, such as gender-based violence (Lundgren & Amin, 2015), depression among women (Priess et al., 2009), higher suicide rates among men (Pitman et al., 2012; Payne et al., 2007), and limitations in economic development (Hiller, 2014). The same accounts for social norms that contribute to the social construction of the traditional family, with legal and cultural barriers for homosexual couples to adopt (Steward Johnson, 2013), higher suicidal risk of homosexual people, and parental judgement (McDaniel et al., 2011; Harris, 2013; Skerrett et al., 2015) as outcomes. By designing norm-breaking advertisements, commercial companies could contribute to a social environment, in which deviations from stereotypes are no longer perceived as being deviations. By this, harmful behaviour as a result of currently existing harmful social norms will vanish and will thereby give space for an improved, less discriminative society to evolve.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this research are influenced by choices made concerning sample, experimental stimuli, independent variables, and underlying theory, leading to a number of limitations but also to a number of topics interesting for future research. Throughout the whole study, an assumption based on Kotler (as cited in Dibbs & Carrigan, 2013) and Wymer (2010) has been made regarding the power advertisements possess in terms of transgressing harmful social norms. This has not yet been empirically proven, which makes it highly interesting for future researchers to map how norm-breaking advertisement actually influence harmful social norms regarding behavioural change. Furthermore, the research generalizability is limited due to the sample exclusively persisting of students enrolled at one Swedish business school, leading to the results not being representative for the overall Swedish population. Also, recruiting students for the research sample can constitute results that might not have been created when using a broader population, since the evaluation of norm-breaking elements in advertisements might have been perceived differently in other samples. Moreover, providing the prospects with the possibility of self-recruitment could have led to biased results, since participants with higher interests in the topic might be over-represented and thus show stronger opinions. To enhance the representation of the results, a more diverse sample could be used in future research.

The advertisements were designed solely for the purpose of this study and were presented to the participants in form of two online experiments, which did not represent a natural environment. Being faced with one ad at a time and the inclusion of existing but unknown brands might have created rather unrealistic situations for the participants. More context-related brands and more applicable products for the participants' lives could be used in future research so as to enhance the validity of the study by creating stronger connections to the purchase situation. More than that, a stronger manipulation, especially in the design for the gender-role advertisements, could have led to more accurate results. In the family-picture advertisement on the other hand, it could be interesting to see how a homosexual male couple is perceived instead of the homosexual female couple.

One interesting finding was that the sample held positive attitudes towards norm-breaking advertisements regarding affective reactions but not concerning cognitive responses. The Dual mediation model suggests that cognitive responses are related to affective reactions, which did not seem to be the case. For future research, it could therefore be interesting to find out why people think differently about norm-breaking advertisements than they feel about them. Furthermore, liberals seem to be more favourable towards norm-breaking advertisements. Based on Brown and Henriquez (as cited in Costa et al., 2014), this study assumes that this could be related to level of education and intellect, but it would be an idea for future research to empirically find the cause. This study only tests short-term effects of norm-breaking ad elements on brand

image. Hence, it would be interesting to study long-term effects. Moreover, only two harmful social norms were chosen for this study and were only represented by one advertisement each. Further research could go deeper by choosing one harmful social norm exclusively and develop more than one representative ad. The effects the ad has on both a commercial level, such as cognitive, affective, and behavioural attitudes, and a social level, including attitudes and behaviour changes, could thereby be examined, either short-term only or even more interesting - over time.

However, this research area is very new, which is why it is difficult to find enough theoretical evidence to define and support accurate conclusions. More in-depth analyses are needed in order to allow more accurate explanations and to identify potential prominent factors. This study is one of the first to contribute to this research field and aims to inspire researchers to get deeper into the topic. With additional and more profound knowledge, empirical evidence could hopefully be found to compose a strong foundation for the bridge that attempts to merge social and commercial marketing. Together, marketers from both fields will then be able to cross the bridge and thereby bring social aspects into the marketing mainstream.

