Homosexual-themed Advertisement in Mainstream Media: Heterosexual Consumer's Attitude Toward the Brand and its Social Impact

LUND UNIVERSITY
School of Economics and Management

Edona Berisha & Mimmi Sjögren

Master Thesis 2016

BUSN39 Degree Project in Global Marketing

MSc in International Marketing and Brand Management

Abstract

Nowadays, consumers are daily exposed to an overflow of content in mainstream media. Many companies have developed a trend where they target different sexual orientations as separate segments in order to create a closer relationship to all consumers. However, when companies use homosexual themes in their advertising, it can be perceived as a sensitive area, especially when including minority groups. Although there are many beneficial reasons of implementing this marketing communication strategy, the number of heterosexual consumers in the mainstream audience is still significantly larger than the number of homosexual consumers, and their attitudinal response can have a big impact on for example the brand's profit. This purpose of this study is to create a deeper understanding of the heterosexual consumers' expressed thoughts and reactions toward homosexual-themed advertisements in mainstream media. Additionally, this study aims to examine if these responses influence heterosexual consumers' attitudes toward the brand, and if homosexual-themed advertisements have an impact on the society, from a consumer perspective. This study has a qualitative approach, with in-depth interviews performed in Sweden. As stimulus, we used three different homosexual-themed advertisements seen on mainstream television. Several common themes emerged and showed a significant importance when analysing the attitude towards the advertisements, brand and brands as social influencers in the society. Another thing that was apparent was that brands were viewed as either responsibility takers or non-responsibility takers. Our findings concern the degree of attitude toward homosexual-themed advertisement, when and if this strengthens the relationship with the brand and if the companies are seen as responsibility takers when implementing this strategy. The results in this study suggest that it is vital to get to know all segment groups as it can bring a lot of, either positive reactions or negative reactions. The result should be of a great use for practitioners that deal with this marketing communication strategy in order to maximize the effect of their marketing efforts. Finally, the findings of this study is not representative for a larger population.

Keywords: *homosexual-themed advertisement, consumer response, attitude, brand, diversity, social impact.*

Thank You

First of all, we would like to thank all of our interviewees: Alex, Ali, Bibbi, Charlie, Charlotte, Ditte, Emma, Kim, Olivia, Robin and Sammie for taking their time to share information with us. Without you, this thesis would not have been possible to complete.

Second of all, a great thank you to our supervisor, Anette Cerne, for the productive and stimulating meetings. You gave us constructive feedback, which was really appreciated.

Also a great thank you to our supporting families, who were always there and motivated us to work even harder.

Lund

2016-05-21

_____

Edona Berisha

_____

Mimmi Sjögren

Table of Content

1. Introduction Chapter

Monday afternoon, 7:19 pm. You are channel surfing with your partner next to you and you find yourselves watching a randomly selected channel. As a young, heterosexual person, you are quite fascinated by what you see on the TV, however you do not get all the things that are going on. The advertisement displayed on the TV screen comes to an end, and the logotype of Björn Borg appears. You are interested and amused to see this type of advertising appeal, which clearly does not remind of any other you have seen by the brand lately. You are confused because they do not have their regular fit models as they usually have in their advertising. How do you respond to the advertisement and brand now?

1.1 Introduction

Marketing communication is one of the most ultimate resource marketers have in the battle of the consumers. Lately, we have seen a lot of companies (e.g. Björn Borg) who look outward to communicate and take a stand on political and social issues in the society, such as minority groups (Osborn, 1999; Smith & Quelch, 1993; Elliott, 1990), due to the expanding diversity of the society (Peñaloza, 1996). As the social consciousness of today's consumers grow, social responsibility has become important in the modern society. However, the mindset of corporations performing any kind of social responsibility can be seen either from a "normative perspective"; they care for the people in which they do business and wish to do good things, or from a "business perspective"; for their own good (Schwartz & Archie, 2008). Thus, the purpose of some marketing communication is to help society into different directions and motivate people to act or think beyond the brand or product (Osborn, 1999; Smith & Quelch, 1993; Elliott, 1990). Companies can take a stand by sticking its neck out, adding fuel to a cause, and by doing so challenging the market and society. It is about taking an accurate read of the pulse of today's society. The companies are telling their customers that they are willing to take a stand, and want the consumers to do it with them.

In the modern society, one type of minority group that are getting more attention than ever before, both legally and in media are the sexual minority groups; lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender, also called LGTB (Chasin, 2000; Glockman and Reed, 1997). Pride parades are arranged more often across the entire world and when same-sex marriage was legalized in USA

it was a huge event in the world (The Guardian, 2015). Just as companies target different demographic segments such as ethnicity, age, gender, a trend has developed targeting sexual orientation as a segment (Gardyn, 2011). Thus, corporations are finally taking a step into the present day, showing advertisements featuring not only successful, white, middle-aged men or pictures of the typical nuclear family, which is the reflection of today's society. This trend also reflects the growing acceptance and support toward LGBT rights which shows a wider diversity and citizen engagement among the corporations. In other words, this has led to a raised bar for the advertising industry (Armstrong, 1997). This study is researching the phenomenon homosexual-themed advertisement, an ongoing trend in the field of marketing communication. A short background of the growing trend will be presented along with a discussion why this phenomenon in today's society is an interesting area to investigate from a consumer perspective.

1.2 Background of Homosexual-Themed Advertisement

In many years, advertisers avoided homosexual-themed media because of its unattractive image (Fugate, 1993). However, this changed in the late 1980s where the origin of feature sexual minorities in advertising and particularly homosexuals appeared. The gay community was discovered to be an attractive market segment with gay male couple as the ultimate consumer, with a double income and no children, also known as "guppies". As a result, companies started to produce advertisements featuring gay figures. Initially, homosexual-themed advertisements were shown in "gay publications" aiming at the gay community and avoiding the mainstream media (Hester & Gibson, 2007).

In 1994, the Swedish retailer IKEA laid the groundwork for homosexual-themed advertisement in mainstream television. The company provided a positive representation of homosexuals, portraying homosexuals as "normal folks". The advertisement featured a homosexual couple shopping for a table together, and was the first advertisement to "openly portray" homosexuals (Wardlow, 1996; Borgerson et al., 2006; Um et al., 2015). It became worldwide news, and was the beginning of a new era. Sexual minorities became more visible in media and major companies such as Miller, Coors, Absolut, Ford, Toyota, Subaru, American Express, The Gap, and Banana Republic started to actively target homosexuals in print advertising (Hester & Gibson, 2007). According to Oakenfull and Greenlee (2005) homosexual consumers support the portray of homosexuals in mainstream media and view the marketer's decision as an

approval and endorsement of the homosexual social movement. Later on, companies such as, IKEA, Calvin Klein, and Benetton, took a step further in homosexual-themed advertising and started focusing on a more general audience (Bhat et al., 1998). Today, companies are not only targeting the gay community with advertisement featuring homosexuals, but also the non-homosexual market in mainstream media. One strategy is to attract and reach out to a larger group of consumers named "slumpies", which according to Hester and Gibson (2007), stands for professionals, with disposable income, that are urban-minded and socially liberal.

There are possible reasons of why homosexuals are being more and more portrayed in advertisements in today's society. First of all, it could be because the companies want to break through the clutter with an advertising theme that consumers are not used to see (Kotler & Keller, 2012). They want to be seen as edgy, trendy and honest, much like a good society citizen and therefore want to be seen as great supporters of the social movement (Fortin & Uncles, 2011). According to Oakenfull & Greenlee (2005), companies can gain from the goodwill of homosexual consumers longing for acceptance in society. It is possible that homosexual consumers feel that the companies featuring homosexuals in mainstream advertising have a greater support for the the social movement. Secondly, the companies that use this type of advertising are also likely to achieve a higher market visibility and gain bigger market shares at the cost of rivals that are not involved in any type of social responsibility (Nicholson, 1999). This could make the company seem more attractive for both potential investors and potential customers, especially those with ethical or social interests.

Loyalty is another possible reason and according to Smith and Malone (2003), homosexual consumers tend to be loyal toward a brand that communicate directly to them. Today, major companies are trying to target this potential loyalty by being more "gay-friendly" (Um et al., 2015). Finally, homosexual consumers have emerged as a market of considerable spending power, as mentioned before, which could be both an attractive and valuable target segment for the marketers (Oakenfull et al., 2008). In 1991, the gay community was referred to as "a dream market" in an article in Wall Street Journal (AdRespect Advertising Education Program, 2015). However, although the homosexual consumers seem beneficial to segment as a marketer, the number of heterosexual consumers in the mainstream audience is significantly larger than the homosexual consumers and their attitudinal response can have a big impact on the brand's image, profit etc. In addition, previous studies has shown that heterosexual consumers are not ready to welcome homosexuals into the mainstream media society (e.g. Bhat

et al., 1998; Hester & Gibson, 2007; Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2005). As a result of this, some companies worry about potential backlashes or boycotts from consumers and organisations that don't support homosexual causes (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

1.3 Problem Discussion

There are many different reasons why corporations in today's society choose to promote their products, services, and brands using homosexual-themed advertisement. However, the marketing strategy where minority groups are used carries real economic and social risks (Swisher, 1990) and according to Hester and Gibson (2007) it probably have stronger effect on the public opinion in comparison to other types of mass media. Assessing the risk before committing anything is something that many marketers want to do. Marketers want to be able to measure the potential of negative or positive attitudinal outcomes from the consumers as it has a huge impact on their profit (Fugate, 1993). Communication effects happens in the mind of the consumers and depends on how the audience respond to the communication message. Marketers strive at provoking positive and persuasive responses of the consumers (Frunză, 2015; Dahlén & Lange, 2011). Therefore, it is of importance for marketers to have knowledge of how consumers respond to their advertising, such as homosexual-themed advertisement. Thus, if the advertisement does not bring a positive outcome in consumer responses, it is not an effective marketing communication, and the marketing strategy may be refocused. This study will focus on how the consumer of the advertising in mainstream media respond to this type of advertisement.

According to Peñaloza (1996) the diversity of the nation's population is expanding. Therefore, marketers have given more attention to consumer groupings and as a result, target marketing has become even more important within today's marketing strategy. Target marketing only refers to a similar group of potential customers with somewhat same needs or characteristics (Kotler et al., 1991). When marketers create targeted advertisements, the market is divided into different segments due to meaningful variables (Aaker et al., 2000). One of these variables is "viewer distinctiveness", which refers to a numerically rare group (McGuire, 1984; McGuire et al., 1979) such as sexual minority groups. As discussed before, there are several reasons to target the homosexual segment, as with any segment. Companies that are niched and in particular want to attract homosexual consumers, have several channels for an efficient targeting, such as "gay magazines". However, companies also use homosexual-themed

advertisement in mainstream media, which is a broader media constructed of people with different sexual orientations. In this study, we found it interesting to study how heterosexual consumers respond to marketing featuring homosexuals in mainstream media. According to Miller (1995), there are a lot of marketers that emphasise that they are concerned when it comes to target marketing, for example when addressing marketplace diversity. Handling several markets at the same time comes with strategic complications for those marketers who try to target multiple segments all at once. One example is when more and more marketers start producing appeals for the market of homosexuals, it can risk alienate heterosexual consumers. Due to the fact that the number of heterosexual consumers in the mainstream audience is significantly larger than homosexual consumers, it is crucial to understand how a sexual majority group, the heterosexual consumers, respond and react to advertising featuring a sexual minority, in this case homosexuals. The heterosexual consumers are consumers of the advertising, potential customers to the company and the brand, and a big part of the whole target market. If these consumers do not support the company's marketing communication, it could backlash and the consumers might distance themselves from the company.

Advertising are stories about and for people who consume the products and the advertisements (Frunză, 2015). Marketers "intended meaning" is to provoke positive responses through their stories. These are not always the same as the consumer's "actualized meaning", meaning how the consumers interpret the story (Douglas & Craig 1997; Star 1989; Wilke 1997). Since previous research (e.g. Bhat et al., 1998; Hester & Gibson, 2007; Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2005) has shown that heterosexual consumers are not ready to welcome homosexuals into the mainstream media society, and that they prefer heterosexual portrayals in advertising, it is reasonable to assume that heterosexual consumers do not feel bonded to this type of advertising nor can they identify themselves with the portrayals (Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999; Aaker et al., 2000). Therefore, it is important to know what consequences it gives to the brand or company behind the advertisement, in terms of attitude, beliefs, and associations and why these emerge. It is important for the marketers to have this knowledge before running such advertising in mainstream media and produce a possible backlash from the heterosexual consumers. Moreover, the attitude toward the advertisement has proven to be one of the significant drivers of advertising effectiveness (Haley & Baldinger, 2000; Brown & Stayman, 1992) and is strongly related to the consumer's attitude toward the brand (Batra & Ray, 1986; Holbrook & Batra, 1987; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989).

Since mainstream advertising is a part of the consumer's daily communication, it can be seen as an explanation system of reality (Frunză, 2015; Gross 1994). According to several psychological and social studies (e.g. Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Aronson, 2011; Gross, 1991) media and advertising can be expected to change attitudes and beliefs in the mind of the consumer. Various authors (e.g Lafky et al., 1996; McArthur & Resko, 1975) agree on the fact that media is a modern way to express cultural ideals and voice concern about what generations in the future will capture from these types of depictions. Therefore, it is of interest to research how homosexual-themed advertisement can have an impact on the society from a consumer perspective. This study will therefore focus on big, national companies that use mass communication, since they have a big influence on society and social responsibility (Calzo & Ward, 2009).

Historically, heterosexual consumers have reacted mostly negatively toward homosexual-themed advertisement (Elliott & Elliott, 2005; Bhat et al., 1998; Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2005; Hester & Gibson, 2007), but still the trend is growing. The social climate is constantly changing and our society is becoming more and more liberal and accepting of cultural and social differences. Shifts in cultural trends and changes in social norms during the past decade have challenged traditional terms such as how a family is constructed (Houston, 2004). Regarding homosexuals there has been much political and social change since Bhat et al. (1998) and Hester and Gibson (2007) conducted their studies of attitude toward homosexual-themed advertisements and brands. For instance, same-sex marriage was not legal in big parts of the world and pride festivals where less common than it is today. Therefore, this study is highly relevant in time. In concern to cultural changes and norms, there are also geographical and cultural differences to take into account. According to Hofstede (1984), there are different dimensions in the cultural system that differ from country to country. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that ideas of sexual orientations and diversity differ from country to country. Moreover, the majority of previous research about consumer response to homosexual-themed advertisement (e.g. Bhat et al., 1998; Hester & Gibson, 2007; Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005; Oakenfull et al., 2008) has been conducted in North America, United States, which differs from Europe and in particular Sweden both geographically and culturally. For instance, looking at the legal aspects, such as same-sex marriage, it took place in United States six years after it became legal in Sweden (Sveriges Radio, 2009; The Guardian, 2015). Thus, this study is limited to Swedish heterosexual, consumers and their responses to national companies and brands featuring homosexuals in mainstream advertising.

In addition, previous studies (Hester & Gibson, 2007; Bhat et al., 1998; Oakenfull et al., 2008; Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2005) have examined manipulated, printed advertisement and imagery. As a result of that, this study will take on the interesting aspect, namely how the consumers respond to already established, non-manipulated advertising that they are being exposed to in their everyday life. In this way, chances of getting more reflected and reality based expressed feelings and thoughts toward the advertisement will be higher. Moreover, the attitudes have previously been measured by differential scales in a quantitative nature, and few previous studies have deeply analysed how the heterosexual consumer react to this kind of advertising. This study responds to the research gap by focusing on creating an understanding of the consumers' deeper thoughts and feelings of this specific research area in order to better understand if, how, and why the marketing strategy should be refocused and what impact it can have on the society.

In conclusion, this research join previous research that question how advertising influence society in respect to psychological theories (Gerbner et al., 2002, Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Calzo & Ward, 2009; Frunză, 2015; Gross, 1994), how a majority group respond and evaluate advertisements portraying a minority group, from a "target" or "non-target" consumer perspective (Grier and Brumbaugh 1999; Aaker et al., 2000; Elliott & Elliott, 2005) looking at homosexual stereotypes in advertising (Dines and Humez 1994; Chasin 2000; Glockman and Reed 1997; Borgerson et al., 2006; Calzo and Ward, 2009; Herek et al., 2005) within the general context of homosexual-themed advertisement (Bhat et al., 1998, Hester & Gibson, 2007; Oakenfull et al., 2008). From a theoretical perspective, investigating the heterosexual consumers' different attitudinal responses can result in a much greater understanding of the full range of responses to persuasive appeals. On the other side and from a more practical perspective, analysing the heterosexual consumers' responses to advertising featuring another sexual segment, sheds insight on how to best manage several segments in an increasingly behaviourally complex and diverse marketplace, which has shown to be difficult.

1.4 Research Question

In this study, there are three questions within the field of homosexual-themed advertisement that we wish to answer. The first question is our main question and by answering this one, we wish to answer two additional questions of how the consumers' responses influence the brand and the society. Thus, these two additional questions should be seen as sub-questions.

- *How do heterosexual consumers respond to homosexual-themed advertisements in mainstream media?*
  - *How do these reactions influence the consumers' attitudes toward the brand?*
  - *How can homosexual-themed advertisements influence the society?*

1.5 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to create a deeper understanding of the heterosexual consumers' expressed thoughts and reactions toward homosexual-themed advertisements in mainstream media. Additionally, this study aims to examine if these responses influence heterosexual consumers' attitudes toward the brand, and if homosexual-themed advertisements have an impact on the society, from a consumer perspective.

1.6 Chapter overview

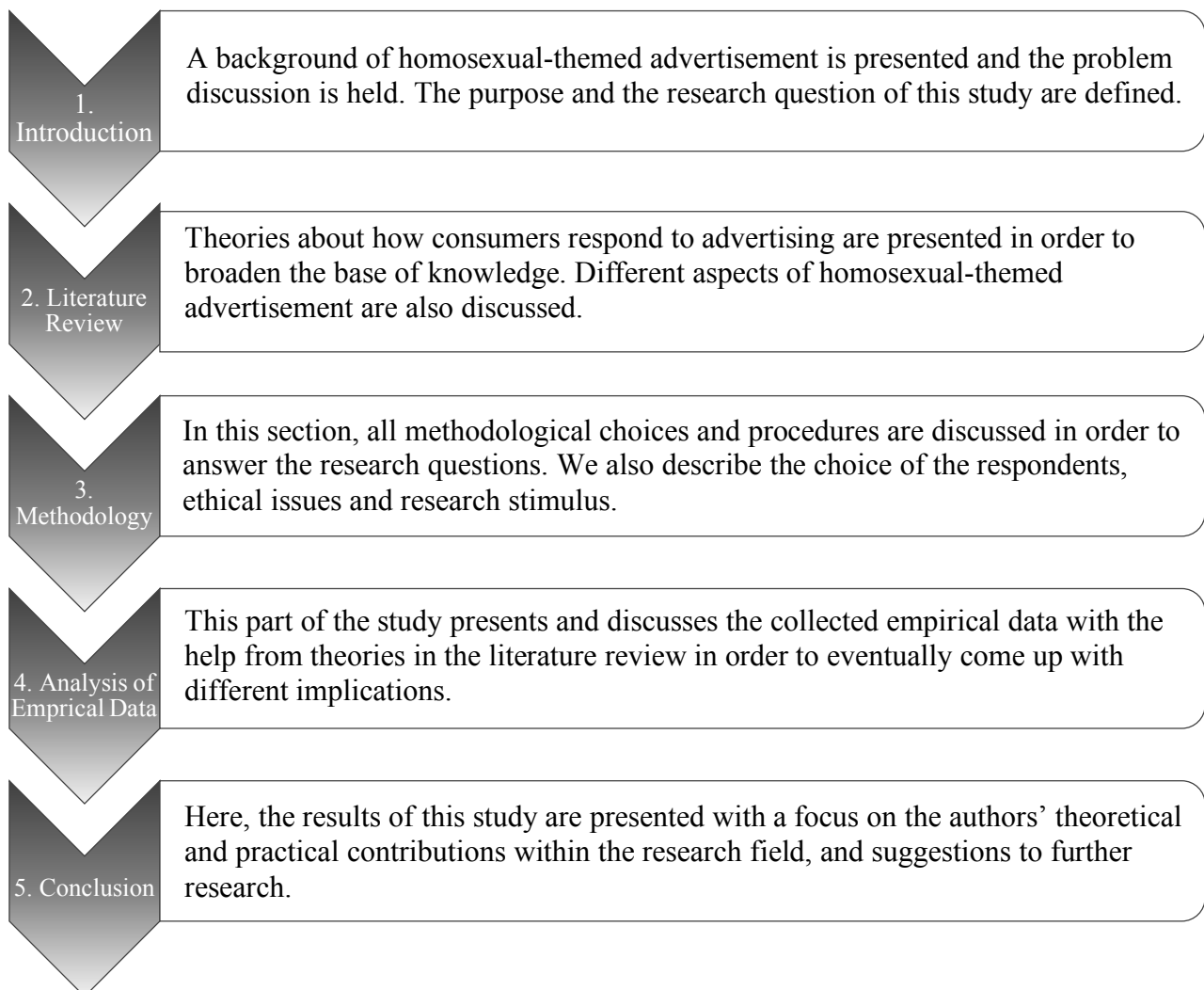|	
1. Introduction	A background of homosexual-themed advertisement is presented and the problem discussion is held. The purpose and the research question of this study are defined.
2. Literature Review	Theories about how consumers respond to advertising are presented in order to broaden the base of knowledge. Different aspects of homosexual-themed advertisement are also discussed.
3. Methodology	In this section, all methodological choices and procedures are discussed in order to answer the research questions. We also describe the choice of the respondents, ethical issues and research stimulus.
4. Analysis of Emprical Data	This part of the study presents and discusses the collected empirical data with the help from theories in the literature review in order to eventually come up with different implications.
5. Conclusion	Here, the results of this study are presented with a focus on the authors' theoretical and practical contributions within the research field, and suggestions to further research.

