



**LUND UNIVERSITY**  
School of Economics and Management

Department of Business administration

BUSN39

Degree Project in Global Marketing

Spring semester 17

# The male vegetarian

A study about advertising's ability to change social norms

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## **Abstract**

**Title:** The male vegetarian. A study about advertising's ability to change social norms.

**Seminar date:** 2017-05-30

**Course:** BUSN39 Degree Project in Global Marketing - Master Level, 15 University Credit Points (UCP) or ECTS-credits

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**Key words:** vegetarian, masculinity, attributes, social norms, purchase intention.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this study was to investigate if males' attraction to vegetarian products can be improved when certain stimuli was used in advertising. It explored the effect of including masculine attributes and a normative statement in advertisements, as well as examined which of the attributes that potentially could achieve an increased attraction most effectively.

### **Methodology:**

This study took an ontological approach of internal realism and a positivistic epistemological standpoint. The research process was deductive and the quantitative method used had an experimental design. A convenience sample method was used and the sample, consisting of male consumers in Sweden, was divided into nine groups. Each group received a survey with advertisements that contained different stimuli. The formulated hypotheses were analysed with an ANOVA.

### **Theoretical perspectives:**

The theoretical framework in this study consisted of theory regarding behavioural decision theory, social marketing and attributes in advertising. The theory regarding behavioural decision-making concerns how consumers make purchase decisions. In this study the Dual Mediation Hypothesis was explained. Social marketing regards how advertising can be used to change social norms by the use of different descriptive and injunctive normative messages. Finally, several gender-based attributes that can be used in advertising to communicate masculinity or femininity were presented.

### **Conclusions:**

This study concluded that different masculine and normative stimuli in advertising do not affect males in the evaluation of vegetarian products. The result also indicated that there might be a low connection between males, meat and masculinity in Sweden.

## Acknowledgements

This thesis marks the end of our four years at Lund University and we would like to thank the people who helped us through these years and all those who gave us the invaluable knowledge we bring with us when we now leave.

We would especially like to thank our supervisor Johan Jansson who helped and guided us in the process of conducting the study and writing this thesis.

In addition, we would also like to thank all the people who helped us during the times of writing this thesis, who contributed with insights and comments, as well as all those who took the time to fill in our survey.

Lund, 24 May, 2017

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Gabriella Svensson

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Julia Svensson

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Men and meat have a strong and long lasting connection. Historically, and across cultures, men went out hunting in order to provide their families with meat (Rozin et al., 2012). Often, meat has been restricted to primary being a men's diet, with women and children being allowed to eat it only if there were left overs (Rozin et al., 2012). Today, meat has come to be an essential part of most western people's diet, where a meal without meat is not seen as a real meal (Fiddes, 1991; Sobal, 2005). This is especially true for men. Real men eat meat (Nath, 2011).

Today, however, we are faced with environmental threats and concerns. The need for a decrease in meat consumption across the globe is crucial (Jordbruksverket, 2013; Livsmedelsverket, 2017; WWF, 2016). The large consumption of meat around the world causes a great environmental impact due to an increased use of pesticides in the meat production, a reduced biodiversity and greenhouse gas emission (WWF, 2016). In fact, around 15 % of the emission of greenhouse gases in the world today is caused by the meat production (Livsmedelsverket, 2017), mainly due to the large amount of land that is needed to grow animal fodder (Jordbruksverket, 2013). The environmental impact constitutes one of the main reasons for people who eat, or want to eat, vegetarian food to a greater extent. Other common reasons for choosing a completely vegetarian diet or to eat less meat is because of animal concerns and that it is perceived to be healthier for the human body (Beardsworth & Keil, 1991; Demoskop, 2014; Fox & Ward, 2008; Rozin, Markwith & Stoess, 1997). In fact, a high consumption of red meat increases the risks of cardiovascular diseases and certain forms of cancer (Jordbruksverket, 2013; Livsmedelsverket, 2017). This further supports the need for lower meat consumption and an adoption of a more vegetarian diet.

Currently, there are about 375 million vegetarians in the world (Friends of the Earth Europe, 2014), and the interest of vegetarian food is increasing in several places. In Sweden, the part of the population that consider themselves to be vegetarian or vegan has increased from 6% to 10% between the years of 2009 and 2014 (Demoskop, 2014). According to research done on behalf of the Swedish company Axfood almost every second Swede eats vegetarian a few times a week and 24% are planning to decrease their meat intake the coming year (Axfood, 2016).

Taking these numbers into account, companies producing and selling vegetarian products are faced with great opportunities. Still, males eat meat to a greater extent than females (Livsmedelsverket, 2012), and they have a lower interest in eating more vegetarian food (Demoskop, 2014). This might depend on the strong connection between men and meat. Hence, companies do not succeed in changing the norm regarding men as meat eaters that exists in the western world today. However, communication, and thereby advertising, possesses the ability to influence and form the perception of social norms in the society (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005). If messages in advertisements are formed correctly, using different kinds of normative approaches, they can change people's behaviours (Schultz et al., 2007).

A possible way for companies to approach the problem and also reach a male target group would be to take a market driving approach. This means taking advantage of opportunities to fill latent needs that have not yet been expressed by the customers (Kumar, Scheer & Kotler, 2000). It can generate competitive advantages compared to being market driven and only

reacting to what the market says (Kumar, Scheer, Kotler, 2000). In the context of vegetarian products and men, being a market driven company would mean having advertisements that follow the existing norm. By instead taking a market driving approach a company proactively aims at changing the existing norm by different marketing activities. It can be achieved by using advertising differently from what is done today, since advertising also affect people's attitude and purchase intention towards products (Lutz, MacKenzie & Belch, 1983; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989).

Products that are mainly consumed by one of the genders have occurred in other industries as well. An interesting example is the tobacco industry which managed to turn cigarettes, that were initially connected to males and masculinity, into an equally feminine product (Leal, Freire Filho & Rocha, 2016; Tinkler, 2001). The industry realised the potential of the female market and thereby started to target women with advertisements especially designed for them (Leal, Freire Filho & Rocha, 2016). During the 1930's cigarette advertisements for women started to occur more frequently, often illustrating stylish women smoking cigarettes in the company of attractive male admirers (Tinkler, 2001). The cigarette advertisements that built on female sexuality and the free, modern woman, managed to turn smoking into an established feminine activity (Leal, Freire Filho & Rocha, 2016; Tinkler, 2001). Thereby, advertising can be assumed to possess the ability to make a vegetarian diet more appealing to male consumers as well.

## **1.2 Problem discussion**

In order to define the problem, literature regarding gender was examined. Two streams within gender literature were identified as relevant for the topic: gender in advertising and gender and food.

### **1.2.1 Gender in advertising**

Gender roles have been a subject under research within the field of marketing since the 1960's and gender stereotyping still occurs in advertising (Eisend, 2010; Landreth Grau & Zotos, 2016). In literature, gender is normally categorized as dichotomies, either as male/female or masculine/feminine (Arsel, Eräranta & Moisander, 2015). Traditionally, gender research has focused on the role of women, but in recent years, the shifting role of men has received attention (Landreth Grau & Zotos, 2016). Gender issues occur in social and cultural discussions as well as in advertising and in the design of products (Arsel, Eräranta & Moisander, 2015).

The portrayal of gender roles in advertisements has been studied on television (Knoll, Eisend & Steinhagen, 2011; Matthes, Adam & Prieler, 2016), as well as in print (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009; Zotos & Tsihla, 2014), and online (Plakoyiannaki et al., 2008). In advertising, females have often been portrayed in sexist roles (Landreth Grau & Zotos, 2016). A study by Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009) concludes that women are stereotypically portrayed as decorative sex objects in print advertising in the UK (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009). In later years however, the portrayal of women has changed (Landreth Grau & Zotos, 2016). This is supported by Gentry and Harrison (2010) who claim that the portrayals of women in advertising are decreasingly stereotypical. However, traditional gender roles still appear in advertising to some extent and it can primarily be seen in portrayals of men (Gentry & Harrison, 2010), even though research suggests that this is changing too (Schroeder & Zwick, 2004).

Research has also focused on how a brand itself can be perceived as having a specific gender, female or male, depending on its brand personality traits (Grohmann, 2009). Brand gender has for example been researched regarding how it is affected by brand design (Grohmann, 2016; Guevremont & Grohmann, 2015; Lieven et al., 2015), and how it is connected to brand equity (Lieven et al., 2014; Lieven & Hildebrand, 2016).

As discussed, much research has been conducted regarding how males and, in particular, females have been, and are being, depicted in advertisements. However, advertisements can appeal to a specific gender without the use of stereotypical gender roles. Gender in advertising can instead be expressed through the use of different attributes. Research has shown that attributes such as colours (Cunningham & Macrae, 2011; Ellis & Ficek, 2001; Hess & Melnyk, 2016; Schroeder & Zwick, 2004), and the shape of fonts (Grohmann, 2016) can be more attractive to males or females depending on how they are used in advertisements.

### **1.2.2 Gender and food consumption**

A person's food consumption affects how the person is perceived by its surroundings. Different food-consumption stereotypes have existed historically and are still present today (Vartanian, Herman & Polivy, 2007).

By holding a healthy diet, a person is perceived to be more intelligent, moral and attractive than those who do not (Barker, Tandy & Stookey, 1999; Oakes & Slotterback, 2004; Stein & Nemeroff, 1995). However, those who consume healthy foods are by other people understood as unhappy, boring and less appealing to socialise with (Barker, Tandy & Stookey, 1999; Oakes & Slotterback, 2004). Perceived masculinity and femininity is also strongly related to what kind of food a person consumes. There is an understanding among people that good and healthy food that contains low amounts of fat is connected to femininity. Contrary, eating unhealthy, high-fat food is linked to being a man (Barker, Tandy, & Stookey, 1999; Stein & Nemeroff, 1995).

Moreover, studies have concluded that larger meal sizes symbolise masculinity meanwhile smaller meals symbolise femininity (Bock & Kanarek, 1995). People who eat smaller meals are also portrayed as neater and less messy compared to people who eat larger meals (Bock & Kanarek, 1995; Chaiken & Pliner, 1987). Studies conducted more recently have focused on the connection between men, meat and masculinity (Vartanian, 2015).

Traditionally, a diet consisting of a high amount of meat has been seen as masculine meanwhile a vegetarian diet has not. A strong connection between men, meat eating and a perceived masculinity exists (Nath, 2011; Rothgerber, 2012; Rozin et al., 2012; Sobal, 2005). The meat is seen to symbolise male sexuality and strength (Nath, 2011). It is supported in a study by Ruby and Heine (2011) which concludes that men holding a vegetarian diet are seen as less masculine than those eating meat (Ruby & Heine, 2011). In accordance with these views, many meat-eating men consider vegetarian meals to symbolize femininity (Nath, 2011). Both men and women use meat consumption in order to express gender on an individual level. Men mark their masculinity by eating meat meanwhile women limit their meat eating in order to express femininity (Sobal, 2005). Therefore, when men choose not to eat meat the widespread hegemonic masculinity in today's western world can be assumed to be challenged (Rothgerber, 2012).

The connection between masculinity and meat particularly applies to red meat (Kubberød et al., 2002; Nath, 2011; Sobal, 2005). Red meat includes beef, pork, lamb and some game meat such as venison (Livsmedelsverket, 2017). Kubberød et al. (2002) found that men possess more positive attitudes to attributes associated with red meat, such as bodily and hedonic pleasures and the bloodiness of the meat.

Nath (2011) researched the connection between men and meat in an Australian context. It was discovered that the barbecue is a social context where the association is particularly strong. At the barbecue hegemonic masculinity is reinforced by the central role of meat consumption, especially by men. Non-meat eaters can face criticism and disapproval for not following the social norm (Nath, 2011).

Studies concerning how masculinity contributes to gender differences in justification of meat consumption (Rothgerber, 2012) and to men's lower involvement in food decisions have also been conducted (Levi, Chan & Pence, 2006). Moreover, studies focusing on the stereotype of the meat eating man have been done. Rogers (2008) looked at advertisements that reinforced that stereotype. The advertisements presented meat consumption as something that is performed by men and aimed to ensure the dominance caused by hegemonic masculinity (Rogers, 2008). In the study by Nath (2011), participants experienced vegetarian food to be marketed only for women. Advertisements therefore cause maintenance of the stereotype.

### **1.3 Problem formulation and contribution**

The literature review shows that gender roles and gender attributes are widely used in advertising to affect consumers' attitudes and behaviours. Thereby, gender norms that exist in society are reinforced, and probably even partly created and spread, by advertisements. One of them is the norm of men as meat eaters, which prior research strengthens the existence of.

There are many studies conducted within the field of gender and advertising. The most common focus of these is the portrayal of people in stereotypical gender roles in advertisements (see Matthes, Adam & Prieler, 2016; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009). The majority of these studies particularly concern the traditional depiction of women. In later years, men have received more attention in this field of studies (Landreth Grau & Zotos, 2016), but research concerning women in advertising is still in majority (Vokey, Tefft & Tysiaczny, 2013). More research regarding men would therefore be beneficial in order to increase the understanding of how masculinity is portrayed in advertising and how males are affected by it.

Prior studies have mainly researched men and masculinity in advertisements from a gender role perspective (see Fowler & Thomas, 2015; Gentry & Harrison, 2010; Kaufman, 1999; Schroeder & Zwick, 2004). Therefore, more research regarding whether advertisements are perceived as masculine or feminine due to the use of gender attributes and how this affects attitudes and buying intention from a Behavioural Decision Theory perspective would be useful for marketers. It would be particularly interesting in the context of vegetarian products since there is an uneven division in interest between men and women of those products.

In prior research regarding gender and food, many studies have examined perceived masculinity of men eating meat or having a vegetarian diet (See Nath, 2011; Rothgerber, 2012; Rozin et al., 2012; Sobal, 2005). Studies have also investigated how advertising reinforces the stereotype of men as meat eaters (Rogers, 2008). This study will instead contribute by

increasing the knowledge regarding advertising of vegetarian products from a gender perspective.

Considering prior research, it can be assumed that the norm of men as meat eaters are holding males, some to a greater extent than other, back from consuming more vegetarian products than today. An investigation of how normative messages and gender attributes can be used in advertisements in order to change this would therefore contribute to literature within the field of norm communication. It would generate deeper knowledge of how communication can be used to change existing social norms related to masculinity for men. It has not earlier been investigated how specific gender attributes can be used for this purpose.

An investigation of this would not only be interesting theoretically, but also practically. When an increasing amount of people start consuming vegetarian products, the market for it grows, which shows in the Swedish market place. Axfood noticed a 41% increase in the sales of vegetarian products the first half of 2016 (Axfood, 2016). Therefore, in practical terms, this study would be useful for companies already present, or wanting to pursue, the vegetarian food market as it could help them to better understand how attributes in advertisements influence consumers' buying intention. It could generate valuable insights in how a specific, or broader, target group can be reached. A greater total consumption of vegetarian products, among both males and females, would also be beneficial for the environment and lead to a more sustainable lifestyle. Moreover, it would result in a healthier life for the individual, decreasing the risk for deadly diseases, which in turn benefits society in several aspects.

## **1.4 Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to investigate if males' attraction to vegetarian products can be improved when certain stimuli is used in advertising. It explores the effect of including masculine attributes and a normative statement in advertisements, and thereby intends to contribute to a greater understanding of how gender attributes in advertising and normative messages influence consumers in the purchase process.

## **1.5 Research question**

To fulfil the purpose of the study the following research question was investigated:

*How do different masculine and normative stimuli in advertising affect males in the purchase of vegetarian products?*

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Behavioural Decision Theory

Behavioural decision theory (BDT) is a study of decision-making, thus how people make and should make decisions. BDT is studied within several different fields such as medicine, economics, marketing and management, as well as psychology which has been the traditional field of study (Slovic, Fischhoff & Lichtenstein, 1977). There is considered to be two theoretical branches within decision-making: normative and descriptive. The normative branch tackles how to make the best possible decision, which is a decision that aligns the best with the person's interests and values. The descriptive branch concerns how individuals actually do make decisions, be it optimal or not. Behavioural decision theory is a prominent example of the descriptive theory (Slovic, Fischhoff & Lichtenstein, 1977; Takemura, 2014).

Companies use advertising to attract the attention of consumers in order to promote and sell products and services. Advertising is defined to be non-personal promotion that is paid by a known actor and occurs in media (Kotler & Keller, 2016). It can be used to communicate a brand's identity and differentiate its offer from the competitors' (Ekström, 2010). Advertising aims at generating attention and awareness, which are cognitive goals. Affective goals that advertising can achieve are interest, preference and desire (Ekström, 2010).

#### 2.1.1 Dual Mediation Hypothesis

Much research has been done on what drives consumer buying behaviour. This study uses the Dual Mediation Hypothesis (sometimes referred to as model). The Dual Mediation Hypothesis (DMH) concerns attitude towards the ad and its relationship to purchase intention. The model was chosen for being relatively easy to understand, while still describing the complex relationship of the consumer's affective response to advertising (Lutz, MacKenzie & Belch, 1983; MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986).

The model consists of five parts, *cognition of the ad*, *cognition of the brand*, *attitude towards the ad*, *attitude towards the brand* and finally, *purchase intention* (Lutz, MacKenzie & Belch, 1983; MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986).

#### ***Cognition***

Cognition is defined as "*the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses*" (Cognition - Definition of Cognition in English | Oxford Dictionaries, 2017). Within marketing, cognition is usually understood as evaluations, awareness, processing, judgement and recall of a brand or a product (Burke & Edell, 1989; Ekström, 2010).

In the DMH there are two branches to the cognition of a consumer: the cognition of the ad and that of the brand. The ad cognition ( $C_{ad}$ ) regards the consumer's perception of the specified ad, for example the execution, while the brand cognition ( $C_b$ ) talks about the perceptions of the advertised brand, such as the attributes of the brand (MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1983).

#### ***Attitude***

In advertising and marketing research, attitude is a popular subject because it can be of good use in the forecast of consumer behaviour and since there is an array of available frameworks

on the topic (Spears & Singh, 2004). An attitude is an emotion or evaluation, positive or negative, of a topic or object. Attitudes thereby shape the way we think of products (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

In the DMH there are two measures of attitude, that towards the ad and that of the brand. Thus, these measures question the consumers' affections towards the ad or the brand, if they like it or dislike it (MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1983).

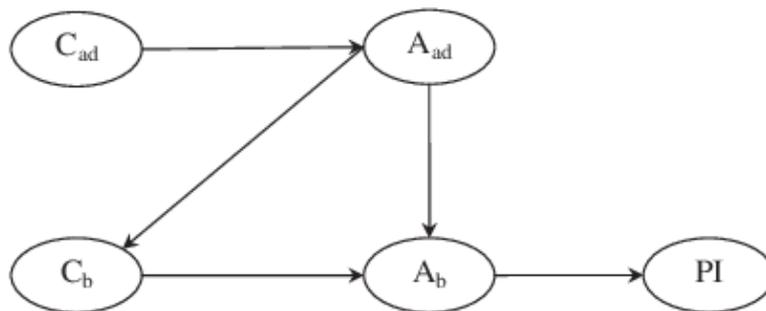
### **Purchase intention**

Purchase intention is the intent of a consumer to buy something, a product or a service. It is often used as a measure for how well the market communication is working (Lange & Dahlén, 2011).

Purchase intention is the ultimate step in the Dual Mediation Hypothesis and simply assesses the probability that the recipients of the advertisement will buy the product or brand sometime in the future (MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1983).

**Figure 1**

The Dual Mediation Model (López & Ruiz, 2011, p. 50)



In *Figure 1*, the relationship between the different parts of the model can be seen. *Cognition of the ad* influences *attitude of the ad*, which in turn affects both *cognition of the brand* and *attitude of the brand*. *Cognition of the brand* also influences *attitude of the brand*, which lastly, leads to *purchase intention*.

## **2.2 Social Marketing**

Kotler and Zaltman were the first to use the term *social marketing*, when they evaluated how marketing could be used to help advance social changes in society in an article in 1971 (Burchell, Rettie & Patel, 2013). An often used definition of social marketing is by Andreasen (2003), who defines it as follows:

Social marketing is the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation of programs designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part (Andreasen, 2003, p. 296)

Using norms in social marketing in order to change behaviour has led to positive results within several areas (Yoon, Ferle & Edwards, 2017), including alcohol consumption (Moreira, Smith & Foxcroft, 2009; Neighbors et al., 2008; Neighbors, Larimer & Lewis, 2004), drug use (Donaldson, Graham & Hansen, 1994), gambling (Larimer & Neighbors, 2003), savings behaviour (Yoon, La Ferle & Edwards, 2017) and pro-environmental behaviour (Cialdini, Reno & Kallgren, 1990; Goldstein, Cialdini & Griskevicius, 2008).

### **2.2.1 Norms**

Norms are learned when we grow up, and during the rest of our lives, as we interact with family, friends and various other social groups (Bendor & Swistak, 2001). Norms are thereby socially constructed and dynamic, since they both influence human behaviour and are influenced by it (Rimal & Lapinski, 2015). Sunstein (1996, p.914) identifies social norms as "*social attitudes of approval and disapproval, specifying what ought to be done and what ought not to be done*". In fact, social norms enable people to understand each other and they are constantly present, affecting almost everything in people's behaviours (Sunstein, 1996). Moreover, according to Bendor and Swistak (2001), social norms include third-party sanctions if the rule of behaviour is not followed (Bendor & Swistak, 2001). Two core elements of social norms is whether the norm is positive or negative, which is the valence of the norm, and if the reference group exhibiting the norm is far or close (Yoon, La Ferle & Edwards, 2017).

Cialdini, Reno and Kallgren (1990) separate norms into descriptive norms and injunctive norms. This separation is important since both types of norms can coexist and the effect of them on people's behaviour can be either congruent or conflicting. Descriptive norms state the behaviour of the majority of people, what is typical, meanwhile injunctive norms refer to what people are ought to do, beliefs of what others approve or disapprove of (Cialdini, Reno & Kallgren, 1990). Therefore, individuals' motivation to follow injunctive norms might be driven by the will to avoid social sanctions (Lapinski and Rimal, 2005). Regarding injunctive norms, the pressure to conform can originate from either perceived threats or perceived benefits (Rimal & Real, 2003).

Lapinski and Rimal (2005) make a distinction between levels of norms, into collective and perceived norms. Norms at the collective level indicate how members of a group should act and behave. Perceived norms are the interpretation of the collective norms by individuals. At both the collective and individual level, descriptive and injunctive norms exist (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005).

In addition to social norms, also personal norms guide our behaviour. Personal norms are embedded in the self, serving as internal standards for how to behave (Schwartz, 1977). However, this study will focus on social norms and how advertising can be used when trying to change them.

### **2.2.2. Norms in Advertising**

Due to their social construction, norms are spread amongst people through communication (Kincaid, 2004). Because of this, media affects how our social realities are constructed to a large extent. Text and pictures distributed through media partly determine what it means to for example have a certain gender, race or physical characteristic (Dow & Wood, 2006). Communication forms people's understanding and belief of norms. However, it simultaneously

possesses the ability to influence and change how norms are perceived (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005).

Social norms marketing campaigns have been used within several areas with the aim to change norms and people's behaviour in accordance with them. The purpose of the campaigns is to educate consumers of how common the behaviour actually is and thereby correct existing misunderstandings that potentially lead to harmful behaviours (Schultz et al., 2007). This is what Burchell, Rettie and Patel (2013) call the Social Norm Approach (SNA). The SNA is based on the concept of conformity. By informing consumers of the behaviour of the majority, others feel a need to conform to that behaviour. SNA campaigns aim at correcting misperceptions about peer group consumption by stating the behaviour of the majority as a proportion. To achieve socially desirable attitudes and behaviours, descriptive and injunctive normative messages can be used in advertisements (Burchell, Rettie & Patel, 2013).