CONCLUSION

Current paper tests the effects of advertisements breaking harmful social norms compared to advertisements following and reinforcing existing harmful social norms with regard to the beholder's perception of the brand image. The results suggest that attitudes towards a brand based on responses towards an advertisement are more positive if it includes norm-breaking elements. This was especially obvious for the advertisement breaking harmful social norms related to gender-roles, but was also detected for elements breaking harmful social norms regarding the picture of a traditional family. When including liberal values, results indicate that people with higher levels of liberal values are more favourable towards advertisements breaking social harmful norms than people with lower levels of liberal values. Overall, the results suggest that commercial companies can reach commercial success by including elements breaking harmful social norms in their advertisement, especially if the target group consist of liberal people.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Survey

1. Är du: *

Kvinna

Man

Annat, vänligen specificera:

2. Ditt födelseår: *

3. Din nuvarande studienivå: *

Bachelor

Magister

Master

Doktorand

Annan, vänligen specificera:

Del 1: Bebiskläder

Hills & Mills är en välkänd och global klädkedja som till ett lågt pris erbjuder varierande kollektioner för kvinnor, män, tonåringar, barn och nyfödda.

Du kommer snart att få se en annons vilken *Hills & Mills* använder sig av för att promota sina bebiskläder. Vidare kommer du bli ombedd att besvara ett antal frågor gällande denna annons samt *Hills & Mills* som varumärke.

När du besvarar dessa frågor ber vi dig komma ihåg att frågorna **inte** gäller produkten utan den annons du kommer att få se.



4. Känner du igen ovan varumärke? *

Ja

Nej

Del 1: Bebiskläder

Gratulerar till din nyfödda bebis! Men så svårt det är att föreställa sig den mängd av kläder det går åt med allt detta bajsande och kräkande. Det verkar som om du saknar tillräckligt med kläder för att alltid ha något rent att klä din bebis i när olyckan väl är framme. Du behöver helt enkelt fylla på garderoben med lite nya.

Var vänlig och kom ihåg att du befinner dig i detta scenario under följande del av undersökningen.



5. Min allmänna **uppfattning** om **annonsen** är att den är: *

Observera att frågan inte gäller produkten

1 2 3 4 5

väldigt innehållslös

väldigt upplysande

väldigt tvivelaktig

väldigt övertygande

väldigt meningslös

väldigt meningsfull

6. Jag **känner** att **annonsen** är: *

Observera att frågan inte gäller produkten

1 2 3 4 5

obehaglig

behaglig

negativ

positiv

opålitlig

pålitlig

frånstötande

tilltalande



7. Jag **anser** att **varumärket** är: *

Observera att frågan inte gäller produkten

1 2 3 4 5

låg kvalitativt

hög kvalitativt

reaktivt

proaktivt

8. Jag **känner** att **varumärket** är: *

Observera att frågan inte gäller produkten

1 2 3 4 5

frånstötande	tilltalande
värdelöst	värdefullt
oattraktivt	attraktivt
opålitligt	pålitligt

9. Efter att ha sett **annonsen**, **känner** du att du: *

Kom ihåg att du befinner dig i tidigare beskriven situation

Instämmer inte alls	Instämmer mestadels inte	Varken eller	Instämmer delvis	Instämmer helt
------------------------	--------------------------------	-----------------	---------------------	-------------------

...absolut **överväger** att köpa bebiskläder
från *Hills & Mills*

...definitivt **förväntar** dig att köpa bebiskläder
från *Hills & Mills*

...absolut **planerar** att köpa bebiskläder
från *Hills & Mills*



10. Jag **anser** att *Hills & Mills* **annons** är: *

Normbrytande betyder att annonsen inkluderar element vilka skiljer sig mot det förväntade eller traditionella i den marknad varumärket är verksamt.

Normföljande betyder att annonsen inkluderar element vilka **inte** skiljer sig mot det förväntade eller traditionella i den marknad varumärket är verksamt.

1 2 3 4 5

Normbrytande	Normföljande
--------------	--------------

Del 2: Kosttillskott

Arimidex Direct är ett välkänt globalt företag som under våren kommer lansera ett kosttillskott för ökad sexuell lust till personer i relationer där gnistan slocknat.

Du kommer snart att få se en annons vilken *Arimidex Direct* kommer att använda sig av i sin lanseringskampanj av kosttillskottet. Du kommer sedan bli ombedd att svara på ett antal frågor gällande annonsen samt varumärket.

När du besvarar dessa frågor ber vi dig komma ihåg att frågorna **inte** gäller produkten utan den annons du kommer att få se.