Image 1: Chapter overview

2. Literature review

2.1 Choice of Theory

Due to the purpose of this study, we have chosen to mostly focus on theories from consumer research, psychological research, advertising research, and marketing research to better understand what aspects that influence people's response to advertisement. Bhat et al. (1998), points out that consumer response toward advertising often is assumed to be homogeneous, which is a far from true. Evidence show that the individual consumers process information of an advertisement differently. We will present theories of what aspects that can influence consumer response in a more general context, such as marketing communication strategies, previous knowledge and associations of a brand, investment and interest in the message, belongingness to a group in terms of "target" and "non-target" consumer, and the consumer's self-concept. We have also chosen to present findings from previous studies within the field of homosexual-themed advertisement, and looked at the factors that have been proven to influence the consumer's response to homosexual-themed advertisement. Examples of these factors are the attitude toward homosexuality and how corporations portray homosexuals in advertisements. To better understand "attitude toward advertisement" and "attitude toward brand", these concepts will also be defined and discussed.

2.2 Consumer Response to Marketing Communication

According to Keller (2007), the purpose of marketing communication is to improve the brand's current situation and that the marketing communication should lead to reached brand awareness among the consumers. The marketing communication process is basically when the sender sends a message that the receiver later responds to (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Advertisements are designed to promote a message of what the brand stands for, create associations to the brand, create an unique image and persuade consumers to purchase a product or service (Frunză, 2015).

According to Kotler and Keller (2012), the consumer response could be either cognitive, rational, or emotional and bring up different kind of feelings. For instance, the brand could make the consumer feel proudness or disgust. The consumer response is an outcome of what kind of different message strategies the sender uses; informational or transformational. The

informational appeal elaborates on the attributes of the product or service to either create brand awareness or knowledge of the products. This strategy assumes that the perceiver uses rational processing on the communication. The transformational strategy elaborates more on the image of the brand and is often non product related. This attempt to bring up emotions and finally motivate the consumer's purchase.

Klein (2010), discusses the advertising trend where much of the contemporary advertising deliberately choose to eliminate products and instead focus on the symbolic connections. According to Tinic (1997), Benetton was one of the first brands to purposefully use advertising without involving its products, only their logotype. Benetton challenged the controversy using provocative campaigns with strong images to highlight political and social issues. According to Dahlén and Lange (2011), consumers respond less positively when companies support activities that have no links or connections to the brand, even though the intentions and activities might be good. The consumers can even become suspicious to the activity or engagement when it is difficult to see the cause of it. Except for the informational and transformational appeals, there are other aspects that influence how consumer respond to advertising. These will be presented below.

2.2.1 Prior Knowledge and Association to Brands

The consumer's knowledge of a brand affects how the marketing communication is perceived. Everything about the brand that is already known affect how the consumers perceive the brand's advertising. Marketing communication for a well-established and well-known brand is under other conditions than the marketing communication for an unknown brand. An identical advertisement is perceived differently if the initial knowledge varies. If the consumers have a positive feeling toward a known brand in beforehand, it is more likely that the attention and elaboration of the brand's advertising increases. Contradictory, the marketing communication for an unknown brand is risking to be unnoticed by the consumers (Dahlén & Lange, 2011).

This can be explained by Kotler and Keller (2012), as an Association Memory Model where a person's association memory can be compared to a set of links that stores information connections to a brand. Information that can be stored in the memory is verbal, visual or contextual information. Thus, the strength of an association link will be important in which kind of information a person can recall about a brand. Brand associations are all kind of brand

related thoughts such as feelings, images, experiences, that can be linked to the brand (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

As discussed, marketing communication is seen as a tool for companies to get the consumers to purchase its products or services. However, the purpose of marketing communication can in addition be about attitude and behavioural changes in social issues (Dahlén & Lange, 2011).

2.2.2 Involvement and Interest in the Message

In order to understand whether consumers like or dislike an advertisement or a brand, we need to understand the consumer's cognitive process when receiving a message from the sender. Petty and Cacioppo (1985; 1986), suggest an explanation model, Elaboration Likelihood Model, in order to understand how people process the message and respond to it differently depending on their interest and investment in the information. According to this model, a person starts to interpret the message as soon as it is perceived from the sender. Later on, depending on the receiver's interest and ability to analyse and elaborate the message, the persuasion can be achieved through either of two process routes in the mind of the receiver; the central route or the peripheral route.

Whether the perceiver of the message take on the central or peripheral route, is determined by two main factors; motivation and ability. Motivation means that the perceiver further wants to analyse the message, which is correlated to their personal relevance and involvement in the message being presented. Ability refers to how capable and interested the receiver is to interpret and analyse the message. If both the motivation and ability is high, the receiver will take the central process route and if these factors are low, the peripheral route will be processed (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979; Petty et al., 1976). The central route tends to last longer and profound persuasion (Griffin, 2012). Regardless what process route the receiver takes on, it will lead to a final opinion and attitude toward the message (Cacioppo & Petty, 1985; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). It is reasonable to assume that the central route will be processed and the persuasion in the message will be more effective if the information in homosexual-themed advertisement is more relevant to the consumer. For instance, if a consumer think it is important with diversity in advertisements, they might experience the advertisement as more relevant to them.

2.2.3 Visual Marketing Communication

When sending out a message in advertising there are many different types of visual communication channels a company can use, such as television or magazines. The different types of communication have been proven to differ when it comes to persuasiveness. Visual communication is intentional communication that is being relied on the visual presentation of textual information and images (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011). Images have long been known for having more power than words when it comes to attitude change and formation (Griffin, 2008). According to Griffin (2008), when it comes to message persuasiveness, images usually win out over speech or text. Visual messages are perceived holistically initially; further effort and inspection is required to process the components of each person, including words, one at a time (Dake, 2005). Thus, the first important thing in the communication process is the visual presentation, in order to gain interest and attention from the viewers. The viewers evaluate the visual messages they encounter daily, deciphering both the content and relationship between themselves, the visual, and other objects. The relationship between the viewer's interpretation of meaning and a message's visual design is complex (Rose, 2007).

Thus, words alone do not have the same efficient and effective power as visual representations (Trumbo, 1999). Images have the power to communicate beyond the abilities of text by contributing with an immediate visceral understanding, which is not possible with only text (Green & Myers, 2010). Visuals can convey cognitive and affective information at a glance by eliciting emotional cues and presenting implicit comparisons, correlations, or associations (Barry, 1997). Visual references make it possible for the viewer to transcend the constraints of language for meaning interpretation when conveying abstract scientific concepts (Trumbo, 1999, 2000). It is likely that the decisions for elaboration are influenced by the visual presentation of a message design. Accordingly, it is expected that the elaboration will be greater when messages are visual than if they would be text-based.

2.3 Attitude

Attitude has been a vital concept in the research of marketing since 1960s, and is an internal evaluation of an object. There are several definitions of attitude (e.g. Hoyer and MacInnis, 1997, 2001; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), and Kotler and Keller (2012) define it as "a person's enduring favourable or unfavourable evaluations, emotional feelings, and action tendencies toward some object or idea" (p.190). Attitude could be general, lasting feelings for individuals, issues, ideas,

objects or advertisements. Attitude object is commonly known as the object which individuals hold an attitude toward (Byron et al. 1974). One of the main reasons why attitude remains interesting from a marketer perspective is because attitudes are relatively stable and enduring predisposition for individuals to act in a certain way (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Attitude is thus a suitable predictor of the purchasing behaviour of consumers (Oskamp, 1997). Since the final goal in effective marketing communication is to persuade the consumer to purchase (Kotler & Keller, 2012), knowledge of consumer attitude is crucial for marketers. Attitude is a topic that has been well-discussed within marketing research, questioning what attitude has an influence on the effectiveness of advertising (Fabriguar and Petty, 1999; Zhang and Buda, 1999).

2.3.1 Attitude Formation

Attitudes are generally known to be constituted by following aspects; the cognitive, the affective, and the conative components (Ray et al., 1973). Several previous studies (Gresham and Shimp 1985; Hill and Mazis 1986) that have investigated consumers' attitudes toward advertisements have adopted Shimp's (1981) perspective of two components; the cognitive and affective. The definitions of cognitive and affective attitude have according to Barry & Howard (1990), progressed with the years and cognitions are today referred to the brain's activity that defines individual's beliefs toward attitude objects. Affect, on the other hand, has gained a meaning of the emotions that individuals gain toward attitude objects. Knowing when the cognitive or affective response comes first is another criticism against this model, as it is difficult to know. The fact that the difference between the cognitive and affective is decided on a fraction of a second, it should be considered whether or not it is something that should have a difference in the final outcome (Barry & Howard, 1990).

In the field of homosexual-themed advertisement, a few studies have examined the emotional and attitudinal responses toward the brand behind the homosexual-themed advertisement, and it has been proven that attitude toward homosexuality influence the attitude toward the advertisement (e.g. Bhat et al., 1998; Hester and Gibson, 2007).

2.3.2 The Consumer's Attitude Toward Homosexuality

Bhat et al. (1998) were pioneers in conducting a study within the field of homosexual-themed advertisement and predicted that a person's attitude toward homosexuality would interact with homosexual-themed stimulus to strongly affect emotional responses to the advertisement. The

result of this study indicated that a person's general attitude toward homosexuality affected one's attitude toward the advertisement and the brand. Furthermore, if the consumers were not tolerant or accepting of homosexuality, they had a lower endorsement level and stronger negative emotional and attitudinal responses toward the advertisement itself and toward the brand. In addition, heterosexuals showed to be less favourable toward advertising depicting homosexuality than to advertising depicting heterosexuality (Bhat et al., 1998). In 2007, Hester and Gibson conducted an additional research to the same area as Bhat et al (1998). The overall findings, supported the results of Bhat et al. (1998) study. However, Hester and Gibson (2007) also found that those consumers who were more accepting of homosexuality showed even higher endorsement and more positive attitudes toward brands after being exposed to their homosexual-themed advertisements.

The attitude toward homosexuality has been shown to be varying depending on different demographic dimensions, gender orientation and political orientation (e.g., Herek, 2002; Strand, 1998). According to Hester and Gibson (2007), there are gender differences in emotional responses to homosexual-themed advertising. Females are found to be more tolerant of homosexuality than males. According to Elliot and Elliot (2005), advertising portraying homosexual men, were perceived of heterosexual men as being "too feminine", "too overtly sexual", "not manly enough" or "gay". The men reacted by not wanting to look at the photographs, flipping the advertisements over, swearing or making jokes. This was seen as expressed overt homophobia and an example of consumers who have no favourable attitude toward homosexuality (Elliott and Elliott, 2005). Additionally, the sex of those models who are being portrayed as homosexuals also have a significant effect on the attitude toward the advertisement. Heterosexual consumers tend to have a more positive response to lesbians than they have to gay males (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005).

2.3.3 Attitude Toward Advertisements and Brands

Attitude toward advertisement is explained as a tendency to react in an either favourable or unfavourable manner to a certain advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion (MacKenzie & Lutz 1989; Burke & Edell, 1989; Biehal et al., 1992, Lutz, 1985). A great number of empirical studies have found that the attitude toward brands is one of the most significant drivers of advertising effectiveness (Haley & Baldinger, 2000; Brown & Stayman, 1992), and that the attitude toward advertisement is strongly correlated with attitude toward the

brand (Batra & Ray, 1986; Holbrook & Batra, 1987; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Park and Young 1986; Gardner 1985; Lutz et al., 1983; MacKenzie et al., 1986; Mitchell 1986; Mitchell & Olson 1981; Moore and Hutchinson 1983; Haley & Balinger, 2000). The attitude toward a brand is defined as the tendency to respond in a positive or negative manner to a specific brand after the exposure of advertising stimulus (Phelps & Hoy, 1996).

The relationship between the attitude toward advertisements and attitude toward brands may be affected by the messages in advertisements, particularly if the consumers are not familiar with the brand behind the advertisement due to lack of prior knowledge on which to base the evaluation of their attitude toward brands. Thus, the consumers are more inclined to rely on their attitude toward advertisements when forming their attitude toward a brand. Those consumers that have established familiarity for brands, by contrast, are more inclined to fall back on existing knowledge about the brand, lowering the possibility of being influenced by attitude toward certain advertisement. This is why the effect of the attitude toward advertising on brand evaluations should be of a lower level when the advertisement is for a familiar brand rather than for an unfamiliar (Machleit & Wilson, 1988; Machleit & Allen, 1990; Campbell & Keller, 2003). According to Meuhling and Laczniak (1988), the consumer's brand beliefs influence the attitude toward brands if the consumer was involved in the message, which is in accordance with the Elaboration Likelihood Model earlier discussed. The authors found that this relationship had a positive correlation even a week after being exposed to the advertisement. Thus, it is likely that the central process route has been taken. Moreover, if the consumers were not involved with the message, already existing brand beliefs became irrelevant after viewing the advertisement. Thus, this shows that existing brand beliefs are significant for the perception of the brand.

2.4 Advertising Construct the Reality

Today, advertising is a global phenomenon that has an important influence on commercial communication, but also on political or intercultural communication. Since advertising is a part of consumers' daily communication, it has a crucial impact on society. Mainstream media, such as television, has a significant influence on forming and reforming social attitudes of the general public, as it is a major source of sexuality information (Calzo & Ward, 2009). Advertising works as an explanation system of reality (Frunză, 2015; Gross 1994). If a marketer decides to limit or even ban the representation of minority groups, such as homosexuals, they are not a

part of nor represented in the "reality" constructed for the consumers. Gross (1994) further argue that "those who are at the bottom of the various power hierarchies will be kept in their place in part through their relative invisibility; this is a form of symbolic annihilation. When groups or perspectives do attain visibility, the manner of that representation will reflect the biases and interests of those elites who define the public agenda" (p.143).

In accordance with the cultivation theory, television can influence heterosexual mainstream viewers, who can come to believe that what they see on television actually represents the real world, whether it is true or not. What viewers believe is the real world can reflect upon their attitude and beliefs (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner et al., 2002). To connect this theory with the symbolic annihilation discussed by Gross (1994), the absence of featuring homosexuals in advertising could affect the viewers to believe that this minority group is rare or abnormal out in the real world. Some goes for stereotypes, if advertisement featuring homosexuals in a certain way it will reflect what people believe is real.

2.4.1 Attitude Change Toward Homosexuality

Drawing on the cultivation theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner et al., 2002), it is reasonable to assume that people's attitude toward homosexuality can change if they are experiencing exposure of advertisement featuring homosexuals. Gross (1991) argue that frequent and regular media consumption can be expected to change or cultivate beliefs and attitudes toward homosexuality coincided with the picture portrayed in media. If negative stereotypes are leading in the consumed media, regular exposure could affect the viewers in a negative way and people can be less accepting and start to accept the unfavourable portrayals. However, due to recent trends showing more diversity and more positive portrayals of different minority groups (Calzo and Ward, 2009), it is possible that such shift may change current stereotypes and make associations and attitudes toward homosexuality more positive.

Another cognitive psychological theory that can have an impact on the attitude toward homosexuality in the media context is the priming theory. Individuals use heuristics to evaluate attitude objects, which can be explained as shortcuts in the memory in order to find the most accessible information (e.g. Valenzuela, 2009; Cialdini, 2005). According to McNamara (1994) priming appears "because the cue to memory includes the target item and elements of the context in which the item occurs" (p. 507). Aronson (2011), points out that media and

advertising in accordance with the priming effect, stimulate related thoughts in the mind of the consumer and has a great influence. Furthermore, priming is often used in certain issues, attempting to make the issue more salient in the consumer's mind. The goal is to alter the components people take into consideration when making judgments. Subsequently, it influences the attitude and behaviour (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Aronson (2011), argue about the priming effects' importance by using a simple example; if there are many important issues concerning education in media, people will think of education as something important once it is time to vote in the coming political election.

How intense and recent the priming event was, influenced the strength of the priming effect on the consumer (Roskos-Ewoldsen et al, 2007). Potential priming could be pictures in magazines, news on TV or certain types of portrayals of homosexuality in advertising that people recently watched or received. When people are presented to stimulus, their minds are given signals to notice components and cues included in the information received, and find similar and related previous memory and experience (Ratcliff & McKoon, 1988). Therefore, the individual attitude toward homosexuality can be improved if a person is primed with e.g. positive associations to homosexual characters in television (Bond-Raacke et al., 2007). The priming effect indicates that media and advertising that portray homosexuals in a positive and diverse way are potential priming of attitude and can lead to a positive memory of homosexuals, and to a positive change of attitude toward homosexuality (Anderson, 1983). Priming people with different types of attributes associated with homosexuality, could lead to a wider, and more diverse network of associations for homosexuality as an attitude object.

2.5 Stereotypes of Homosexuals in Media

According to Kotler and Keller (2012), advertisers who want to "think outside the box" and design advertising that consumers are not used to see, need to be sure it does not overstep social and legal norms. Hence, it is important that the portrayal of homosexuals do not exploit or offend people. Portrayals of homosexuals are more and more visible in mainstream media, but the media continues to draw upon a variety of negative and mistaken stereotypes and clichés of homosexuals, such as being highly educated, affluent, white homosexual professionals (Dines and Humez 1994; Chasin 2000; Glockman and Reed 1997; Borgerson et al., 2006; Calzo and Ward, 2009; Kates 1999; Herek et al., 2005). Other stereotypical characteristics that are being portrayed in media are that homosexuals have the purchase patterns and power associated with

the upper-class (Sender, 2006). Additionally, except from "being different", several stereotypes are emphasized and reinforced in some portrayals of homosexual characters on television, such as TV-shows. Examples of attribute that are often ascribed to homosexuals are immaturity and physical attractiveness (Fouts & Inch, 2005; Netzley, 2010).

Popular stereotypes have people to believe that sexual orientation and gender-typical characteristics go hand in hand. Some people tend to stereotype and believe that a woman is homosexual if she acts more like a man than the feminine norm. Conversely, if these people know a woman who is homosexual, they expect her to act more like the masculine norm than the feminine one. Similarly, this stereotypical pattern is the same for homosexual men, who are assumed to be more feminine (Groom & Pennebaker, 2005). Additionally, homosexual couples are often portrayed with one partner that is more masculine or athletic, while the other partner is portrayed with more feminine attributes (Ivory et al., 2009).

The formation of stereotypes is created through perceptual, often superficial differences between groups of people. People often see other people as members of different social groups, which will be discussed later, and the categorization procedure is therefore unavoidable since it reflects upon an individual's perceived reality (Rothbart et al., 1978; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994). The categorization of people and formation of stereotypes are often unknowingly (Hamilton & Sherman, 1994).

2.6 Implicit and Explicit Homosexual Advertising

According to previous researcher within the field of homosexual-themed advertisement there are different kinds of advertisement in terms of how homosexuality is being portrayed and how homosexuals are being targeted. These advertisements have been well discussed and are often divided into two categories; implicit and explicit homosexual advertising (e.g. Peñaloza, 1996; Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999; Bhat et al., 1998; Oakenfull et al., 2008, Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005). Implicit homosexual advertising can either be designed using models or culturally meaningful symbols. Both methods aim to target homosexual consumers in mainstream media without alienating heterosexual consumers (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005; Peñaloza, 1996). Thus, the use of implicit homosexual advertisement minimizes the risk of backlashes from heterosexual consumers (Bhat et al., 1998).

"Gay window advertising" has emerged within the field of marketing communication as a flexible marketing strategy of implicit homosexual advertisement (Clark 2000; Rohlinger 2002). Gay window advertising draws on "gay vague", a term coined by Michael Wilke, and a strategy that allows brands to achieve a balance in targeting different sexual orientations; heterosexuals and homosexuals (Tuten, 2002). "Gay vague" implies that sexual preferences of the person in advertising are portrayed ambiguously (Schroeder 2002; Borgerson et al., 2006). Whether this kind of "gay vague" communication is successful or not, depends on how the consumer or viewer interpret the advertisement. A heterosexual consumer might perceive two women in an advertising as friends, sisters, or colleagues, whereas a homosexual consumer might understand and pick up indirect message and infer that the advertisement is targeting toward homosexuals (Kates 1998; Solomon et al., 2002).

In many subcultures, such as homosexuality, "markers" are often developed, which hold meaning to the members of the subculture. Within the homosexual subculture it has developed "markers of gay identity" (Tharp, 2001) such as, symbols, language, clothes, and appearance (Kates, 2000; Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2005). These "markers" create no meaning to consumers who have no knowledge of the subculture as they cannot identify or understand these "gay symbols" (Bhat et al., 1998). By using these "markers" in advertising messages such as, homosexual iconography or symbolism, marketers can reach homosexual consumers in mainstream media without alienating heterosexual consumers (Peñaloza, 1996; Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999; Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005; Bhat et al, 1998). Examples of homosexual iconography are rainbows, freedom rings, pink triangle, and references to "pride" (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005). Implicit homosexual advertisement in mainstream media has the characteristics of an inside-joke and allows the homosexual consumer to feel bonded with the brand (Peñaloza, 1996). Thus, such a strategy would allow homosexuals to identify themselves with the advertising.

According to Oakenfull and Greenlee (2005), consumers react differently to implicit and explicit homosexual advertisement. According to their research, explicit homosexual-themed advertisement will effectively target homosexual consumers but the heterosexual mainstream consumer was far less favourable to explicit homosexual advertising. Therefore, marketers was recommended to avoid explicit homosexual advertisement in mainstream media (Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2005) and concentrate on implicit advertising as often as possible (Oakenfull et al.,

2008). However, Um et al. (2015), pointed out that companies prefer to use explicit visuals rather than implicit and that only 22.8 % of homosexual-themed advertisements use "gay symbols" such as rainbow flags, pink triangles, and equal right symbols. Interestingly, companies seem to do the opposite way of what Oakenfull and Greenlee (2005), and Oakenfull et al. (2008) claim to be the most favourable for marketers.

2.7 Non-Target and Target Groups

Advertising are stories about brands, but also stories about and for the people who consume the products and the advertisements (Frunză, 2015). These stories are not always suitable for an intended consumer. The responses marketers try to provoke in the mind of the target consumer such as, positive cognitive or affective attitudes, is called "intended meaning". These are not always the same as the consumer's "actualised meaning", which is how the consumer respond to the advertisement through his or her own interpretations (Star 1989; Douglas and Craig 1997; Wilke 1997). However, there might be an alternative meaning for those consumers that are outside the one target segment that the marketing efforts are intended for. With other words, the consumer's actualised meaning and reactions to the advertisement depend on the characteristics of the consumer as well as the advertisement (Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999; Scott, 1994; Levy, 1986).

Research within the field of consumer behaviour have shown that there are several factors that influence the way consumers interpret an advertisement. For instance, differences in how people read advertising (Scott, 1994), are members in a social group (Park and Lessig, 1977), what language and lifestyle that is represented (Aaker et al., 2000), or personal experiences (Mick and Buhl, 1992). Aronson (2011) discuss in- and out-groups in terms of "we" and "them". He argues that "we" are a group of people who all identify themselves with each other, whilst "them" is another group of people who are much alike each other but different and do not belong to "we". These groups are also called reference groups and has significant impact on the formation of a person's attitude toward an object. Thus, individuals divide people into groups based on social categorization (Turner, 1991). In the field of homosexual-themed advertisement, heterosexuals and homosexuals can be looked at from an in-group and out-group perspective in terms of "target" and "non-target" segments (Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999). Bhat et al. (1998), found out that heterosexuals viewed homosexual-themed advertisement negatively and that they perceived the advertisements and products as "gay". Therefore, it is

reasonable to assume that they did not feel bonded and could not identify themselves as "we" in the advertisements. Grier and Brumbaugh (1999) examined how "non-target consumers", referring to those who are non-members of the intended target market, create meanings from targeted advertising. They discuss the meanings in advertising and argue that these concerns or backlashes from heterosexual consumers develops when the target market and the non-target market construct dissimilar meanings to the advertisement, due to own cultural, social and individual experiences.

When marketers create targeted advertisements, the market is divided into different segments due to meaningful variables (Aaker et al., 2000). One of these variables is "viewer distinctiveness", which refer to a numerically rare group (McGuire, 1984; McGuire et al., 1979) such as, professional athletes, handicapped individuals, or sexual minority groups. Based on the distinctive theory, people who belong to these groups are more likely to be aware of the characteristics shared within the group and tend to include the group identity with their own self-concept (Aaker et al., 2000). According to reading strategies, consumers who are non-targeted of an advertisement may feel that it is not intended for them since the meaning in the advertisement is opposite or distancing from their lives, and the characteristics in the advertisement is incongruent with their beliefs or values (Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999). Therefore, consumers can feel excluded (Greco, 1991), offended (Lipman, 1991), distracted or irritated (Star, 1989), and start to criticise, reject or actively resist the message of the advertisement (Scott, 1994). This is negative non-target effects (Aaker et al., 2000). As a result of these effects, it is unlikely that they receive the message from the sender (Kover, 1995). If an advertisement feature members of a minority group that the viewer is not a member of, Aaker et al. (1999) points out that there would be no favourable effects and the consumer will not adopt a favourable attitude toward the advertisement. Contradictory, Baker and Petty (1994) argue that in advertising featuring majority groups, both the target consumer and the non-target tend to respond in a similar way since it is viewed as a representation of more accurate and valid in comparison to minority groups. According to Aaker et al. (2000), these similar responses could lead to stronger market effects.

2.7.1 Self-concept
Based on identity theory, consumers respond more favourably to advertisement that reflect their self-identity (Jaffe, 1991). If an advertisement is presumed to be effective, it is reasonable to

believe that the consumer feels a cognitive connection between the advertisement and the self (Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999; Aaker et al., 2000). Grubb and Grathwohl (1967), define the self as "what one is aware of, one's attitudes, feelings, perceptions, and evaluations of oneself as an "object" (p. 24). In other words, the advertisement is tailored to the consumer's self and that the viewer feels targeted (Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999; Aaker et al., 2000). According to James (1992), self-concept is everything that the individual calls "me".

According to Higgins (1987), there are three different basic domains of the self; the actual, the ideal and the ought self. The actual self is the representation of the attributes a person thinks he or she possess. Secondly, the ideal self, represents the attributes that a person would like to possess. For instance, representations of hopes or wishes for that person, yourself or someone else. While the ought self is the representation of the attributes that a person believes he or she should or ought to possess for example, sense of duty, obligations or responsibilities. Higgins (1987), explain the difference between the ideal and ought self as a conflict between a hero's personal interest or wishes and his or her "sense of duty".

2.8 Summary of Literature Review

This literature review has shown that a person's response to advertising depend on many factors such as, knowledge and associations to a brand, investment and interest in the message, identifications in terms of in-group and out-group and the connection of the advertisement and the "self". These reactions can be expressed in attitudes toward the advertisement, and also toward the brand. In addition, a person's elaboration will be greater when the message is visual rather than solely text-based. Advertising such as television does not only affect the elaboration of a person, but it can have a great impact on the society through both cultivation and priming effects. Therefore, the general public's attitude toward homosexuality can be influenced by homosexual-themed advertisement. This can have a positive impact in terms of perceived diversity but also in a negative way in terms of negative stereotypes. Since the purpose is to increase the knowledge of heterosexual consumer's reaction to homosexual-themed advertisement, these factors presented will be the basis of our research. In the next chapter, we will present how we conducted the study in order to fulfil the purpose of this study and answer the research questions.

3. Methodology

We start this chapter with a discussion about our philosophical viewpoints before moving on to the different methodological choices that we have made in order to make this study possible. Furthermore, the procedure of data collection will be presented and finally ethical aspects will be discussed.

3.1 Research Philosophy

This section aims to discuss and clarify the epistemological and ontological positions of the authors of this thesis. As a result of these assumptions, we will try to explain and argue for the way in which we view the world. The philosophy reasoning will recognize and help to clarify the forthcoming selections of methodology.

The field of epistemology is concerned with what knowledge should be regarded as acceptable in a specific field of study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It is about the best way of enquiring into the nature of the world (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Audi (1998) disclose many variables in the field of epistemology and claims in his book that there are many different things that influence how human beings define acceptable knowledge for instance, inner and outer perception. Inner perception relates to how humans interpret information, and how it may lead to a change in the knowledge that comes from experiences. However, outer perception relates to our actual physical realities and the objects within them. In business research there are three different epistemological approaches to consider; positivism, realism and interpretivism (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009).

Regarding our own epistemological stance for this research the chosen viewpoint has fallen toward interpretivism. In the interpretivism it is significant for the researcher to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors. The term social actor is crucial, since it emphasises research among people rather than objects such as, computers. Therefore, it is of importance for us to adopt an empathetic understanding. To enter the social world of the research participants and to understand the world from their perspective is a challenge (Saunders et al., 2009).

The heritage of the interpretivist stance comes from different intellectual traditions, such as phenomenology and symbolic interactionism (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, 2009). Titchen and Hobson (2005), define phenomenology as "the study of lived, human phenomena within the everyday social contexts in which the phenomena occur from the perspective of those who experience them" (p.121). Laverty (2003) discusses phenomenology as a tradition concerned with uncover the life world or human experience as it is lived and is convinced that the world which the researcher see as the world, is only one life world among many other worlds. We argue that the nature of interpretivism with a phenomenology tradition, is a stance that makes sense in this specific study since we will focus on how the individuals experience the phenomenon, homosexual-themed advertisement, such as how they respond and describe it. Hence, we will work toward increasing the understanding of the phenomenon from the social world. This will be the ground for further methodological choices.

The ontology is our view of the nature of reality and being (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). It describes how and what constitutes the reality and can be divided into two opposites, objectivism and subjectivism, where the latter is also known as constructivism. An ontological issue is if the social entities can be considered objectively real, or just a subjective feeling to its interpreter. While the objectivism argue that the social phenomenon exists independently from social actors, the subjectivism argue that social phenomenon is continually created from perceptions and consequent actions of social actors (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009).

However, a social constructionist stance will be taken in this study. Social constructionism argue that it is crucial to research the subjective meanings that motivate the actions of social actors. Here, the reality is viewed as a reality that has been socially constructed and that are determined by people rather than objective and external factors (Saunders et al. 2009). This ontological position was originally formed by Berger and Luckman (1966), who argued that every human's personal reality is constituted of the rules and norms in the society, which we later interpret as our reality. One of their main arguments is that the self is not given by birth, it is formed by family, society and subgroups. Within these groups there are social orders such as, set of roles, rules, and norms which over time become the truth. Social order is not in the human's nature or natural environment, it is created (Berger & Luckman, 1966).

Thus, social actors will perceive things differently depending on their own view of the social world (Saunders et al. 2009). For instance, individual consumers in this study, may have different interpretations in a given situation or to different stimulus. Therefore, we have the role to understand the subjective reality of the consumers in order to understand their attitudes and thoughts in a meaningful way.

3.2. Research Approach

The first methodological choice that had to be made is what kind of research that should be applied. Quantitative research is often used in broader studies to measure social trends, produces of the social life or different variables. Instead of focusing on measurements and numbers, the qualitative strategy focuses on words to analyse the society (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Since the purpose of this study is to create a deeper understanding in the field of homosexual-themed advertisement from a consumer perspective, this study is of a qualitative nature. Both Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and Merriam (2009), argue that qualitative studies do not only create a deeper understanding of a research area, but the deepness of data collection also makes it easier to explain a certain phenomenon from both the researcher's and the respondent's perspective. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), the qualitative research is about the learning of how people experience and interact with the world; their social reality. The perspective of those being studied, what they see as important, provide the point of view.

Next step for us was to decide on a research approach for the relation between theory and empirical data. Many researchers state out two different approaches; inductive and deductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009; Merriam, 2009). These two differ importantly in the starting process of the study. The deductive reasoning starts with a rule or hypothesis and later design the study in order to test a theory (Saunders et al., 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011). The researcher eventually come up with a result which either demonstrates the hypothesis or falsifies it (Timmerman & Tavory, 2012). This approach is often used in quantitative studies and are not appropriated for this study. In the inductive approach, on the other hand, the researcher uses the data collection as a starting point and eventually formulate a theory as a result of the findings and data analysis (Saunders et al., 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

In addition to these approaches, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2015) present a third alternative; the deductive approach. According to Dubois and Gadde (2002), this approach is similar to the traditional grounded theory approach, since the main concern of the researcher is to discover new findings, concepts and to develop already existing models, rather than confirming them. What differ abduction from the other two approaches, is the fact that it comprises understanding. Therefore, this approach allows us to create an understanding rather than an explanation of the research area as in inductive reasoning (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2015). Since the purpose of this study is to create a deeper understanding in a specific research area, an abductive approach has been applied.

Timmerman and Tavory (2012), discuss the abductive approach in relation to the grounded theory. They argue that the grounded theory has been questioned whether the approach has delivered its promise of developing empirically based theories, and that the abductive approach should not be seen as similar to grounded theory. Although, they argue that abduction is a creative process which fits in the grounded theory recommendation of shifting between theory and data repeatedly (Timmerman and Tavory, 2012). In other words, the abductive starting point would be in both theory and the empirical data, and the researcher work with both during the working process (Alvehus, 2013). In order to increase knowledge and create understanding within this research area, we have as a starting point collected literature in order to create a strong basis of the theoretical part. According to Timmerman and Tavory (2012), the researcher should enter the research field with the deepest and broadest theoretical base possible. Moreover, in this study it is likely to find new aspects of the research area that will need an adjustment in the theory, and later on an updated theoretical insight. Therefore, the theory was continuously modified and cultivated along with the working process.

3.3 Overview of Research Design

3.3.1 Research Design

There were different research designs we had to have in mind. First of all, we had to decide upon a descriptive, explanatory or exploratory design, all depending on the purpose of the study (Saunders et al., 2009). In descriptive research, the researcher wants to portray a clear picture of either a person, an event or a situation (Robson, 1993; 2002). According to Frege (2005), the

empirical research has over time shifted away from purely descriptive toward a more analytical process. Furthermore, the emphasis in explanatory studies is to study a situation in order to find and explain causal relationship between different variables (Saunders et al., 2009). Lastly, exploratory research is a suitable design if the researcher seeks to gain new insights to a specific phenomenon (Robson, 2002). According to Adams and Schvaneveldt (1991), the exploratory research can be likened to the activities of the traveller or explorer. Malhotra and Birks (2006) argue that the exploratory design gives deeper insight into the problem and it can help to further understand a certain problem, by providing data about soft variables such as feelings and values. This is something the other types of research could not do, simply because those are not interested in finding the meaning.

For this study, the exploratory research deemed to be the most appropriate research design in order to create a deeper understanding of homosexual-themed advertisement from a consumer perspective. In addition, according to Saunders et al. (2009), the advantage of this design is that it is flexible and adaptable to change. If a researcher is conducting an exploratory research, it could be necessary to change direction as a result of new data and insights appear, which is in line with the abductive research approach earlier discussed.

3.3.2. Research Strategy

As for the research strategy, Yin (2003) argues that there are different ways to design the strategy to fit the research question and purpose of the study. After considered different options, the most appropriate research strategy deemed to be case study. This strategy has substantial ability to produce answer to questions involving "why", "what", and "how". However, it is pointed out by Saunders et al. (2009) that "how" questions, such as the question in this study, tend to be more toward the survey strategy. The survey strategy is often associated with the quantitative data, deductive approach and data collection techniques such as questionnaires (Saunders et al., 2009), and with other words, no appropriated strategy for this study.

The choice of case study was attributed due to the purpose of gaining a deep understanding of the phenomenon in question. Dubois & Gadde (2002) and Yin (1993) argue that the use of in-depth case studies helps the researcher to best understand and investigate the connection between a phenomenon and its real life context. In addition, Flyvbjerg (2011) argue that the strategy has been ignored within the academy and poorly understood. He wants to help case

study research gain a wider use and claims that if the researcher wants to understand a phenomenon in any degree of thoroughness, case study is the most appropriate strategy. Case studies' main strength is depth; more detail, richness, completeness and variance for the individual unit than does other strategies. However, he points out that one of the most critical criticism is the difficulty to generalize the findings to a larger population.

According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) a case study can be used to look at one or a small number of organisations or individuals referred to cases. Yin (2003) discusses two dimensions within the case study strategy; single versus multiple case. A single case is often used to represent a critical, unique or extreme case and the multiple case is more than one case (Saunders et al., 2009). There are two types of single case study, namely the intrinsic and instrumental. Since this study focuses on providing a general understanding of the consumption of homosexual-themed advertisements, it is an instrumental case study. The case chosen can be a typical one although an unusual case may help illustrate matters overlooked in a typical case because of the fact that they are subtler there. This means that a good instrumental case is independent of the researcher's ability to defend its typicality, though the researchers need to provide a rationale for using a particular case (Harling, 2002). In this study, there will be a number of respondents from all around The Oresund Region with different background, which will help increase the credibility (Yin, 1993).

It is also said that single case study is used when one wants to challenge or confirm a theory (Yin, 1994), which is also the case in this study. Single case study is also an ideal study for revelatory cases where the observers may have access to something that was not accessible before. As homosexuality was not openly spoken about for a couple of years ago, one could say that it is easier to get information about it now than it was before. In addition, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that the chosen strategy connects the researcher to specific methods. For instance, case study mostly relies on interviews, observations and document analysis. Consequently, this discussion leads to the next section; *Data Collection Method*.

3.4 Data Collection Method

3.4.1 In-depth Interviews

Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) argue that it is important for the researcher to be clear about the overall objectives in the research before deciding on which method of data collection that should be adapted. In this study, the verbal content in data collection was given due to the purpose of researching consumer's expressed thoughts and reactions toward homosexual-themed advertisement. In order to obtain the desired amount of data in spoken words, the data collection techniques were limited down to two alternatives; in-depth interviews and focus groups.

Both in-depth interviews and focus groups aim to explore a topic in-depth and generate rich answers. Bryman & Bell (2011) argue that researchers who use focus groups are interested in which individuals interact in a group, discuss a certain topic, and respond to each other's views, instead of as individuals. In comparison, the in-depth interviews are done by one individual at a time, often face-to-face with the researcher. According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2012), this method is used in order to gain an understanding from the participant's perspective, and not only understand the participants point of view, but also understand how this particular viewpoint has emerged. In accordance to the phenomenology approach, Patton (2002) argue that the researcher should interview individuals who have experienced the research phenomenon. When we considered which method to adapt, the advantages and disadvantages were taken into account. In this specific study, the problems using focus groups as a method was deemed to be bigger than the advantages.

We argue that homosexuality, sexual preferences, sexual orientations, and attitudes could be seen as socially-sensitive topics for some people and particularly, sensitive to discuss in front of other people in a group. Easterby-Smith (2012) state that the social pressure can influence the responses since people may not be willing to express themselves in public arena. The ethical aspects of this study are being further discussed in the section of Ethics in 2.10. Bearing this in minds, the in-depth interview deemed to be the most appropriate data collection method for this study. Both in terms of gaining an understanding of the individual's point of view of the research topic but also in order to diminish the possibility for the respondents to feel social pressure, considering the sensitive topic.

Next decision that had to be made, was what type of in-depth interview we should adapt; unstructured or semi-structured interviews. The main differences between the two types is the

structure. In unstructured interviews, the researcher only has some issues or topics that aim to be covered and the interview tend to be informal and similar to a conversation. While in semi-structured interviews, the researcher has a series of fairly specific questions to be covered, also called an interview guide (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009). We decided to conduct semi-structured interviews since our goal with the interviews was to both give the participants a situation with enough space to explain and reflect upon their experiences, but also in order to cover some more specific and structured questions.

3.4.2 Choice of Stimulus

As a part of the semi-structured interviews, stimulus in terms of visual homosexual-themed advertisement deemed to be an appropriate technique due to the purpose of this study. There were several reasons why we chose to include visuals in the data collection processes. By using stimulus, it opened up a possibility for new insights to emerge that otherwise would have remained hidden (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Moreover, the stimulus helped the respondents to use creative thinking, and to explore feelings, emotions and values when they were asked to reflect, explain and comment on the objects in the visuals. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), stimulus similar to photos can help the interview to move from "the concrete" to the "socially abstract", which in other words means that they move toward finding out what the object in the advertisement means to the respondents.