However, in the context of this study the majority of people do not perform the desired behaviour. Only a small proportion of Swedish males conform to a vegetarian diet. Research has shown that it is possible for minority groups to influence the behaviour of the majority as well (van Herpen, van Trijp & van Amstel, 2012; Wood et al., 1994). There are, however, potentially negative effects of promoting a behaviour performed by a minority. Therefore, it is important to carefully consider how to present and frame the information (Demarque et al., 2015). Van Herpen, Van Trijp and Van Amstel (2012) for example suggest that the minority behaviour should be presented positively in accordance to its actual occurrence (some Swedish males consume vegetarian products) instead of focusing on the fact that only a minority actually perform the behaviour (a vegetarian diet is better for the environment and the health, but only 10% of Swedish males consume vegetarian products). Words such as some, a few and many have a positive polarity and is therefore recommended to be used when presenting a minority behaviour (Demarque et al., 2015). Words with negative polarity, such as not all, few and not many, should instead be avoided (Demarque et al., 2015).

Moreover, indicating that the group of people performing the minority norm is growing has shown to make the influence stronger (Van Herpen, Van Trijp & Van Amstel, 2012). In order to make the presentation of the minority norm effective it can also be beneficial to only present it to those consumers that constitute the target group and that are meant to be influenced (Demarque et al., 2015).

Finally, when the desired behaviour is in minority, injunctive norm messages can instead be used (Demarque et al., 2015). Injunctive messages are also important to take into consideration when people already performing the desired behaviour are reached by the message (Schultz et al. 2007). According to Schultz et al. (2007), descriptive normative messages in advertisements are most effective to change the behaviour of those who act in a destructive, undesirable manner. However, a boomerang effect can occur for consumers who already engage in the promoted behaviour (Schultz et al. 2007). For them, a descriptive normative message can lead to less engagement in that behaviour or even encourage them to start engaging in the destructive behaviour. For example, if students are told that the average alcohol consumption among students in average is higher than their own consumption they might feel that they need to drink more in order to not deviate from the norm (Schultz et al. 2007). This effect can be reduced by adding an injunctive normative message of approval of consuming a, in the case of alcohol consumption, lower amount (Schultz et al. 2007). Thereby, if the students from the example

are presented with an approval from peers of their lower alcohol consumption, they will probably not be affected negatively by the descriptive normative message.

Because of the fact that normative messages, both for majority and minority norms, can be used in advertising to change people's behaviour it can also be assumed to be effective in the case of male consumers and vegetarian products.

***H1: Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains a descriptive normative statement regarding males' consumption of the product***

## **2.3 Attributes in advertising**

Attributes are characteristics or features that are specific to an object or a person (Attribute - Definition of Attribute in English | Oxford Dictionaries, 2017). Consumers use attributes to evaluate and compare products and brands and are therefore important for marketers to keep notion of (Puth, Mostert & Ewing, 1999). If the driving attributes are known, companies can more easily adapt their marketing and advertising to work in their favour. Often, the consumer takes use of several attributes that are thought to be important to different extents and value these attributes for the different product options. The product that scores the highest in total will be the preferred option (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Attributes are used by marketers to differentiate their product, either by using several, or just one, specific attribute. The attributes are used in advertisements to affect consumers' perception of the product so that they favour it over competitor's products (Puth, Mostert & Ewing, 1999).

### **2.3.1 Gender-specific attributes**

Gender is the culturally and socially constructed sexes. It is not necessarily biological, even though the biological gender often coincides with the social one (Gender - Definition of Gender in English | Oxford Dictionaries, 2017). People are born as either male or female, but how we behave is taught by the norms and behaviours of the society around us. These so called gender roles are different depending on the society and may change over time (WHO | Gender, 2017a). Today, there is a recognition for people who do not fit within the binary system of male-female (WHO | Gender, 2017b), but in society and within advertising the gender norms are still visible (Schroeder & Zwick, 2004).

Relating gender to marketing, there is the notion of brand gender. There are characteristic gender features that consumers associate with a specific brand, resulting in either brand masculinity or brand femininity. People use brand gender as means to cement their perception of themselves, a fact that is used by marketers. Masculine brands are commonly perceived as more aggressive and dominant, while feminine brands evoke gracefulness and sensitivity (Grohmann, 2009).

Research indicates that males are possibly more sensitive to gender cues like colours, shapes and food (Brough et al., 2016). Research also shows that males are more likely to make choices

that correspond to their sex, thus products that are judged to be masculine. This is because there is a greater perceived risk for males if they do not conform to the norm compared to females (Brough et al., 2016).

From an early age, we are taught to like some things over others. Products destined at boys are usually designed differently from products destined for girls. This segmentation starts as soon as the babies are born, for example blue for boys and pink for girls, and already at two years old consumers can understand this segmentation (Schroeder & Zwick, 2004; Cunningham & Macrae, 2011). Even for adults, blue is preferred to a higher extent by males (Ellis & Ficek, 2001). In an experiment, Cunningham and Macrae (2011) found that the colour in question did not even have to be a part of the product, but it was sufficient for it to be part of the stimuli. Thus, just having gender-specific colours in the background of an advertisement is enough to trigger the judgement of that product based on gender (Cunningham & Macrae, 2011). However, there are inconsistencies within the literature regarding gender and colour preferences. Some results show black as more attractive to females (Silver & Ferrante, 1995), while others connect males and the colour black (Ellis & Ficek, 2001; Singh, 2006). The most consistent results are that females are more attracted to pink (Ellis & Ficek, 2001; Labrecque & Milne, 2012) and males to blue (Ellis & Ficek, 2001). Therefore, these two colours were chosen for the hypotheses regarding colour.

***H2: Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains the colour blue.***

***H3: Males have a lower purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains the colour pink.***

In addition to colour being a strong gender cue, shape is another one. This can be found in research regarding how fonts have been used in advertising. Rounder, slimmer fonts are considered to be more feminine, while angular, heavy sans-serif fonts are perceived as more masculine (Grohmann, 2016).

***H4: Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains angular and bold fonts.***

***H5: Males have a lower purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains slim and round fonts.***

Food also has a connection to gender-cues that males might be more sensitive to than females. Masculinity is often connected to a high meat consumption, making meat a symbol for masculinity (Nath, 2011; Rothgerber, 2012; Rozin et al. 2012; Sobal, 2005). Males that eat

vegetarian therefore challenge their masculinity (Adams, 1990). A relationship between men and barbecue, with grilled meat being a very strong sign of masculinity also exists (Nath, 2011).

***H6: Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains elements of a barbecue.***

Another attribute that is strongly connected to males and masculinity is sport. According to Whannel (1992) masculinity is part of sports at the same time as sport is part of masculinity. The connection is present already for young boys as masculinity is seen as being proved by a boy's interest in, and skilful practice of, sports (Whannel, 1992). Male sports stars highly symbolise hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), and it is partly through the practice of sports that values of dominant masculinity have been incorporated in today's society (Whannel, 1999). Because of this view, it can be believed that males are attracted by sport elements in advertisements.

***H7: Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains sport elements.***

Since the masculine attributes mentioned above are believed to influence male's purchase intention positively, it can also be assumed that a combination of several of them would enhance the effect even more, making the advertisement even more appealing to males.

***H8: Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains a combination of several masculine attributes.***

## 2.4 Summary of hypotheses

**Table 1**  
Summary of hypotheses

<b>Hypothesis</b>	
H1	Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains a descriptive normative statement regarding males' consumption of the product.
H2	Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains the colour blue.
H3	Males have a lower purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains the colour pink.
H4	Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains angular and bold fonts.
H5	Males have a lower purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains slim and round fonts.
H6	Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains elements of a barbecue.
H7	Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains sport elements.
H8	Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains a combination of several masculine attributes.

## **3. Method**

### **3.1 Scientific approach**

The ontological approach of this study was internal realism. It was thereby assumed that the nature of reality consists of one existing truth (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). However, the ontological approach considers this truth to be concealed and researchers can thereby not directly access that single truth. Hence, this study intended to gather data that indirectly could explain the stated problem (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

This study had a positivistic approach, which means it held a belief in what can be objectively observed (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The data was thereby collected through a survey without any subjective judgement. Since positivism views the social world as external (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015), the researchers were independent of the observed problem. Furthermore, positivism supposes that human behaviour consists of regular patterns that can be verifiable (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The problem in this study was quantitatively measured and statistically investigated in order to generalize the findings. Moreover, according to the positivistic approach, the purpose of this study was to identify casual explanations between stimuli in advertisements and purchase intention of vegetarian products (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Thereby, that approach was more suitable for this study compared to a social constructionist approach which instead aims to generate broader understandings, where human interest constitutes the core (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

#### **3.1.1. Deduction**

In line with the study's positivistic approach, a deductive process was used. This is the process most commonly used by positivistic researchers (Burns & Burns, 2008). It was therefore a better process to use for this study compared to an inductive one, that instead develops theory from the gathered data (Burns & Burns, 2008). A deductive research is derived from existing theory and the theory is used to formulate hypotheses that are tested on the observed data (Burns & Burns, 2008).

In this study, theory regarding behavioural decision theory, social marketing and attributes in advertising was used to formulate the eight hypotheses. A quantitative survey was conducted in order to collect data to test them. The hypotheses could thereby be accepted or rejected and enable knowledge contribution and further development of the existing theory.

#### **3.1.2. Quantitative**

The ontological, epistemological and methodological approaches taken in this study resulted in the use of a quantitative method in order to collect the data. A quantitative method is beneficial when the aim is to receive a broader understanding of a topic (Bryman & Bell, 2013), which was the case for this study. The purpose of it was to generate knowledge about which attributes that can be used in advertisements in order to attract males to purchase vegetarian products. However, it was not meant to explain the underlying reasons for why this was the case. Thereby, a qualitative method was not suitable for this study. A qualitative method takes a more subjective approach, aiming at analysing specific situations in-depth (Bryman & Bell, 2013).

In order for the result of this study to be applicable for the whole target population, male consumers in Sweden, as diverse data as possible was required. To enable a collection of diverse data, a large sample size is normally needed (Malhotra, 2009). Therefore, a quantitative method was the best option for this study. The choice of a quantitative method is further supported by the fact that this study wanted to investigate the relationships between variables (Bryman & Bell, 2013), more specifically, the relationship between advertising stimuli and purchase intention.

## **3.2 Research design**

### **3.2.1 Primary and secondary data**

In line with the quantitative method, the primary data in this study was collected through a survey. Thereafter, it was statistically analysed and conclusions could be drawn from the result in order to answer the research question. To find out what primary data that was required to answer the question, existing research and previous statistics were carefully reviewed. That is what constituted the secondary data in this study. The secondary data was taken from reliable academic journals and organisations.

### **3.2.2 Experimental design**

In the survey, an experimental design was applied. In an experiment, the participants are divided into groups that are presented with different stimuli (Burns & Burns, 2008). One group did not receive any unusual stimuli, thereby serving as a control group (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The experimental design was used to enable comparison between the differences in the dependent variable caused by the manipulation of the independent variable (Burns & Burns, 2008). The independent variable in this study, different stimuli in fictitious advertisements, was manipulated in order to investigate if it had an effect on the dependent variable, the purchase intention of a vegetarian product in the advertisements. In this research, the participants were divided into nine groups that, in the survey, were presented with different versions of the advertisement.

### **3.2.3 Sample**

Research normally aims to obtain information from a population, which comprises all elements that possess a specific characteristic (Malhotra, 2010). The target population in this study includes male consumers in Sweden. Only male consumers were relevant to this study since the purpose was to investigate what stimuli in advertisements that could possibly change the norm of men as meat eaters and lead to a greater consumption of vegetarian products amongst males.

The reason for why Sweden was chosen to be investigated was partly because there has been an increase in vegetarians there lately (Demoskop, 2014), and that the market for vegetarian products has improved with higher sales (Axfood, 2016). Furthermore, Sweden has a lot of single households. Out of all the households 37,7% are single households without children and between the ages of 20–60 the majority of these are single males (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2014). This means that many males in Sweden shop for groceries themselves compared to in other countries where single households are less occurring.