11. Känner du igen ovan varumärke? *

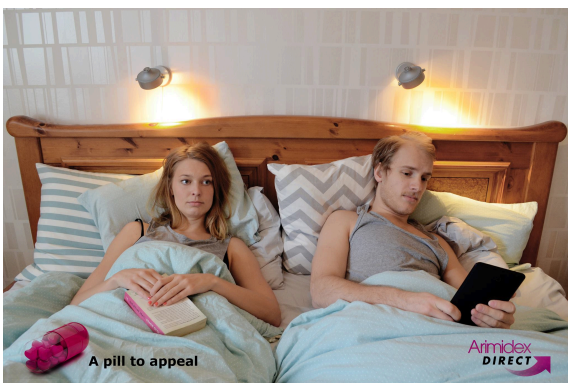
Ja

Nej

Del 2: Kosttillskott

Föreställ dig att du befinner dig i en kärleksrelation där dagarna av nyförälskelse samt känslan av att inte kunna hålla händerna ifrån varandra är över och har lämnat plats för rutiner. Med krävande arbeten och stressfulla liv i övrigt räcker inte energin och humöret till för att regelbundet uppmärksamma och visa ömhet för varandra. Du börjar med sorg frukta att er kärlekshistoria närmar sig ett slut.

Var vänlig och kom ihåg att du befinner dig i detta scenario under följande del av undersökningen.



12. Min allmänna **uppfattning** om **annonsen** är att den är: *

Observera att frågan inte gäller produkten

1 2 3 4 5

väldigt innehållslös

väldigt tvivelaktig

väldigt meningslös

väldigt upplysande

väldigt övertygande

väldigt meningsfull

13. Jag **känner** att **annonsen** är: *

Observera att frågan inte gäller produkten

1 2 3 4 5

obehaglig

negativ

opålitlig

frånstötande

behaglig

positiv

pålitlig

tilltalande



14. Jag anser att varumärket är: *

Observera att frågan inte gäller produkten

1 2 3 4 5

låg kvalitativt hög kvalitativt
 reaktivt proaktivt

15. Jag känner att varumärket är: *

Observera att frågan inte gäller produkten

1 2 3 4 5

frånstötande tilltalande
 värdelöst värdefullt
 oattraktivt attraktivt
 opålitligt pålitligt

16. Efter att ha sett annonsen, känner du att du: *

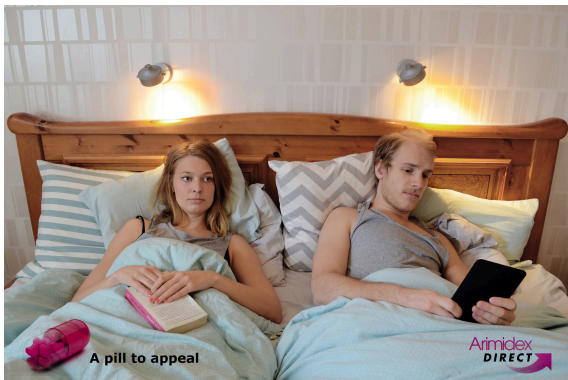
Kom ihåg att du befinner dig i tidigare beskriven situation

Instämmer inte alls Instämmer mestadels inte Varken eller Instämmer delvis Instämmer helt

...absolut **överväger** att köpa bebiskläder från *Hills & Mills*

...definitivt **förväntar** dig att köpa bebiskläder från *Hills & Mills*

...absolut **planerar** att köpa bebiskläder från *Hills & Mills*



17. Jag **anser** att *Arimidex Direct* **annons** är: *

Normbrytande betyder att annonsen inkluderar element vilka skiljer sig mot det förväntade eller traditionella i den marknad varumärket är verksamt.

Normföljande betyder att annonsen inkluderar element vilka **inte** skiljer sig mot det förväntade eller traditionella i den marknad varumärket är verksamt.

1 2 3 4 5

Normbrytande

Normföljande

18. Var vänlig att återge hur du ställer dig inför följande påståenden: *

Instämmer Instämmer Neutral Instämmer Instämmer
inte alls mestadels inte

Ett normalt kärlekspar innebär en relation mellan en man och en kvinna

Dagens invandrare är en börda för Sverige eftersom de tar våra jobb, bostäder och sjukvård

Olika etniska och religiösa bakgrunder berikar samhället

En riktig familj består av en mamma, en pappa och deras biologiska barn

Jag är medveten om att mina handlingar påverkar den globala uppvärmningen och jag känner ett ansvar för mina handlingar

Jämställdhet, män och kvinnors lika värde, har kommit långt nog som det ser ut idag

19. **Tack** så hemskt mycket för **ditt** deltagande!

Om du vill ha en chans att **vinna** en fikastund med någon du gillar, var vänlig och skriv din emailadress här: