The use of social movements in marketing

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Abstract

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In today's marketing, we now and then see organizations using socio-political movements. This phenomenon often creates questions amongst its audience whether the organization genuinely cares about the movement, or whether it is just an easy way to capitalize on the movement. In this study, we wanted to examine further how the audience perceives brands, which marketing alludes on social movements, by examining some aspects connected to the brand and the choice of movement. Furthermore, this study aims to identify if there are some crucial factors that should be considered in order to create a successful advertisement that alludes on a social movement.

To be able to examine this phenomenon we choose to do a case study on Gillette's advertisement "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be," an advertisement that alludes on the #Metoo movement. Furthermore, we choose to conduct a mixed method with a qualitative approach, where we created a survey questionnaire to gather our empirics, that we, later on, analyzed qualitatively.

What we were able to identify after analyzing our empirics, where the majority of our respondents expressed a positive attitude towards the advertisement. Hence a defined pattern was that a lot of the respondent expressed a questioning attitude towards the real purpose of the advertisement. Despite the positive attitude towards the advertisement, we could identify that the majority of the respondents had a neutral attitude toward Gillette as a brand after watching the advertisement.

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Keywords: Social movements, #Metoo, advertisement, Gillette, mixed method, visual advertising, gender in advertising, emotional branding, audience reception.

Sammanfattning

Användningen av sociala rörelser i marknadsföring

I dagens marknadsföring ser vi då och då hur organisationer använder sociala rörelser. Detta fenomen skapar oftast funderingar bland målgruppen huruvida organisationen verkligen bryr sig om rörelsen och anspelar på den för att aktivt ta ställning i frågan, eller för att kapitalisera på den sociala rörelsen. Genom denna studie ville vi fortsatt undersöka hur målgruppen upplever varumärken som genom sin marknadsföring anspelar på sociala rörelser. Genom att undersöka några aspekter kopplade till varumärket och den valda sociala rörelsen. Dessutom syftar denna studie till att undersöka om det finns några nyckelaspekter som bör tas i beaktning för att lyckas med denna typ av marknadsföring.

För att möjliggöra en undersökning av detta fenomen valde vi att genomföra en fallstudie av Gillettes reklam "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be", en reklam som anspelar på den feministiska rörelsen och i synnerhet #Metoo. Utöver det valde vi att applicera en mixed method med en kvalitativ tillvägagångssätt, där vi skapade ett kvantitativt frågeformulär för att samla in vår empiri som vi senare analyserade kvalitativt.

Vad vi lyckades identifiera genom att analysera vår insamlade empiri var att majoriteten av deltagarna uttryckte en positiv attityd gentemot reklamen. Däremot fann vi ett tydligt mönster av deltagare som ställde sig frågande till syftet med att anspela på feminism och vad det verkliga syftet av reklamen var. Dessutom kunde vi se att trots att majoriteten hade en positiv attityd gentemot reklamen, hade en märkbar majoritet neutrala attityder gentemot varumärket Gillette efter att ha sett reklamen.

Antal tecken: 119 024

Nyckelord: Sociala rörelser, #Metoo, marknadsföring, Gillette, Mixed method, visuell marknadsföring, genus i marknadsföring, emotional branding, publikmottagning .

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In today's society, it has become more common that organizations consciously are violating the former well-established business norm of remaining apolitical and instead shed light on different political or social justice movements. This is often seen as a part of a strategy to establish successful marketing campaigns to attract consumers. In recent years, making political statements have been central in some of the most famous marketing campaigns, and organizations have realized the role that social movements can play in their social marketing to get the attention needed (Hastings and Domegan, 2013). Recent studies show that over fifty percent of consumers will boycott or adapt negative attitudes towards a brand because of how the brand positions itself on an ongoing issue. The same goes when brands stay silent on issues that we, as consumers, feel that the brand should be morally bound to address (Edelman, 2019). Brands has become a way for us consumers to express our values and beliefs and there has been a shift from where we choose brands because of its quality to becoming "belief- driven buyers" who shop with our conscience (Kambhampaty, 2017).

In recent years we have seen many multi-billion dollar brands adapting their marketing strategy to this phenomenon. Pepsi became heavily criticized for co-opting the BlackLivesMatter movement for profit. The advertisement, starring famous reality-tv star and model Kendall Jenner, quickly went viral and Pepsi faced plenty of backlashes, which forced Pepsi to pull the advertisement and make a public statement apologizing for missing the mark (Nytimes.com, 2019). Another well-known case is when Nike created their campaign to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the sports brand's iconic slogan and announced that Colin Kaepernick was one of the athletes to be part of their new campaign. The advertisement showed a close-up of Kaepernick with the updated Nike slogan, "Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything". The campaign was a reference to the lawsuit Kaepernick had made towards the National Football League (NFL) for allegedly colluding the athlete out of the NFL because of his protests against police brutality towards Afro-Americans in America. This campaign went viral and also started a boycott, but the boycott came to have

the desired effect for Nike which made a big win with the use of Kaepernick with a 6 billion dollar increase in value for the sports brand (Abad-Santos, 2019).

As late as in January this year, Gillette followed the trend of taking a political stand and released an advertisement that made several references to the #Metoo movement. This advertisement started, just like the advertisements mentioned above, a debate online, and it quickly went viral. By studying a specific case where the use of social movements created a debate, we hope to get a clearer view of how the audience responds to this phenomenon. In doing so, this study contributes to the conversation about social movements in social marketing by examining some of the critical issues and challenges identified in the literature, and then illustrates these issues through a case study of the Gillette advertisement "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be." The theories used to fulfill the purpose of this study will be the following: *Visual advertising*, *Gender in advertising*, *Femvertising*, *Emotional Branding* and *Audience Reception Theory*. We chose these theories since we believe they will be useful for both the reader but also for us, as writers, when conducting the analysis part. In regards to our contribution to the field of strategic communication, we argue that this study will further explore a relatively new trend amongst brand marketing which we believe will contribute to this field due to our focus on the receivers attitudes. Many studies with focus on how brands should improve their marketing is often made entirely from an organizational perspective, while this study almost entirely will be made with the receiver in focus.

1.1.1 We Believe: The Best Men Can Be

As we will further discuss in chapter 4.3.1, we have chosen to conduct a case study of Gillette's TV-commercial "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be." The advertisement was launched as a two minutes short-film on January 13, 2019, on Gillette's official Youtube account, and was later released as shorter 30 and 6 second-clip. The advertisement points out how men have been treating women and that the excuse always has been "boys will be boys." With this advertisement, they point out that this excuse is no longer valid. Now, boys and men need to be held accountable for their actions against women (Gillette, 2019). The reactions after Gillette released the advertisement have been many and it started an outcry amongst some Gillette users, while others thought this advertisement came just in time and addressed an important issue in today's society. In addition to this, there are also those who

question the agenda of the advertisement. Are Gillette genuinely caring about this issue, or are they just trying to capitalize on the #Metoo Movement? (Gillette, 2019).

Regarding to Jon Moeller, the Chief Financial Officer at Procter & Gamble, who owns Gillette since 2005, the sales number has not decreased since the advertisement aired and he states that the audience of younger men appreciates the advertisement (Resume, 2019). After the advertisement aired and many social media users indicated their boycott of the company, the analyze company Morning Consult conducted a survey asking over 2000 Americans about their opinions about the advertisement. The result of the survey showed that only 17 percent had a negative attitude towards the advertisement" (The Drum, 2019). What we hope to contribute with this study is to examine the use of social movements in advertisements from a more global perspective. In Chapter 1.3, we will further discuss the aim and purpose of the study.

1.1.2 It is time for boys to be held accountable for their actions

The 5th of October, after The New York Times, published an article where the actress Ashley Judd, accused one of Hollywood's most famous directors, Harvey Weinstein for sexual harassment (Abrams, Ashford & Rashbaum, 2017), is said to be the starting point of the #metoo movement. After Judd had the courage to speak out on the sexual abuse and harassment that had been going on for decades behind closed doors in the film industry, many other women also came forward with similar stories and accusations. The article published by The New York Times did not only expose Weinstein and the film industry in Hollywood but came to influence the unveiling of other industries and powerful men worldwide.

Mainly great things were born out of this, what many women had known for a long time, now finally hit the surface. With the unveiling of #metoo, both men and women finally understood the magnitude of the problem, important discussions about sexual harassment and stepping over the line took place. Out of the discussion, one could understand that a lot of men did not count grabbing someone ass, as crossing the line, but with the #Metoo movement, things changed. However, what counts as sexual harassment is still up for debate and raises questions among certain groups in the society, and when the movement spread worldwide, it became visible that the term sexual harassment can differ to a great extent depending on social or cultural context. It has become noticeable that the term sexual

harassment can vary to a great extent depending on social or cultural context. Despite this, we believe that men in general, hence there are no statistics to prove this, are more aware of the issues of the patriarchal structure in our society since the #Metoo movement.

1.2 Aim of the Study and Research Question

This study aims to examine how brands use social justice movements or political issues in their social marketing to create successful marketing campaigns. To explore this phenomenon more specifically, the study will be based on a case study where we examine the Gillette advertisement "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be." A 48-second tv-advertisement, which alludes on the brand's tagline "The best a man can get." The advertisement went viral in January 2019 after addressing ethical issues regarding sexual harassment as well as the well-known #Metoo movement.

Furthermore, our study aims to examine what consumers attitudes are towards brands that are taking a political stand or alludes on social movements in their marketing. By that, we wish to bring findings into which marketing aspects that determine the outcome of an advertisement based on the consumer's previous attitudes towards the brand and the social movement used in the advertisement. That means that in this study, we will try to examine if there are some guidelines that organizations should be following to make their advertisement appeal more favorable to the audience.

To reach the aim and meet the objectives of this study, the following research question was formulated:

- *How are brands perceived by their audience when using social movements in their marketing?*

For us to answer our research question, we will conduct a case study of how Gillette's advertisements "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be" uses the feminist movement to promote themselves and allude on their slogan "Gillette the best a man can get." Further, we will be using a mixed method with a qualitative approach throughout the study by conducting a quantitative survey that will be analyzed qualitatively. In the survey, the attitudes and assumptions of Gillette as a brand together with the "We Believe; The Best Men Can Be"

advertisement will be studied as an example of when an organization creates a marketing strategy based on a social movement. By doing so, we hope to contribute with a clearer understanding of how organizations can use social movements and whether it is perceived as a positive ethical move or just a money making strategy, which in this case would capitalize on the #Metoo movement.

1.3 Problem area

A recurring speculation that comes to mind when thinking about brands use of social movements to sell products or services, is whether it is because the organization genuinely cares, or if it is only a way to capitalize on the socio-political issues. It would not be astonishing nor odd if it were a combination of taking a political stand and also making money out of it. As we will discuss later on in this study, we will not examine why organizations choose to interact with movements in their advertising, but rather how the audience perceives the advertisement that alludes on social movements.

One interesting aspect when it comes to Gillette is what you find when you look into their history. One picture is of specific interest. It is a picture of women in really tight bodysuits with the Gillette logotype placed on their buttocks, an image which to many could be seen as portraying women as sexual objects.

Figure 1: (Ritschel, 2019)

In comments on Gillette's Twitter post after the release of the advertisement, this picture was posted by their audience several times accusing Gillette of not caring about the issue, since they have built much of their previous marketing on objectifying women and now the brand only seeks to profit from an ongoing issue. One can argue that there is a possibility that Gillette by this advertisement wants to wash away previous reputations as being labeled as a brand who only portraits athletic, masculine, and good looking men. Hence, one can also argue that their advertisement not only is about washing away reputations but that they care about this issue and by being a global brand, they are taking their responsibility on this issue.

What further brings people to doubt Gillette's agenda of this advertisement is the prize of female razors versus the price of blades for men. This has created deep suspicion on the underlying reasons for why Gillette decided to address this issue in their new campaign. This phenomenon, where low-involvement products for women coasts more than the same product for men, is called a pink tax (Ritschel, 2019).

1.4 Delimitations

First and foremost we have chosen only to study the assumptions and attitudes towards Gillette's "We believe: The best men can be"-advertisement, and not conducting a semiotic analysis on the advertisement itself. This decision was made since we have limited our research and problem formulation to a receiver perspective, where the interest does not lay in how the campaign itself was made, but how its audience perceived it.

Secondly, we have decided to focus on one specific organization and only examine one specific case and briefly mention, but not go further into other well-known cases where brands have used other socio-political issues or movements as part of their marketing. This means that we will only collect empirical material from this specific advertisement to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions regarding this case. We are aware of the fact that studying several cases and collecting empirical material from more than one source could help to contribute to a broader understanding of this phenomenon, but due to limited resources and the time aspects, we decided to limit this study to one case only.

2 Theoretical framework and previous research

In this chapter, we will present the theories which will build the foundation for our analysis and hopefully help to answer our research question. Our choices of theories are visual advertising, gender in advertising, emotional branding, and audience perception. In this chapter, we will furthermore bring up the research gap that we will try to fill with this study.

2.1 Visual advertising

Previous research

Since marketers began to adopt full-scale marketing initiatives and activities in the late nineteenth century, investigations regarding how, and to what extent visual element can contribute to the effectiveness of advertising started. Literature and research regarding the visual perception of advertising have previously, mostly considered printed advertisement. However, today, the research has become broader, and it now appears in a variety of media formats (Simola, Hyönä, Kuisma, 2014).

The use of Visual Advertising today

Using visual advertising has become crucial to the success of any business today. As a result, the majority of all advertising today is highly visual, no matter the brand or market. Our every day is filled with visual advertisements, and we can argue that we live in a highly visual society. Due to the rise of social media platforms like Youtube, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, visual advertising has never been easier to come across even though most individuals do not actively seek out to be exposed to it. These advertisements are via visual processes transmitted into the receivers affective and cognitive systems. This visual process controls what messages that are being transmitted and passed onto further mental processing and it display how visual advertising therefore highly depends on the brand's ability to attract attention (Simola, Hyönä & Kuisma, 2014). One of the central characteristics of visual communication and persuasive communication is that it is typically seen as unwanted attention.

Understanding the importance of visual images used in advertising is crucial, but Rose (2001) argues in her book Visual methodologies that adopting a critical approach and understanding is equally as essential. By taking a critical approach, there are three aspects that can be useful before launching any campaign containing visual imagery. The first one highlights the importance of taking images seriously. Today social scientists are often accused of assuming that images are nothing but reflections of its social context and are therefore usually held accountable for not looking at images carefully enough. Consequently, it is necessary to look at visual images very carefully and be aware that images are not entirely reducible to their contexts, but instead, they have their own effects. Secondly, it is essential to think about The social conditions and effects of visual objects of visual imagery. According to Rose (2001), visual imageries and representations both should be viewed as cultural practices that both produce and depends on social subjects. The third and last approach explains that the viewer needs to consider their own way of looking at images. The issue of reflexivity is always present when discussing the challenges of looking at a visual image. This leads to the common problem that arises when discussing the critical approach towards visual imagery. It is necessary to understand what you see when looking at images, but more importantly, it is necessary to understand what it is that you do not see. We assign value to the stimulus while we are talking about the way respond to those forms of stimulation, and the way we respond differs due to that we all as viewers have different historical, social and culturally specifics. It is common that viewers end up describing different things under the illusion that they are talking about the same thing, leading to endless discussions.

With the rise of visual advertising, the enormous impact that visual imagery and advertisement have on our society has become visible in a more precise way than before. Therefore, the necessity to educate individuals on the connections between the image-driven society we live in today and how it is affecting the quality of life among individuals has become even more critical. Even though most consumers are aware that the reality of what we see is based on the knowledge that we as individuals acquire, we remain unaware of how, and to what extent our perceptions have been affected by our emotions and memory, also known as emotional manipulation. This type of manipulation operates at an unconscious level and affects our conscious thinking and how we perceive visual imagery (Barry, 1997).

When formulation an accurate response to visual imagery or advertisement, it is worth emphasizing that there is no single or "correct" answer to how to perceive a visual image in the correct way. As Hall (1997) argues, there is no law to obey or guidelines that can rightfully guarantee that imagery has only one meaning and that its meaning will not change over a period of time. Therefore, Hall further argues that when analyzing visual imagery the importance does not lay in who is "right and who is wrong," instead work in this specification are is bound to create a debate with different meanings and interpretations (Hall, 1997).

2.2 Gender in advertising

Previous research

Researchers have been conducting studies about gender and the stereotypes portrayed in advertising since the early 1970s (Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976). These studies have been seen as the first ones who discussed the issue with gender stereotypes in advertising and argued that advertisements had portrayed women wrongfully, and had not kept up with time to portray women in alternative roles in the society. Studies showed that initially, female stereotypes mainly focused on women's working roles in society but later came to include a broader range of representations (Hatzithomas, Boutsouki & Ziamou, 2016).

Gender in today's advertising

In today's society, women status in advertisements has improved tremendously in comparison to the 1970s. Though it is still common that brands, organization and the mass media receives sharp criticism for portraying women in traditional mother and wife roles and still using gender stereotypes. Research shows that the main gender stereotypes in advertisement have been hard to entirely remove even though the society and its view on gender roles, and the gap between femininity and masculinity, has significantly changed over the past 30 years (Signoretti, 2017). This criticism has been more accessible to localize due to the rise of social media and it has also become vital for organizations to identify these types of criticism before it can lead to larger-scale boycotts of the organization (Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976). Since society's demands on organizations and brands to create ethically correct advertisements has risen, we do not longer accept advertisements that go against our own beliefs and visions. If

an organization wants to succeed, studies show that advertisement liking is one of the most significant factors linked with both sales and persuasion. This purchase intention is seen as the individual's intention to support a specific brand which they have carefully selected after a certain evaluation. Meaning that consumers affective response towards advertisement can, to a large extent, influence their will to purchase a specific product, and their purchase intention can therefore directly influence consumers (Kapoor & Munjal, 2017).

2.2.1 Femvertising

In today's fast evolving world of advertising and the intense competition it further brings along, brands advertisement plays a critical role in gaining attention and changing brand perceptions of customers. Advertisements today should be seen as three things. First, it should be seen as a marketing tool. Secondly, it should be seen as a social actor where advertisements transform cultural symbols together with ideas and further bonds together images of products and individuals. In the current era of advertising, a large number of brands are launching campaigns that are targeting and marketing feminism. Brands are today not only promoting and selling customers the actual product but are also selling customers empowerment through their products. This phenomenon has been named "Femvertising" and is making huge waves in the world of advertisement with women's purchasing power increasing. With the purchasing power from females, rising marketers have been given an opportunity to use this phenomenon. When brands adapt femvertising in their advertising, they mainly focus on either removing the traditional social taboos related to women in different cultures or social contexts or portraying women in more powerful roles and situations in the society (Kapoor & Munjal, 2017).

Previously, in the advertising industry, the saying "Sex sells" was a common marketing strategy to use. Larger brands like Gucci, Tom Ford, and even Gillette were well-known for creating campaigns that were objectifying women or put women in positions where they only were seen as sexual beings with, quite often, a considerably lower status than men (Hyland, 2015). Thus, sex still is a common element used in marketing campaigns "sex sells" is now seen as an outdated marketing saying and instead a shift, focusing more on female empowerment, has occurred. Research shows that millennial women do not identify with marketing messages that use the "sex sells" philosophy or in any other way objectifies

och sexualize women. Instead, women, today demands marketing messages that emphasize women's competencies and intellect, and that does not focus, or in any way, make connections to their physical appearances. As women have become stronger customers with more power than ever before, their voices matter, and as a result, brands have realized that marketing objectifying women will not be accepted (Grayceco, 2019).

Female empowerment in marketing has become excessively common today, and well-known femvertising-strategies is being adopted by more and more brands. We live in a time of unprecedented social and historical change where brands are trying harder than ever before to engage and encouraging women, often falling short with messaging that is seen as unrelatable, misplaced or worse, like pink-washing. As a result, women have developed a lack of trust towards brands and are tuning out at a faster rate and is not coming back. (Grayceco, 2019).

Organizations have, as mentioned above, come to the realization that using overly sexualized advertising in marketing for women is a wrong strategy. Instead, incorporating advertisement that empowers and further rises women, will make it easier for brands to connect with, and create content for its target market. A well-known femvertising strategy that is being played out by brands online is the use of female empowerment through hashtags. Creating hashtags has become a simple yet effective way for brands to sell young women empowerment through campaigns. Hashtags can quickly become viral with its catchy slogans that can take off on social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram. Creating a campaign that encourages sisterly encouragement is a simple way for brands to stay relevant and show that they are ignoring all kinds of gender inequality. To do this, research shows that marketers need to understand what women really are looking for, then strategize how to market their products thenceforward (Kapoor & Munjal, 2017).

2.3 Emotional branding

Previous research about emotional branding

A majority of the research in the field of emotional branding has been made *about* and *if* the positive feelings that is created amongst the audience when watching an advertisement and if it leads to a more positive attitude towards the brand itself. Some studies have been comparing if there is a visible difference between high and low involvement products and has

come up with the findings that the product of the advertisement does not matter (Geuens, De Pelsmacker & Tuan Pham, 2014).

Even though social movements can create positive feelings it may also bring up other emotions combined with the positive such as anger, frustration, hope, and fear. By looking at Gillette's advertisement that alludes on a social movement we hope to further contribute with more valuable knowledge into the field of emotional branding.

What is emotional branding?

Emotional branding is a proven branding strategy whose purpose is to establish brand loyalty. The theory alludes and creates great emotions within its audience, and it aims to build long-term relationships that in the organization's future will increase the sale of its goods or services. In other words, a successful campaign built upon emotional branding is the one who is communicated directly towards the heart of the consumer (Kim & Sullivan, 2019). As in almost every theory, there is not only one definition of emotional branding. The first Chief Marketing Officer of The Coca-Cola Company, Sergio Zyman described emotional branding as "Emotional branding is about building relationships; it is about giving a brand and a long-term product value. It is about sensorial experiences, designs that make you feel the product; designs that make you taste the product; designs that make you buy the product" (Gobé, 2001, p. v). Marc Gobé, the author of *emotional branding* (2001), defined emotional branding as "Emotional branding is the conduit by which people connect subliminally with companies and their products in an emotionally profound way" (Gobé, 2001, p. xxvii). Another definition of emotional branding is "a brand's strategy that stimulates consumers' affective state, appealing to their feelings to increase consumer loyalty toward the brand" (Kim & Sullivan, 2019, p. 2).

An essential crossroad for emotional branding and its growth in the marketing sphere is the paradigm of what the consumer wants. Before, the most important for the consumer were great quality or having the lowest price on the market. Now, the consumer is searching for additional value, things that add values to their personal brand and self-image (Kim & Sullivan, 2019). Marc Gobé points out ten commandments of the development from brand awareness to emotional branding and the evolution of the consumers' expectations of a brand. Since not all ten commandments fulfill the purpose to answer our research question, we will

only present the ones of interest to this study. The first one is the transformation from consumers to people. Previously, organizations looked upon consumers as just consumers and the marketing was shaped after this perspective. Now, this perspective has switched into viewing the consumer as people, people whom the organizations create a relationship with. The second commandments Gobé (2001) describes is the transformation from product to experience. Further, he means that "Products fulfill needs, experiences fulfill desires" (Gobé, 2001, p. xxviii). In other words, the consumer society we now exist in does not buy what it needs, but what it wants and marketing needs to adjust to that. The third commandment and the last one that is of interest for this study is the transformation from notoriety to aspiration. This commandment connects to the commandment from product to experience. Notoriety means that you are well know, that your organization or brand is out there and is being talked about. However, it is no guarantee that you are being liked or loved of that single reason. In addition to the fact that your brand or organization is being recognized, you have to create a desire among the audience that goes in line with their aspiration. In other words, the way one creates notoriety must be in an inspirational way that makes the consumer longing for the product. (Gobé, 2001, p. xxviii-xxx).

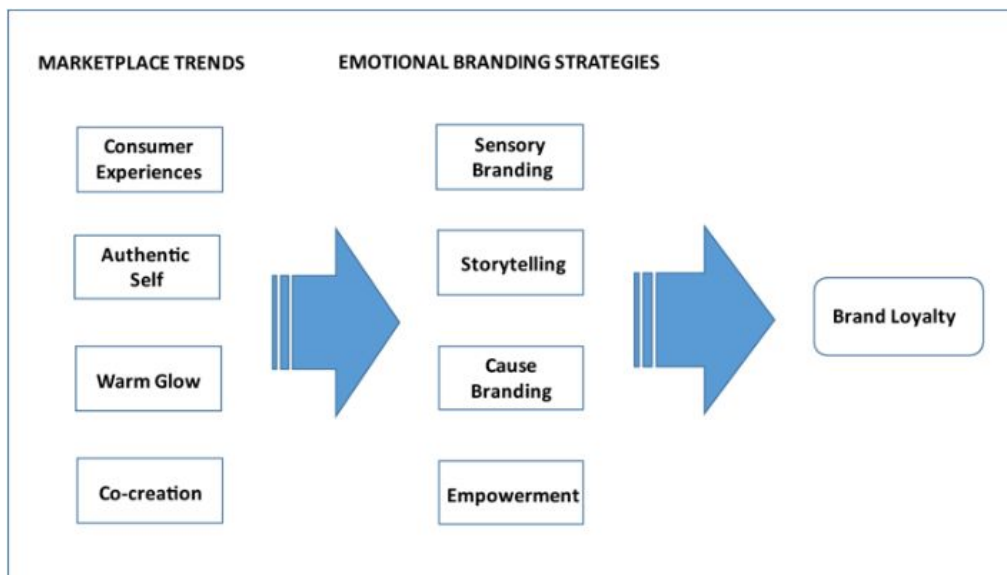Emotional branding by Kim & Sullivan (2019)

Figure 2: The model of (Kim & Sullivan, 2019, p. 2)

This figure illustrates the foundation of emotional branding, and it aims to help structure the emotional branding for a brand. The marketplace trend that suits our study is an authentic self. Therefore we will not discuss the other ones anymore. The same goes for the emotional branding strategies. Storytelling is of interest for this study and will be further discussed. As for Sensory branding, Cause branding and Empowerment, we will not discuss them any further (Kim & Sullivan, 2019).

Marketplace trends

Authentic self

The idéa of this part of the model shown in (fig. 1), is based upon the fact that brands nowadays needs to reflect its consumers. The more the consumers can relate to the brand, the stronger the brand gets. Lazzari, Fioravanti & Gough (1979) describes two "personal self," they call it actual self and ideal self. Actual self represents the reality of oneself, who you are, and how your surroundings perceive you. Ideal self, on the other hand, serve the version of how a person aims to be. If a brand wants to be successful with its emotional branding, they should aim for reaching their consumers actual self, since this will create a valuable relationship with the brand and its consumer (Kim & Sullivan, 2019).

Emotional branding strategies

Storytelling

Storytelling has gotten its roots in America, and Steen (1999) defined storytelling as "Using a narrative approach is what making information tangible and memorable" (Steen, 1999, p. 87). Lena Mossberg (2008) also points at storytelling as a marketing strategy that makes the brand more memorable and convincing. Further, she means that storytelling creates a comprehensive view of a brands image. Mossbergs deems that the reason why storytelling works effectively on the consumer's behavior is that the consumer gets emotionally involved with the brand (Mossberg, 2008).

The aim of using and applying storytelling in marketing is to meditate and share knowledge and values about your organization, consumer, or product (Dennisdotter, 2008). Further Dennisdotter (2008) means that good and successful storytelling is the one that spreads among its audience without the organizations spending any more money on it. One

important thing to keep in mind when using storytelling in marketing is to understand that storytelling is not about creating a cool story. However, the story one creates does not have to be real, as long as the audience perceives the story as real and authentic, it serves its purpose (Holt, 2002), (Dennisdotter, 2008). Furthermore, the fictive created story must be true to the values of the organizations, and its purpose can not be to trick or set aside the consumer. If the story is based on unauthentic or false grounds that will make the consumer perceive the brand as positive, the risk is that when, or if, the truth comes out the fall gets deeper and in the long-term, the brand gets damaged. Of course, the story can be nothing but the truth, but then it is crucial that the story is realistic and most important interesting enough to engage the consumer and trig emotions that makes the consumer desire the brand (Dennisdotter, 2008).

2.4 Audience Reception

Previous research

Reception theory came as a version of readers response to the literary theory that emphasizes the reader´s reception of a literary text or message. The theory originated from the work of Hans-Robert Jauss in the late 1960s, but it was not until the late 1970s and beginning of the 1980s that it came to be influential. Expansion of theory from text to a more semiotic approach was first developed in the 1990s by researchers in the sociological field (Fortier, 2002).

Audience Reception Theory

Audience Reception Theory, also known as reception analysis, has been widely used among marketers as an easy way of analyzing and characterizing audience responses. Reception theory argues that some contextual factors, more than textual factors, in many ways, influence the way an audience member views a visual message. This theory came to be useful in the wave of audience research, which was popular within marketing studies during the 1980s. This work has tended to adopt qualitative methods of research. By this research, scholars found out that the premise for understanding how the public interprets a text or a message is to not only by analyzing the content itself but to further examine the responses from the audiences that have been exposed to the content (Miller, 1998). The theory,

therefore, tends to be concerned with exploring the active choices, uses, and interpretations that the consumer is exposed to via media materials.

A proponent in the research of audience reception was the British sociologist Stuart Hall, who wrote a new, edited approach to Hans-Robert Juass's Reception theory (Davis, 2004). The Theory of Audience Reception can be traced back to the "Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse" study written by Hall back in 1973, and it is this edited version that is now referred to as Hall´s Theory of Encoding and Decoding. It was in this study that the now well-known model first was published and it offered a new, theoretical approach to how media messages are disseminated, produced, and interpreted by the audience.

Encoding/decoding by Stuart Hall (1973)
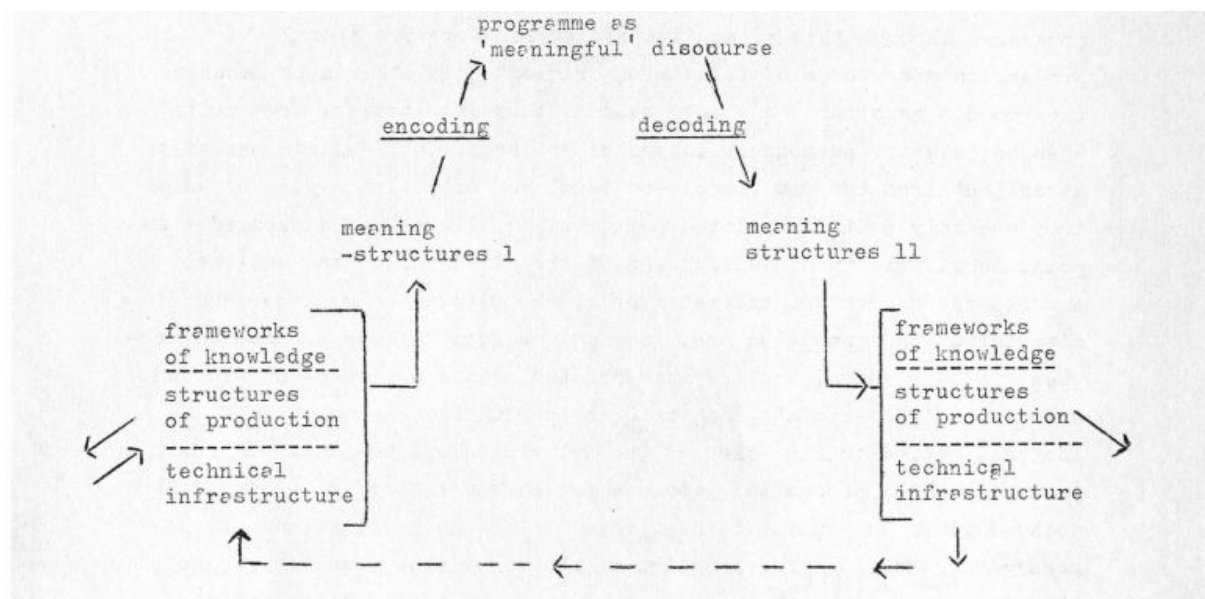
Figure 3: The model of (Hall, 1973)

Hall (1973) examined how media messages are encoded and decoded by a producer and its audience. With the producer who encodes its messages and values taken from, which is later decoded by its audience. However, Hall describes the importance of understanding that different audience members will decode the media messages in many different ways, which could often be to the contrary to the way that the producer initially intended. It is vital for marketers to understand this model and the process of decoding/encoding when producing messages because how the audience perceives the message can determine future success for

the organization or sales of a specific product (Hall, 1973). Therefore, Hall stated that audience members could adopt one of the following three positions when they are in the process of decoding a text or media message:

Dominant, or Preferred Reading: In the first position, the audience decodes and broadly agrees with how the producer intended the audience to view the message. This position is often adopted by audience members who come from the same culture or is around the same age. It can also be adopted by members who believe that the message has an easy to follow narrative or if it in any way deals with themes or issues that are relevant to the audience in question. It is very positive for the producer if the audience members identify with this step since it means that their advertisement has been successful as to get the values and messages across.

Oppositional Reading: The second position describes the problem that can occur for a producer when its audience rejects the intended message and instead creates their own meaning for the media message. This problem often occurs when the message contains themes that could be seen as controversial or addresses issues that members of the audience often could disagree with. But oppositional reading can also arise when an audience member has different beliefs or if the message has a somewhat complex narrative structure. Usually, a structure that might not be dealing with themes or trends in the current modern society.

Negotiated Reading: This position should be seen as a compromise between the dominant or preferred and oppositional readings. By negotiated reading, the audience accepts the producer´s view to a certain extent. The audience can accept parts of the message made by the producer. However, they still have their personal views, inputs, and understanding of certain parts of the message. Hence, this position should not be seen as negative for the producer since the message still comes across, even if the audience member also is making personal judgments.

What makes an audience member adopt one of the above-stated readings can be due to a number of factors including age, gender, beliefs, social or cultural context. These factors decide what conscious or unconscious readings the audience member adapts to (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001), (Hall,1997).

3 Method

In this chapter, we will present how we gathered our empirical material that, together with our chosen theoretical framework, will serve as a foundation for our upcoming analysis and discussion. Furthermore, this chapter will not only describe how but also why we have chosen our selected method. We decided to do a mixed method on this case study, which includes a quantitative survey to gain information about attitudes and previous perception and qualitative analysis of the gathered empirics. As we will discuss, the choice of doing a case study is not to give a generalizable answer that can be used in all situations similar to the one studied but to provide a more detailed knowledge that can be used when creating similar advertisements that allude on social movements.

3.1 Choice of method and scientific approach

This study is based upon an ontological perspective, which means that the entity is based on aspects we can not affect. Further, the ontological perspective has two different mindsets, positivism and social constructivism. The mindset of positivism implicates that there is only one entity, social constructivism on the other hand, questions positivism and believes that the entity is constantly being created in the interaction between humans. This study will further be based upon an ontological perspective with a mindset of social constructivism. Therefore we will not present an objective answer to our research question (Bryman, 2018). In addition to this perspective, Bryman argues that the author's previous validations, whether it reflects the emotions or opinions by the author always takes place in ones study. This means that no matter how objective we try to study our research question, the study will be, in somewhat based and constructed on our subjective entity (Bryman, 2018). Further, this study will in addition to the ontological perspective, likewise have a social constructive perspective with an epistemological mindset, which implicates that there is not one entity, but everyone has its own entity based on previous knowledge and experiences (Burr, 1995).

Furthermore, this study will be made in an inductive process, which means that we have selected the theories to analyze our empirical material, and not gathered empirical material to explain the selected theory. It means that we created the method without knowing which

theories to use, by making general conclusions of the gathered material, theories were selected (Bryman, 2018).

Later on, in this method chapter, we will further explain our choice of method, which will be a mixed method with a qualitative approach. Hence, the qualitative approach prefers to be studied on a holistic level, which implicates to study the entity as total (Bryman, 1988).

3.2 Mixed Methods

Esaiasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson & Wängnerud brings up in their book Metodpraktikan the struggle to choose the right method for ones study. They mention the impossibleness of including all or too many different methods but highlights how important it is to have a plan. Furthermore, they discuss how one simply cannot be criticized for its choice of method, but questioned if the method chosen is the most suitable for the study and its aim (Esaiasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson & Wängnerud, 2007). With this in mind, we have chosen to apply a mixed method for this study, where we will conduct a quantitative survey and do a qualitative analyze. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner defines mixed method as "research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007, p.123).

Why mixed method?

We argue that the conducting of a quantitative survey in combination with a qualitative analysis of the respondent answers from the survey will be the best way to answer our research question. This is based on the fact that the phenomenon we study is a global issue and that we are interested in finding respondent from all over the world. Since we are not interested in finding "how many" or statistics about this problem, a quantitative analysis simply does not fulfill its purpose. Instead, we have chosen to conduct a qualitative analyze when analyzing our answers since we are interested in attitudes and perceptions.

Method delimitation

One can argue that an interview or a focus group would fit our study, and we can only agree with that. But since we aimed to get respondents from all over the world, a survey is a much more efficient way to do so. In order to look at our research question from a global perspective, we would need both more time and a larger budget, which is the main reason why we chose to conduct a survey. As mentioned in the chapter above, we will not look at our research question with a qualitative approach, since we are not interested in numbers and statistics.

We are aware that other methods could be applied to this study and that our chosen method only allows us to see our research question from one point of view.

3.2.1 The quantitative survey

In this chapter, we will discuss the choices we will make when creating our survey, everything from the design, introduction, potential pitfalls, and the strength of surveys, both generally and more broadly. Further, we will discuss the choice of language, the number of questions, and how we will formulate both open-ended questions and the alternatives of answers. Since we are conducting a mixed method and therefore, analyze the quantitative survey qualitatively, we will only discuss the survey from a respondents perspective.

Why survey?

One of the benefits of conducting a survey versus having interviews are that all of the respondents get the same question, presented in the same way. This, on the other hand, puts pressure on the questions and how they are formulated, which will be further discussed later on in this chapter. Secondly, by using a survey there will be no interviewer who asks the question which can form the respondents answers. It may occur if the respondent feels intimidated by the interviewer, that the respondent answers in a way that they think the interviewer wants. Since surveys, relatively often are anonymous, the chances of getting an honest answer are higher, but only if the respondent feels that they are answering anonymous (Bryman, 2018).

Survey design

Esaiasson et al. (2017) divide survey questionnaires into two parts, respondent survey, and interview survey. Interview surveys see the respondent as a "witness" or a "truth speaker" as Esaiasson et al. denotes them. The purpose of the respondent is to contribute with useful information about the reality in a specific event (Esaiasson et al., 2017). Since our research question aims to answer questions about attitudes and perceptions, we have chosen to conduct a respondent survey. Respondent surveys focus on the thought of the respondent regarding the study objects, and that is why we have chosen this type of survey questionnaire. Further, we will mention the respondent survey or survey questionnaire as the survey.

The first part of the survey, the introduction, should be designed in a way that captures the interest of the respondent. To do so, Esaiasson et al. (2017) present five elements to follow. First, the introduction must contain a presentation of the survey and its purpose. Second, a "Thank you for your participation" is in order to show gratitude to the respondents for contributing to the study. Third, a description of how the survey function and the way the respondent is supposed to answer must also be included in the introduction. The fourth element is the need for contact information so that the respondent at any time can contact the creator of the survey if any unclarities regarding the survey would occur. The final and fifth element is the need of information that states that the survey is voluntarily to answer and that the respondent at any time can leave the survey with no further questions. This element is of certain importance when it comes to sending the survey by post or email since it is easy to think that survey is mandatory to answer when sent personally to someone (Esaiasson, et al., 2017). As for the five elements presented, we have carefully taken them into consideration when created our survey. Further, the survey, as a whole, along with the introduction, can be found in Appendix 1.

In addition to the introduction Esaiasson et al. (2017) points out the importance of the visual in the survey, it must be appealing to the respondent in order to make them *want* to answer the survey. Therefore, we chose to add a picture from the advertisement as a header in our survey. Mainly since we believe that this picture combined with the tagline "The Next Generation Of Men Is Watching" has a powerful message that is suitable for our survey and makes it more visually appealing for the respondents.

Figure 4: (Gillette, 2019)

The same goes for the importance of structure. The structure needs to make sense and make the pathway of answering the survey easy (Esaiasson et al., 2017).

The design of the questions

In order to create questions that would be easy to understand for the respondents, the validity of the survey is crucial, yet it is one of the greatest pitfalls in a survey. Esaiasson et al. believe that a survey is not suitable for subjects that are too complicated (Esaiasson et al., 2017). We argue that the subjects portrayed in our survey are not too complicated, based on the argument that both feminism, the #Metoo movement, Gillette as a brand and TV-advertisements are subjects that are well known and often discussed in today's society.

Furthermore, the language is vital, it is important that the language used in the survey is not too advanced for the intended respondent audience. This has been a bit of a struggle for our survey since we aimed to get respondents from people all over the world we needed to create the survey in English. Even though English is a language spoken by many people around the world, more formal English was needed to make sure that the survey was presented in a professional and correct manner. The language was therefore perceived as correct by the respondents who were comfortable with the English language, whilst the respondents that have English as a second or third language could see the more formal language as an obstacle. We noticed this when sending the survey out to our test respondents.

Another important thing to keep in mind is to avoid vague words, by means, words which are lacking a clear definition. The reason for this is because vague words can have

different meanings to different people, meaning that the answers collected from questions with vague words in some ways are not useful. Furthermore, there should not be double questions in one question. Instead, they should be split into two separate questions to make it more clear. In our survey, we have one open question, a type of question where the respondent answers the question with free words, and there are no given alternatives. In this question, we choose to have a head question with two sub-questions, the reason is simply to give the respondent some inspiration on how to answer the head question without leading them to a specific answer. Finally, it is of great importance not to create questions with a negative formulation, since that may lead the respondent into answering what you are searching for, something we were very cautious about (Esaiasson et al., 2017).

Validity and reliability

To be able to say something about the gathered empirics it is of importance to, before sending out the survey, go through the validity and reliability of the survey. Validity can be described as how well the questions in the survey that the respondents answers, answers the research question of the study. In order to conduct a survey with a high level of validity, one must make sure that there is none or little systematic incorrectness. One negative aspect when conducting a survey in terms of validity is the lack of flexibility. The respondents have no possibility of asking questions about the survey, and the closed questions may not give an answer that fits in line with the respondent initial thoughts, and they are therefore forced to answer something that may not be correct to what they really think. To make our survey a bit more flexible and increase the validity, we chose to have one open-ended question. With that question, we wanted to give the respondent a possibility to express a more personal reflection about the advertisement. In order not to provide the respondent with a wider bias we chose to put the open-ended question as to the first question after watching the advertisement, the reason of this is due to the possibility that the respondent might be affected by the other questions and therefore not give a spontaneous answer. On the other hand, the respondent always has the option of going back and forth in the survey, and therefore it is a risk that the respondent changes their answers anyways.

Furthermore, one aspect of the survey that increases the validity is the fact the all of the respondents get the same questions and that they do not get affected by an interviewer and

the pressure of answering the way they think the interviewer wants decreases. Moreover, to increase the validity of our survey, we chose to have two similar questions, one in the beginning and one at the end. The reason why we did that was to make sure that the respondent answer truthfully throughout the survey. The first question was, "What were your previous opinions about Gillette as a brand?" and the second one was "What is your opinion of Gillette as a brand?". The difference is that the first question asks what they think about Gillette before watching the advertisement, and the second is after watching it. To see if they believe that the advertisement changed their view of the brand we asked: "Has your perception of Gillette as a brand changed after you watched the advertisement?".

In addition to making sure the validity is high one must also mind the reliability of the survey. Reliability can be described as the reliability of the questions. In other words, how well the questions measure our research question. Lack off, or low reliability might be due to unclear questions or ambiguous alternative of answers. In order to create a survey that is not easy to misinterpreted and has answers that represent the most of what the respondent likely would answer we tested our survey on a couple of test-respondents and got valuable information that we used to increase the reliability of our survey (Djurfeldt, Larsson & Stjärnhagen, 2010).

Furthermore, Djurfeldt et al. (2010) argue that the answer does not know/ maybe/ no opinions might decrease the reliability of the survey. We have chosen to include this alternative in some of our questions since not giving this alternative might force the respondent to answer something that is not fully representative of their thoughts (Esaiasson et al., 2017). We argue that this is a way to increase the validity since we are giving the respondent a possibility to answer more correctly according to their thoughts.

3.2.2 Survey questions

As discussed in the chapters above, there are a few guidelines to follow to create good and useful survey questions. In this chapter, we will further discuss some of our survey questions and explain their relevance for this study. Furthermore, we will reflect upon some decisions made when creating the survey that we think had a positive impact on the whole of the survey.

As mentioned, having questions with vague words should be avoided in a survey, despite this, we aware of the fact that we have one question which is formulated with a vague word. It is question number five "How good do you find this advertisement on a scale from 1-5. Where 1 equals really bad and 5 equals really good. 0 equals no opinion." The word good is an abstract word with a subjective meaning depending on the respondent previous experience. This implies that we can not analyze this question by itself, but combining the answer from this question in combination with answers from other question can be meaningful and by that reason, we argue for the relevance of the question and its formulation. Other survey questions with vague words are the two questions which discuss feminism. Since feminism is a rather complex subject and can mean many different things, these questions are similar to the one containing the word "good." We have selected these questions based on the argument that we believe that the respondent's standpoint and opinions toward feminism affect their attitudes toward the advertisement in general.

One can argue that the #Metoo movement has none or little impact on the attitudes of the advertisement and the same goes for the questions about feminism. As discussed above, we believe that this, in fact, impacts the attitudes and perceptions amongst the respondents. To be able to say something about these questions and its answers they have to be combined with other questions since the answers given about the #Metoo or the ones about feminism itself does not give us any useful information which contributes to answering our research question.

3.2.3 The qualitative analysis of the quantitative study

We decided to conduct a qualitative analysis of the gathered empirics from our quantitative study. By using a qualitative approach, our ambition was to make sense of the material collected from our questionnaire by looking at and identifying patterns, categories, and themes in the material that could further help us obtain a more in-depth understanding which also will help us answer our chosen research question. Previous theories combining these two methods were hard to find, and therefore, we came to the conclusion to analyze this quantitative study with an approach much similar to the one used when coding qualitative structured interviews or similar.

Our main data analysis resources come from the qualitative answers from the open-ended question "What is your first impression of the advertisement? Describe what emotions you felt during the advertisement and what you think Gillette wanted to highlight with this film. You may also add if you liked the advertisement or not.". Due to the amount of material gathered from the qualitative answers, we, therefore, argue that the 134 respondents of our survey and their responses are justified although we are aware that the 134 respondents at first glance might seem like a sample too small based on the formula used for multivariate analysis calculations. Which says that the number of respondents must be $N > 50 + 8m$, where N equals the number of respondents and m equals the number of questions in the survey. In our case, that would be, $N > 50 + 8 \times 15 = 170$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p.123). Due to the extensive amount of data gathered from the qualitative answers, we argue that our sample is justifiable. Since the collected qualitative empirical material sets the ground for our quantitative analysis, and not the other way around, we feel justified to rely on our sample to give us a well-grounded analysis.

Our sampling for the study is a convenience sample, which was chosen on the grounds that it is an efficient way of getting respondents viewed from the perspective of time and budget. This sample type gives us a chance to reach the most accessible group of respondents. Further, in chapter 4.1, we will present where we posted our survey. Although it is essential to keep in mind that this sample type may result in poor data since it may only represent a small part of the population (Marshall, 1996).

Coding procedure

The initial level of conducting a useful analysis often involves coding, and in order to transform our material into usable data, all the information collected needed to be coded and analyzed. By doing so, we could make sense of the material. Collecting data is an important part of the process, but if the data material is not being analyzed for researchers to make sense of the material, the data collection process would be useless (Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer, 2012). We were aware that the analysis of the collected data often could lead to that unexpected information is revealed. This information could often change the direction of the study. Therefore, we made sure every change or addition concerning the new data was carefully noted so we could identify what was not in our original study plan. However, it was

equally as fundamental for us to stay open to findings that could be contrary to our primary thoughts.

The qualitative analyze aimed to increase the overall understanding of the characteristics, meanings, and quality of our research and offered rich complementary explanations about the characteristics of our respondents. Further codification consisted of a process where the collected empirical material collected from our survey studied in detail. Thus, we could establish a structure of thematic ideas, find valuable reasoning in the text that matched with our research question and, consequently, make possible interpretation of our content (De Sousa, Magalhães, de Oliveira, Albuquerque, 2019).

In our analyzing process, we decided to follow some of the guidelines originated from John W. Creswell's (1994) Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches when coding our data. The guidelines presented are a general, and we decided to handpick some of them to help our qualitative analysis of our quantitative study.

In the first step, we read through the material as a whole to get a clear overview of our collected material. The second step required us picking one of the responder's answers to examine more carefully, looking for topics that have been covered and as a third step, we repeated the second step but to several of the respondents' answers, pulling the answers apart and made a list of all the different topics covered. By deconstructing the answers, we could put them back together in a more meaningful way and add meaning to the various parts (Lapan et al., 2012). These topics, patterns, themes, and categories we identified further helped build the foundation of our analysis (Davidsson & Patel 1994). In the fourth step we turned the topics we found into categories so we then in the fifth step could assemble all the material found under one category in one place so we could analyze them and see what we found out from the answers in our study (Berger, 2014).

The process of coding a survey means looking at responses and then categorizing these responses into groups. Our first open-ended question helped us identify patterns among our respondents, and after the process of categorizing, we could form groups based on the other responses. Once we coded our open-ended questions, we could analyze these responses in combination with the multiple responses questions (Berger, 2014).
Throughout this process, it was fundamental that we were guided by our research question that our analysis seeks to help answer. Therefore, we understood that it should always be

considered that all the material we coded, and the form of how our survey was structured, very much influence the process of the data analysis (Gibbs, 2008).

Additionally, we understood that our coding process could face some problems that would come to influence our study. When conducting a survey like the one used in this study, there will always be some problems that could, to a certain extent, create problems. Berger (2014) argues for problems that could occur in studies where respondents answers will create the foundation for the analysis. The first one highlights the fact that people might not always tell the truth. In our survey, with this in mind, we decided to make sure all respondents knew that their answers would be anonymous. By stating that our survey would be anonymous our aim was to make our respondents feel more comfortable to answer in the most honest way possible. However, Berger (2014) also describes how respondents sometimes can trick themselves into believing that their accounts are not lies but the actual truth. This is a factor that would be difficult for us to influence in our survey.

Additionally, Berger (2014) demonstrate for a second aspect that could be seen as a pitfall when coding a quantitative survey qualitatively. People sometimes tell you what you want to hear. Therefore, the questions in our survey were made as objectively as possible, containing no personal bias or non-loaded questions. That helped us to avoid an otherwise common pitfall when coding our material. In our survey, we combined multiple options question with open-ended questions. When using open-end questions the coding process must be undertaken carefully as we were aware that responses could be open to interpretation and judgment to the individual and become a very subjective process although the intention was to stay as objective as possible.

3.3 Case study

Lapan et al. (2012) define case studies as "Case study research is an investigative approach used to thoroughly describe complex phenomena, such as recent events, important issues, or programs, in ways to unearth new and deeper understanding of these phenomena." (Lapan, et al., 2012, p. 243)

The use of a case when doing a study is certainly suitable when researching within the field of strategic communication since case studies give rich knowledge when you want to look deeper into a complex phenomenon (Eksell & Thelander, 2014). We argue that our

choice of case is of a complex structure, first, because of the complexity amongst feminism and secondly, because of the emotions the advertisement has created amongst its audience. We will further discuss this in the next chapter. Furthermore, Eksell & Thelander (2014) implies that case studies are of certain use when it comes to creating an understanding of the audience of the organization and its experience of the case studied. Based on this we believe that a case study suits our research question, both because we intend to examine attitudes and perception but also because this is a rather complex phenomenon to study without using a case to exemplify or frame the topic.

Eksell and Thelander (2014) further explain what characterize a case study and not surprisingly, the one thing that characterizes a case study is that one has to study a real organization. In addition to that, one important thing to keep in mind while discussing case studies is that a case study is not a method. To be classified as a method, case studies would need a specific technique associated, which are not the case. Hence, a good case study is one with a lot of different methods involved. Due to the short time frame for this study, we only conducted a survey and a qualitative analysis of the gathered empirics (Eksell & Thelander, 2014). In chapter 3.3.1, we will further discuss and reflect upon which other methods could have been used in this study.

Further Eksell & Thelander (2014) divides the case study into two parts; the analyze unit and the case. The analyzing unit is what one studies, which here is the advertisement. The case is the organization that the analyze unit belongs to, which in our study is Gillette.

3.3.1 Choice of case

Based on the criteria presented above in chapter 3.3, we have chosen Gillette as our case of study and their advertisement "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be" as the primary analyze unit. The advertisement "We Believe: The best men can be," directed by Kim Gehrig, was the first advertisement launched as a part of Gillette's new corporate social responsibility advertising campaign. This new campaign marks the 30th anniversary of Gillette's old tagline "The best a man can get," which was originally introduced during a 1989 Super Bowl commercial. By the time of the release Gillette also announced on a website launched together with the advertisement that the campaign includes a three-year-long commitment by the brand to make larger donations to organizations that encourages and helps men to be the

best versions of themselves (Gillette, 2019). On the newly launched website, Gillette describes its responsibility as a company by stating:

It's time we acknowledge that brands, like ours, play a role in influencing culture. As a company that encourages men to be their very best, we as a brand have a responsibility to make sure we are promoting positive, attainable, inclusive and healthy versions of what it means to be a man today (Gillette, 2019).

The advertisement, which plays upon the brand's previous long-time slogan, was made to address and take stock of harmful, negative behavior and toxic masculinity among men. The advertisement makes several references to mansplaining, bullying and sexual harassment combined with the sexual-misconduct allegations that took off during autumn 2017, with allegations made towards the famous Hollywood film director Harvey Weinstein. In a scene in the advertisement, after a group of men sexually harass a female victim, a vintage ad for the razor brand appears, and voiceover asks with an ironic tone "Is this the best a man can get?" The advertisement goes on to further challenge old notions as "Boys will be boys" and states once again that the company's old advertisement campaign often only showed one type of story about masculinity (Cerón, 2019).

The two-minute short-film was debuted on Gillette's official Youtube channel where it quickly became trending. Today, on the 7th of May 2019, the youtube video has over 30 million views and almost 450.000 comments (Youtube, 2019). The film was at the time of its release also circulating heavily on Twitter, where it today has over 230 000 retweets, with over 51 thousand comments (Twitter, 2019). Unlike Twitter, Youtube also has a dislike button where the viewer can express its dislike for a video. The Gillette advertisement today has over 1,5 million dislikes, making it one of the top-20 most disliked videos on the media platform (Youtube, 2019).

However, the message of the advertisement was soon after its released met with backlash and outrage from some of its audience, mainly against Gillette, but the also aimed at other brands who used socio-political statements in their marketing. After sparking a wave of controversy, and creating debates on various types of social media platforms, a spokesperson for Gillette told CNBC that Gillette expected debate and that discussion is necessary. Furthermore, they said that for every negative reaction aimed towards the advertisement,

Gillette had seen the same amount of positive reactions where people were giving Gillette cred for what they were doing. The spokesperson went on to say that:

At the end of the day, sparking conversation is what really matters. This advertisement gets people to pay attention to the topic and encourages them to consider taking action to make a difference (Taylor, 2019).

A further description of Gillette and their history will be presented in the next chapter, 3.3.2. In addition to the criteria, we choose this case since it addresses an actual and relevant social movement, feminism, and its emerging movement #Metoo. We believe that using a case that is well known, both motivate people to answer our survey and gives us useable answers since they hopefully have some knowledge of the phenomenon together with an up-to-date attitude and perception. This, in combination with our chosen brand, a well-known brand with a large following base, was the reason for our choice.

Furthermore, we believe that this analyzes unit is of a reasonable size for this study. Hence one can argue that a wider and more in-depth study could be applied to this case, which we would agree with. However, we do believe that due to our financial and time limit, a wider study would not have been conducted professionally with correct findings. Therefore, the analyzing unit is suitable for our study, when combined with our choice of method.

3.3.2 History of Gillette

The Gillette Company was established in 1901 by King C. Gillette with the vision that "There had to be a way to bring the barber's chair into the bathroom." Three years later, in 1904, Gillette patented the first safety razor and the American Safety Razor Company, as it was known then, started operations. Sales started growing steadily, but it was after the U:S Government issued razors and shaving blades to all soldier serving for the nation in the World War I, making Gillette the official knife, that Gillette became the official razor brand of the nation (Gillette, 2019).

Today, over a century since King C. Gillette invented the idea of disposable blades and safety razors, the evolution of men's razors has kept evolving, and The Gillette Company has come to outlive King C. Gillette secured a top 50 ranking on Forbes list of the world's most valuable brands in 2018. Today, with an estimated brand value of $17,1 billion.

The Gillette Company became a part of Procter & Gamble (P&G) in 2005 when P&G announced that they had signed a deal with the razor product company for $57 billion, making it the most massive deal ever made by P&G. The Gillette Company has been the most significant player on the razor and shaving market for over a century and Procter & Gamble announced in their 2017 annual report that Gillette had a 65% market share globally with over 750 million men in more than 200 countries using the Gillette shaving products (Euromoney, 2005). However, from being the unaccompanied major player on the razor blade market, Gillette had seen its market share drop increasingly from 70% in 2010 to 54% in 2016. In 2017, the sales dropped a further 3%. The reason for these market drops is due to several factors but mainly because of online retailers like Dollar Shave Club, which was first to introduce online subscription services were razors was sent to the customer automatically once a month (Cheng, 2018). Dollar Shave Club later was acquired by Unilever for $1 billion in 2015. Harry's, a direct-to-consumer brand which is known for being affordable and appealing to millennials with its aesthetics. These two startups have combined taken about 12 percent of the razor blade market (Forbes, 2018).

4. Analysis

This chapter aims to analyze our gathered empiric material in combination with our choice of theories. The aim with this is not to simply provide a clear answer to our chosen research question, simply since our choice of conducting this analysis with a qualitative approach and the complexity of the research topic selected would make that difficult. Instead, with focus on our research question, we will in our analysis part try to create an understanding of how the audience perceives marketing campaigns and advertisements that allude on socio-political movements and demonstrate which factors that can decide the opinions of an audience member and therefore fulfill the purpose of this study. First, we will begin by describing the survey, which was used to collect the empirical material that this analysis is based on, and give a brief overview of how it was used. We will then move on to analyze the results of the survey, which will be presented both in text and with pie charts to further be able to identify patterns and themes that in conclusion will help us answer our chosen research question.

4.1 Survey & analysis background

Since this study is conducted with the aim to be used globally, we needed to be able to have respondents for different areas of the world. The survey was therefore posted on a number of online websites which could be easily accessed globally. The survey was online from the 16th of April to the 4th of May and received 134 respondents. The following list shows all of the places where we posted the survey:

- In our personal Facebook-walls.
- In our university class group on Facebook
- Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR)
- In the Facebook group called *YECREA*
- In the Facebook group called *ICA Early-Career Scholars Network*
- In the Facebook group called *International Communication Association*
- In the Facebook group called *IAMCR Emerging Scholars Network*
- On the website pollpool.com

- In the Facebook group called *What do you need help with today buddy?*
- In the Facebook group called *Dissertation survey exchange*
- To our earlier peers from Malmö University and University of The Arts London.
- To our friends and family

We are very pleased with the range of participant gained from these different platforms and the reach of our survey, which got us respondents from across the world and of different ages and sexes. Thus one can question whether or not the participants are homogeneous since posting it to a lot of people in our vicinity increases the risk of getting homogeneous answers. Furthermore, we will not analyze any cultural or geographical differences in our analysis. The question "Which country are you from?" simply had the purpose of making sure that we got respondents from all over the world. Out of the 134 respondents, 79 answered that they were from Sweden, and the rest were from other countries. We argue that there is no possible way we can say anything about, for example, the audience from Finland with only two Finish respondents. For that reason, we will not further analyze this question, since we made sure that we got respondents from all over the world, which makes it possible for us to conduct this study with a global perspective.

Also, we have decided to exclude the question "Have you ever used or bought products from Gillette?" since we did not ask our respondents about their possible consumption in the future we did not see the purpose of analyzing this question. Instead, the question "What were your previous opinions about Gillette as a brand?" gave us useful information about the respondents earlier perceptions, which adds to the reason for why it is possible for us to exclude the question.

4.2 Attitudes towards the advertisement

In order for us to create an understanding of why the respondents reacted either positive or negative towards the advertisement, we asked two questions at the very beginning of the survey. First, we had one open-ended question where we allowed the respondents to express their spontaneous reaction to the advertisement, which was, "What is your first impression of the advertisement? Describe what emotions you felt during the advertisement and what you think Gillette wanted to highlight with this film. You may also add if you liked the

advertisement or not." After that, we had a one-to-five scale question, as shown in the figure below, where the respondents had to rate how good they thought the advertisement was.

How good do you find this advertisement on a scale from 1-5. Where 1 equals really bad and 5 equals really good. 0 equals no opinion.
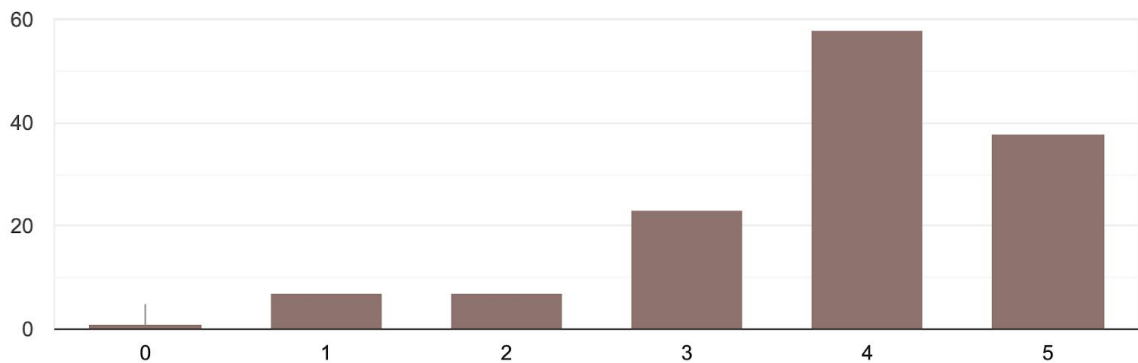
134 svar

Figure 5.

When analyzing the answers gathered by these two questions, we categorized them into three different positions according to Hall's (1997) studies on audience members decoding messages. These three positions were the Dominant, or Preferred Reading position, the Oppositional Reading position, and the Negotiated Reading position. By doing so, we were able to identify patterns amongst the respondent's answers. The Dominant or Preferred Reading position is respondents with a positive attitude towards the advertisement. The oppositional Reading position is respondents who had a somewhat positive perception of the advertisement and Negotiated Reading position is respondents with a negative attitude towards the advertisement.

The qualifications for belonging to the Dominant, or Preferred Reading, the respondent, answered a 3, 4, or 5 in the scale question as shown in (fig. 5). In addition to that, their answers in the open-ended question had to express the words good, like or positive without questioning the purpose of the advertisement. To be sorted into the category Oppositional Reading, the respondent fulfilled the qualification for the Dominant, or Preferred Reading but was still skeptical about the purpose and questioning the reasons why Gillette conducted this advertisement. Further on, we will call this category semi-positive

since it will create a clearer understanding of the respondents' emotions within this category. The qualification for the category Negotiated Reading was a 1, 2 or 3 on the scale question as shown in (fig. 5) and in addition to that the respondent strongly expressed in the open question that they did not like the advertisement.

By this categorization of positive, semi-positive, and negative attitudes towards the advertisement, it was easier to identify emotions and thoughts about the advertisement and how it affected the respondent's attitudes.

We also wanted to see if there were any differences amongst the genders. Since all of our respondents either answered that they were male or female, we are going to present it that way with the knowledge that people who identify as non-binary may not be represented.

When categorizing the respondents into the three positions, as mentioned above, 27 of the men who represent 54% of the male respondent were positive towards the advertisement. As many as 64 of the women, which represents 76% of the female respondent were positive, which makes the total percentage of the ones who were positive 68%. As mentioned previously, some words we identified in the open-ended question from the respondents who we categorized as having a positive attitude, had used one or more of the following words: good, like or positive. Furthermore, we will present other common reactions among the positive respondents.

Interesting responses from the men were that they felt sorry for the way men treats women but that they believe that things will change in the future. Further, they found the advertisement inspiring and beautiful and felt emotions like *shame, pride, frustration*, and *joy*. The most common reactions amongst men were joy and a positive view of the future. Following are some stated examples of answers from the open-ended question that we interpreted as positive by male respondents:

I really like it, i don't at all understand all the critique this ad has gotten. I might think that some men can't admit that this is the way it in society today even though they are aware of it. So Therefore it feels easier to hate on it than to support it. I also think that maybe some men really like it but they are afraid to say so because they don't want other men to think they are weak, which to me is ridiculous.

I did like the ad, it portraits the issue in a nice way instead of just accusing men it also shows the good in men.

Good ad, felt joy that this topic is being discussed in such a broad channel.

The reactions were slightly different amongst the female respondents who we interpreted were positive towards the advertisement. They described their emotions and thoughts about the advertisement and how it made them feel with the words *goosebumps*, *satisfaction*, *gratefulness*, and being *touched* by it. Furthermore, they also had faith in the future, the same emotions that could be identified by the male respondents. The most common reactions were that they felt like "it was about time" and that the advertisement emotionally touched them. Following are some stated examples of answers from the open-ended question that we interpreted as positive by female respondents:

The commercial highlight an important issue in our society and lifts up the #Metoo movement in a different angel. It strengthens the brand's image and creates positive perceptions. I personally really liked the commercial and thought it was a smart move from Gillette.

I am positive, I even got a little goosebumps at the end. I think they want show that they believe in change towards the better. (Translated from Swedish by the authors)

My first impression was that the advertisement is touching. I think that they wants the message to be "real men treats women in a good way". I thought the advertisement were interesting and good! (Translated from Swedish by the authors)

In the category semi-positive, we identified 15 of the men, which represent 30% of the men and 17 of the women, which represent 20% of the women and combined represents 24% in total. Interesting findings amongst the males was, that very little emotion was expressed, they were, in general, more skeptical and questioning towards the advertisement, and some respondents even answered that they found the advertisement *cheesy*. Even though the majority did question the purpose of the advertisement they still found the message to be good and important. Following are some stated examples of answers from the open-ended question that we interpreted as semi-positive by male respondents:

Sceptical towards the trustworthiness of Gillette, but I like the message.

This commercial caught mine, among many others attention due to its ability to use something as important as Metoo to sell their own products. Was it smart? In my opinion, yes. Was it ethical? Well, that's a question that could be discussed further. But in general it is good yes.

I really like the advertisement, think that the message is nice and important. But then I wonder why Gillette have made this advertisement is it because of their own economic gain or because they actually cares about the issue. If I were to guess i would say it is a combination of both, but with that said I still like the advertisement. (Translated from Swedish by authors)

When analyzing the emotions and reaction amongst the women in the semi-positive category, the difference was not as significant as it was between positive males and females. In general, the women reacted the same way as the men did, but they were even more questioning and skeptical, some female respondents felt *irritated* and certain that the purpose of the advertisement was only to capitalize on the #Metoo movement. If we were to generalize what the semi-positive women felt after watching the advertisement one could say that they thought that the message is important and that they believe it is a good thing that it is brought up, but they have mixed emotions and are strongly questioning why Gillette has created this advertisement. Following are some stated examples of answers from the open-ended question that we interpreted as semi-positive by female respondents:

I get mixed feeling watching this commercial. I think it's quite good and it makes me feel something. I think the message is very beautiful and the whole commercial is beautiful made. But at the same time I feel that Gillette is riding on feminism and metoo. That they are using this movement to generate money, because in the end it´s a commercial. But it's a very good commercial at the same time and I really think they achieved what they wanted.

Good message but also, another example of commodity feminism: using feminist ideals to further capitalist exploitation.

It's interesting and bold. However, I also feel that it is a bit of Pink washing. I am not sure that they really want a change in society. They still do other ads that are very gender specific and use a lot of stereotypes.

In the last category where the respondent was negative towards the advertisement, eight of them were male respondents which represent 16% of the men. Only three of them were women, which represent 4%, in total, 8% were negative towards the advertisement. The reactions and emotions expressed from the men who had a negative approach were that the advertisement was *sexist, judgemental, not genuine, patronizing*, and made them feel *sad.* After analyzing all of the answers, the negative men felt *attacked* and *irritated* by the advertisement. A possible reason for this reaction may be that they did not identify

themselves as the portrayed stereotype of men in the commercial. Following are some stated examples of answers from the open-ended question by male respondents that we interpreted as negative:

Annoyed and sad.

Seems extremely sexist, doesn't it? I mean, imagine Dove doing a commercial directed at women and implying women aren't good mothers, or good daughters, and that they owe it to society to be better and "nag" their husbands or brothers less. That by itself is generalizing an entire gender, and seems extremely judgmental and sexist.

Did not really like it, it didn't feel genuine and neither did it feel representative of men in general. It was mostly built on stereotypes that I couldn't for the life of me identify with (E.g. men being horrible parents). The commercial did stir up emotions and got people talking about the issue at hand and also about Gillette but I think they got more negative connotations towards the brand than positive.

When analyzing the emotions and reactions amongst the female respondents that we interpreted viewed the advertisement as negative, they expressed feelings such as hate and irritation and felt that the advertisement was *pathetic, ridiculous*, and *judgemental*. These three women who we interpreted viewed advertisement as negative had very different opinions on why they felt this way, Following are the answers from the open-ended question by these three female respondents that we interpreted as negative:

I think it is amazing that they succeed with making a advertisement about the fact that women should be treated with respect were only men talks, acts and seems to have an impact. I hate the advertisement and think it is diminishing the problem. (Translated from Swedish by the authors)

ridiculous, irritating. Portraits men very badly. (Translated from Swedish by the authors)

As a female, I first did not think seriously about the ad, and thought it was okay, but later on, the ad was kind of generalizing that all men are horrible... that happens in some cases, but there are other good men in reality. The worst part is that they did not think seriously about their target audience, who are mainly men. So, I would say this is not a good ad...

After sorting the respondents into these three categories as presented above and by analyzing their emotions, reactions, and spontaneous thoughts about Gillette's advertisement "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be." The patterns we notified were the majority were positive or somewhat positive towards the advertisement. By those who were positive, examples of

emotions expressed were "Finally, this important message is being spread," which is also being represented in the figure below.

Do you think that the advertisement is highlighting an important issue in our society today?
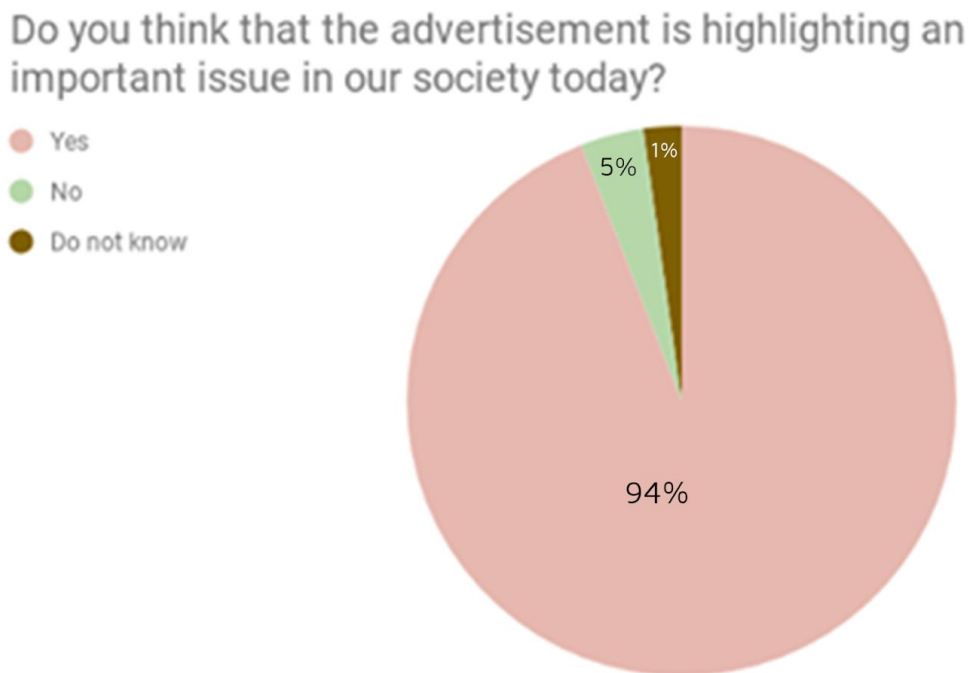
- Yes
- No
- Do not know

5%
1%
94%

Figure 6.

Compared to the debate on Twitter as we mentioned in chapter 1.1.1, surprisingly few were negative towards the advertisement, and by those who expressed a negative attitude. We would summaries by the answers from the open-ended question that they either felt accused by the advertisement or that they felt a misuse of such an important issue. Even though the majority expressed a positive attitude, one clear pattern could be viewed. That is despite the feeling of emotions that triggers joy a skepticism towards the purpose of sending out this message and using the #Metoo movement existed amongst the respondents. Furthermore, one can say that the advertisements effectively implied emotional branding in terms of creating emotion and involve their audience.

4.2.1 The story of the advertisement

As presented in chapter 2.3, storytelling aims to make the brand more memorable and convincing for its audience (Steen, 1999). Furthermore, in order to work, it must be able to get the audience emotionally involved with the advertisement (Mossberg, 2008). By

analyzing the open-ended question as made in the chapter above, there is no doubt that the advertisement is succeeding with getting the audience emotionally involved. As presented, the respondents expressed a significant variation of emotions, everything from loving emotions to hate towards the advertisement.

Due to our time frame of this study, we will not be able to analyze further whether Gillette's successful way of getting the audience emotionally involved will affect the memorization of the brand. Hence, when it comes to the part where storytelling works in a convincing way, we argue that due to the many questionings about the aim of using the #Metoo movement, the advertisement does not work in a completely successful way. Thus there is a majority with a positive attitude towards the advertisement, which makes it impossible for us to know how well they succeed with the advertisement from a perspective of storytelling. We argue that it all depends on the goal set by Gillette when creating the advertisement, hence it is not possible to please all of its audience. Furthermore, in chapter 4.4, we will further analyze how the advertisement affected the audience view of Gillette as a brand. To be able to get a wider perspective and hopefully get a more precise knowledge on how, and if the storytelling amongst other aspects affected the perception of Gillette as a brand.

Furthermore, Dennisdotter (2008) describes that the message in the story requires sharing knowledge and values in order to affect the audience. Moreover, she points out that the message should not strive to be perceived as cool but rather be perceived as trustworthy and realistic, compared with the values of the brand. Besides, the purpose of the brand cannot be set aside in order to be perceived as trustworthy. As described in chapter 1.1.1, the story in the advertisement is about how men have been treating women poorly for decades, and that now is the time to change that behavior. This can be seen as an actual story that is taking place in our society today, and by that reason, we argue that Gillette did not try to make this into a cool story since it is not made up.

To analyze what the respondents thought about the message we once again looked into the open-ended question and in combination to that, we analyzed the results from the question "Do you think that the advertisement is highlighting an important issue in our society today?" as shown in (fig. 6). The patterns we have been able to find from analyzing these two questions and their answers are first of all, as mentioned before, a skepticism

towards the use of the movement and questions whether this advertisement is made to capitalize on the #Metoo or if Gillette genuinely cares about this issue. As mentioned in chapter 1.2, previous advertisements by Gillette has been perceived as sexist and portraying women objectively where men have been portrayed in successful, good-looking, and influential roles. Now Gillette is sending out a completely opposite message which has gotten many to question the advertisement, same patterns as found when analyzing the open-ended question. Another interesting finding that we have identified is the questioning amongst the audience about where the razors are? As mentioned, it is important that the organization's purpose is not set aside, which some respondents argue is missing here. Once again, it is important to keep in mind that even though some of the audience are questioning the advertisement, the majority perceived it positive, but that does not make the advertisement itself successful. Due to the presented patterns, we argue that the advertisement in somewhat failed due to the expressed lack of trustworthiness of the message.

4.3 The use of #Metoo in the advertisement

Since it has become more common that brands use socio-political issues or making political statements in their marketing, we wanted to examine the audience's attitudes toward this phenomenon and in this case, the use of #Metoo in the advertisement made by Gillette. By asking our respondents their opinions about brands expressing political views in their marketing, and examine their opinions towards the fact that Gillette refers to the #Metoo movement in this campaign, and moreover their opinions about #Metoo in general.

Our wish was to identify patterns which could help describe why some respondents were positive and why others had a bit more skeptical or negative approach towards it. As Hall (1997) states, it is not possible for us to label our respondents as "right" or "wrong" in the question how the use of socio-political issues in marketing should be used, nor whether Gillette was ethically correct by using #Metoo in their campaign.

Since this is a highly visual advertisement, we agree with Hall (1997), that our work here is simply to, by the debate that Gillette created with this advertisement, understand these different meanings and interpretations. We will never be able to fully understand the various reasons why the respondents encoded and decoded the message made by Gillette in this advertisement in a certain way. However, we will be aware of the fact that different social

and cultural factors affect how the respondents decode the somewhat complex message in this advertisement. Therefore, it is in our interest to examine what the majority of our respondents have answered to be able to create a more in-depth understanding of why and how the majority of the audience perceives this phenomenon.

The use of visual advertising as a way for brands and organizations to market themselves or sell products while shedding light on an important socio-political issue or movement can as mentioned by Hastings & Domegan (2013) be a very useful strategy to draw attention to a brand. Since brands have become a way for consumers to express their own beliefs, consumers attitudes have come to play a significant role in the marketing strategies made by brands. For such a well-known "masculine" brand like Gillette to refer to a feminist movement as a part of their new marketing campaign became a somewhat watershed between its audience on social media but also when analyzing the results from our survey.
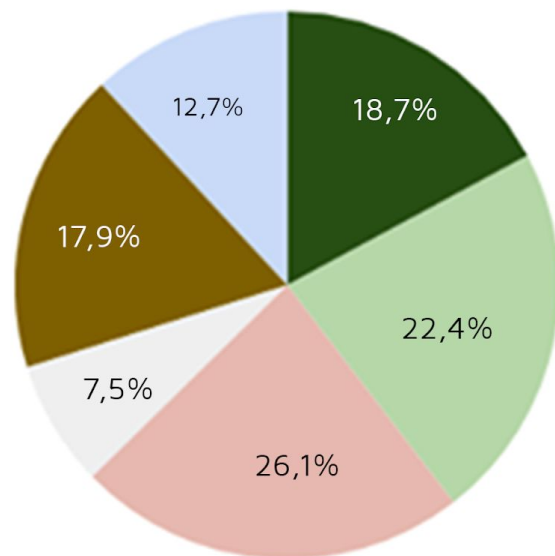

Figure 7.

From our survey results, we could identify that the respondents that initially had a negative attitude towards the advertisement itself, were to a greater extent also negative towards the

phenomenon with brands expressing their political views in their marketing. An interesting aspect we could identify here was the difference between the negative males versus the negative females. In the category with respondents with a negative attitude towards the advertisement itself, females were more positive or neutral in the question regarding brands expressing political views in their marketing, than males in the same category. This raises an interesting question regarding the gender differences in combination to an advertisement like this one, which highlights and refers in many ways to previous and old-fashioned gender roles. Of the respondents with a positive attitude towards the advertisement, the vast majority also had a positive or neutral attitude towards brands expressing political views in their marketing. None of the female respondents who were positive towards Gillette's advertisement were negative towards brands expressing political opinions in their marketing. It is hard for us to make a clear conclusion to why men tend to be more negative than women, but an assumption that could be made is that men to a greater extent felt betrayed by Gillette, a brand that in almost every campaign or marketing initiative until the release of this advertisement have been promoting masculinity, and therefore adopted a more negative attitude to the use of political movements in general. A few of the respondents also answered "other" and had the opportunity to share their own thoughts regarding brands expressing their political views in their marketing. Many of these respondents had a somewhat positive attitude towards the phenomenon but with some restrictions and expressed some skeptical opinions towards what Gillette's actual thought behind the advertisement was. Two of the respondents wrote the following:

It is good that they are raising an important issue, but to me it feels irrelevant considering their products.

It makes economic sense, and could contribute to better knowledge of the issue in the general sense. But I doubt these brands would do this if it were not to their economic advantage. Moreover, these messages serve to cover-up exploitation.

Kapoor & Munjal (2017) describes how the demand of organizations to create ethically correct advertisements, has risen and how the success of a company in many ways is linked with advertisement liking. By the respondents who had a more skeptical approach to brands expressing their political opinions in their marketing, it was equal between the genders.

However, as mentioned in chapter 1.1, over 50% of consumers will adopt negative attitudes towards a brand or even go as far as boycotting a brand due to how it is positioning itself on an ongoing issue. As mentioned in chapter 4.2, men overall had a more negative approach towards this advertisement, and some even felt discriminated by Gillette, which could help describe why men had a more negative approach in general. One interesting finding in addition to this was how the respondents answer regarding if the advertisement offended its primary audience or not. In the figure below, it shows that the opinions about this were truly divided amongst the respondents.
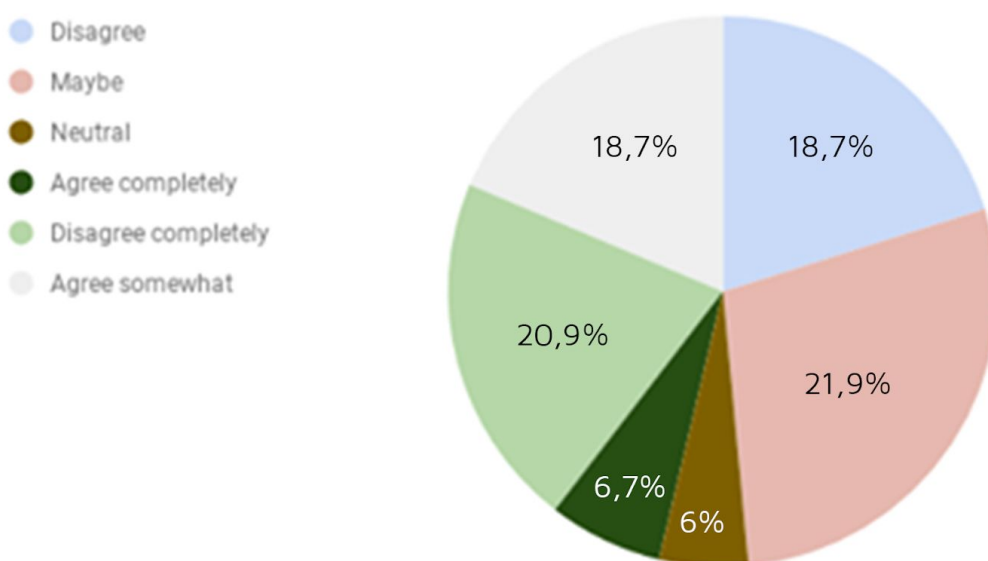

Figure 8.

With this in mind, we could see how the male respondents, to a greater extent, also were negative to the #Metoo references in the advertisement. Notably, the male respondents with a negative attitude towards the advertisement itself were very critical of Gillette's use of the #Metoo movement, but when looking at the female respondents with a negative attitude, almost all respondents were positive to Gillette's use of #Metoo.

What is your opinion about the fact that the advertisement makes references on the #Metoo movement?

- I think it is a good thing
- Neutral
- I think it is a bad thing
- I like the movement but the commercial could have expressed the message in a different way.
- Other
- I like the movement but the advertisement could have expressed the message in a different way.
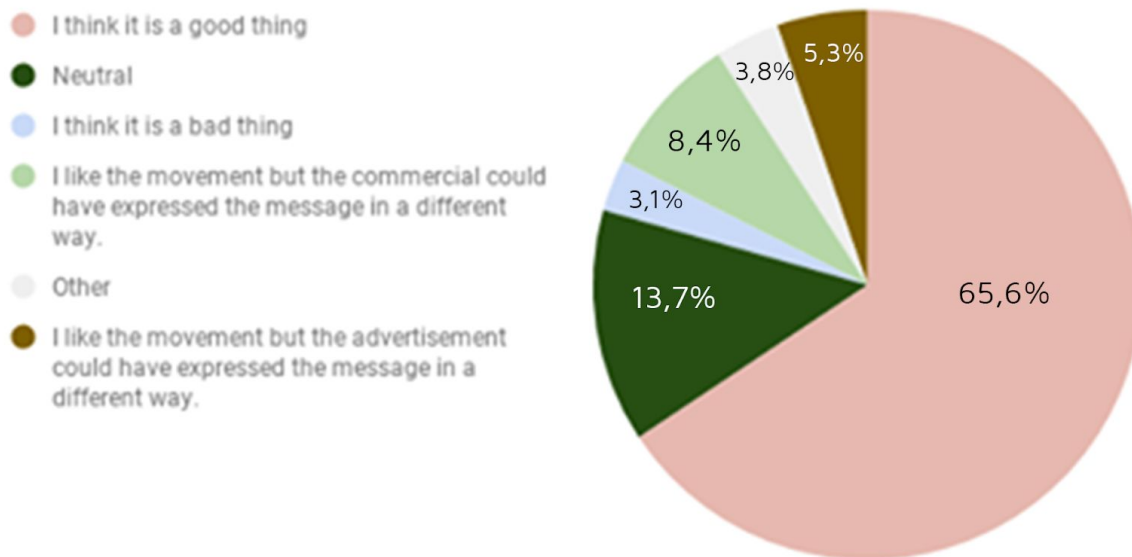
5,3%
3,8%
8,4%
3,1%
13,7%
65,6%

Figure 9.