Information from a sample of the population was collected in order to be able to analyse the problem and draw conclusions (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). In this study a non-probability sampling design was used. In non-probability sampling, the probability of an element of the population to be chosen cannot be calculated (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The elements in this study were chosen due to accessibility. Therefore, a convenience sampling was applied (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The survey was distributed both online and offline. The online version was shared and spread through the researchers' networks on the social media page Facebook. The offline version of the survey was handed out to people around Lund city and at Lund University. The paper survey was a compliment to the online version in order to collect more answers and obtain a more diverse sample with respondents that were not part of the researchers' acquaintances. Because of the time limits of the study this sampling method was considered to be the best available option. However, convenience sampling increases the risks of bias and makes it more difficult to reach statistically generalizable results (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

In order for the sample to be credible it is important that it represents the population and is as precise as possible (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Since a convenience sample was used in this study, the risk for a biased sample that does not completely represent the population was greater than if a probability sampling method would have been used. Concerning the precision of the sample, sample size matters. The sample needs to be big enough in order to make judgements and draw conclusions for the whole population (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Since a survey was used in this study, a large sample was needed. Large sample sizes normally lead to more precise information (Malhotra, 2010). The use of a convenience sample enabled the requirement of a large sample to be met more easily (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). In this study 435 elements participated by answering the survey. The sample size was affected by the resource constraints of this study, which included money and time limitations. The experimental design with nine different groups further complicated the collection of respondents, since each group needed to be large enough in order to enable generalisability of the results.

In the sampling process, the aim was to limit the sampling errors as much as possible. However, sampling errors are to some degree inevitable, even when a sampling is correctly performed. Sampling errors occur since the sample never exactly corresponds to the population, since the sampling either is done randomly or sample bias occurs (Burns & Burn, 2008). The convenience sampling method used in this study resulted in a sample that to a majority consisted of young people from the two lowest age groups with respondents 18-25 and 26-35 years old. This was due to the fact that the researchers' Facebook network mostly consisted of people in that age and that the population of Lund, where the experiment was conducted, has a large proportion of students, which are mostly younger.

### **3.2.4 Survey design**

The survey consisted of a self-completion questionnaire for the respondents to answer. The digital version was web-based and made with Qualtrics. There are several advantages with using a web-based survey (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). It enables a more interactive design and provides opportunities of personalisation. Moreover, web surveys allow for a convenient participation and they constitute a fast and inexpensive method for the gathering of data (Malhotra, 2010). However, there are also limitations to web surveys. When

surveys are executed over the Internet, individuals that lack Internet access cannot be reached. Nevertheless, this is not a problem in Sweden today. A large proportion of the population use the Internet daily (Internetstiftelsen i Sverige, 2016).

The offline version of the survey was in a printed paper format. Except the format, the paper survey was identical to the web survey. As mentioned, it was mainly distributed in addition to the online version in order to obtain a larger and more diverse sample. The offline survey version is also low in cost (Burns & Burns, 2008). Moreover, the respondents could take the time they needed to answer the questions and they were free from any appearance or influence from an interviewer (Burns & Burns, 2008). There was no significant difference between the different distribution methods when it came to the final result of the experiment.

In order to increase the trust of the participants taking part in the experiment the purpose of the study was highlighted in the survey. Moreover, to make the participants feel more secure, confidentiality of the received information was guaranteed (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

When designing and distributing the survey, the researchers of this study were faced with some problems. To begin with, the survey design program that was provided to the researchers did not possess the functions needed to design the survey. In the program, it was not possible to randomise the different advertisements, which was required for this study. No other service that possesses that possibility was easily available. Instead, the researchers needed to use a program, Qualtrics, where they did not have full accessibility. Thereby, other problems regarding the distribution arose. In order to collect the number of respondents required, several identical versions of the survey needed to be created. A separate link had to be distributed for each version of the survey, which complicated the collection of the data. Moreover, since the researchers did not have full access to the survey design program used, the data could not be transferred to SPSS digitally. Instead, all the data needed to be inserted to SPSS manually, which constituted a source of error.

### ***Design of survey advertisements***

In the survey, each of the nine groups were presented with different advertisements of a vegetarian product. The survey design program, Qualtrics, randomly distributed the different advertisements to the respondents. The advertisements contained different stimuli in the form of a normative statement and gender attributes that, according to prior research, are appealing to either males or females. In line with the recommendations from prior research the normative statement of the advertisement was formulated using words with positive polarity and it stated that the proportion of males consuming vegetarian products is increasing. The attributes that were presented included blue colour, pink colour, angular and bold fonts, slim and round fonts, sport attributes and elements of a barbecue. In one of the advertisements (*see appendix 2 – advertisement 9*) several of the masculine attributes were used, excluding only elements of BBQ, pink colours and slim, round fonts. This was done to examine if the use of several masculine attributes strengthened the effect compared to using them separately. One of the groups was presented with a neutral advertisement (*see appendix 2 – advertisement 1*), without any traditional gender attributes or normative statements, serving as a control group.

The advertisements were designed by the researchers of this study. Thereby, they were not professionally produced, which possibly affected the respondents' view of them. Further, the

design process was affected by time and resource restraints. However, the statement and attributes in the advertisements were salient and the advertisements were thereby considered to be suitable to use in the experiment. The vegetarian product used in the advertisements was a veggie burger of a fictitious brand. The reason for choosing that specific product was that the veggie burger is common to find in stores and it looks good on picture. Additionally, it needed to be a product that would work on a grill since that was one of the attributes in the advertisements. Using a burger as the product might already have an impact since barbecuing and burgers have a connection to males to begin with, but since all advertisements used the same product and the study focused on differences between the attributes, it was not considered to be a problem.

The use of a fictitious brand limited the number of external factors that could otherwise affect the result (Bryman & Bell, 2013). It was thereby possible to avoid that factors such as previous brand associations, brand knowledge and brand reputation affected the respondents, which is argued by prior research (see Low & Lamb Jr, 2000; Mitchell & Olson, 2000; Rao, Qu & Ruekert, 1999). Since the purpose of this study was to investigate how males are affected by certain attributes and normative messages in advertising it was important that no prior attitudes towards the advertised brand existed among the respondents. Thereby, a fictitious brand was the best option in order to fulfil the purpose.

### ***Design of survey questions***

The data collection in the survey was structured and direct, meaning that the questions were arranged in a specific, predetermined, logical order and that they had fixed alternatives for the respondent to choose from (Malhotra, 2010). This made it easy to participate in and to complete the survey. However, in structured-direct surveys the requested information can be difficult to provide since respondents are not always aware of the underlying factors of their actions and believes. Moreover, if the survey asks for sensitive information, the respondents might not feel comfortable to respond (Malhotra, 2010). In order to make the respondents able and willing to complete the survey and respond accurately, the questions and statements in the survey were carefully designed. Well-designed questions increase the response rate, prevent questionnaire fatigue and minimise response error (Malhotra, 2010). It is also important since no interviewer was present to clarify if the respondents do not understand the question (Burns & Burns, 2008). Therefore, the language of the questions in the survey was clear and easy to understand. Words that were considered to be simple and familiar for the intended target sample were used and an academic language was avoided since that is normally confusing for the respondent (Burns & Burns, 2008). Moreover, leading questions were not used. Only questions that were appropriate for the purpose of the survey were asked. Hence, the effort required to participate in it was limited (Malhotra, 2010).

The questions in the survey were arranged in a carefully considered order in accordance with what is recommended by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015). Questions that covered similar topics were grouped together. The different topics in this survey regarded demographics, perception, attitude, purchase intention and gender. Since the demographics were the least sensitive questions they came first and questions regarding gender, which are more sensitive, were placed at the end of the survey (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Thereby, the questions regarding perception, attitude and purchase intention were placed in the middle. They were arranged in the order of occurrence in the Dual Mediation Hypothesis to

make it logical and easy to follow. By placing the question in the order described, facts were asked for before opinions (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

In accordance with the described order of the questions the survey begun with a check question regarding whether the respondent identifies himself as male. If no was checked the survey skipped to the end. This was done since the study only aimed to examine the opinions of individuals who identify as males and thereby only responses from those who do were desirable. Thereafter, other demographical questions concerning age, education, income and household composition were asked. When constructing the survey, some problems arose concerning the display of advertisements on devices with smaller screens such as smartphones and tablets. The problem was later solved, but a question regarding which device that was used to complete the survey was included in order to control that it did not affect the result. A questions regarding how often the respondent consume vegetarian products was thereafter asked in order to see how familiar the respondent was with vegetarian products to start with. Vegetarian products are in this research defined as meat substitutes, for example burgers, hotdogs and filets made out of soy or other vegetable protein. Just using vegetarian food or vegetarian products risks being too wide and undefined for people to understand. Vegetarian food can be anything from eating a salad for lunch to making your own bean burger. Thus, by focusing on meat substitute products the wide range of vegetarian food can be narrowed down to vegetarian products that are similar to meat, such as a veggie patties or a soy burger, that people actively decide to replace meat with.

Following that, the participants were exposed to one of the nine advertisements and statements regarding it were presented. The statements were derived from each of the different steps in the Dual Mediation Hypothesis. All the steps of the model, from *cognition of the ad* to *purchase intention*, were thereby covered and measured.

The anchor points for the measurements were adopted from a research by Teng, Laroche and Zhu (2007). In their research the scale used for the measurements varied, both semantic differential scale and Likert scale were used. In this study however, it was chosen to have the same type of 7-point scale, the semantic differential scale, for every measurement. This was done in order to provide the respondents with consistency throughout the questionnaire, in order to not confuse them. A disadvantage with the Likert scale is the lack of a defined midpoint (Burns & Burns, 2008). The midpoint will thereby have slightly different meaning depending on how it is named. Problems with meaning differences also occur for the semantic differential scale since the chosen anchor points such as high quality, can have different meaning to different respondents. However, the semantic differential scale is easy to construct and is popular among market researchers (Burns & Burns, 2008). Therefore, it was also chosen for this study. Below, the measurements that were used are presented.

### ***Cognition of ad***

Three items were used to measure *cognition of the ad*. The anchor points for each item were *very unpersuasive/very persuasive*, *very uninformative/very informative* and *not very meaningful/very meaningful* (Teng, Laroche & Zhu, 2007).

### **Brand cognition**

To measure *brand cognition* a two-item scale was used. *Less salient attributes/more salient attributes* and *low quality/high quality* constituted the anchor points (Teng, Laroche & Zhu, 2007).

### **Attitude towards ad**

*Attitude towards the ad* was measured by four items, including the anchor-points *very bad/very good*, *very unfavourable/very favourable*, *highly uncreative/highly creative* and *least attractive/very attractive*.

### **Attitude towards brand**

In order to measure *attitude towards the brand* three items were used. The anchor points were *dislike quite a lot/like quite a lot*, *unsatisfactory/satisfactory* and *very unappealing/very appealing*.

### **Purchase intention**

In order to measure *purchase intention* three items, divided into three separate questions, were used. The items were *I would absolutely consider buying*, *I would definitely expect to buy* and *I would absolutely plan to buy the product* (Teng, Laroche & Zhu, 2007). Teng, Laroche and Zhu (2007) use a four item scale. The reason for why this study excepts *I would definitely intend to buy the product* is because the two words consider and intend are very similar in Swedish. It was therefore chosen to combine these two items into one. In the English version, consider was kept since it most closely corresponds to the Swedish translation. The anchor points for each item were *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree* (Teng, Laroche & Zhu, 2007).

After the measurements, questions regarding to what degree the advertisement and brand were perceived to be masculine or feminine were asked, in order to see if the attributes used were actually believed to symbolise the intended gender, and thereby were more or less attractive to males. Finally, the respondents were asked to specify to what degree they perceived themselves as masculine or feminine and whether they would like to be masculine or feminine. For the four last questions, a one-item scale was used.