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, it is of interest to investigate established, non-manipulated advertisement that the consumers are being exposed to in their everyday life. After a great deal of consideration we decided that visual marketing communication, in terms of advertisement shown on television, would be the most interesting advertisement to investigate. Partly because previous studies within this research area have only researched printed advertisement in magazines, and because there are several differences between printed advertisement and advertisement showed on television.

Advertisement shown on television is according to Kotler and Keller (2012), acknowledged to be the most powerful channel since it reaches a broad consumer audience and a wider diversity than printed advertisements. Advertisements on television are often repeated many times and have the opportunity to dramatize the message since it can engage sight and sound while displaying motion, as was also discussed earlier. With other words, it is a suitable channel to

use for brands to stir emotions among consumers more than any other media-channel (Dahlén & Lange, 2011). Additionally, it is interesting to mention that according to MMS (2015), Swedes are watching more and more television, and has increased with 60 % compared to the previous year.

Bearing this in mind, three different homosexual-themed advertisements, from three different brands used in mainstream television were chosen as stimulus. The advertisements were shown to the participants as examples of homosexual-themed advertisements to interpret and reflect upon during the interviews. The three chosen advertisements are explicitly portraying homosexuality in order to not go unnoticed by our targeted population, heterosexual consumers (Oakenfull et al., 2008; Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999; Bhat et al., 1998; Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2005). It should also be mentioned that the researchers have chosen advertisements where the company explicitly portray homosexuals. In other words, the researcher has not interpreted the situation displayed in the advertisement as being about homosexuals. Three different situations and portrayals of homosexuals are chosen in order to get variation in the stimulus. The three brands behind the advertisements are all Swedish retail brands and active in different markets such as fashion, telephone service and information service. What the companies all have in common, is that they target mass media consumers based on sexual orientation. It is important to mention that the researchers are aware that the stimulus is entirely composed of advertisements that portray homosexual men. Furthermore, the company, brand, and the specific advertisements are shortly described in the next section.

3.4.2.1. Björn Borg - "Love for All"

Björn Borg offers sports apparel and underwear as well as bags, eyewear, footwear, and fragrances through license. The products are sold in 30 markets, of which Sweden is one of the largest markets. The brand of Björn Borg was established in the Swedish fashion market in the 90s and has a strong position in its established markets, especially underwear (Björn Borg, 2016a). Björn Borg state that its collective mission is to take an active stand to spread more love in the world. In order to do so, the brand is constantly working with different innovative marketing campaigns. For instance, the spring campaign in 2014 "Nudeclear power and unite the lovers", aimed to give financial support to the organisation Love Commandos, which protect Indian couples in love who escape arranged marriages. Björn Borg is also promoting diversity

in terms of sexual orientation and an example of that is the advertisement "Love for all" (The Björn Borg Group, 2015).

The campaign video for the theme Love for All, was made to illustrate that love is for all (Björn Borg, 2016b). The video starts by showing a full church and music is playing, later on a marriage between, what seems to be, a man and a woman is portrayed, but then turns out to be a marriage between two male priests, performed by a female priest. The advertisement ends with the text, "Love for All" and then goes on to show the Björn Borg logotype. Additionally, it should be mentioned that no products were exposed in the advertisement (Björn Borg, 2008). Rocky af Ekenstam Brennicke, PR and Event Manager at Björn Borg, said that "the video is about love in a manner worth considering. At Björn Borg, we are happy and proud to have created a platform which allows all kinds of expressions for interpreting love" (Björn Borg, 2016b).
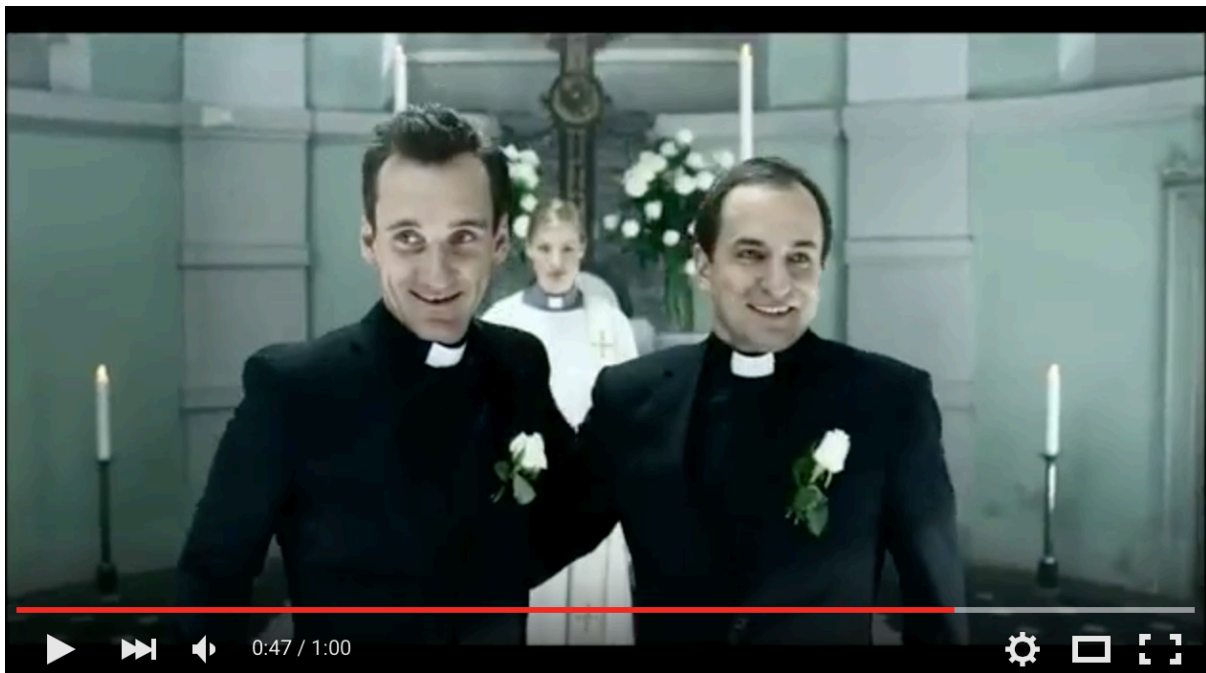

Image 2: Screenshot of Björn Borg "Love for All" (Björn Borg, 2008).

3.4.2.2 Halebop - "Hockey"

Halebop is a Swedish mobile operator with a young target group. The operator has been on the market since 2001. Halebop is a part of the TeliaSonera group and uses Telia's network for its services (Halebop, 2016a). According to Åsa Bohman, PR responsible, Halebop

communication aims to show that it is a mobile operator suitable for everyone. They want to show how the world would like, if everyone was nice to each other (Larsson, 2013).

Halebop is working with different campaigns where all aims to encourage their customers to "love bomb", which is a consistent theme in their advertisements. Halebop states that the best thing you can do with words, is to be nice and "love bomb". For instance, "love bombing the internet" encourages people to be kind to one another on the internet, otherwise the "online-troll" will never stop existing. The company also points out that they try to ignore what others think and recommend to challenge the norm (Halebop, 2016b).

An advertisement, within the theme "love bombing" is the one called "Hockey". The video is portraying a young, male hockey team in their changing room. Suddenly one of the boys take the main character's phone and starts reading out loud while the rest of the team is listening. "Miss you, Theo Ekenborg"... Who is that?" The main character starts to stumble and says "It is my boyfriend. We are having our one-year-anniversary today". It turns into silence in the changing room when the boy holding the phone says "Congratulations, one year! Damn, that is not easy." The whole team congratulates him and one of the boys in the room says "I know him, he looks really good". In addition, the product is being exposed throughout the whole video and in the end the logotype is shown together with an, at that time, on-going offer (Halebop, 2013).

Image 3: Screenshot of Halebop "Hockey" (Halebop, 2013).

3.4.2.3. Adressändring - "Paris"

Adressändring is a service for those who are moving out and need to report a change of address and order mail forwarding or storage. The company works in cooperation with the Swedish Tax Agency, Posten and other postal operators. It was established in 1994 and is responsible to gather and quality control the address changes from both private persons and corporates. They have approximately one million customers per year and around 800.000 households that are moving yearly (Adressändring, 2016).

In 2013, the advertisement called "Paris" won "Guldägget" for best movie. "Guldägget" is the biggest marketing communication competition in Sweden, where innovative and smart ideas are nominated. The advertisement "Paris" is about the consequences of not using Adressändring's service (Guldägget, 2016a, b). In the advertisement, the viewer gets to follow two young men falling in love in Paris. They are doing all kinds of activities, such as riding a Vespa together, laughing, holding hands, drinking wine in the bed, sleeping and cuddling together. While these pictures are shown, music is playing and the voice of a man with a French accent is reading a letter with the following text: "Paris, 2nd of June 1989. My darling Kjell, my little boom boom. I have been in love with you since the second I saw you, you stole my heart and you took it with you back to Sweden. This is the third time I write you, please answer. Kjell, come live with me in Paris". Suddenly, the romantic pictures of the two men and the music is disrupted of the sound of a coffee machine and an older version of Kjell, who is daydreaming and making a coffee in a cup with the text "Paris" on it. The text "Today Kjell lives with Britt-Marie" is shown followed by "Don't miss any important mail" and "Order mail forwarding when you change address". Lastly, Kjell is sitting outside with Britt-Marie, where Kjell asks Britt-Marie for a "Croissant?" and she responds "No, it's good". At the same time, the logotype is displayed (Adressändring, 2014).

Image 4: Screenshot of Adressändring "Paris" (Adressändring, 2014).

3.4.3 Interview Guide

According to McGivern (2009), an important aspect of the research design is the structure of the interview. We deemed that it was necessary to formulate an interview guide in order to have some structure to compare the different answers with one another. An interview guide is also in line with the semi-structured interviews applied for this study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In the initial phase of designing the interview guide, we started to frame different themes, to later on formulate questions within the themes. The different themes are shown in the main body of the interview, showed in Image 5. McGivern (2009) argue that the introduction is one of the most important parts of the interview from an ethical point of view, therefore an introduction and closing part were also planned in order to provide the respondents with information about the interview and ethical issues. A detailed description of the *Procedure of Data Collection* can be found in section 2.8.

The questions were formulated in order to suite the method and approach applied in this study. We asked open questions, which is important in qualitative studies (Seidman, 2006), and by that we avoided leading questions in order to not get biased answers (Easterby-Smith et al., 2009). When the questions were formulated, the next step was to try them out in a pilot study. The complete interview guide can be found in Appendix 1.
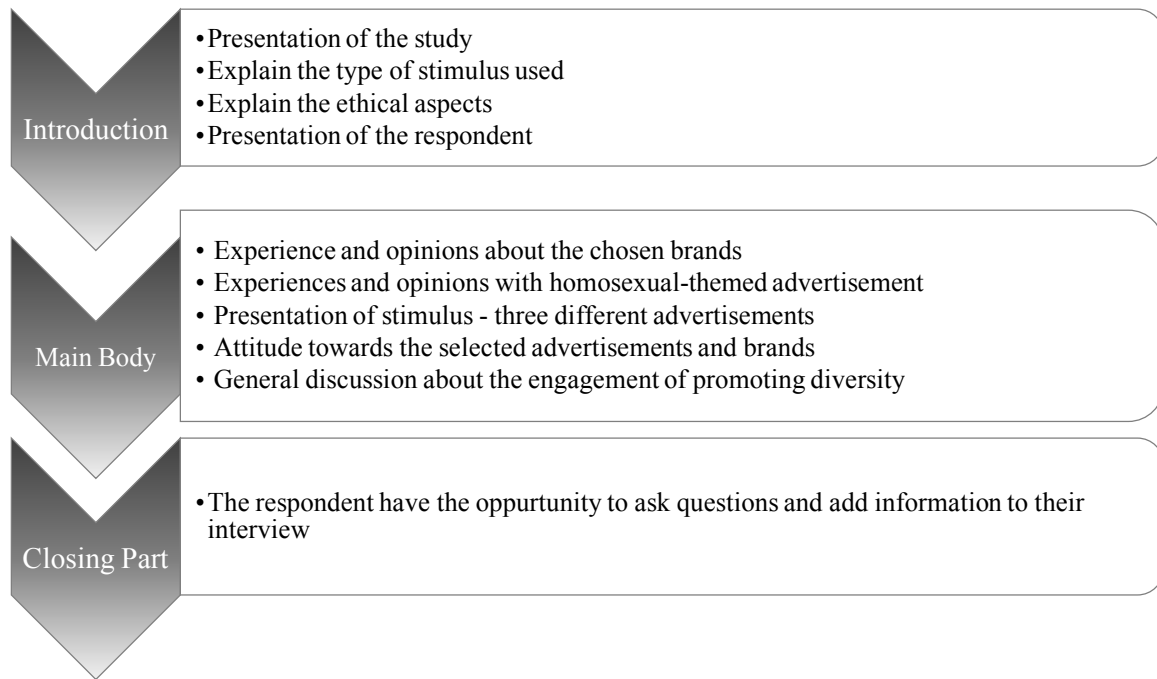
Image 5: Overview Interview Guide

3.4.3.1 Pilot testing

Seidman (2006) points out that interviews are complexed processes that often take unexpected turns and should therefore, be tried out in beforehand. Therefore, in order to test how the interview guide worked in practice, two pilot tests were performed. These pilot studies, helped us to realise that some of the questions were difficult for the interviewees to understand, and could therefore be improved with different phrasings. Other questions needed to be adjusted since they were repetitive in order to stimulate the conversations in a better way. It should also be mentioned, that the pilot interviews were not used as empirical material in the study, only as a testing. The pilot interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes, which was used as a time frame when we informed the respondents about the interviews.

We, together with another author, wrote the master paper titled "Pinkwashing or Pro-Diversity?", which was published in "The Strategic Brand Management, Master Papers First Edition, 2015" (Berisha et al., 2015). This was a result of the course "Strategic Brand Management", part of the Master's program "International Marketing and Brand Management" at Lund School of Economics and Management in Sweden. The purpose of this study, which can be seen as a pilot study for this study, was to investigate the homosexuals' attitudes toward homosexual-themed advertisement and the brand behind it. The authors found that the

homosexual-themed advertisements can have both positive and negative affect on the attitude toward the brand, depending on the manner in which homosexuality is portrayed. This study, has been the inspiration source for making this master thesis and in concern to the selected stimulus, two out of three advertisements are used in both the master paper and in this study.

3.5 Sampling and Selection of Respondents

The sample was selected through a convenience sample, which is a type of non-probability sample. This is a common sample within qualitative research where the researchers choose the interviewees due to their accessibility. Since this study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the research phenomenon, a representable sample of the target population is considered to be less important in this study (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Since we want to investigate heterosexual consumers, we had to limit the heterosexual mainstream audience a bit more and focus on a sample within this audience. Partly because it was too broad for this study, but also in order to conduct data from similar respondents in order to create a deeper understanding. When it comes down to the sampling process a few requirements or criteria was taken into consideration in order to find people we believe could contribute with relevant data. The criteria for the sample are Swedish consumers that watch mainstream television, identify themselves as heterosexuals, and are in the age range of 20-30 years. The reason why this age range was preferred is because the consumers in this age range have experienced the shift of marriage legalization, which took place in Sweden in 2009 (Sveriges Radio, 2009). The sampling will also be narrowed to only include The Oresund Region, due to many reasons. Not only does The Oresund Region consist of both Southern Sweden and Eastern Denmark, it is also considered as one of the most dynamic Regions in Europe with an area generating a quarter of the total GDP of Denmark and Sweden. This region is a terrific example of an international region that reflects the modern age; two countries that complement one another in a common region. The Oresund Region has a strategic location, with proximity to a wide range of different markets, and is also an attractive market in itself. The region's consumer base is made up of two of the absolute strongest consumer nations in Europe, and has a strong purchasing power (Oresundsregionen, 2016).

In order to select and come in contact with our respondent we used our social networks online and asked for people who fit into our certain criteria. Later on, we chose people from different

areas of the Oresund Region, from small towns to bigger cities, and from varying ages between 20-30 years. However, the empirical material from the convenience sample could be criticised due to the fact that we as researchers already had a social relationship to some of the respondents (Saunders et al., 2009). This may affect the credibility since the researchers and the respondent could have had a tendency to understand each other (Seidman, 2006). This presented sampling and selection of respondents is of course different from e.g. a probability sample using questionnaires, where the researcher probably knows little about their respondents. However, since the respondents in this study are part of our social network, we are involved in the relationship with the respondents. Being involved in the participant's life is nothing new in academical research. For instance, ethnographers in organisational observations are involved in their participant's lives in various ways (Saunders et al., 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Bryman and Bell (2011) discuss Gold's (1958) categorisation of four different participant observer roles which reflect different degrees of involvement and detachment of the social setting being observed. One of them, observer-as-participant, means that the researcher is mainly interviewer but also little involved with its participants. Thus, it is much like the case in this study.

We did not chose in beforehand how many interviews were needed. Instead, the data collection process stopped when data saturation was reached (Saunders et al., 2009). In other words, it stopped when we deemed that the empirical data had reached a level of depth and variation to fully answer the research question and analyse the answers given, and when additional data did not provide any new insights. A number of eleven respondents were interviewed in this study, which generated in a total interview time of 5 hours and 53 minutes. Due to the fact that the interviewees were assured anonymity, the interviewees were given pseudonyms in this study. A list with all eleven interviewees can be found below in Table 1.

Name	Age	Location	Interview Length
Olivia	27	Lund	33 minutes
Alex	25	Ängelholm	28 minutes
Kim	26	Helsingborg	33 minutes
Charlie	20	Båstad	36 minutes

Emma	26	Malmö	34 minutes
Ali	27	Båstad	26 minutes
Robin	23	Malmö	29 minutes
Charlotte	22	Helsingborg	34 minutes
Ditte	25	Landskrona	30 minutes
Sammie	20	Lund	27 minutes
Bibbi	24	Lund	22 minutes

Table 1: Overview of respondents.

The sample is an example of the limitations in this study that makes it impossible to generalize the findings. We have focused on one nationality, from a specific geographic area, a sample size of eleven respondents which was rather small, and from a quite specific age range. Thus, if other respondents had been selected to represent the empirical data of this study, such as a wider age range and other geographical limitations, the result would probably have turned out differently. This in turn, means that the findings of this study are not representative for all heterosexual consumers in Sweden. We are aware of this, and has therefore focused on a sample of people with different social contexts, in order to gain a deeper understanding. Seidman (2006) argues that it is important to get a detailed picture of the participants' experiences and present it in order for the reader to understand one's living situation. Moreover, Bryman and Bell (2013) discuss the importance of the respondent's social context. They argue that qualitative studies often claim more detailed description of the context in order to understand an individual. Hence, a background matrix is presented with more detailed information about our respondents in order to increase the understanding of their social context, see table 2.

Olivia	Olivia is 27 years old and lived in Lund. She recently graduated from the School of Social Studies. Olivia is planning to move to Copenhagen and continue her studies at an advanced level. Until then, she works at her parents' Italian restaurant.
Alex	Alex is 25 years old and lives in Ängelholm. Alex is a having a diploma in "Event and Meeting Producer" but has chosen to work as a loan administrator. Alex is born and raised in the small harbour village Torekov.

Kim	Kim is 27 years old and lives in Helsingborg. Kim is studying Global studies within the field of social anthropology. Kim has recent become a legitimate body attack instructor and works 5 times a week.
Charlie	Charlie is 20 years old and lives with her parents in the small town Båstad. Charlie works at the kindergarten but will start studying drama in the autumn. Charlie loves to dance, work out and be with friends.
Emma	Emma is 26 years old and lives in Malmö together with her Brazilian boyfriend. She is a master student at Copenhagen Business School and are hoping to get a career in marketing and management. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her friends.
Ali	Ali is 27 years old and lives Båstad with his girlfriend, where he has lived his entirely life. Since 2010 he works as a machine operator. After high school he travelled around the world for a year.
Robin	Robin is 23 years old and lives in Malmö. Robin works as a stewardess in Copenhagen and will start studying Psychology in Lund this autumn. Robin enjoys spending time with her family, boyfriend, and best friends.
Charlotte	Charlotte is 22 years old and lives in central Helsingborg with her boyfriend and dog. She is a student at Lund University and will graduate in Spring 2017. Charlotte loves food and quality time.
Ditte	Ditte is 25 years old and is a Private Banker. Ditte loves her family and likes spending time with her friends. On the weekends she usually goes swimming with her best friend.
Sammie	Sammie is 26 years old and is a medical student. Sammie plays basketball and loves travelling.
Bibbi	Bibbi is 24 years old and is waiting a child. The best thing Bibbi knows is cooking and being in the nature.