All of the statements in the questionnaire had closed answers. It pre-sets the answers to some extent but also possesses the advantage of making it easier for the participants to respond (Bryman & Bell, 2013). The questionnaire was handed out in Swedish due to the nationality of the target group and it was believed that the response rate would be higher if the native language of the respondents was used. The words used in the Swedish version of the questionnaire might not exactly correspond to the English words originally used in the Dual Mediation Hypothesis and in the English version of the questionnaire presented in this study (*See appendix 1*). Since the meaning of the words can differ slightly the researchers carefully translated the questionnaire back and forth in order to only have minor differences. In order to test the adequacy of the instructions and questions in the survey a pilot study was first conducted (Burns & Burns, 2008). The result of it was successful and therefore no changes were needed in the survey.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

#### **3.3.1 Level of significance**

The statistical software *SPSS Statistics 24* was used to analyse the data collected from the survey. It was analysed using a 95% confidence interval. Thereby, having a significance value (sig. value) of 5%. If the sig. value would have been lowered to 1%, the risk of making a Type I error decreases. A Type I error occurs when a true null hypothesis is rejected (Burns & Burns, 2008). However, the risk of making a Type II error increases, which means that a false null hypothesis is accepted (Burns & Burns, 2008). Therefore, the 5% sig. value was considered to be appropriate for this study.

#### **3.3.2 Cronbach's alpha**

Question 8-12 in the survey consisted of more than one item. Therefore, Cronbach's alpha was used to test whether all the items for each question measured the same characteristic, which is the case if the items inter-correlate (Burns & Burns, 2008). An alpha value above 0,7 indicates a high internal reliability of the measurements (Burns & Burns, 2008).

#### **3.3.3 Analysis of Variance**

The eight hypotheses were analysed with an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test. ANOVA is used to test significant differences between more than two groups (Burns & Burns, 2008). A one-way ANOVA is suitable when there is only one independent variable included in the study. In this study the independent variable consisted of the stimuli used in the nine advertisements, thus, the normative statement and the different attributes. Purchase intention constituted the dependent variable. This was the case for all of the eight hypotheses. The assumptions of ANOVA include normality, homogeneity of variance and independence of errors (Burns & Burns, 2008). They should preferably be fulfilled in order to conduct an ANOVA. However, ANOVA is rather robust to deviations from normality. Levene's test is used to verify the assumption of homogeneity of variance (Burns & Burns, 2008). The assumption can be accepted if the p-value is higher than the sig. level of 5%.

Since the ANOVA only indicates if differences in the mean of the dependent variable of the different groups exist, a Post Hoc test needs to be performed if the ANOVA is significant (Burns & Burns, 2008). The ANOVA is more likely to be significant if the F ratio has a high value. The Post Hoc test is used to investigate between which groups the differences exist (Burns & Burns, 2008). The Tukey Post Hoc test is chosen when the study includes many comparisons and the sample sizes of each group are similar (Burns & Burns, 2008).

#### **3.3.4 Correlation**

In addition to the hypotheses testing, correlation tests were conducted in order to analyse the data and look for further findings. Correlation indicates to what extent two variables correspond to each other (Burns and Burns, 2008). Variables can be positively correlated, negatively correlated or have a zero or random correlation. Positive correlation exists when one variable increases simultaneously with the other one (Burns and Burns, 2008). On the opposite, negative correlation occurs when one variable increases at the same time as the other decreases. Finally, zero or random correlation means that random variation occurs for the two variables (Burns and Burns, 2008).

## **3.4 Reliability and Validity**

When conducting a quantitative study, reliability and validity must be taken into consideration (Burns & Burns, 2008).

### **3.4.1 Reliability**

A reliable study is one that is stable, predictable and dependable. To improve the reliability, the measurements need to be correct and accurate, thus there should be as few errors as possible in the measuring instrument (Burns & Burns, 2008).

If the results of the measurements are varying it may be as a result of actual differences in the variables tested or because of error variability. Error variability is a combination of *random fluctuation error*, which is to what extension a score has been affected by factors that are irrelevant, and *systematic or constant error*, which is when unwanted variables influence the result in one way (Burns & Burns, 2008).

There are elements that have an impact on the level of reliability. One is length of assessment, which in this study has been assured by having a variety of questions in the survey. Thereby, chance factors are balanced out and do not affect the result in the same way (Burns & Burns, 2008). The method of reliability estimation also impacts the reliability. By using a measure which includes both stability and equivalence, the reliability is improved (Burns & Burns, 2008). In this study, the measure used was Cronbach's alpha, which is one of the measures that are considered to be beneficial to the reliability since it includes stability and equivalence.

Higher reliability can also be obtained if the administration of the test is standardised. This for example means that all groups should have the same time limits, instructions and freedom from distractions when they conduct the experiment. Since the respondents answered the survey in various different places, freedom from distractions could not be guaranteed. However, all the respondents had the same time limits and received identical instructions.

### **3.4.2 Validity**

Validity refers to the degree of which the testing instrument tests the intended variable (Burns & Burns, 2008). Requirements of both external and internal validity must be met.

#### **3.4.2.1 External Validity**

External validity concerns how transferable and generalizable the findings obtained from the sample are to the whole population (Burns & Burns, 2008). By adopting a convenience sample, which is done in this study, high external validity is harder to fulfil. That is because it is a non-probability sampling design and a lack of representativeness of the population might therefore occur (Burns & Burns, 2008).

There are also other aspects that can threaten external validity. One is if the independent and dependent variables are not explained explicitly (Burns & Burns, 2008). That is avoided in this study since the method and course of action is carefully described in order to enable future replications of the experiment. Reactive bias is another threat. It means that attitudes and opinions of a respondent might change due to the mere awareness that, he, in this case, is taking part in an experiment (Burns & Burns, 2008). In the survey, a short scenario telling the respondent to imagine a certain purchase situation was presented. The aim was to put the

respondent in the mind-set of a real purchase situation and thereby minimize the reactive bias. The scenario also aimed at reducing the risk of inadequate operationalization of the dependent variables and thereby make sure that what was answered in the survey corresponded to the choice that would have been made in a real, non-experimental setting.

#### ***3.4.2.2 Internal validity***

Internal validity measures how precise the result of an experiment is (Malhotra, 2010). In order to achieve high internal validity in an experiment the conditions of it must be controlled. Thereby, it can be assured that it is the independent variable that causes any differences in the dependent variable, and that other factors do not affect the result (Burns & Burns, 2008). In this study, the advertisements presented had a simple and clean design in order to make every attribute stand out. Each advertisement, except the neutral and the combined one, only contained one gender attribute or normative statement. This was done in an attempt to ensure that it was that attribute solely that affected the dependent variable.

The level of internal validity is threatened by a number of factors. If the sample size is too small it will lead to a low statistical power of the test (Burns & Burns, 2008). This can, in turn, lead to a type II error. In order to avoid that, this study's goal was to obtain as large of a sample size as possible, considering the time limits. Problems with maturation, which is natural psychological changes within a respondent, and history, which is events that occur between tests that are not part to the experiment, do not exist in this study since it does not include a longitudinal test (Burns & Burns, 2008).

Internal validity can also be threatened by selection bias which occurs when the allocation of test units to different stimuli are inaccurate. This bias is greatest if test units select groups themselves or if the researcher assigns units to groups based on judgement (Malhotra, 2010). None of these methods were used in this study and the result was therefore not believed to be affected. In order to increase the internal validity and prevent false results the researchers of this study also avoided "fishing" for statistically significant findings. This is otherwise sometimes done when research is executed in new areas and the researchers search for all possible associations between variables (Burns & Burns, 2008).

## 4. Empirical work

### 4.1 Frequencies

The respondents in the survey were divided into nine groups, which received one of the advertisements each. In *Table 2* it can be seen that the groups consisted of between 46 to 51 of the in total 435 respondents, which corresponds to 10,6% to 11,7% of them. To a majority, every group consisted of respondents of 18-25 years old, which can also be seen in *Table 2*. The same table shows that the most frequent income group was the lowest one who earned 0-14 999 SEK and most of the respondents had finished an education on a basic (high school) or intermediate (university 0-3 years) level. The division in regards to age, income and education of the respondents are similar in each group, but differences do exist. For example, some groups do not have any respondents of a certain age, educational background or income and the proportion of respondents with a certain demographic is greater in some groups compared to other. This was due to the random distribution of advertisements in the survey that did not take these aspects into account when a respondent was divided into a group.

**Table 2**  
Demographics – in percentages

	Neutral	Blue	Pink	Bold font	Fine font	Barbecue	Sport	Statement	Combination	Total	N
<b>Age</b>											
18-25	73,5	72,5	82,6	75,5	70,0	77,6	61,2	72,3	63,3	72,0	
26-35	20,4	11,8	8,7	6,1	17,4	16,3	14,3	10,6	18,4	13,8	
36-45	4,1	3,9	0	6,1	0	6,1	4,1	0	10,2	3,9	
46-55	0	5,9	6,5	6,1	8,7	0	12,2	12,8	2,0	6,0	
56-65	2,0	5,9	2,2	4,1	2,2	0	8,2	2,1	4,1	3,4	
65+	0	0	0	2,0	2,2	0	0	2,1	2,0	0,9	435
<b>Education</b>											
Low	0	0	0	2,0	2,0	0	0	0	2,0	0,7	
Basic	44,9	52,9	37,0	40,8	34,8	49,0	47,0	44,7	49,0	44,6	
Intermediate	32,7	29,4	34,8	32,7	50,0	30,6	38,8	38,3	25,5	34,7	
High	22,4	17,6	28,3	24,5	13,0	20,4	14,3	17,0	22,4	20,0	435
<b>Income</b>											
0-14 999	69,4	60,8	69,6	63,3	71,7	73,5	61,2	63,8	65,3	66,4	
15 000-24 999	14,3	11,8	6,5	12,2	6,5	2,0	8,2	8,5	8,2	8,7	
25 000-34 999	10,2	15,7	10,9	10,2	8,7	16,3	14,3	14,9	10,2	12,4	
35 000-44 999	2,0	5,9	6,5	8,2	6,5	6,1	6,1	4,3	8,2	6,0	
45 000-54 999	4,1	2,0	2,2	2,0	6,5	2,0	8,2	4,3	6,1	4,4	
55 000+	0	3,9	4,3	4,1	0	0	2,0	4,3	2,0	2,3	435
<b>Respondents</b>											
Percent	11,3	11,7	10,6	11,3	10,6	11,3	11,3	10,8	11,3	100	
N	49	51	46	49	46	49	49	47	49	435	

*Table 3* shows that the majority of the respondents rarely consume vegetarian products, scoring 1-3 on the 7-point scale. Here, the random distribution of advertisements in the survey also led to uneven groups. Compared with the total score, some groups contained a larger proportion of respondents who consume vegetarian products often, meanwhile other groups contained a larger proportion of respondents who seldom consume vegetarian products.

**Table 3**  
Consumption of vegetarian products – in percentages

	Neutral	Blue	Pink	Bold font	Fine font	Barbecue	Sport	Statement	Combination	Total	N
1	20,4	39,2	37,0	28,6	21,7	26,5	28,6	29,8	32,7	29,4	
2	28,6	33,3	28,3	24,5	23,9	40,8	38,8	29,8	30,6	31,0	
3	16,3	13,7	12,2	16,3	15,2	10,2	14,3	17,0	8,2	13,8	
4	10,2	2,0	8,7	4,1	8,7	8,2	8,2	12,8	12,2	8,3	
5	6,1	3,9	2,2	14,3	10,9	6,1	8,2	2,1	6,1	6,7	
6	4,1	5,9	2,2	6,1	4,3	4,1	0	4,3	4,1	3,9	
7	14,3	2,0	8,7	6,1	15,2	4,1	2,0	4,3	6,1	6,9	
Mean value	3,22	2,24	2,54	2,94	3,37	2,55	2,37	2,57	2,65	2,71	435

1 = never  
7 = almost always

## 4. 2 Measurement Reliability

In *Table 4* it can be seen that all of the measurements except perception of the brand has internal reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha above 0,7. For perception of the ad, the alpha value is slightly lower, 0,621. However, that specific measurement only contained two items and was not analysed. Therefore, the lower value was considered to be acceptable.

**Table 4**  
Summary of measures

	Mean*	SD	Cronbach's alpha
<i>Perception of the ad, summated</i>	3,33	1,30	0,816
very unpersuasive – very persuasive	3,33	1,56	
very uninformative – very informative	3,33	1,54	
not very meaningful – very meaningful	3,33	1,48	
<i>Perception of the brand, summated</i>	3,06	1,25	0,621
less salient attributes – more salient attributes	3,17	1,52	
low quality – high quality	2,96	1,42	
<i>Attitude towards the ad, summated</i>	3,27	1,09	0,818
very bad – very good	3,05	1,36	
very unfavourable – very favourable	4,00	1,37	
highly uncreative – highly creative	2,52	1,39	
least attractive – very attractive	3,52	1,30	
<i>Attitude towards the brand, summated</i>	3,38	1,18	0,895
dislike quite a lot – like quite a lot	3,35	1,36	
unsatisfactory – satisfactory	3,18	1,32	
very unappealing – very appealing	3,60	1,20	
<i>Purchase intention, summated</i>	2,69	1,60	0,942
I would absolutely consider buying vegetarian products	2,84	1,77	
I would definitely expect to buy vegetarian products	2,68	1,66	
I would absolutely plan to buy vegetarian products	2,55	1,64	

\*Scale for items: 1-7

## 4.3 Results

### 4.3.1 Hypotheses

The eight hypotheses concerned how the inclusion of different attributes and a normative statement in advertisements would affect purchase intention. Based on prior research, it was assumed that the normative statement and the attributes blue colour, angular and bold fonts, elements of a barbecue, sport elements and a combination of masculine attributes would increase purchase intention and that pink colour and slim and round fonts would lead to a lower purchase intention amongst males.

**Table 5**

Purchase Intention – mean, standard deviation (SD) and p-value

		Neutral	Blue	Pink	Bold font	Fine font	Barbecue	Sport	Statement	Combination	Overall p-value
I would absolutely consider buying vegetarian products	Mean	3,22	2,57	2,52	3,24	3,20	2,55	2,63	3,02	2,63	0,125
	SD	1,61	1,59	1,57	2,04	2,05	1,73	1,70	1,73	1,74	
I would definitely expect to buy vegetarian products	Mean	3,12	2,37	2,30	2,94	3,13	2,61	2,45	2,87	2,37	0,047
	SD	1,69	1,28	1,50	1,99	1,90	1,69	1,56	1,66	1,45	
I would absolutely plan to buy vegetarian products	Mean	2,80	2,37	2,37	2,94	3,02	2,35	2,39	2,55	2,22	0,153
	SD	1,76	1,26	1,55	2,13	1,84	1,56	1,50	1,44	1,52	
Summated score for purchase intention	Mean	3,05	2,44	2,40	3,04	3,12	2,50	2,49	2,82	2,41	0,078
	SD	1,55	1,28	1,49	1,98	1,89	1,49	1,52	1,52	1,50	

1 = completely disagree  
7 = completely agree

The three questions regarding purchase intention showed different results in the ANOVA, which can be seen in *Table 5*. "*I would definitely expect to buy vegetarian products*" showed a significant result at the 5 % sig. level, which was chosen for this study. This indicated that mean differences for this question regarding purchase intention existed between the nine sample groups. However, as can be seen in *Table 7*, the Post Hoc test did not show any significant results in accordance with the ANOVA and it could therefore not be seen between which groups the difference occurred. Thereby, the eight null hypotheses were accepted and the formulated alternative hypotheses regarding purchase intention were rejected, see *Table 9*. The two other questions did not meet the requirement of a 5% sig. value, but "*I would absolutely consider buying vegetarian products*" was significant at a 15% sig. level and "*I would absolutely plan to buy vegetarian products*" was significant at a 20% sig. level, see *Table 5*. For these two questions the Post Hoc test did not show any significant differences either, see *Table 6* and *Table 8*. It can also be seen in *Table 5* that the means of the three questions regarding purchase intention only differs slightly between the nine groups.

**Table 6**Post hoc showing p-values for *I would absolutely consider buying vegetarian products*

	Neutral	Blue	Pink	Bold font	Fine font	Barbecue	Sport	Statement	Combination
Neutral		0,638	0,581	1,000	1,000	0,617	0,767	1,000	0,767
Blue	0,638		1,000	0,598	0,712	1,000	1,000	0,939	1,000
Pink	0,581	1,000		0,542	0,656	1,000	1,000	0,909	1,000
Bold font	1,000	0,598	0,542		1,000	0,577	0,732	0,999	0,732
Fine font	1,000	0,712	0,656	1,000		0,692	0,826	1,000	0,826
Barbecue	0,617	1,000	1,000	0,577	0,692		1,000	0,928	1,000
Sport	0,767	1,000	1,000	0,732	0,826	1,000		0,976	1,000
Statement	1,000	0,939	0,909	0,999	1,000	0,928	0,976		0,976
Combination	0,767	1,000	1,000	0,732	0,826	1,000	1,000	0,976	

**Table 7**Post hoc showing p-values for *I would definitely expect to buy vegetarian products*

	Neutral	Blue	Pink	Bold font	Fine font	Barbecue	Sport	Statement	Combination
Neutral		0,358	0,275	1,000	1,000	0,839	0,526	0,998	0,362
Blue	0,358		1,000	0,734	0,366	0,998	1,000	0,854	1,000
Pink	0,275	1,000		0,629	0,282	0,992	1,000	0,768	1,000
Bold font	1,000	0,734	0,629		1,000	0,987	0,867	1,000	0,735
Fine font	1,000	0,366	0,282	1,000		0,839	0,532	0,998	0,370
Barbecue	0,839	0,998	0,992	0,987	0,839		1,000	0,997	0,998
Sport	0,526	1,000	1,000	0,867	0,532	1,000		0,942	1,000
Statement	0,998	0,854	0,768	1,000	0,998	0,997	0,942		0,854
Combination	0,362	1,000	1,000	0,735	0,370	0,998	1,000	0,854	

**Table 8**Post hoc showing p-values for *I would absolutely plan to buy vegetarian products*

	Neutral	Blue	Pink	Bold font	Fine font	Barbecue	Sport	Statement	Combination
Neutral		0,933	0,940	1,000	0,999	0,912	0,948	0,998	0,728
Blue	0,933		1,000	0,727	0,578	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Pink	0,940	1,000		0,749	0,605	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Bold font	1,000	0,727	0,749		1,000	0,688	0,766	0,965	0,433
Fine font	0,999	0,578	0,605	1,000		0,537	0,622	0,904	0,301
Barbecue	0,912	1,000	1,000	0,688	0,537		1,000	1,000	1,000
Sport	0,948	1,000	1,000	0,766	0,622	1,000		1,000	1,000
Statement	0,998	1,000	1,000	0,965	0,904	1,000	1,000		0,987
Combination	0,728	1,000	1,000	0,433	0,301	1,000	1,000	0,987	

**Table 9**

Result of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis		
H1	Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains a descriptive normative statement regarding males' consumption of the product.	Rejected
H2	Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains the colour blue.	Rejected
H3	Males have a lower purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains the colour pink.	Rejected
H4	Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains angular and bold fonts.	Rejected
H5	Males have a lower purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains slim and round fonts.	Rejected
H6	Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains elements of a barbecue.	Rejected
H7	Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains sport elements.	Rejected
H8	Males have a higher purchase intention towards vegetarian products when an advertisement contains a combination of several masculine attributes.	Rejected

### 4.3.2 Attitude towards the ad

An ANOVA was also conducted to test mean differences regarding attitude towards the ad in order to see if that differed from purchase intention and gave any significant results. The ANOVA showed a significant result on a 10% sig. level. However, similar to purchase intention, there were no significant results in the Post Hoc test and it could thereby not be seen between which groups the difference existed. *Table 10* shows slight differences between the group means of attitude towards the ad.

**Table 10**

Attitude towards the ad – mean, standard deviation (SD) and p-value

	Neutral	Blue	Pink	Bold font	Fine font	Barbecue	Sport	Statement	Combination	Overall p-value
Mean	3,43	3,14	2,98	3,43	3,52	3,04	3,36	3,47	3,08	
SD	0,89	1,17	1,06	0,97	1,16	1,12	1,09	1,11	1,11	0,079

### 4.3.3 Other findings

Since no mean differences could be seen between the different groups, other interesting aspects of the problem were tested for. In *Table 11* it can be seen that the respondents perceived the advertisements that contained sport elements ( $p=0,000$ ) and a combination of masculine attributes ( $p=0,000$ ) as significantly more masculine than the other advertisements. In *Table 12* it can be seen that the ANOVA showed significant mean differences in purchase intention, in regards to *expect buying* ( $p=0,039$ ) and *plan to buy* ( $p=0,012$ ), between different levels of education. The Post Hoc test, that was done to investigate where the differences occurred, showed that respondents who had a high level of education significantly had a higher purchase intention in regards to *expect buying* ( $p=0,027$ ) and *plan to buy* ( $p=0,015$ ) compared to those who had a basic level of education. However, no significant results could be found for the different levels of education regarding attitude towards the advertisement, which can be seen in *Table 12*. The same table shows that significant mean differences existed between the age groups in regards to attitude towards the advertisements ( $p=0,000$ ). The Post Hoc test revealed that the age groups 46-55 and 56-65 had a significantly higher attitude towards the ad compared to the age groups 18-25 ( $p=0,001$ ,  $p=0,007$ ) and 26-35 ( $p=0,006$ ,  $p=0,016$ ). No differences in purchase intention between the different age groups occurred.

**Table 11**Sig. values for the variable *gender perception of the ad*

	Neutral	Blue	Pink	Bold font	Fine font	Barbecue	Sport	Statement
<b>Blue</b>	1,000							
<b>Pink</b>	0,994	0,962						
<b>Bold font</b>	0,998	0,984	1,000					
<b>Fine font</b>	0,992	0,999	0,697	0,785				
<b>Barbecue</b>	0,996	1,000	0,754	0,835	1,000			
<b>Sport</b>	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*		
<b>Statement</b>	0,968	0,885	1,000	1,000	0,519	0,580	0,000*	
<b>Combination</b>	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	1,000	0,000*

\*= p-value significant

**Table 12**

Means, standard deviation (SD) and p-values for education and age

	Attitude towards the ad	I would absolutely consider buying vegetarian products	I would definitely expect to buy vegetarian products	I would absolutely plan to buy vegetarian products
<b>Education</b>				
Low	3,58 (1,66)	3,00 (1,73)	2,00 (1,73)	3,00 (1,00)
Basic	3,21 (1,03)	2,63 (1,69)	2,48 (1,59)	2,28 (1,51)
Intermediate	3,35 (1,13)	2,96 (1,79)	2,72 (1,56)	2,70 (1,65)
High	3,26 (1,14)	3,09 (1,88)	3,08 (1,91)	2,91 (1,85)
<b>overall p-value</b>	<b>0,669</b>	<b>0,163</b>	<b>0,039*</b>	<b>0,012*</b>
<b>Age</b>				
18-25	3,17 (1,04)	2,78 (1,76)	2,61 (1,68)	2,46 (1,63)
26-35	3,16 (0,98)	2,87 (1,83)	2,87 (1,66)	2,73 (1,74)
36-45	3,40 (1,16)	2,47 (1,51)	2,00 (1,28)	2,24 (1,64)
46-55	4,04 (1,20)	3,38 (1,72)	3,19 (1,44)	2,81 (1,36)
56-65	4,15 (1,21)	3,33 (1,99)	3,27 (1,75)	3,27 (1,91)
65+	3,88 (1,64)	3,75 (1,89)	3,25 (1,71)	4,00 (1,41)
<b>overall p-value</b>	<b>0,000*</b>	<b>0,321</b>	<b>0,107</b>	<b>0,114</b>

\*= p-value significant

In *Table 13* correlation analyses between different variables are presented. The correlation between purchase intention and how often the respondents currently consume vegetarian products indicate a significant moderate positive relationship. It slightly differs between the three questions *consider buying* ( $r=0,45$ ), *expect buying* ( $r=0,52$ ) and *plan to buy* ( $r=0,56$ ). In *Table 13* the summated correlation coefficient ( $r=0,54$ ) can be seen. The correlation between consumption and attitude towards the ad was positive, but much closer to zero ( $r=0,14$ ). Moreover, consumption and self-perceived gender had a slight positive correlation ( $r=0,14$ ). The same results could be seen in a correlation analysis between self-perceived gender and purchase intention ( $r=0,15$ ) and between self-perceived gender and attitude towards the ad ( $r=0,14$ ). Further, the attitude towards the ad for the nine groups had a moderate positive

significant correlation with purchase intention ( $r=0,51$ ). The strongest correlation occurred between two demographics, age and income ( $r=0,71$ ).