Table 2: Background information about the respondents

3.6 Procedure of Data Collection

Most of the interviews were held in the interviewee's homes, as we wanted to interview in calm and quiet environments, so that the interviewees would not worry about being overheard or distracted (Bryman & Bell, 2013). Due to lack of opportunities to meet some of the respondents

in person, six interviews where done using the chat-function "Skype". This data collection technique deemed to be more appropriated compared to telephone interviews since the interview could still befall face-to-face. Each interview was made in the respondent's native language, Swedish, so that they would not feel limited in any kind of way. The useful material was later on translated into English. In the beginning of each interview the interviewers let the respondents present themselves with information such as, their age, where they live, and what they work with. After that, the purpose of the study in general was presented as well as the duration, the stimuli material and the conditions in terms of ethical aspects. Later on, we asked the interviewees if they allowed us to record the interview and at the same time told them that they would be anonymous and that they had the rights to decide if we could include their words in the study. We also informed them that they had the possibility to end the interview and that they could skip a question, if needed. According to McGivern (2009, p. 203), an introduction is indispensable "from an ethical point of view and in order to put the respondent(s) at ease".

During the interviews that were made between 14th and 18th of April, the interview guide was used as a tool and the questions were asked in the same order. While the interviewees were answering the questions, the researchers listened and took some notes. According to Seidman (2006), it is recommended to listen when doing interviews, he even considers it as the most important skill when doing interviews (Seidman, 2006). He claims that the most difficult thing when interviewing is to actively listen and being quiet when the interviewees are talking. It is of particular importance as it leads to richer and more detailed answers. Follow-up questions as well as other questions that was not initially outlined was posed along the interview, all depending on if the researcher picked up value information said by the respondents. This lead to a slight difference between the interviews. Also, the stimulus were shown in different order, to avoid bias. Finally, the interviewees were asked if they had any questions or something they wanted to add. After that, they were asked if the researchers could contact them in the future, if needed.

After the interviews, we started transcribing all of our interviews, in order to get a better overview of our material. Apart from the exact words being expressed, their reactions and tone of voice also mattered. For instance, when some of the respondents discussed an advertisement and got frustrated, they expressed themselves both through word and through their tone of voice.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Since this is a qualitative study, the focus will be on the trustworthiness, instead of the reliability and validity which would be the case if the findings were to be measurable, as in quantitative study (Bryman & Bell 2013). Trustworthiness consists of four sub-criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and lastly confirmability. Credibility refers to the fact that there are many thoughts of how the social reality looks like. Thus, the credibility that is presented by the researchers determines the level of acceptability for others (Bryman & Bell, 2013). It is therefore important to reassure that the researchers have taken into account all the available rules there are. Transferability refers to how the generated empirical material should be transferable to other contexts. Thus, it is recommended to generate detailed descriptions of each culture (Bryman & Bell, 2013). The dependability refers to the importance of a critical viewpoint for the researchers which reassures a complete report of each phase. Finally, confirmability refers to how the researchers show that they have been acting in good faith, from the insight that it is no complete objectivity when it comes to social research. It should be obvious that the researchers have not been affecting the outcomes of the study with their own personal thoughts and opinions (Bryman & Bell, 2013).

The background information about the interviewees (see figure 2) is provided in order to increase the transferability, as it describes their social environment and experiences. In order to increase the credibility, all the steps in the research process have been presented in detail in this chapter, where transparency is encouraged in order to increase the trustworthiness. In order to ensure the dependability of the study, a detailed motivation of all the decisions made and directions taken, was presented in order to create transparency for the readers. When it comes to confirmability, the risk of personal values being the basis for decisions have been reduced by motivating all decisions and interpretations made. This, to show that the performance of the study has not been deliberately affected by personal values. According to Bryman & Bell (2011), qualitative research is commonly criticized for being too subjective. The researchers will choose what they think is important when dealing with the empirical material. Therefore, we have not been able to be completely objective when doing this qualitative study.

3.8 Ethics

Saunders et al. (2009) argue that the choice of research topic will be directed by ethical considerations. As mentioned in section 2.6.1 *Data Collection Method,* attitude toward sexual orientations or sexual preferences were referred to as socially-sensitive issues, which should be handled in a discrete manner (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Even though the interviewees were not directly asked to discuss their personal opinion about homosexuality, the interview could be seen as an indirect discussion about homosexuality since it is a part of the research topic. Therefore, all decisions are made in respect to the fact that the research topic could be seen as a sensitive one.

Bryman and Bell (2011) discuss Diener & Crandall (1978) classification of ethical principles into four categories: harm the participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception. These four were used as guidelines throughout the research process. First of all, the potential harm to participants was minimized, to the extent it could be. For instance, the choice of conducting in-depth interviews instead of focus groups was made to minimize the potential harm to the participants, as mentioned before. Mertens & Ginsberg (2009) discuss the concept nonmaleficence which means "do not cause others harm". They argue that it is a vague concept and question "what constitutes harm?". Saunders et al. (2009), argue that interviews can evoke stress and anxiety for the interviewees. Furthermore, Mertens & Ginsberg (2009) argue that discomfort and stress are temporary during data collection and can probably be justified if the participant freely entered the study and at the same time was informed of the risks (Mertens & Ginsberg, 2009). As a result of this discussion, it was important to reach an informed consent (Saunders et al., 2009) and that the interviewees participate on a voluntary basis. All respondents were fully informed about the nature of the study, the data collection procedure and anonymity in beforehand.

According to Bryman and Bell (2011), researchers often want the participants to respond more naturally in the data collection, and therefore limit the participants' understanding of what the research is about. To minimise the deception; that we present this study as something other than it is, the nature of the study was explained to the respondents and afterwards, all participants had the opportunity to review the recorded interview.

Anonymity deemed to be the most important ethical issue in this study, due to the sensitive topic and the choice of semi-structured interviews, as it tends to be more personal in nature compared to other data collection methods. The respondents were informed and promised anonymity in this study. The anonymity was preserved and we experienced that it gave more room for honesty and credibility during the interview. By giving the respondents full anonymity, they are also promised confidentiality, indirectly. Confidentiality is concerned with "the right of access to the data provided by individual participants" (Saunders et al., 2009, p.42) and should be kept private. The findings based on the collected information and answers will be published and therefore not confidential, but the respondents are given pseudonyms and cannot be identified. The material will only be used by us as material to fulfil this study. The material will be saved until the research process is over, and the study has been published. After that, we will delete it after a reasonable period of time.

Bryman and Bell (2011) points out that it is impossible to know which topics that are sensitive to a specific individual in beforehand, although there are some topics that can be judged sensitive to everyone. It should be clarified that even if we categorise homosexuality as a "sensitive topic", we are aware that this is not sensitive for everyone to talk about. To not invade on the privacy of the participants (Bryman & Bell, 2011), the respondents were interviewed voluntarily and informed that they only had to answer if they wanted to and could withdraw at any time.

3.9 Analysis of the Empirical Data

Analysing our empirical material involved several tasks such as discovering different themes and linking these to our theoretical chapter; literature review. According to Ryan and Bernard (2003), these are some of the most important tasks in qualitative studies. Grounded theory is an approach that was first outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and provides guidelines and techniques of how to classify, organise and analyse the data collected. Based on some of these guidelines we started our analysis process by proofreading the transcribed interviews several times. Later on, we started to simply put the material into different segments with different phrases such as attitude, norms, trends, public opinion etc. Afterwards, we grouped different coded segments, which resulted in three different categories based on our research questions; responses to advertising, attitudes to the brand, and social impact. What we looked for during this process was mostly repetitions; where our respondents had the same network of ideas or if

a person repeatedly referred to the same type of ideas during the interview. According to Ryan and Bernard (2003), the more the same concept occurs in a text, the more likely it is considered a theme or a category. We also looked for similarities and differences in order to compare the empirical material (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) and found that the respondents' expressed thoughts were both different and similar from each other.

However, the first category; responses to advertisement, had the most data, which was reasonable as it was our main question in the study. Therefore, we had to dig deeper into this category and mark the data with important words such as dreamy scenario, products and services, stereotypes etc. in order to discover different themes. We deemed this to be quite difficult since many of the categories and themes were affected of each other. When the respondents talked about an advertisement, they often talked about two themes or more at the same time. An example is the "dreamy scenarios", which will be further discussed in the next chapter. These scenarios were both discussed as being unauthentic and norm challenging. Therefore, some aspects are naturally mentioned in more than one theme. Finally, it resulted in five different themes, which will be presented in the beginning of the next chapter. These themes are referred to as different aspects that had a huge impact on the respondents' reactions. Additionally, we analysed the empirical data through our theory that can be found in the literature review. This process can also be referred to as, what the grounded theorist calls, "open coding". Referring to when researchers break down, examine, compare, and categorise empirical data that are later on grouped and turned into categories and different themes (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

After we had created our categories and themes, we thought it would be a good way to illustrate the empirical data by using quotes from the respondents. We also thought it could contribute with a more stimulating and involving feeling for the person that reads this study. We chose verbatim quotes that seemed important to the content of a certain discussion to illustrate key arguments or reactions. Each quote illustrates the discussion from the last previous section. If there are two quotes instead of one, they have different meanings and we argue that they together will contribute to a better illustration.

Additionally, there were different sources to use in order to come up with names for our categories. A researcher can either utilise terms that has emerged from the empirical data, for instance terms used by the respondents. Another way is to use terms based on existing theory

in the literature review (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). We named the categories after theoretical terms used in both the introductory chapter and in the literature review, and the themes were named after terms used by the respondents.

4. Analysis of Empirical Material

During the interviews we found that the respondents reacted differently and perceived the advertisement stimulus in different ways. Some advertisements and brands were perceived, and also evaluated in a more positive way, and some in a less positive way due to different aspects. During the process of analysing the empirical data, we found it obvious that the advertisements had triggered both positive and negative emotional reactions from the respondents, which resulted in different attitudes toward the brand. Therefore, we have chosen to highlight and discuss the most common and interesting aspects that influenced how the respondents reacted to the advertisement and how it in turn, affected their attitude toward the brand. In addition, a more general discussion about homosexual-themed advertisement and the brand, is presented.

Firstly, we will introduce this discussion by giving an overview of how the respondents experience the increased homosexual-themed advertisements in the general context of minority groups in advertising. This introduction does not help us answer the research question since it is of a more general nature, but deemed to be relevant in order for the reader to gain a deeper insight of the respondents existing knowledge. Later on, we discuss the respondent's stance toward homosexual-themed advertisement in general, and their responses after watching the selected advertisements. Furthermore, we discuss the respondent's attitudes toward the brand using homosexual-themed advertisement both in general and from the reactions of the advertisements. Finally, we discuss how companies that use this marketing communication strategy can be seen as either responsibility takers or non-responsibility takers, and their power to influence the society.

4.1 Trends in Marketing Communication

All respondents discussed an apparent change in marketing communication. They referred to this change as a "trend", in which corporations take a stand in different political and social issues, such as featuring minority groups in their advertising. The corporations that are using this marketing communication strategy, are perceived as "standing for the right things in the

society", being trendy, and following the development of the society. Furthermore, the respondents see the mindset of these corporations more from the business perspective, meaning that they do it for their own good in order to increase their sales, because they believe that people will appreciate this kind of engagement with diversity.

"I think companies do this [author's note: including minority groups] because it is a debate now, and by showing it, they can sell more. It is trendy to take a stand. It has nothing to do with what the company do or stand for. They do it to sell more, adapt to the climate in the society and encourage what is popular and trendy." - Kim

"...you don't know if it is because they want to sell more. They know that people might appreciate it. It is a wave of including minority groups in advertising and in other contexts as well, I believe. Maybe they do it because they are supposed to do it." - Emma

In the discussion of the increased portrayal of minority groups in media, portrayals of sexual orientations, such as homosexuality was mentioned as one of the obvious changes. Furthermore, the participants drew parallels to other groups of people that are getting more exposure in advertising today than a couple of years ago. They perceived that groups who have been considered as less popular has gotten more attention in media, such as plus size models and older models. Another change in advertising that was discussed was that it is more multi-cultural and multi-ethnicity today and that it is no longer only the stereotypical Swede with blonde hair and blue eyes that is being portrayed in media. Conservative view on genus; what is masculine and feminine was also brought up as something that has changed in media. It is no longer the woman that has to stand in the kitchen or clean the house that is being portrayed in advertising. To sum up the discussion about minority groups, all these changes were seen as positive and the respondents thought that this "trend" reflects the society we live in today, even if the companies do it for their own good.

However, the reactions and the public opinions of homosexual-themed advertisement are pointed out as big influencers whether or not minority groups will continue to be portrayed in media. Media will still show what is trendy and "in time", and what they think the consumers want to see.

"We will not see it [author's note: more homosexual-themed advertisement] in advertising if the politics and society do not come along, then we will see something else, the next trend. It is up to the society." - Kim

4.2 Responses to Homosexual-Themed Advertisement

After the interviews we could see a clear pattern in how the respondents responded to homosexual-themed advertisement in general. Thus, the participants could be divided into two groups. One group, the majority of the respondents, that showed a higher endorsement, excitement and more positive reactions toward the advertisements, and one group that reacted in a less positive way toward the advertisements. However, none of the respondents reacted in a negative manner. After a detailed analysis of the answers of each respondent, we saw a connection between the respondent's reaction to homosexual-themed advertisement and their personal relationship to homosexuality. The respondents in the first group had a close relationship toward homosexuality in terms of friends, family members, or classmates who identify themselves as homosexuals. In these cases, the respondents explicitly expressed their support toward homosexuality as "another way of falling in love". They also expressed their engagement of support when it comes to human right issues in the society.

"It should be the same if you are hetero or homosexual, everyone should be equally seen and heard." - Ali

The other group, who reacted in a less positive way, had no close relationship to people who identify themselves as homosexuals. Elaboration Likelihood Model could be the explanation to this pattern, as the first group who reacted in a favourable manner had more motivation and ability to further analyse and interpret the message in the advertisement. The reason is because they are personally involved and interested in issues concerning different types of sexual orientation and that the message is personally relevant to them. Additionally, by having a close relationship toward homosexuality indicates that the respondents have a positive attitude toward homosexuality. In accordance with previous research, a consumer's prior attitude toward homosexuality determine how they perceive the advertisement.

However, homosexual-themed advertisement was in general perceived positively, and all of the respondents thought that advertising should try to reach out to all kinds of people, and since the whole population does not only include heterosexuals, it should be obvious that advertisements featuring homosexuals should be a part of mainstream media.

> *"I think advertisements should include all kinds of people and since there are many people that are gay, it should be obvious that they are all included in the advertisements as well." - Emma*

After the respondents had watched the three different advertisements, the majority of the respondents did not think that the advertisements concerned them due to their sexual orientation. Based on identity theories, consumers respond more favourably to advertisement that reflect their self-identity. This was clear when some of the respondents claimed that the homosexual-themed advertisement is important to be shown, but that they did not feel a close connection to it since they are not homosexuals. If an advertisement is presumed to be effective, the consumer should feel a cognitive connection between the advertisement and their "self", which the respondents claimed that it did not do in all of the three cases. Moreover, a clear non-target feeling was experienced among the respondents as they expressed that they felt excluded as the advertisements did not concern them nor was intended for them. Thus, they did not feel attached or bonded to the advertisements shown.

> *"I would not like a brand or advertisement more, because I am not homosexual. It does not matter if an advertisement is portraying two women grocery shopping, or two men or one man and one woman. However, if I would have another attitude toward homosexuals, maybe I would not like it." - Bibbi*

> *"I would not buy a certain product just because the brand has homosexual-themed advertisements, since it is not about me and I don't feel attached to it." - Robin*

In other words, they argued that the advertisement would probably be more effective to homosexuals, as the target group, but not toward them as non-homosexuals. Their discussions indicated that the advertisement would be more effective for the homosexual segment since they probably feel targeted by the advertisement. Drawing on the distinctive theory, people who identify themselves as homosexuals are more likely to be aware of the characteristics shared

within that group of similar people. Additionally, based on identity theory, homosexuals would respond more favourably to homosexual-themed advertisement if it reflected their self-identity. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that they feel attached to the advertisement as the information is more likely to be more accessible for them than for the heterosexual respondents.

Even if the respondents reacted in a more or less positive manner to homosexual-themed advertisement in general, all homosexual-themed advertisement are not identical and therefore the respondents reacted differently on the three advertisements selected as stimulus for this study. After being exposed to the homosexual-themed advertisements, the respondents responded in a both positive and negative manner due to different aspects in the advertisements. These aspects are discussed in terms of portrayals of homosexuals and the situational context in the advertisements. The different aspects formed five different themes that showed to have a huge impact on the respondents' responses to homosexual-themed advertisement. These themes are *Authenticity*, *Involvement of Products and Services*, *Norm Challengers*, *Sexual Categorisation,* and *Stereotyping,* and will be presented further in this section.

4.2.1 Authenticity

A theme that was discussed in the interviews was authenticity, which played a significant role in terms of how the respondents responded to the advertisements. This theme was referred to when describing whether the homosexual-themed advertisements were realistic or believable. This was applicable for the persons displayed in the advertisements, the situational context that the persons were portrayed in. The respondents responded in a positive manner when they perceived the advertisement as authentic. Some advertisements were perceived as less authentic than others for various reasons. The reasons will be discussed below.

According to the respondents, how the homosexuals are portrayed plays an important role, especially when working with minority groups. Adressändring's advertisement, where the man that married a woman because he missed out on changing his address with Adressändring, was perceived as the most authentic by the respondents. The participants argued that Adressändring showed a realistic image of what seems to be a quite realistic relationship. Another thing that was argued was the fact that Adressändring was the only one that was humoristic, which increased the authentic feeling. Adressändring succeeded with producing an advertisement about homosexuals in an authentic and humoristic way, without any kind of stereotyping.

51

"The ad I like the most is Adressändring because it is the most realistic one. It was well thought-out and the product was a part of the movie. The others were a bit exaggerated". - Ditte

Halebop's advertisement "Hockey", was the second most authentic advertisement according to the respondents. This due to the fact that Halebop have done similar movies in the past so many of them could relate to this advertisement. Another thing that was argued was that Halebop's earlier themes have been "love bombing". "Love bombing" was about treating each other with love and support, and not hate. This engagement from the brand's side has left its positive marks and therefore a similar advertisement about support and love was seen as authentic by most of the respondents.

However, the reason why Halebop was criticized for its lack of authenticity by some respondents was mostly connected to the situational context that the persons were portrayed in. The respondents argued that the possibility of a boy coming out as a homosexual in a locker room with all his team players is really low. Portraying homosexuals in scenarios where it could be difficult to believe that it could be true, are referred to as "dreamy scenarios" by the respondents. However, exposure of "dreamy scenarios" was not seen as a negative thing. The respondents thought it was good when a "dreamy scenario" was portrayed, although there were many that could not relate to the scenarios. This was because many believed that when "dreamy scenarios" are shown it can help normalize similar situations. It was argued that this could lead to a change in people's minds and show how it is supposed to be. They argued that they liked the "dreamy scenarios" particularly because of the absence of stereotyping and constitutional norms.

"However, I think it is good that they have dreamy scenarios, partly because it can help normalize it, but also because it makes you question yourself why one would react in another way." - Olivia

4.2.2 Involvement of Products and Services

The respondents' responses to the advertisements was also influenced by whether it was perceived as informational by promoting its product or service, or as transformational by

focusing more on the image of the brand without being related to the service or product. If the situational context was displayed along with a clear exposure of the company's product or service, it was perceived as more realistic and trustworthy. According to the respondents, the portrayal of the company's product or service is the most important thing in an advertisement, no matter what type of advertisement it is. Furthermore, they argue that it will depend on whether they like a brand more or less.

> *"It does not matter if it is two girls, two boys, or a boy and a girl that represent the brand, for me it is about the products." - Charlotte*

Adressändring's and Halebop's advertisements had both a clear purpose and message. The most important thing seemed to be the inclusion of the product and the clarity of the message in terms of legitimacy, according to the respondents. On the other hand, the respondents reacted less positively when the advertisement was not related to the product or service and only highlighted political or social issues, such as same-sex marriage in Björn Borg's advertisement. Adressändring's advertisement was perceived as the one with the best combination of product inclusion, portrayal of homosexuality, and a clear message.

> *"Here, the message was super clear [note by author: respondent talking about Adressändring], 'oh, changing your address is something you definitely have to think of'. They get out the right message...In some advertisements it makes no sense of what they are promoting." - Charlie*

When the respondents were exposed to Björn Borg's advertisement, confusion arose and some had a hard time understanding the connection between the brand and the activity. This deemed to be unclear for the respondents. They argued that it was just a random scene taken in the church with two men getting married, without no connection to neither the products or the fit models that usually are seen in Björn Borg's advertisements. The respondents felt confused, suspicious, and they were not sure they understood the point of it. Some of them also felt mislead, which made them feel negatively about the advertisement. Many pointed out the importance of including the product, throughout the advertisement; otherwise they would feel that the company is taking advantage of something without having a connection to it. Elderly men in suits is not what the respondents associate with Björn Borg, and therefore it lowered the genuine feeling, although their very important message "Love for all". This goes in line with

earlier mentioned theory, where it was said that consumers react less positively to advertisements where companies support activities that have no links or connections to the brand, even though the intentions and activities are considered good. The consumers can even become suspicious toward the activity or engagement when it is difficult to see the cause of it, which was also the case in this study.

"In Björn Borgs advertisement, the product was not shown nor did it have something to do with it. It took time to get that it was a gay marriage. It felt like a PR trick to show openness when it comes to homosexuals. It has no connection to the product or service." - Alex

4.2.3 Norm Challengers

In some scenarios in the advertisements the respondents were surprised, both because of the certain scenarios but also because of their own reactions. They reflected upon their own reactions when they became surprised and clearly pointed out that these scenarios made them challenge stereotypical norms they did not think that they had. It was mostly the advertisement by Björn Borg and Halebop that provoked these feelings among the participants. In Björn Borg's advertisement, the respondents thought that the company had deliberately made a norm challenger, which they referred to as a "surprise moment". The surprise moment occurred when they realised that it was two men getting married, instead of one man and one woman. Björn Borg deemed to have made it to a surprise, since you could only see one of the men in priest uniform in the beginning. According to the respondents, Björn Borg want to give the viewers a food for thought, challenge the norm of a "traditional marriage" between a man and a woman and challenge possible prejudices of same-sex marriages. Furthermore, an eye-opener for the respondents was when they asked themselves why they took it for granted that it should be a man and a woman getting married and why they were surprised when it eventually was shown to be two men instead. Thus, they thought that the advertisement wanted to create this type of reaction and highlight the fact that there are yet norms of how weddings should be constructed.

Additionally, these surprised feelings the respondents got were first less positive and the respondents felt troubled, since they got the feeling that the advertisement took advantage of homosexuals by intentionally making it a surprise. But after they had evaluated and elaborated

the message in the advertisement, their final feeling toward these moments were all positive because they claimed that it is challenging existing norms, which is a good thing.

> *"They try to challenge the norms, that a man and a woman is getting married, when you do not understand. The song as well. The audience, different ages and sex, that all of them think it is okay that they are homosexuals. A female priest is also against the norm. They challenge the norm. You have to think a step further, that it is not given that it could be two men. That is probably their point, that you are forced to think a little extra and challenge your thoughts and prejudices [...] Even if you are open-minded toward homosexuality, we have an idea or image of that the "normal" is a man and a woman. That is what they are challenging here. - Olivia*

Some of the respondents, argued that they know that same-sex marriage is legal in Sweden, but that they do not know how the surroundings would react if someone said that he or she is homosexual. Regarding the fact that Halebop's situational context was perceived as a "dreamy scenario", as mentioned earlier, the respondents claimed that this type of scenario is more important to show in comparison to the same-sex marriage. To show how a young man comes out as homosexual in front of his team in a locker room and that the news are received in a positive way, challenge the respondents' norms once again since they have never thought that it could be a realistic scenario. After the first reaction, the respondents wondered why they reacted in that way, since it should look like that in reality and no one should think of it as unrealistic. Thus, they challenged the norms once again.

If people who live in a world where they spend a big part of their living in the world of television need to challenge their norms while being exposed to homosexual-themed advertising, it is more likely that the viewers start to change their norms in accordance to the cultivation theory. Thus, it is more likely that the perceiver believe the social reality portrayed.

> *"I think you have to go against the norms and stand against what is today's society and include everyone and not just the "normal people". The unwritten rules have to be broken in order to reach out to everyone." - Sammie*

4.2.4 Sexual Categorisation

Categorising different people in advertising, based on sexual orientation such as homosexual or heterosexual, and make the advertisement revolve around those categorisations, had a major impact whether the respondents reacted in a favourable or unfavourable manner to the the advertisements. Regarding implicit and explicit homosexual-themed advertisement discussed in the literature review, we found that the respondents reacted differently to what type of advertisement it was and the degree to which homosexuals were portrayed in. In this study, the stimulus consisted of explicit homosexual-themed advertisement, but the respondents also hypothetically discussed implicit homosexual-themed advertisement. Even if the reactions were positive toward explicit homosexual-themed advertisement, the respondents thought that it can sometimes be too much of "political correctness". When the respondents talked about the fact that people often categorise people into different groups, such as homosexuality or heterosexuality, it brought up negative and angry feelings. When the corporations are "utilising" portrayals of homosexuals to make it the "main thing", it loses its connection to what their brand is all about, which is seen as exaggerated and will no longer provoke positive reactions. To illustrate this exaggeration, one respondent gave a hypothetical example of a pasta commercial using homosexual-theme.

"It is an advertisement about pasta, it does not have to be about homosexuals…" -
Kim

The respondents felt hopeful and wished that companies would start using more implicit homosexual-themed advertisement and draw more on gay vague to promote and construct diversity. The respondents thought and hoped that it would be less focus on homosexuality in the future, and more focus on including everyone regardless of people's sexual orientation. They argued that they hoped that it will be more "queer" and "open". The respondents claimed that it does not need to be obvious that it is a homosexual couple in the advertisements, instead sexual preferences of a person could be left open for any kind of interpretation. As in the pasta example above, the respondent suggested that they could portray a big family eating pasta around a table, without illustrating which ones that are couples or in love. Thus, the participants argued that it can be two sisters or two colleagues or a married couple, the viewer does not need to know the sexual orientation, because it should be accepted no matter what and should not be a big deal when someone have another sexual preference than you.

I think it will be more natural for example if two women are sitting in the couch and asking 'have you bought the Bingo Lotto?' [authors note: Bingo Lotto is a Swedish lottery]. You do not need to know if it is a couple, two siblings or two friends. [...] We people want to put everything into boxes and categories, we really want to know. For example, in one of IKEA's commercials, it happens a lot, among other things two older women are kissing each other. One tiny thing can do more different than these big, cliché-ridden advertisements where you think 'oh, it was a homosexual couple'. If it [author's note: featuring homosexuals] comes stealthily, it would not be a big deal." - Charlie

4.2.5 Stereotyping

Labelling different people with specific characteristics in advertisements was a highly discussed theme during the interviews. How a homosexual person is portrayed based on different characteristics had a major impact on whether the respondents reacted in a favourable or unfavourable manner to the the advertisements. When advertisements are featuring homosexuals, it should not be exaggerated, and it should also not have stereotypical roles for the homosexual people being portrayed. When it comes to the three chosen advertisements, all respondents reacted in an extremely favourable manner since they did not think that homosexuals were portrayed in any kind of stereotype-enhancing way, rather the opposite. They pointed out that the homosexuals in the advertisements had roles such as, hockey player and priests, which is not what is usually associated with homosexuality. If these advertisements would have done it really obvious by having for example only homosexuals in a football team, it would not have been so real, perceived as "too much" and the effect would be the opposite as well. The scenarios must be realistic without stereotyping.

"Many have an image of how homosexuals look like and behave. So, I think it is a good thing when advertisements try to break this norm. I don't like advertisements that play on the stereotypical homosexual. I like it when for example the one that you did not think was gay, is gay. Breaking an old pattern." - Kim

The majority of the respondents reacted negatively when discussing advertisements that have stereotypical roles for the homosexual people that are portrayed. According to the respondents, the only reason to include homosexuals in the advertisements should be to normalize this type

of sexuality, and not strengthen the prejudices about them by labelling them with different characteristics, since it is highly likely that it could be transmitted to the perceptions of the world. The respondents gave many examples of negative stereotyping characteristics that advertising should avoid, a sample of these negative stereotypes are when one of the partners have to be the "man" and the other the "woman", when homosexual men are portrayed as feminine and often painting their nails, talking with a highly pitched voice, and dressing in "female clothes", and finally when homosexual women are portrayed as "masculine". Thus, most of these stereotypes are based on the idea that sexual orientation and gender-typical characteristics go hand in hand. They claimed that many have an existing image of how homosexuals behave and look like and therefore it is really good when there are advertisements that try to break this norm, whether it is by either having "dreamy scenarios", having more "gay vague" advertising, challenge norms in the mind of the consumer or just by changing the roles in terms of femininity and masculinity. Instead of portraying the homosexuals in stereotype-enhancing ways, the respondents argued that it would be better to portray homosexuals in the same way as heterosexuals are being portrayed as we are all equal. The respondents claimed that it is important to not enhance any type of stereotyping, and especially not in advertisements where people might learn appropriate roles and beliefs by observing how people are portrayed. The respondent's desire to strive toward greater gender equality and also smash antiquated conceptions about homosexuals is to serve distinct roles in society is a fact. Another example that the respondents brought up was when the advertisements are portrayed with a distorted image of what seems to be the "real life". The respondents mentioned the term "nuclear family" and argued that a "family" looks different for different people, and that companies should not take a stand on how a family should be constructed.

> *"It is a statement, where they put in their own idea of how a nuclear family should look like, for someone else, a family might not look the same." - Kim*

In summary, there are aspects of the five themes above where respondents have reacted either in a positive or negative manner toward the particular advertisements. The positive aspects are the following: connection to product or service, authentic scenarios and portrayals, scenarios that challenge the norm, such as dreamy scenarios or surprise moments, no categorisations of people, and non-stereotypical portrayal. In addition, the negative aspects are the following, no connection to product or service, unauthentic scenarios and portrayals, categorisation of people, and finally stereotypical portrayals.

4.3 Attitudes Toward Brands

All in all, homosexual-themed advertisements are considered good and the attitude toward the brand is positive, regardless of the company's intentions. After analysing how the respondents responded to the three different advertisements, most of the positive reactions reflected the attitude toward the brand in a positive way since as they claimed that the brand was thoughtful by choosing to feature homosexuals. Although, the positive and negative aspects of homosexual-themed advertisement showed to have an influence on the respondent's attitude toward the brand. When an advertisement had many of these positive aspects, such as "dreamy scenarios", the attitude toward the brand seem to be more positive. On the other hand, the more negative aspects an advertisement had, such as no connection to the product, the respondents seemed to have a more negative attitude toward the brand. This is in line with earlier mentioned theory, that points out that attitude toward the advertisement is strongly correlated with attitude toward the brand.

> *"Somehow it makes me think positively about the brand because they care about everyone. The brand is thoughtful." – Ditte*

Although the respondents are positive to this marketing communication strategy and think that diversity is an important type of engagement from the companies, they argued that they would not like the brand more just because of the homosexual-theme in their advertisements, compared to other brands that don't use this kind of strategy. However, the majority claimed that they would strongly dislike a brand that takes a stand against homosexuality, and it was considered as one of the worst things that they can do. When the respondents were hypothetically discussing companies that take a stand against homosexuals, a strong negative attitude toward them was explicitly expressed in comparison to those that implicitly choose not to include homosexuals in their advertising. As an example of a company that takes a stand against homosexuals, a pasta company that have expressed in media that they would never include homosexuals in their advertisements, was mentioned. The respondents claimed that this was an extremely negative stance for the company to take, and argued that it creates negative associations toward the brand.

After analysing the respondents' responses, it was obvious to us that they do not want to be associated with brands that stand against the rights that they believe in, or when their image of how the real life looks like is being portrayed differently. This can be aligned with the identity-theories. Since the company's stand against homosexuals does not go in line with their beliefs and attitudes, it is reasonable to assume that there will be no connection between the brand and their "self", and they will therefore respond less favourable to the advertisement. This could also be seen from the self-enhancing aspect as how the respondents do not want to be like.

> *"You do not want to get acquainted with brands that are racists or homophobes."*
> *– Charlie*

The advertisements have a great impact on the attitude toward the brand, but in accordance with the association memory model, we saw that the respondents had stored information about the brands, which influenced their attitudes toward them when exposed to them. Everything the respondents already knew about a brand affected how they perceived the advertisements. The respondents were familiar with all the brands in this study that use homosexual-themed advertising, and according to the theory this lowers the chances of influencing the attitude on the advertisements. The respondents, who had a prior attitude toward a certain brand, increased their attention toward the advertisement and evaluated it with their previous thoughts, feelings, associations, and experiences with the brand. For instance, this was noticed when the respondents claimed that they loved Halebop's advertisements, before even knowing which advertisement that was going to be showed.

> *"Halebop, their advertisements are the best! [...] I have an extremely positive view*
> *on the brand thanks to their advertisements. Back in the days, they differentiated*
> *themselves with inventive advertisements but today, they are all about anti-bullying,*
> *anti-racism, anti-homophobia and so on. I think I will automatically look up to the*
> *brand even more." – Charlie*

Before the respondents were exposed to the three homosexual-themed advertisements, one aspect was found interesting. Almost all respondents pointed out that there has been a positive shift in advertising featuring homosexuals, but no one could recall more than one brand that was behind any of the advertisements that they had seen. Most of them pointed out that they had seen homosexual-themed advertisements, but could not remember the brand behind it. This

could be seen as a result of that they do not feel targeted by the advertisements shown in mainstream media and therefore the advertisements are less accessible to them, as discussed in earlier sections. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that part of the advertisement, such as the brand name go unnoticed for the respondents, which is a negative non-target effect. This could also depend on the strength of an association link, which in accordance with the Association Theory, depend on what information a person can recall about a brand. So, if the respondent had a low brand association in general, or felt that there were no associations between the specific homosexual-themed advertisement and the brand, it could lead to a difficulty in recalling the brand. Additionally, some of the respondents argued that homosexuality is as natural as heterosexuality, and therefore they cannot recall a brand, as they do not pay more attention to homosexual-themed advertising than heterosexual-themed advertising.

"It could be that I don't notice the kind of advertising with those aspects [note by the author: homosexual-themed advertisement] or it is just because there are very few advertisements featuring homosexuals." – Kim

However, even if the respondents did not feel that the advertisements concerned them, some respondents argued that they felt connected to the brand and what they stand for. If they feel a cognitive connection between the brand and their "self" it could mean that they identify themselves with the brand. This can also be explained by the ideal self; if a person wants or wishes to be the kind of person that takes a stand in political and social issues, such as the right of homosexuals, they feel a connection to the brand that does this and respond more favourably to it, regardless if they feel attached to the advertisement or not.

"Advertising is about recognition, that you relate products and brands to yourself [...] People feel self-concept, that people wants to be perceived as something. If you buy from a brand that has an inclusive approach, you might do that because you want to be that kind of person." – Emma

To sum up this discussion about the respondent's attitude toward the brand, the one time the respondents would feel negatively about the brand is when the company express that they do not want to include portrayals of homosexuals in their advertisements. If a company chooses to use homosexual themes in their advertising, the respondents respond in a positive manner and can identify themselves with the brand. However, they argued that they would not like a brand

61

more just because of this strategy, compared to those companies that have a neutral stance. Additionally, previous experiences and associations of the brand has an impact on the attitude toward the brand.

4.4 The Social Impact of Homosexual-themed Advertisement

The positive and negative aspects of an advertisement had a huge impact on the attitude toward the brand even though other factors also affected, as discussed in the earlier section. As a result of that, a brand can be perceived in different ways; either as *responsibility taker* or *non-responsibility taker* or somewhere in-between. The brand was perceived as responsibility taker when the company had many of the positive aspects in their advertising. Moreover, the brand was perceived as non-responsibility taker when the company had many of the negative aspects in their advertisement.

Responsibility-taker (Positive) ⟷ Non-responsibility taker (Negative)

Image 6: Brand as responsibility taker or non-responsibility taker

The reason why brands can be seen as either responsibility takers or non-responsibility takers, is because companies have a persuasive power through advertising and can make a difference in society. This was also known among the respondents. According to the respondents, companies can use this power in a good way by challenging and changing existing norms of homosexuality and make the society more normalised. However, they also discussed that this power also can be abused, since companies can use advertising and their brands to influence the society negatively by creating a categorised society with different groupings, strengthened norms and stereotypes. In some cases, the respondents argued that it does not matter for what reason the companies decide to use homosexual-themed advertisement; if it is for their own good or because they actually care and want to help in the society. As long as they do not use the negative aspects in their advertisement, exposure of homosexuality can only have good outcome for the society.

"Today, I think there are many brands that take advantage of it [author's note: homosexual-themed advertisements] and I think they are smart by doing so. This will only do good, so it does not really matter. But I think they do it for the brand's own good." - Emma

The impact corporations have on the society was highly discussed among the respondents. Many believed that homosexual-themed advertising should come from those with higher power. Except for the fact that media can persuade people to purchase products and increase brand awareness, the corporations and media in general are perceived as having a lot of power and are the ones who can influence people when it comes to creating a better world. The majority of the respondents thought that homosexual-themed advertising should be a given strategy in marketing communication and that this type of engagement is good and important. According to the respondents, the companies in mainstream media need to promote diversity in order to show how the society looks like in reality. By portraying homosexuals in advertisement, it gives an honest image of how the society looks like. In accordance with the priming theory, corporations and media have the power to prime the viewers effectively. Whatever is shown in media is automatically believed to be of importance.

"I think it is really important, partly because people should see differences and see differences as similarities. That it is nothing weird, that people do not look the same, that everyone does not have the same sexual orientation. I think it has a crucial impact [...] It reflects how the society looks like in reality, therefore it is important that minority groups also get to feel that they are part of the society. To be seen daily, to see the discrepancy, affect more than you would think." - Olivia

The respondents argued that corporations can use their power in order to normalise the society, normalise the view of homosexuals and change existing norms, which is something that they all want since homosexuals are a "group of people" that are also a part of the society. They argued that the more you talk about something, the more normal it tends to get. This can be connected to both the priming effect and the cultivation effect that indicates that media and advertising portraying homosexuals in a positive and diverse way can lead to a positive memory of homosexuality and a more diverse view of the social reality.

"The more you see something, the more you will think it is okay and not taboo." - Ditte

"When people see things often, they get more used to it. The more you see something, the more you tend to like it. Or the more informed you get, the fear of the subject will decrease." - Charlotte.

In accordance with earlier theories, the majority of the respondents claimed that companies and advertising has a major impact on the general public's perceived reality in terms of diversity. Even if they personally did not think it would change their own purchase behaviour toward brands using this strategy, they agreed that they believed it would change the general public opinion toward homosexuality. Some respondents argued that homosexual-themed advertising can make homosexuals feel that they are a part of the society. Another "group of people" that was discussed to be affected by this kind of advertising were the ones with less positive attitude toward homosexuality. Especially the older generation are pointed out as being more conservative and against different sexual orientations. According to the participants, it is good that homosexual-themed advertising is increasing and getting more common, since there are many people that are hostile and homophobic toward homosexuality and therefore need to face it on a daily basis. If these people think homosexuality is wrong, they might change their attitude toward homosexuality if they get exposed to homosexual-themed advertisement. This goes in line with earlier mentioned theory about how advertising works as an explanation system of reality.

"I think it [author's note: homosexual-themed advertisement] has impact on the society. I think partly there is people who has a positive or neutral stance toward homosexuality, which you should have, that do not think it is a great deal. It is natural and even positive to include [author's note: homosexuals]. Those who are homophobes, might not be converted, but they might realise that homosexuals are included because of the rising acceptance, and therefore they should also be more accepting and opened." - Emma

Even if some advertisements had "dreamy scenarios", which might not portray realistic situations but still are perceived as positive, the respondents thought that it was a great idea as they claimed that it does not have to look like that in real life, as long as people see it in

64

advertising. Then, the consumers of the advertisement will eventually start to believe that it looks like that and start accepting it. Some of the respondents claimed that the absence of homosexuals in advertising would make them feel uncomfortable. This can also be connected to the cultivation theory, where it is said that the absence of a certain group of people in advertising may have the effect of making the viewers believe that the group is non-existing more or less.

"There are many out there that think homosexuality is wrong, and I believe that they need to see this kind of advertisement." - Ali

To sum up the last section of this chapter, brands using homosexual-themed advertisement can be seen as either responsibility takers or non-responsibility takers. Companies seem to have the persuasive power to make a difference in the society by normalising it, change existing norms and change the attitude toward homosexuality, especially for those people that are less supportive of homosexuality. If companies use this power in a positive way, they are seen as responsibility takers.

5. Conclusion

The implications of this study will be presented in this chapter. Initially, we want to remind the reader of the purpose and the methodological choices and procedures of the study. Later on, the most central implications are being discussed both from a theoretical perspective in relation to existing theories and from a practical perspective. Finally, this chapter will provide some practical recommendations and suggest areas for further research.