**Table 13**  
Correlations

	Age	Education	Income	Consumption	Gender self	Gender ad	Attitude
Age							
Education	0.01						
Income	0.71**	0.17***					
Consumption	-0.05	0.17***	-0.08				
Self-perceived gender	0.08	0.10*	0.06	0.14**			
Gender perception of ad	0.03	0.01	0.07	-0.06	0.03		
Attitude towards the ad	0.23***	0.02	0.16***	0.14**	0.14**	0.07	
Purchase intention	0.10*	0.14**	0.03	0.54***	0.15**	-0.06	0.51***

N= 435.  
\* $p<0.05$ ,  
\*\* $p<0.01$ ,  
\*\*\* $p<0.001$ .

## 5. Analysis & Discussion

Compared to previous research, which constitutes the basis for the theoretical framework and formulation of hypotheses, the result of this study is conflicting. Since no mean differences could be seen between the nine groups in the study, the results do not correspond to prior research when applied to the context of vegetarian products. The first hypothesis concerned how normative statements could be used in advertising in order to change unwanted behaviour (Burchell, Rettie & Patel, 2013; Schultz et al. 2007). This study used a statement that indicated that the amount of males that consume vegetarian products is increasing, in line with what Van Herpen, Van Trijp and Van Amstel (2012) recommended for norms performed by a minority. Since the Swedish males in the experiment were not more attracted to the statement compared to the neutral advertisement it indicates that, for food and in particular vegetarian products, normative statements might not be effective. The result might also relate to the fact that it is more difficult to change norms when the preferred behaviour is in minority compared to when it is in majority.

The two following hypotheses, 2 and 3, regarding colour were also rejected. The group that received the pink advertisement had the lowest mean out of all the groups in two of the questions regarding purchase intention, *consider to buy* and *expect to buy*, and in attitude towards the ad. Still, the differences compared to the other groups were small. The result of this study thereby contradicts Ellis and Ficek's (2001) suggestion that males prefer blue colour and women prefer pink colour. However, there are inconsistent results within prior research regarding colour (see Ellis & Ficek, 2001; Labrecque & Milne, 2012; Silver & Ferrante, 1995, Singh, 2006), which might be the reason for the result in this study. Moreover, the fact that Swedish males do not prefer blue over pink in advertisements might be due to other reasons such as cultural and social aspects of the Swedish society.

Research also stated that angular, bold fonts are perceived as more masculine and round, slim fonts as more feminine (Grohmann, 2016), which was treated by hypotheses 4 and 5. Both fine font and bold font were among the advertisements that had the highest means of purchase intention and attitude towards the ad, with barely any difference between each other. However, they did not differ much from the other advertisements and the bold font was, in contrary to the results in Grohmann's (2016) research, not perceived as particularly masculine. One possible reason for this could be that the supposed masculinity of the bold font does not outweigh the eventual perceived femininity of the product. Further, a font usually constitutes a small portion of a full advertisement. Thereby, the bold and fine font in the advertisements used in this experiment were maybe not salient enough.

Hypothesis 6 concerned males' attraction to elements of a barbeque meanwhile hypothesis 7 regarded sport elements. In line with earlier research it was believed that males would be more attracted to both of these attributes (see Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Nath, 2011; Whannel, 1999). Since that did not hold true for this study, these attributes are not believed to impact males' purchase intention towards vegetarian products. Neither did a combination of several of the masculine attributes together with the normative statement, which was assumed in hypothesis 8.

It was also tested whether the attitude towards the nine advertisements differed between the groups since attitude towards the ad is an important step in the Dual Mediation Hypothesis

(DMH) (MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1983; 1986). However, similar to purchase intention, no significant differences occurred. Moreover, the attitude towards the ad for the nine groups in this study had a moderate positive correlation with purchase intention. Hence, the results of this study is in line with MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch's (1983) claim that attitude towards the ad is an indicator of purchase intention towards the advertised product. Thereby, the findings of this study support the DMH and the theory was appropriate to use to fulfil the purpose of this study.

Since none of the hypotheses were accepted, this study showed that normative statements and masculine attributes in advertisements do not affect males in the purchase of vegetarian products. A reason for this could be that the differences in the advertisements designed for this study were not prominent enough. Also, males in Sweden could possibly have a lower interest in vegetarian products because the norm of males as meat eaters is rooted in the Swedish society and that attributes in advertising are not enough to change this. However, how often the respondents consumed vegetarian products was relatively independent of their self-perceived gender, indicating that males that consider themselves to be very masculine do not necessarily consume more meat and less vegetarian products than males that consider themselves to be more feminine, which contradicts prior research (see Nath, 2011; Rothgerber, 2012; Rozin et al, 2012; Sobal, 2005). This would instead be evidence that the norm of males as meat eaters might not be as strong as expected in Sweden.

Nonetheless, Swedes are still consuming increasingly more meat (Jordbruksverket, 2017), which means that even if the connection between self-perceived gender and meat consumption is low, something else must contribute to the big meat intake in the country. Additionally, the result might have been affected by the sample which mostly consisted of young people, since it is more common amongst younger people to eat vegetarian food (Demoskop, 2014). Thereby, they might eat more vegetarian food than older males regardless of if they perceive themselves as masculine or feminine. Moreover, self-perceived gender only has a slight positive correlation with both purchase intention and attitude towards the ad. Meaning that men who consider themselves more feminine only have a slightly higher purchase intention and attitude. When comparing this to the fact that the respondents did not have any differences in attitude and purchase intention it can be assumed that masculine men are not persuaded to buy more vegetarian products with the use of masculine attributes and normative statements in advertisements.

Prior research states that the portrayals of gender roles are changing (see Gentry & Harrison, 2010; Schroeder & Zwick, 2004). That indicates that attitudes and values are changing as well, which possibly can be supported by the fact that 46-65 year olds had a higher attitude towards the ads compared to 18-35 year olds. Since most of the advertisements contained masculine attributes, this suggests that older males are more attracted to masculine attributes than younger males, indicating a shift in attitude towards traditionally masculine attributes. This goes in line with a recent research made by Siyanova-Chanturia, Warren, Pesciarelli, Cacciari (2015). They claim that older adults are not as flexible when it comes to stereotyping. They believe, to a larger extent than younger adults, that gender stereotypes are right (Siyanova-Chanturia et al., 2015). Connected to the result of this study, older males might be more attracted to traditionally masculine attributes due to their lower stereotype flexibility. No difference in purchase intention was discovered between the age groups. The older age group is thereby not more interested in buying the vegetarian product even though they had a better attitude towards the

ads. Therefore, the advertisements do not manage to change the intended behaviour of the older group, but the attributes and normative statement in the advertisement are still more appealing to them. This result however, might also be an effect of the majority of young people in the sample.

In the experiment, it was also found that respondents that had a high level of education were more likely to *expect to buy* and *plan to buy* vegetarian products than those who had a basic level of education. The respondents that have a higher level of education might be more educated about the negative effects of meat consumption and therefore be more positive towards purchasing vegetarian products. It could also be explained by the fact that there are more people with a high education that live in big cities (Demoskop, 2014), at the same time as the interest of vegetarian products are increasing to a greater extent there (Statistiska centralbyrån, 2006). However, there were no differences in attitude towards the ad, which again indicates that the masculine attributes and the normative statement were not enough to change male's liking of the advertised vegetarian product.

Moreover, the results showed that there was a considerable positive correlation between purchase intention and how often the respondents currently consume vegetarian products. It is reasonable that people who already consume vegetarian products would be more willing to buy it again, since they are already interested in, and probably like, the product. However, the same result could not be seen between consumption and attitude towards the ad, which further supports the assumption that the advertisements did not generate a more positive attitude towards vegetarian products. Instead, the higher purchase intention for people who originally consumed a larger quantity of vegetarian products probably was due to their already positive attitude towards vegetarian food.

The respondents perceived the advertisements that contained sport elements and a combination of masculine attributes to be more masculine than the other advertisements. Nevertheless, the respondents did not have higher purchase intention or better attitude towards the ad for those advertisements. This indicates that Swedish males still perceive some of the attributes, that according to prior research appeal to males, to be more masculine. However, it does not mean that they like them more. In the context of vegetarian products, Swedish males therefore do not seem to be more attracted by perceived masculine attributes. It might be due to the fact that Sweden has a relatively feminine society compared to other countries. According to Hofstede's (2001) masculinity dimension, Sweden is considered to be a feminine country since it has the lowest masculinity score out of 53 compared countries (Daechun An & Kim, 2007). Other reasons might be because of a dislike of the vegetarian product itself or because of the suggested change in attitude towards traditionally masculine attributes.

Moreover, Sweden is a relatively gender equal country, rating number four in the world on gender equality with a gender gap index of 0,823 (World Economic Forum, 2015). Therefore, Swedish males might be progressive when it comes to modern gender roles. This could mean that men do not connect their own masculinity with meat, but still do not care much for vegetarian food. That would possibly explain that the means for purchase intention for all the advertisements ranged from 2,22 to 3,24, which out of a scale from 1 to 7, is quite low. Meaning that, in general, the purchase intention was low. If Swedish males do not connect their own masculinity with their food consumption, then using masculine attributes to attract males to vegetarian products would not be useful. Another possible explanation for the low means of/in

purchase intention in this study might be that the attributes and statement used in the advertisements were not salient or appealing enough or that other elements of the advertisements affected the answers more than the actual attributes and the normative statement.

In summary, the hypothesis testing together with the additional findings from the study indicate that there is a low connection between masculinity and vegetarian products for Swedish males, which in turn is further validated by the fact that the perceived masculine attributes do not have a higher purchase intention or attitude. The reasons for this might be many, some of the more prominent factors that seem to influence this is the large portion of young people in the sample and the fact that Sweden is a relatively gender equal and feminine country in comparison to other parts of the world.

## **6. Conclusions**

### **6.1 Summary**

The purpose of this study was to investigate if males' attraction to vegetarian products could be improved when using stimuli such as a normative statement and masculine attributes in advertising, in order to contribute to a greater understanding of how gender attributes in advertising and normative messages influence consumers in the purchase process. The eight hypotheses that were formulated assumed that the normative statement and the attributes blue colour, angular and bold fonts, elements of a barbecue, sport elements and a combination of masculine attributes would increase purchase intention amongst males and that pink colour and slim and round fonts would lead to a lower purchase intention for the same group. However, all of the advertisements resulted in approximately the same mean of purchase intention and no differences could be seen between the different groups. Thereby, all hypotheses were rejected and it can be concluded that different masculine and normative stimuli in advertising do not affect males in the evaluation of vegetarian products. To use this type of stimuli in advertising is therefore not efficient in improving the purchase intention and attitude of vegetarian products amongst males in Sweden. To succeed with that, a better understanding regarding what Swedish males are appealed by and what attributes that could help sell vegetarian products would be needed.

Additionally, the result showed that two of the advertisements (sport and combination) were considered to be more masculine, but the attitude for these two were not higher in comparison to the rest. Thus, no positive correlation could be seen between an advertisement being perceived as masculine and a higher buying intention towards vegetarian products amongst Swedish males. This indicates that there is a low connection between males, meat and masculinity in Sweden.