The aim of this thesis was to create a deeper understanding of the heterosexual consumers' responses toward homosexual-themed advertisements and additionally examine if these responses influenced heterosexual consumers' attitudes toward the brand, and if homosexual-themed advertisements had an impact on the society. In order to fulfil our purpose, we focused on a qualitative study by interviewing a small sample of eleven Swedish respondents, between 20-30 years, who all identified themselves as heterosexuals and spend much time watching television. Each respondent was during the in-depth interview provided with three different homosexual-themed advertisement seen in mainstream television. The three brands behind the advertisements are all Swedish retail brands and active in different markets such as fashion, telephone service and information service. What they all have in common, is that they target mass media consumers based on sexual orientation. The findings of this study are therefore not representative for a larger population, but we believe that this is a contribution to existing theories within the field of homosexual-themed advertisement from a consumer perspective. This study has resulted in a greater understanding of attitudinal responses toward the advertisement and the brand that use sexual segmentation in their advertisement. It has also gained insight in how advertising featuring homosexuals can have an impact on the society and affect the heterosexual public attitude toward homosexuals. The theories used in this study are more or less supported, and also contributes to existing theoretical knowledge. As a reminder of the research questions we have chosen to discuss our findings under each question separately, presented below.

- *How do heterosexual consumers respond to homosexual-themed advertisements in mainstream media?*

First of all, this study has resulted in a better understanding of which aspects that influence heterosexual consumers' responses toward homosexual-themed advertisement. We found the

respondents to be positive to homosexual-themed advertisement in general. However, there are some aspects in the advertisement that showed to affect whether they responded either in a positive or negative manner. Those aspects that resulted in positive responses are the following, connection to product or service, authentic scenarios and portrayals, scenarios that challenge norms; dreamy scenarios or surprise moments, no sexual categorisation, and non-stereotypical portrayals. Additionally, those aspects that resulted in negative responses are the following, no connection to product or service, inauthentic scenarios and portrayals, sexual categorisation, and stereotypical portrayals.

What was apparent after gathering and presenting the empirical material was that in order for the respondents to gain favourable attitude toward the brands using homosexual-themed advertisement, the respondents did not have to feel directly bonded to the advertisements, as long as the advertisements portray a realistic picture of the society; as a representation of how it looks like in today's society. The respondents felt that they, as heterosexuals, were positive to any kind of inclusion of different minority groups, as most of them had someone that they know that is a part of a minority group.

Even though the respondents reacted positively toward homosexual-themed advertisement, they felt that the advertisement were not intended for them, and felt excluded. Thus, the respondents felt that the advertisement did not target them as consumers. According to existing theory, it is assumed that non-target consumers feel excluded, offended, distracted or irritated and that they start criticising, rejecting or actively resisting the message of the advertisement (Lipman, 1991; Star, 1989; Scott, 1994; Greco, 1991). However, in this study we found out that this might not always be the case. When brands include minority groups, such as homosexuals, in their advertisements, the heterosexuals observe this and appreciate the engagement in terms of diversity. Thus, it did not result in negative responses as the positive reactions toward the company's engagement and thoughtfulness dominated. Even though the respondents did not feel targeted, we do not know if the company intend to "non-target" them. However, if they intend to non-target them, we can contradict some of the theoretical knowledge within target marketing.

Another theory that was contradicting was the study of Aaker et al. (1999) where they argued that advertisements that feature minority groups, which the viewer is not a member of, will not adopt favourable attitudes toward the advertisement. In this study, it is clear that even the ones

that are not members of the groups that are being featured in the advertisements, can have favourable attitude toward the advertisements. The reason can be for example the change in time, particularly when it comes to homosexuality, and also the age of the respondents. When Aaker did her study, same-sex marriage as for an example, was not allowed nor was it a discussed topic in many countries (Sveriges Radio, 2009; The Guardian, 2015). As for now, it is a topic that has received considerable attention in media and same-sex marriage is legalized in many countries, and this argument was also discussed by the respondents.

We strongly believe that this study can contribute to existing theories of how heterosexual consumers respond to homosexual-themed advertisement. Previous studies have shown that heterosexual consumers react less favourably to explicit homosexual advertising, due to their attitude toward homosexuality in general. Implicit homosexual advertisement has therefore been deemed to be the most appreciated type of advertisement for heterosexual consumers as it would not alienate them in the same way (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005). This study supports that heterosexual consumers react more positively to implicit advertisement, but the reason is contradictory to previous findings. The reason why some of the respondents preferred implicit homosexual advertising compared to explicit, was because they claimed that homosexuality should not be the main theme in the advertisement. However, our findings support the previous research by Hester and Gibson (2007), where they found that those consumers who were more accepting of homosexuality showed an even higher endorsement and more positive attitude toward brands after being exposed to their homosexual-themed advertisements.

- *How do these reactions influence the consumers' attitudes toward the brand?*

Second of all, a better understanding of how homosexual-themed advertisement can affect the attitude toward the brand has been achieved in this study. A number of previous studies (Batra & Ray, 1986; Holbrook & Batra, 1987; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Lutz et al., 1983; Haley & Balinger, 2000) has proven that attitude toward the brand is strongly correlated with the attitude toward the advertisement, which the findings of this study supports. However, the aspects that strongly affected how the respondents responded to the advertisement in general was found to have a huge impact on the attitude toward the brand. For instance, the more positive aspects a company have in their homosexual-themed advertisement, the more positive attitude toward the brand.

Based on identity theories, we found that in some cases the respondents could identify themselves with the brand instead of the advertisement itself. It became apparent that when a person wants to be identified with human rights such as, encouraging homosexuality or diversity in media, she or he will identify herself or himself with those brands that engage in these types of rights in society. If the respondents wish to be like the brand, it can be discussed from a self-enhancing perspective, where these attributes represent a person's ideal self (Higgins, 1987).

- *How can homosexual-themed advertisements influence the society?*

Lastly, we achieved a better understanding of the social impact that homosexual-themed advertisement can have on society. The findings from the empirical material support theories of advertising and corporation's impact on society. The reason why large, national corporations can be seen as either responsibility takers or non-responsibility takers, is because companies have a persuasive power through advertising and can make a difference in society and construct realities in the mind of the consumers by using different types of marketing communication. If they use this power in a good way, such as using positive aspects in their homosexual-themed advertisement, they can help normalise the society and create a more diverse society. With this kind of power, companies can influence the society and make a change on how reference groups view other groups of people. We found that it is important to avoid negative aspects in advertising, as it can strengthen stereotyped, unrealistic images of people, particularly those that belongs to minority groups. All respondents agreed on the fact that no one should ever be categorised with specific labels, and that it should be more focus on diversity and inclusion of everyone that is a part of the society instead.

Psychological and social studies about attitude change (e.g. Gross, 1991; Gerbner & Gross, 1976, Gerbner et al., 2002; Ratcliff & McKoon, 1988; Bond-Raacke et al., 2007) were supported according to this study. More realistic and positive portrayals of homosexuals in mainstream media deemed to change the public attitude towards homosexuality. In particular, homosexual-themed advertisement seemed to have an impact on those less supportive of homosexuality in accordance with both the Cultivation and the Priming theory. Moreover, during the process of our analysis, the respondents seemed to have a smaller perceived gap between people with different sexual orientations compared to elderly people. The respondents referred to the elderly people as people with a negative attitude toward homosexual-themed

advertisement. Another group in their studies that deemed to be affected by the advertisement was the target group itself; the homosexual community, due to the feeling of belongingness in the society

Moreover, respondents draw parallels to other groups of people that are numerically rare or historically has been considered less popular, such as plus size models and older models. If the companies have this persuasive power to change the public opinion of minority groups and create a more diverse world, they also have a huge social responsibility. According to this study, the companies can only gain positive reactions if they avoid negative aspects in their advertisement and focus on the positive ones. We found that it is important to have knowledge about how different segments react to mainstream advertising. Otherwise, there is a risk that the consumers will form negative attitudes toward the brand as non-responsibility taker, which might lead to a significant loss of potential customers.

From a practical perspective, this study has led to increased insights on how to better manage multiple sexual segments without creating, and at the same time avoiding so called negative non-target effects. This is more important than ever, as it is getting more popular to include minority groups in advertising and therefore important to know how to do this before implementing it. Marketers could benefit from working actively to better understand how the different sexual segments respond to advertising that use sexual segments in their advertisements. As mentioned in the methodological chapter, sexuality could be a sensitive and personal topic. Therefore, marketers should be careful when targeting different sexual segmentation, as it can easily offend people if it is not done properly. Thereof, marketers can make their advertising as effective as possible.

Due to the results of this study, just including minority groups randomly will obviously not cut it according to the respondents. Marketers are recommended to follow some criteria that need to be followed thoroughly, as this strategy clearly have its risks. One of the criterion, is that one has to consider not to enhance norms. Norms cannot be followed but rather be broken. If companies do this, it will signal to people; both consumer, corporations, organisations and the government, that they care for others and in turn for the society. This will help all segments, who think that it is important to care for the society, to feel identified with the brand behind the advertisement. This, because the brand seems to be caring and "one of us", as one of the

respondents said. Here, companies could be able not only to capture one segment, but several ones at the same time.

5.1 Further research

This research has limitations that afford further research within the field of homosexual-themed advertisement. First of all, this study could be replicated in several countries using respondents from different social groups and cultural contexts in order to contribute to consumer cultural theories. A comparison study between different age ranges could be an interesting perspective to further investigate, since younger heterosexual people in this study claim that elderly heterosexual people would react in a negative way due to their conservative point of view.

The respondents in this study argue that homosexuals would feel a stronger feeling of belongingness in the society if homosexual-themed advertisement became more common in mainstream media. According to our pilot study, mentioned in the methodological chapter (Berisha et al., 2015), homosexual respondents responded differently to the two shown advertisement, used in both studies, compared to the heterosexual respondents in this study. Bearing this in mind, a comparison study with the purpose of researching how homosexual and heterosexual consumer respond to same homosexual-themed advertisement would probably generate interesting findings and add insights to the research of homosexual-themed advertisement from both a heterosexual and homosexual perspective.

Another approach to research responses toward homosexual-themed advertisement and its impact on the brand and the society, could be to conduct a quantitative study. By having a larger sample and collecting numerical data, the results could be generalised to the target population. For instance, the degree of the relationship between different aspects in the advertisements and the attitude toward the brand could generate new insights by analysing correlation.

Lastly, one could also investigate if there is a difference in sex when talking about homosexuality. As many of the homosexual-themed advertisements shown in media today tend to include male gays, and rarely lesbians. This could be tested on both homosexuals as well as heterosexuals and see if the male gays or the lesbians are more preferred in media, and also why this is.

6. References

Aaker, J.L. (1999), The malleable self: the role of self expression in persuasion, Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 45-57.

Aaker, J. L., Brumbaugh, A. M. & Grier, S. A. (2000), Nontarget Markets and Viewer Distinctiveness: The Impact of Target Marketing on Advertising Attitudes, Journal of Consumer Psychology, 9 (3), pp. 127-140.

Adams, G. & Schvaneveldt, J. (1991), Understanding Research Methods (2nd edn). New York: Longman.

AdRespect Advertising Education Program (2015), Overview and History of the Global Gay & Lesbian Market. Available online: http://www.commercialcloset.org/common/news/reports/detail.cfm?classification=report&qID=4784&clientID=11064&topicID=384&subsection=resources&subnav=resources [Accessed: 2016-03-17].

Adressändring (2012), Adressändring Reklamfilm Paris - Missa ingen viktig post, [YouTube]. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXESZoM9p8c [Accessed: 2016-04-12].

Adressändring (2016), Om Adressändring. Available online: http://www.adressandring.se/kundtjanst/om-adressandring [2016-04-13].

Alvehus, J. (2013), Skriva uppsats med kvalitativ metod: en handbok, Stockholm: Liber.

Alvesson, M. & Sköldberg, K. (2015), Tolkning och reflektion: Vetenskapsfilosofi och kvalitativ metod, Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Anderson, J. R. (1983), The architecture of cognition, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Armstrong, D. (1997), Gay Consumers an Affluent Group, Rocky Mountain News, 10 (February).

Aronson, E (2011), The Social Animal, New York: Worth Publishers.

Audi, R. (1998), Epistemology: a contemporary introduction to the theory of knowledge, 2nd edition, London: Routledge.

Avgerinou, M. (2009), Re-viewing visual literacy in the "Bain d'Images" era. Techtrends, 53(2), 28-34.

Avgerinou, M. D., & R. Pettersson. (2011), Toward a Cohesive Theory of Visual Literacy. Journal of Visual Literacy 30: 1-19.

Baker, S. M., & Petty, R. E. (1994), Majority and minority influence: Source-position imbalance as a determinant of message scrutiny. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67 (1), 5-19.

Barry, A.N.S. (1997), Visual Intelligence, Perception, Image, and Manipulation in Visual Communication. New York, State University of New York Press.

Barry, T. E., & Howard, D. J. (1990), A review and critique of the hierarchy of effects in advertising. International Journal of Advertising, 9(2), 121-135.

Batra, R. & Ray, M. L. (1986), Affective Responses Mediating Acceptance of Advertising, Journal of Consumer Research, 13 (September), 234-249.

Bauer. R. A. & Greyser, S. A. (1968), Advertising in America: The Consumer View. Boston: Harvard University.

Belk, R. W. (1988), Possessions and the Extended Self, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 15, September, pp. 139-168.

Berisha, E., Sjögren, M. & Sölve, J. (2015), Pinkwashing or Pro-Diversity? Strategic Brand Management - Master Papers, 1st edition Student Papers, September - October.

Berger. P., & Luckman, T. (1966), The social construction of reality, London: Penguin Books.

Bhat, S., T. Leigh, & D. Wardlow. (1998), The Effect of Consumer Prejudices on Ad Processing: Heterosexual Consumers' Responses to Homosexual Imagery in Ads, Journal of Advertising 28 (1): 55–68.

Biehal, G., Stephens, D., & Curlo, E. (1992), Attitude toward the Ad and brand choice, Journal of Advertising, Vol xxi (3), 19-36.

Björn Borg (2008), Björn Borg - Love For All, [Youtube]. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JX4ug55rh5U [Accessed: 2016-04-12].

Björn Borg (2016a), About Björn Borg. Available online: http://corporate.bjornborg.com/en/about-bjorn-borg-0 [Accessed: 2016-04-12].

Björn Borg (2016b), Björn Borg Shows That Love Is For All In A New Campaign Video, Press release, 2008-12-03. Available online:

http://investors.bjornborg.com/index.php?p=press&s=detail&afw_id=1120198&afw_lang=en
[Accessed: 2016-04-12].

Bonds-Raacke, J. M., Cady, E. T., Schlegel, R., Harris, R. J., & Firebaugh, L. (2007), Remembering gay/lesbian media characters: Can Ellen and Will improve attitudes toward homosexuals?, Journal of Homosexuality, 53(3), 19-34.

Borgerson, J.L., Schroender, J.E., Blomberg, B. & Thorssén, E. (2006), The Gay Family in the Ad: Consumer Responses to Non-traditional Families in Marketing Communication, Journal of Marketing Management, 2006, 22, 955-978.

Brown, S. P. & Stayman, D. M. (1992), Antecedents and Consequences of Attitude Toward the Ad: A Meta-analysis, Journal of Consumer Research, 19 (1), 34-51.

Bryman, A & Bell, E. (2011), Business Research Methods, Third edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burke, M. C., & Edell, J. A. (1989), The impact of feeling on Ad-based affect and cognition, Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 26 (1), 69-83.

Byron, H. W., Amold, H.J. & Jhon, A.A. (1974), Fundamentals of Dairy Chemistry, The Avi Publishing Company Inc, 2nd edition, pp. 2-8.

Cacioppo. J. T. & Petty, R. E. (1985), Central and Peripheral Routes to Persuasion: The Role of Message Repetition, in Psychological Process and Advertising Effects, L. F. Alwitt & A. A. Mitchell, eds. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 91-111.

Campbell, M. C., & Keller, K. L. (2003), Brand familiarity and advertising repetition effects, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 30(2), 292-304.

Calzo, J. P. & Ward, M.L. (2009), Media exposure and viewers' attitudes toward homosexuality: Evidence for mainstreaming or resonance?, Journal of Broadcasting Electronic Media, 53(2), 280-299.

Chasin, A. (2000), Selling Out – The Gay and Lesbian Movement Goes to Market, New York: Palgrave.

Cialdini, R. B. (2005), Påverkan - teori och praktik, Malmö: Liber AB.

Clark, D. (2000), Commodity Lesbianisn, In: Scanlon, Jennifer (ed), The Gender and Consumer Culture Reader, New York: New York University Press, pp. 372-387.

Dahlén, M. & Lange, F. (2011), Optimal marknadskommunikation, 2nd edition. Malmö, Liber.

Dake, D. (2005), Aesthetics theory, na.

Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2005), The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research in Denzin, N.K., Lincoln, Y.S. ed. The Sage handbook of qualitative research, 3rd edition, California: Sage Publication, pp. 1-32.

Diener, E., & Crandall, R. (1978), Ethics in Social and Behavioral Research. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dines, G. & Humez, J. (1994), Gender Race and Class in Media, London: Sage.

Dubois, A & Gadde, L-E. (2002), Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research, Journal of Business Research 55 (2002) 553-560.

Douglas, S.P. & Craig, C.S. (1997), The Changing dynamic of Consumer Behavior: Implications for Cross-Cultural Research, International Journal of Research in Marketing, 14 (October), 379-395.

Eagly, A.H. & Chaiken, S. (1993), The psychology of Attitudes, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Jackson, P. (2012), Management Research. Sage: London.

Elliott, G.R. (1990), The marketing concept: necessary but sufficient?, European Journal of Marketing, 24(8) pp. 20-31.

Elliott, R. & Elliott, C. (2005), Idealized images of the male body in advertising: a reader-response exploration, Journal of Marketing Communications, 11:1, 3-19.

Fabrigar, L. R & Petty, R. E. (1999), The role of the affective and cognitive bases of attitudes in susceptibility to affectively and Cognitively based persuasion, Personality and Social Psychology Bullentin: Vol. 25(3), 363–381.

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975), Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2011), Case Study, in Norrman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 4th edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2011, Chapter 17, pp 301-316.

Fortin, D. & Uncles, M. (2011), The first decade: emerging issues of the twenty-first century in consumer marketing, Journal of Consumer Marketing, Vol. 28 Iss 7 pp. 472 - 475.

Fouts G. & Inch, R. (2005), Homosexuality in TV situation comedies: Characters and verbal comments, Journal of Homosexuality, 49(1), 35-45.

Frege, C. M. (2005), Varieties of Industrial Relations Research: Take-over, Convergence or Divergence?, British Journal of Industrial Relations, 43(2): 179–207.

Friestad, M. &Wright, P. (1994), The persuasion knowledge model: How people cope with persuasion attempts, Journal of Consumer Research, 21, 1-31.

Frunză, M. (2015), Advertising, Gender Stereotypes and Religion. A Perspective from the Philosophy of Communication, Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies, vol. 14, issue 40 (Spring): 72-91.

Fugate, D. L. (1993), Evaluating the US male homosexual and lesbian population as viable target market segment: review with implications, Journal of Consumer Marketing, Vol. 10 Iss 4 pp. 46 - 57.

Gardner, M.P. (1985), Does Attitude Toward the Ad Affect Brand Attitude Under a Brand Evaluation Set?, Journal of Marketing Research, 22 (May), 192-8.

Gardyn, R. (2001), A market kept in the closet. American Demographics, 23(11), 36-44.

Gerbner, G., & Gross, L. (1976), Living with television: The violence profile, Journal of Communication, 26, 173–199.

Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., Signorielli, N., & Shanahan, J. (2002), Growing up with television: Cultivation processes. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), Media effects: Advances in theory and research, 2nd edition, pp. 43–68, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967), The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. Chicago: Aldine.

Glockman, A. & Reed, B. (1997), Homo Economics – Capitalism, Community, and Lesbian and Gay Life, London: Routledge.

Gold, R. L. (1958), Roles in Sociological Fieldwork, Social Forces, 36: 217–23.

Greco, A. J. (1989), Representation of the elderly in advertising: Crisis or inconsequence. Journal of Consumer Marketing, 6, 37-44.

Green, M. J., & Myers, K. R. (2010), Graphic medicine: use of comics in medical education and patient care. BMJ, 340, c863.

Gresham, Larry G. & Terence A. Shimp (1985), "Attitude Toward the Advertisement and Brand Attitudes: A Classical Conditioning Perspective," Journal of Advertising, 14 (1), 10-17.

Grier, S., & Brumbaugh, A. (1999), Noticing cultural differences: Ad meanings created by target and non-target markets, Journal of Advertising, 28, 79–93.

Griffin, E. (2012), A First Look at Communication Theory, 8th edition, McGraw- Hill: New York, 205-207.

Groom, C.J. & Pennebaker, J.W. (2005), The Language of Love: Sex, Sexual Orientation, and Language Use in Online Personal Advertisement, Sex roles, Vol.52, No. 7/8, April.

Gross, L. (1991), Out of the mainstream: Sexual minorities and the mass media, Journal of Homosexuality, 21, 19–46.

Gross, L. (1994), What is wrong with this picture? Lesbian women and gay men on television, In R. J. Ringer (Ed.), Queer words, queer images: Communication and the construction of homosexuality (pp. 143–156), New York: New York University Press.

Grubb, E.L. & Grathwohl, H.L. (1967), Consumer Self-Concept, Symbolism and Market Behavior: A theoretical Approach, Journal of Marketing, 31 (October), 22-27

Guldägget (2016a), Om Guldägget. Available online: http://guldagget.se/om-guldagget/ [Accessed: 2016-04-13].

Guldägget (2016b), Vinnare. Available online: http://guldagget.se/vinnare/paris/ [Accessed: 2016-04-13].

Halebop (2013), Halebop - Hockey, [Youtube]. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FuvCVdjsRk4 [Accessed: 2016-04-12].

Halebop (2016a), Om Halebop, Available online: https://www.halebop.se/om-halebop [2016-04-12].

Halebop (2016b), Varumärke. Available online: http://kampanj.halebop.se/varumarke/ [2016-04-12].

Haley, R. I. & Baldinger, A. L. (2000), The ARF Copy Research Validity Project. Journal of Advertising Research, 31(2), p. 11-32.

Hamilton, D. L., & Sherman, J. W. (1994), Stereotypes. In R. S. Wyer, Jr., & T. K. Srull (Eds.), Handbook of Social Cognition, 2nd edition, Vol.2, pp. 1-68.

Harling, K. (2002), An overview of case study. Available online: http://www.farmfoundation.org/news/articlefiles/1028-1_harling.pdf [2016-04-18]

Herek, G. M. (2002), Gender Gaps in Public Opinion about Lesbians and Gay Men, Public Opinion Quarterly, 66, pp. 40-66.

Herek, G. M., Widaman, K. F. & Capitanio, J. P. (2005), When sex equals AIDS: Symbolic stigma and heterosexual adults' inaccurate beliefs about sexual transmission of AIDS, Social Problems, 52, 15–37.

Hester, J. B. & Gibson, R (2007), Consumer Responses to Gay-Themed Imagery in Advertising, Advertising and Society Review 8 (2).

Higgins, E.T. (1987), Self-Discrepancy: A Theory Relating Self and Affect. Psychological Review. 94 (3), pp. 319-340.

Hill, R. P. & Michael B. M. (1986), Measuring Emotional Responses to Advertising, in Advances in Consumer Research. Vol. 13, R. J. Lutz, ed. Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 164-9.

Hofstede, G. (1984), Cultural Dimensions In Management And Planning, Asia Pacific Journal of Management, January, pp. 82-99.

Holbrook, M. B. & Batra, R. (1987), Assessing the Roles of Emotions as Mediators of Consumer Responses to Advertising, Journal of Consumer Research, 14 (December), 404-419.

Houston, R. H. (2004), Other Mothers: Framing the Cybernetic Construction(s) of the Postmodern Family, Consumption Markets & Culture, 7 (3), pp. 191-209.

Hoyer. W. D., & MacInnis. D. J. (1997), Consumer Behaviour, Houghton Mifflin (Boston), U.S.A.

Hoyer. W. D., & MacInnis. D. J. (2001), Consumer Behaviour, 2nd edition, Houghton Mifflin (Boston), U.S.A.

Huang, R., & Chen, D. (2015), Does environmental information disclosure benefit waste discharge reduction? Evidence from China. Journal of Business Ethics, 129(3), 535–552.

Ivory, H. A., Gibson, R., & Ivory, J. D. (2009). Gendered relationships on television: Portrayals of same-sex and heterosexual couples, Mass Communication & Society, 12(2), 170-192.

Jaffe, L. (1991), Impact of positioning and sex-role identity on women's responses to advertising, Journal of Advertising Research, 31, 57–64.

James, W (1992), The Principles of Psychology: Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica.

Kates, S. M. (1998), Twenty Million New Customers: Understanding Gay Men's Consumer Behavior, New York: Haworth Press.

Kates, S. M. (1999), Making the Ad Perfectly Queer: Marketing "Normality" to the Gay Men's Community, Journal of Advertising, 28 (1), pp. 25-37.

Kates, S. M. (2000), Out of the closet and out on the street!: Gay men and their brand relationships. Psychology & Marketing, 17, 493–513.

Klein, N. (2010), No Logo, London: HarperCollins.

Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., & Starr, R.G. (1991), Principles of marketing, 5th edition, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kotler, P. & Keller, K. L. (2012), Marketing Management, 14th edition, Global edition, Pearson Education.

Kover, A. J. (1995), Copywriters' Implicit Theories of Communication: An Exploration, Journal of Consumer Research, 21 (March), 596-611.

Krugman, H., E, (1965), The impact of Television Advertising: Learning Without Involvement, Public Opinion Quarterly, 29 (Fall), 349-356.

Lafky, S., Duffy, M., Steinmaus, M. & Berkowitz, D. (1996), Looking through Gendered Lenses: Female Stereotyping in Advertisements and Gender Role Expectations, J&MC Quarterly, vol. 73, nr. 2, pp. 379-388

Larsson, R. (2013), Kärlek är kärlek och i det här fallet råkar det vara mellan två killar, QX Förlag AB, 5 april. http://www.qx.se/Xtra/attityd/23330/karlek-ar-karlek-och-i-det-har-fallet-rakar-det-vara-mellan-tva-killar [Accessed: 2016-04-12]

Laverty, S. M. (2003), Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations, International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 2(3).

Lee, B., Collier, P. M., & Cullen, J. (2007), Reflections on the Use of Case Studies in the Accounting, Management and Organizational Disciplines, Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, 2(3): 169–78.

Levy, S. J. (1986), Meanings in Advertising Stimuli. In Advertising and Consumer Psychology, Vol. 3, Jerry Olson and Keith Sentis, eds. New York: Praeger Press, 214-226.

Lipman, J. (1991), Stroh ad campaign spins put of control, Wall Street Journal, p. B6.

Lutz, R., J. (1985), Affective and Cognitive Antecedents of Attitude towards the Ad: A conceptual framework, Psychological Processes and Advertising Effects: Theory, Research, and Applications, Linda Allowed and Andrew Mitchell, eds, Hillsdale, NJ.

Lutz, R.J., MacKenzie, S.B. & Belch, G.E. (1983), Attitude Toward the Ad as a Mediator of Advertising Effectiveness: Determinants and Consequences, Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 10, R. P. Bagozzi & A. M. Tybout, eds. Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research, 532-9.

Machleit, K. A., & Wilson, R. D. (1988), Emotional feeling and attitude toward the advertisement: the roles of brand familiarity and repetition, Journal of Advertising, Vol. 17(3), 27-34.

Machleit, K. A., & Allen, C. T. (1990), Measuring and modeling brand interest as an alternative Aad effect with familiar brands, Advance in Consumer Research, Vol. 17, 223-230.

MacInnis D.J., & Jaworski B.J. (1989), Information processing from advertisements: Toward an integrative framework, Journal of Marketing 53(10): 1-23.

MacKenzie, S. B., Lutz, R.J. & Belch, G.E. (1986), The Role of Attitude Toward the Ad as a Mediator of Advertising Effectiveness: A Test of Competing Explanations, Journal of Marketing Research, 23 (May), 130-43.

MacKenzie, S. B., & Lutz, R. J. (1989), An Empirical Examination of Attitude Toward the Ad in an Advertising Pretest Context, Journal of Marketing 53, 2 (1989): 48-65.

Malhotra, N.K & Birks, D.F. (2006), Marketing Research: An applied approach, 3rd edition, Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Limited.

McArthur, L. & Resko, B. (1975), The Portrayal of Men and Women in American Television Commercials, The Journal of Social Psychology, vol. 97, pp. 209-220.

McGivern, Y. (2009), The practice of market research, 3rd edition, Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

McGuire, W., McGuire, C. V., & Winton, W. (1979), Effects of household sex composition on the salience of one's gender in the spontaneous self-concept, Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 15, 77-90.

McGuire, W. (1984), Search for the self: Going beyond self-esteem and the reactive self. In R. A. Zucker, J. Aronoff, & A. I. Rabin (Eds.), Personality and the prediction of behaviour (pp. 73-120), New York: Academic.

McNamara T. P. (1994), Theories of priming: II. Types of primes, Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition, 20(3), 507-520.

Mehren, E. (2004), Acceptance of Gays Rises Among New Generation, Los Angeles Times, 22 April, A1.

Merriam, S.B. (2009), Qualitative Research: A guide to Design and Implementation, 2nd edition, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mertens, D.M. & Ginsberg, P.E. (2009), The Handbook of Social Research Ethics, California: Sage Publications.

Meuhling D. & Laczniak R. (1988), Advertising's Immediate and Delayed Influence on Brand Attitudes: Considerations AcrossMessage- Involvement Levels, Journal of Advertising Vol. 17 Issue 4, p23-34. 12p.

Mick, D.G. & Buhl, C. (1992), A Meaning-Based Model of Advertising Experiences, Journal of Consumer Research, 19 (December), 317-338.

Miller, C. (1995), Top Marketers Take Bolder Approach in Targeting Gays, Marketing News, 28, 4 (July), 1-2.

Miller, K. (2005), Theories of message processing, Chapter 8, Communication theories: perspectives, processes, and contexts. McGraw-Hill. p. 129.

Mitchell. A. A. & Olson, J. C. (1981), Are Product Attribute Beliefs the Only Mediator of Advertising Effects on Brand Attitude? Journal of Marketing Research, 18 (August), 318- 32.

Mitchell. A. A. (1986), The Effects of Verbal and Visual Components of Advertisements on Brand Attitudes and Attitude Toward the Advertisement, Journal of Consumer Research, 13 (June), 12-24.

Moore, D. L. & Hutchinson, J. W. (1983), The Effects of Ad Affect on Advertising Effectiveness, in Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 10 (1), 526-531.

MMS (2015), Årsrapport. Available online: http://mms.se/wp-content/uploads/_dokument/rapporter/tv-tittande/ar/Årsrapporter/Årsrapport%202015.pdf [Accessed: 2016-04-03].

Netzley, S. B. (2010), Visibility that demystifies: Gays, gender, and sex on television, Journal of Homosexuality, 57, 968-986.

Nicholson, J (1999), Big National Advertisers Are Eyeing Gay Press, Editor & Publisher, Vol. 132, No. 11, 13 (March).

Oakenfull, G. K. & Greenlee, T.B. (2005), Queer Eye for a Gay Guy: Using Market-Specific Symbols in Advertising to Attract Gay Consumers Without Alienating the Mainstream, Psychology and Marketing 22 (5): 421–439.

Oakenfull, G. K., McCarthy, M.S., & Greenlee, T.B. (2008), Targeting a Minority Without Alienating the Majority: Advertising to Gays and Lesbians in Mainstream Media, Journal of Advertising Research 48: 191–198.

Osborn, A. (1999), Heeding the voice of the community, The Daily Telegraph, 27 (July), p. 32.

Oskamp, S. (1997), Attitudes and Opinions, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Park, C. W. & Lessig, V.P. (1977), Students and Housewives: Differences in Susceptibility to Reference Group Influence, Journal Consumer Psychology, 4 (September), 102-110.

Park, C. W. & Young, S. M. (1986), Consumer Response to Television Commercials: The Impact of Involvement and Background Music on Brand Attitude Formation, Journal of Marketing Research, 23 (February), 11- 24.

Patton, M.Q. (2002), Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods (3rd edition), Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Peñaloza, L. (1996), We're Here, We're Queer, and We're Going Shopping! A Critical Perspective on the Accommodation of Gays and Lesbians in the U.S. Marketplace, Journal of Homosexuality, 31 (2), 9-41.

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986), The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion, In E. l. Berkowitz (Ed.), Communication and persuasion (pp. 1–24), New York: Springer.

Petty R. E., Fazio RH, & Briñol P, (2009), Attitudes: Insights from the New Implicit Measures, New York: Psychol. Press.

Phelps, J. E., & Hoy, M. G. (1996), The Aad-Ab-PI Relationship in children: the impact of brand familiarity and measurement timing, Psychology & Marketing, Vol. 13(1), 77-101.

Ratcliff R., & McKoon G. (1988), A Retrieval theory of priming in memory. Psychological Review, 95(3), 385-408.

Ray, M. L., A. G. Sawyer, M. L. Rothschild, R. M. Heeler, E. C. Strong, & J. B. Reed. (1973), Marketing Communication and the Hierarchy of Effects, in P. Clarke,' edition, New Models for Mass Communication Research (Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage).

Ringhold, D. J. (1995), Social criticisms of target marketing: Process or product. American Behavioral Scientist, 38 (4), 578-592.

Robson, C. (1993), Real World research: a resource of social scientists and practitioner-researchers, Oxford: Blackwell.

Robson, C. (2002), Real World Research (2nd edition), Oxford: Blackwell.

Rohlinger, Deana A. (2002), Eroticizing Men: Cultural Influences on Advertising and Male Objectification, Sex Roles, 46 (3/4), pp. 61-74.

Rose, G. (2007), Visual methodologies: An introduction to the interpretation of visual materials, 2nd edition, London: Sage.

Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R., Klinger, M., & Roskos-Ewoldsen, B. (2007), Media Priming. In R. W. Preiss, B. M. Gayle, N. Burrell, M. Allen, & J. Bryant (Eds.), In Mass media effects research: Advances through meta-analysis, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Rothbart, M., Fulero, S., Jensen, C., Howard, J., & Birrell, B. (1978), From individual to group impressions: Availability heuristics in stereotype formation, Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 14, 237-255.

Ryan, G. W. & Bernard, H.R. (2003), Techniques to Identify Themes. Field Methods, Vol. 15, No. 1, (February), pp. 85-109.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009), Research Methods for Business Students, 5th edition, Edinburgh, UK, Pearson Education limited.

Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007), Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models, Journal of Communication, 57, 9-20.

Schroeder, J. E. (2002), Visual Consumption, New York: Routledge.

Schwartz, Mark S., & Archie B. Carroll (2008), Integrating and Unifying Competing and Complementary Frameworks: The Search for a Common Core in the Business and Society Field, Business and Society 47, no. 2 (June): 148-86.

Scott, L. M. (1994), The Bridge From Text to Mind: Adapting Reader-Response Theory to Consumer Research, Journal of Consumer Research, 21 (December), 461-480.

Seidman, I. (2006), Interviewing as Qualitative research: a guide for researchers in education and the social science, New York: Teachers College Press.

Sender, K. (2006), Queens for a day: Queer Eye for the Straight Guy and the Neoliberal Project, Critical Studies in Media Communication, 23(2), 131-151.

Shimp, Terence A. (1981), Attitude Toward the Ad as a Mediator of Consumer Brand Choice, Journal of Advertising, 10 (2), 9-15.

Smith, E. A., & Malone, R.E. (2003), The Outing of Philip Morris: Advertising Tobacco to Gay Men, American Journal of Public Health 93 (6): 988–993.

Smith, N.C. & Quelch, J.A. (1993), Ethics in Marketing, USA: Irwin.

Solomon, M, Bamossy, G., & Askegaard, S. (2002), Consumer Behaviour: A European Perspective, Harlow, UK: Prentice Hall.

Spalter, A. & van Dam, A. (2009), Digital visual literacy, Theory into Practice, 47(2), 93-101.

Star, S. H. (1989), Marketing and Its Discontents, Harvard Business Review, (12), 148-154.

Strand, D. (1998), Civil liberties, civil rights, and stigma: Voter attitudes and behavior in the politics of homosexuality. In G. Herek (Ed.) Stigma and sexual orientation: Understanding prejudice against lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals (pp. 108–137), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (2008), Basic of Qualitative Research, 3rd edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sveriges Radio (2009), Gays Win Marriage Right, 1 (April). Available online: http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=2739765 [Accessed: 2016-04-14]

Swisher, K. (1990), Gay Spending Power Draws More Attention, Washington Post, Vol.113, 18 (June), Washington Business, 1.

Tharp, M. (2001), Marketing and consumer identity in multicultural America, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

The Björn Borg Group (2015), Björn Borg Annual Report 2014. Available online: http://corporate.bjornborg.com/files/press/bjornborg/BB_AR_2014_UK.pdf [Accessed: 2016-04-12].

The Guardian (2015), Gay marriage declared legal across the US in historic supreme court ruling. Available Online: http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/jun/26/gay-marriage-legal-supreme-court [Accessed: 2016-03-21].

Timmerman, S. & Tavory, I. (2012), Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis, Sociological Theory, 30 (3), 167-186.

Tinic, Serra A. (1997), United colors and united meanings: Benetton and the commodification of social issues, Journal of Communication 47, no. 3: 3-25.

Titchen, A. & Hobson, D. (2005), Phenomenology, in Somekh, B and Lewin, C., eds., Research Methods in the Social Sciences, California: Sage Publications.

Trumbo, J. (1999), Visual literacy and science communication, Science communication, 20(4), 409-425.

Trumbo, J. (2000), Essay: Seeing Science Research Opportunities in the Visual Communication of Science, Science Communication, 21(4), 379-391.

Turner J.C. (1991), Social Influence, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Tuten, Tracy L. (2005), The Effect of Gay-friendly and Non-gay-friendly Cues on Brand Attitudes: A Comparison of Heterosexual and Gay/lesbian Reactions, Journal of Marketing Management, Vol. 21 (3/4), pp. 441-461.

Um, N-H., Kim, K-O., Kwon, E-S. & Wilcox, D (2015), Symbols or icons in gay-themed ads: How to target gay audience, Journal of Marketing Communications, 21:6, 393-407.

Valenzuela, S. (2009), Variations in media priming: The moderating role of knowledge, interest, news attention, and discussion, Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 86(4), 756-776.

Wardlow, D. L. (1996), Gays, Lesbians, and Consumer Behavior – Theory, Practice and Research issues in Marketing, Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press.

Wilke, M. (1997), Big Advertisers Join Move to Embrace Gay Market, Advertising Age, 4 (August).

Zhang, Y. & Buda, R. (1999), Moderating Effects of Need for Cognition on Responses to Positively versus Negatively Framed Advertising Messages, Journal of Advertising, 28:2, 1-15.

Yin, K. R. (1994), Case study research: Design and methods, 2nd edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.

Yin K. R. (2003), Case Study Research; Design and Method, 3rd edition, Sage Publications.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 - Interview Guide Swedish Version

Introduktion

Huvudfrågor

Erfarenheter och åsikter om de utvalda varumärkena

1. Vad har du för erfarenhet och åsikt om Varumärke X generellt?
2. Hur uppfattar du Varumärke X, vad gäller deras ställningstagande i samhället?

Erfarenheter och åsikter om de utvalda varumärkena

3. Har du märkt någon förändring på senare tid när det kommer till reklam som inkluderar minoritetsgrupper?
4. Vad har du för relation till homosexualitet?
5. Vad har du för ställning till reklam som inkluderar homosexuella? Varför?
6. Hade du tyckt om ett varumärke mer om de inkluderade homosexuella i sin reklam? Varför?
7. Kan du nämna någon företag som använder sig av reklam som inkluderar homosexuella?
8. Tror du det har någon påverkan på samhället? I så fall vad för typ av påverkan?

Presentera stimuli – tre olika reklamfilmer

Attityd och åsikter om de utvalda reklamfilmerna

9. Vad tycker ni om denna reklamfilm?
10. Vad tycker du om varumärket om du enbart tar hänsyn till denna reklamen?
11. Vilken reklamfilm och varumärke tycker du bäst om?

Diskussion om socialt engagemang med avseende på mångfald

12. Varför tror du ett företag använder sig av reklam som inkluderar homosexuella?
13. Tror du det kan bli för mycket politiskt korrekt? Varför?
14. Hur tror du reklam kommer att se ut om 5-10 år?

Avslutning

Appendix 2 - Interview Guide English Version

Introduction

Main body

Experiences and opinions about the chosen brands

1. What kind of experiences and opinions do you have towards Brand X in general?
2. How do you experience Brand X in terms of their standpoint in society?

Experiences and opinions with homosexual-themed advertisement

3. When it comes to advertisement portraying minority groups, have you noticed any changes lately?
4. What kind of relationship do you have towards homosexuality?
5. What is your stance towards homosexual-themed advertisement? Why?
6. Would you like a brand more if it would have homosexual-themed advertisement? Why?
7. Can you mentioned any company that use homosexual-themed advertisement?
8. What kind of implications do you think it has on society?

Presentation of stimulus – three different advertisements

Attitude towards the selected advertisements and brands

9. What do you think of this advertisement?
10. What do you think of the brand solely in respect to this advertisement?
11. Which advertisement and brand did you like the most?

General discussion about social engagement in terms of diversity

12. Why do you think brands use homosexual-themed advertisement?
13. Do you think it can be too much focus on being "politically correct"? Why?
14. How do you think advertisements will look like in 5-10 years?

Closing part