### **6.2 Contributions**

The findings of this study contribute to theory regarding norm communication and gender attributes in advertising. By investigating the effect of using a normative message and different gender attributes in advertising of vegetarian products, it generates increased knowledge about if communication can be used to change social norms, in particular the norm regarding males as meat eaters. Since the hypotheses in this study were rejected, the result contradicts prior findings regarding how normative statements for desired behaviour, that is in minority, should be formulated and what attributes in advertising that males are attracted by. Thereby, it contributes to new insights regarding the topic. It also constitutes a base for further development of existing theory and a generation of new knowledge. It suggests that males are decreasingly attracted by attributes that prior research has stated to be masculine. Thereby, in the context of vegetarian products, this study can theoretically contribute with the conclusion that communication including this type of stimuli does not possess the possibility to change social norms.

In practical terms, this study contributes with a result that can be valuable for companies and marketers. By understanding that males' purchase intention towards vegetarian products do not increase when normative statements and masculine attributes such as blue colour, bold fonts,

elements of a barbecue, sport elements or a combination of attributes are used in advertisements, companies can adapt their marketing activities accordingly. If companies that produce and sell vegetarian products want to reach male consumers in Sweden they should preferably not include these type of stimuli in their communication efforts. Since the interest of vegetarian food is greater among females than males in Sweden today (Demoskop, 2014), there is much potential of an increased profit for companies if they succeed in attracting males as well. Therefore, it could be valuable for companies to instead implement other marketing activities that possibly possess the ability to make males more interested in buying vegetarian products.

### **6.3 Limitations and further research**

In order to build on the theoretical contributions of this study, further research should test the study's hypotheses in other contexts. It should be done to investigate if the same findings regarding normative messages and gender attributes in advertising holds true in areas other than vegetarian products and the norm of men as meat eaters.

The main limitation of this study was the sample size. In this study a sample of 435 respondents was collected. In order to obtain more accurate results that are significant at a lower sig. level, a much larger sample would have been necessary. Moreover, the sample of this study consisted of males 18-65+ years old. However, the majority of them belonged to the lower age groups, 18-25 and 26-35. Most of them were also students. This was due to the convenience sampling technique used in the study. In future research it would be highly beneficial to collect a larger and more diverse sample in order to obtain more generalizable data.

This study was limited to Sweden and male consumers. Further, since the study was carried out in the south of Sweden, most respondents came from there. Sweden is an interesting country to conduct this type of study since, like previously mentioned, it has a large amount of male single households. Males are therefore to a high degree in charge of the actual purchase of food and also of vegetarian products. However, it would be interesting to replicate or conduct a similar study in another country or region further north in Sweden, since the opinions and attitudes might differ there due to another cultural and social context. The theory that this study is based upon is applicable worldwide. Nevertheless, Sweden rates number four in the world on gender equality (World Economic Forum, 2015). Thereby, males in Sweden are probably more progressive regarding these issues and they might be more open towards feminine personal characteristics and feminine attributes in advertising and less appealed by masculine attributes, compared to males in other countries.

This study investigated how a normative statement and different attributes influenced males' evaluation of advertisements of vegetarian products. Suggestions for future research would be to include other attributes and normative statements formulated differently in order to see if that would lead to different, significant results. For future research it would also be beneficial to have more pronounced differences between the different advertisements used in the experiment. Moreover, this study does not include any models in the advertisements. It would therefore be interesting to see whether the inclusion of models in different gender roles in advertisements increases the likability of vegetarian products for males. This study resulted in findings that contradict some prior research regarding what gender attributes in advertising that males are attracted by, even though they were not significant. Therefore, it would be beneficial

to conduct a similar study in order to see if the findings of this study hold true, and that males' preferences thereby are changing.

The advertisements used in the experiment in this study were of a fictitious brand. The result might have differed if existing brands were used instead. Existing brands possess a brand image and brand personality. Therefore, it might be easier for the respondents to assess an advertisement from an existing brand. Further, the advertisements in this study were not professionally produced, which might have affected the results. If professionally produced advertisements had been used instead, the quality would have been higher and the attributes might also have been more distinct. Thereby, the respondents' answers might have differed.

Finally, this study had a quantitative method. Conducting a similar research, but instead using a qualitative method to collect the data would generate valuable insights about males' evaluation of advertisements of vegetarian products. A qualitative method could investigate the problem from another perspective and thereby result in deeper knowledge regarding underlying thoughts and motivation for why male evaluate the advertisements and different normative messages and attributes the way they do. In such research, information regarding to what degree males actually are influenced by advertising in the decision of whether to buy vegetarian products or not can be uncovered. It could also be investigated if there are other aspects that are more important for that specific purchase.

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# Appendices

## 1. Survey

### English version

Thank you for wanting to participate in our survey which investigates mens' attitudes towards advertisement of vegetarian products. The result of the survey will be used in our master thesis in marketing. Your participation in the survey will be anonymous.

Demographics:

#### 1. Do you identify yourself as male?

yes/no

#### 2. What device are you using to fill in this survey?

Computer, tablet, smartphone

#### 3. Age

18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 65+

#### 4. Highest level of education

elementary school, high school, university 0-3 years, university 3+ years

#### 5. Monthly income before tax (SEK)

<14 999, 15 000 – 24 999, 25 000 – 34 999, 35 000 – 44 999, 45 000 – 54 999, >55 000

#### 6. Household composition

Single without children, single with children, co-habitation without children, co-habitation with children

**7. How often do you consume vegetarian products?** *Vegetarian products are here interpreted as meat substitute products (e.g. burgers, hotdogs and filets made out of soy or other vegetable protein)*

never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very often

In order for your answers to be as realistic as possible we ask you to imagine the following scenario when answering the following questions:

You are going to do the grocery shopping for tonight's dinner. Since you have not had time to plan your purchase you do not have a shopping list with you when entering the shop. When passing by the frozen products you see the following advertisement.



*(This is an example of the nine advertisements, for each survey one of them was shown. See appendix 2 for all advertisements)*

**8. I perceive the ad to be:**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

very unpersuasive  
 very uninformative  
 not very meaningful

very persuasive  
 very informative  
 very meaningful

**9. My perception of the brand is that is has:**

*(Attributes are characteristics or features that are specific to an object or a person)*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

less salient attributes

more salient attributes

low quality

high quality

**10. I feel that the ad is:**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

very bad

very good

very unfavourable

very favourable

highly uncreative

highly creative

least attractive

very attractive

**11. My attitude towards the brand:**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

dislike quite a lot

like quite a lot

unsatisfactory

satisfactory

very unappealing

very appealing

**12. After having seen the ad:**

A) I would absolutely consider buying vegetarian products

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 strongly agree

B) I would definitely expect to buy vegetarian products

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 strongly agree

C) I would absolutely plan to buy vegetarian products

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 strongly agree

**13. I perceive the ad as:**

masculine 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 feminine

**14. I perceive the brand as:**

masculine 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 feminine

**15. I consider myself to be:**

masculine 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 feminine

**16. I would like to be**

masculine 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 feminine

## Swedish version

Tack för att du vill medverka i vår enkät som undersöker mäns attityder till reklam för vegetariska produkter. Resultatet från enkäten kommer användas i vår masteruppsats inom marknadsföring. Din medverkan i enkäten kommer vara anonym.

### 1. Identifierar du dig som man?

ja/nej

### 2. Vad använder du för enhet för att fylla i denna enkät?

Dator, surfplatta, smartphone

### 3. Ålder

18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 65+

### 4. Högsta avklarade utbildningsnivå

grundskola, gymnasium, universitet 0-3 år, universitet 3+ år

### 5. Månadsinkomst innan skatt (SEK)

<14 999, 15 000 – 24 999, 25 000 – 34 999, 35 000 – 44 999, 45 000 – 54 999, >55 000

### 6. Hushållstyp

Ensamstående utan barn, ensamstående med barn, sammanboende utan barn, sammanboende med barn

**7. Hur ofta konsumerar du vegetariska produkter?** Med vegetariska produkter avses här köttsubstitut (*t.ex. burgare, korvar and filéer gjorda på soja eller annat växtprotein*)

aldrig 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 väldigt ofta

För att dina svar ska bli så verklighetstroga som möjligt ber vi dig att föreställa dig följande scenario då du svarar på nedanstående frågor:

Du ska handla matvaror till kvällens middag. Då du inte har haft tid att planera ditt köp har du inte någon inköpslista med dig när du går in i mataffären. När du går förbi frysdiskens får du se nedanstående reklambild.



**8. Min uppfattning av annonsen är att den är:**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

väldigt tvivelaktig

väldigt övertygande

väldigt innehållslös

väldigt upplysande

väldigt meningslös

väldigt meningsfull

**9. Min uppfattning av varumärket är att det har:**

*Attribut är kännetecken eller särdrag som är typiska för ett objekt eller en person*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

icke framträdande attribut

väldigt framträdande attribut

låg kvalité

hög kvalité

**10. Jag känner att annonsen är:**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

väldigt dålig

väldigt bra

negativ

positiv

fantasilös

nyskapande

frånstötande

tilltalande

**11. Min attityd gentemot varumärket:**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

ogillar

gillar

otillfredsställande

tillfredsställande

motbjudande

lockande

**12. Efter att ha sett annonsen:**

A) Skulle jag absolut överväga att köpa vegetariska produkter

instämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 instämmer helt

B) Skulle jag definitivt förvänta mig att köpa vegetariska produkter

instämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 instämmer helt

C) Skulle jag absolut planera att köpa vegetariska produkter

instämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 instämmer helt

**13. Jag uppfattar annonsen som:**

maskulin 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 feminin

**14. Jag uppfattar varumärket som:**

maskulint 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 feminint

**15. Jag anser mig själv vara:**

maskulin 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 feminin

**16. Jag skulle vilja vara:**

maskulin 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 feminin

## 2. Advertisements

### Advertisement 1– neutral



Advertisement 2 – blue



Advertisement 3 – pink



Advertisement 4 – bold font

**Testa vår  
helt nya  
vegoburgare**



VEGGIS

**Vego  
BURGARE**

100% VEGO  
Proteinrik  
Vegansk

ÄGG  
FRI

MJÖLK  
FRI

300 gram (4 x 75)

Advertisement 5 – fine font

Testa vår helt nya  
vegoburgare



VEGGIS

**Vego  
BURGARE**

100% VEGO  
Proteinrik  
Vegansk

ÄGG  
FRI

MJÖLK  
FRI

300 gram (4 x 75)

Advertisement 6 – barbecue

# Testa vår nyhet för grillen



VEGGIS

**Vego BURGARE**

100% VEGO  
Proteinrik  
Vegansk

MÖLK FRI  
ÄGG FRI

300 gram (4 x 75)

Advertisement 7 – sport

# Testa vår helt nya vegoburgare



VEGGIS

**Vego BURGARE**

100% VEGO  
Proteinrik  
Vegansk

MÖLK FRI  
ÄGG FRI

300 gram (4 x 75)

Advertisement 8 – normative statement

**Antalet svenska män som äter vegetariskt ökar. Följ trenden du med.**



The advertisement features a central product box for VEGGIS Vego BURGARE. The box is white with a grey background and contains the following text: 'VEGGIS' in a white box, 'Vego BURGARE' in large bold letters, '100% VEGO Proteinrik Vegansk' in a green circle, 'ÄGG FRI' and 'MJÖLK FRI' in green hexagons, and '300 gram (4 x 75)' at the bottom. Two brown burger patties are shown in the center. The box is surrounded by three green leaf graphics on a brown stem.

Advertisement 9 – combination

**Antalet svenska män som äter vegetariskt ökar. Följ trenden du med.**



The advertisement features a background image of a football player in a blue jersey with the number 14, holding a football. The text 'Antalet svenska män som äter vegetariskt ökar. Följ trenden du med.' is overlaid on the right side. In the bottom right corner, there is a smaller version of the VEGGIS Vego BURGARE product box, identical to the one in Advertisement 8.