By measuring the relationship between our respondents view on brands expressing political views in their marketing with their attitudes towards Gillette making references to the #Metoo movement in the advertisement, we could identify some patterns that showed that the female respondents to a greater extent had a more positive view on brands expressing their political opinions in marketing. Also, to the use of #Metoo in this case, even if they had a more negative attitude towards the advertisement itself. Therefore one can argue that the use of femvertising, in this case, was a relatively effective move made by Gillette and that our female respondents felt that the advertisement took a step away from the brand's previous campaigns were women have been portrayed differently. Referring to Grayceco (2019), Gillette succeeds with the message in this advertisement and could, therefore, luckily avoid being accused of pinkwashing by a more significant amount of its audience. This might be the reason for why the majority of the female respondents had a positive approach to the use of #Metoo in this advertising and also, as mentioned in chapter 4.2, to a greater extent were positive to the advertisement as a whole.

However, even though the female respondents were positive to the use of #Metoo, some were still skeptical about what the brand's initial thought was. By the ones being

skeptical towards the use of #Metoo, the female respondents were, to a greater extent, more skeptical than the male respondents. One respondent wrote the following when asked about the use of #Metoo in the movement:

The question if it is ethically correct rises when using a movement like #MeToo to sell products

The majority of the respondents with a somewhat skeptical approach to the use of this socio-political issue as part of marketing addressed the question of whether this was an ethically correct move made by Gillette. As mentioned previously in chapter 3.3.1, Gillette's spokesperson said that this advertisement aimed to spark conversation and help people pay attention to the issue with sexual harassment, bullying, and toxic masculinity and to make people take action and make a difference. Despite that, it is still worth questioning if that actually was the initial thought by the brand or only a way to own the backlash that occurred. Indeed, the reactions after the advertisement went live definitely sparked conversation.

Would you consider yourself an ally to the feminist movement?

- Yes I strongly support and engage in the feminist movement
- I strongly disagree with the view of feminism and I do not consider myself an ally
- I support feminism but I am not an active ally
- Neutral
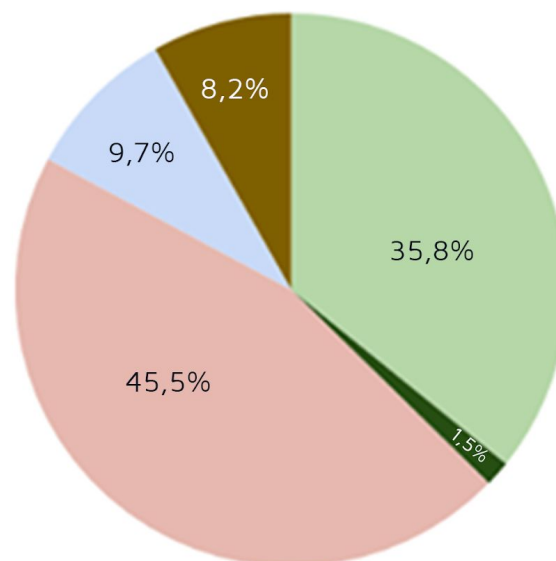- I have heard of feminism but I am not an active supporter

8,2%
9,7%
35,8%
45,5%
1,5%

Figure 10.

What is your opinion on the #Metoo movement?

- I think that the #Metoo movement got the attention it deserved.
- The #Metoo movement is the most important thing that has happend to our society in modern time.
- I do understand its purpose, but I think it got a little bit exaggerated.
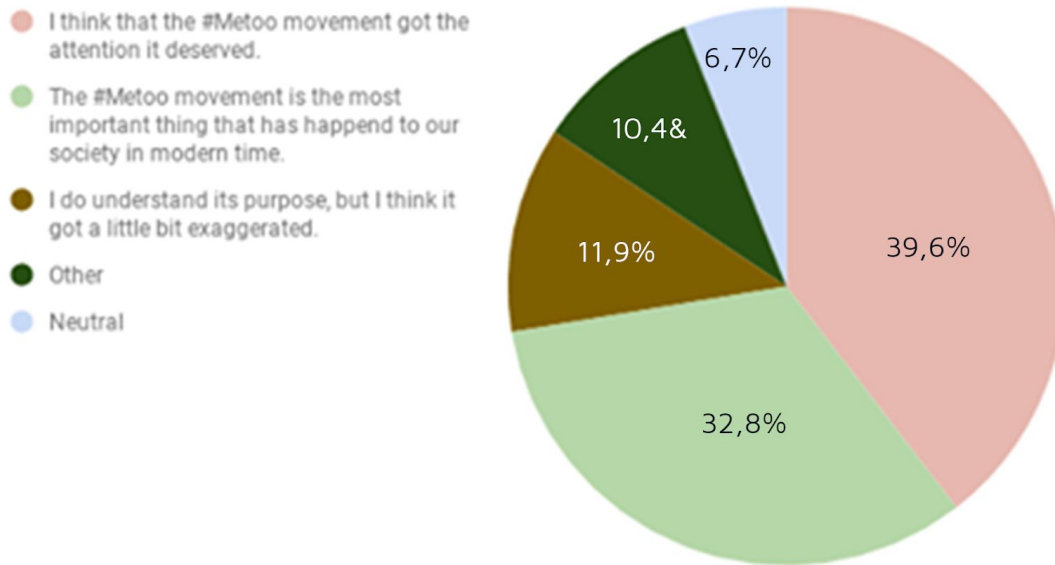- Other
- Neutral

6,7%
10,4&
11,9%
39,6%
32,8%

Figure 11.

A notification (fig. 11) hade one more alternative of answer, which was "I think that the whole movement is a joke". Since none of our respondents answered this, we made the decision not to represent it in the figure above.

Our surveys results indicate that the vast majority of our respondents indeed had a positive attitude towards both brands taking a political stand in their marketing but also to the use of #Metoo in Gillette's advertisement. However, we could identify a slight difference among the genders, were the female respondents that were negative towards the advertisement, being more positive towards both brands using movements like #Metoo in their marketing, but also to the actual use of #Metoo in the Gillette advertisement. This could be due to several factors but we, as women ourselves, believe that women could tend to feel a bit more emotionally connected to the #Metoo and feminist movements, or that they felt like they could identify with some of the issues it addresses and therefore could have a more positive attitude towards it. This combined with the fact that women are seen as much stronger consumers with more power could be a factor that makes women adapt a more positive attitude to any campaign that helps bring social issues regarding the female sex the attention it deserves, and give women a more influential role.

4.4 Changed view of Gillette as a brand after the advertisement

We wanted to investigate if the advertisement affected the audience view and attitudes towards Gillette after watching the advertisement. In order to do so, we compared the answers of the figures below,
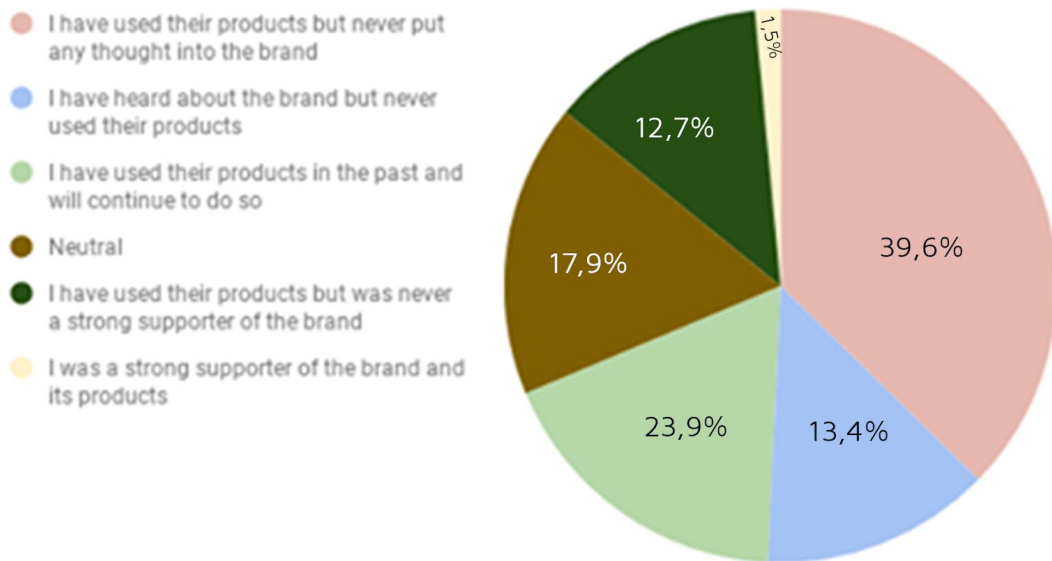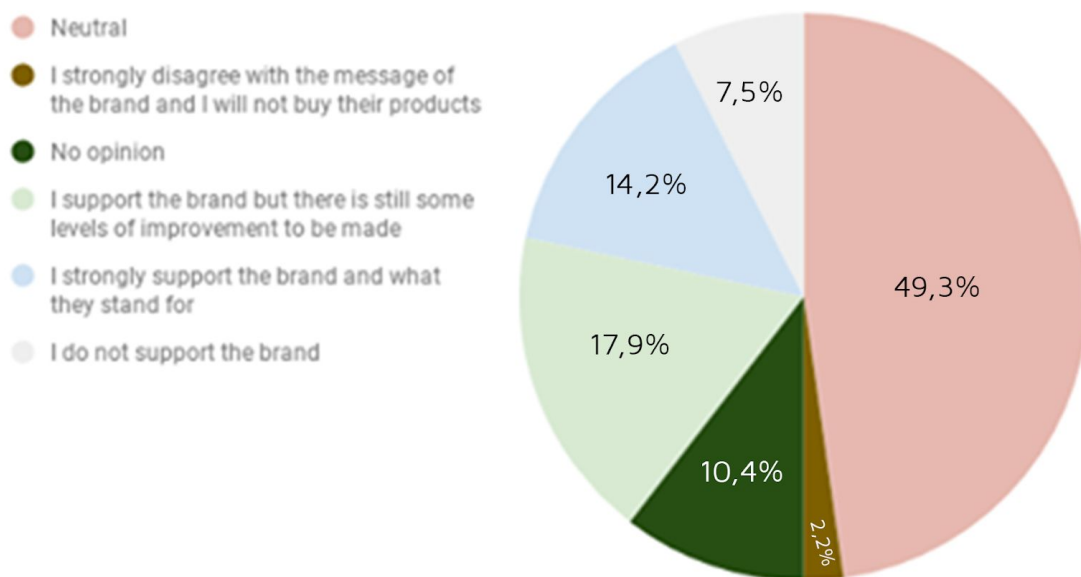

Figure 12.

Figure 13.

and categorized these answers into three categories; positive, neutral, and negative. By looking at the respondents who had a positive attitude towards the advertisement we wanted to examine if their attitude towards the brand itself also was positive or not and if so if the advertisement had an impact on the audience view of Gillette. By doing so, we could get closer to answer our research question.

As Marc Gobé (2001) argues, emotional brandings purpose is to create great emotions within the audience in order to gain brand loyalty. When analyzing our gathered empirics in the way we presented in chapter 4.2, we argue that Gillette succeeds with their advertisement viewed from the perspective of creating emotions. As shown in chapter 4.2, the majority of the respondent 68%, were having a positive reaction towards the advertisement. If combining them with the 24% who was semi-positive, only 8% of the respondents were having a negative attitude towards the advertisement. Furthermore, we analyzed whether the 92% of the ones who had a positive attitude also had a positive attitude towards Gillette as a brand. Thus the high percentage of respondents with a positive attitude towards the advertisement as discussed in the chapter above, the positive opinions towards Gillette as a brand is relatively low as shown in the (fig. 13). As much as 58,3% said that their opinions towards Gillette were "neutral" or that they had "no opinion" and only 32% answered either "I support the brand but there is still some levels of improvement to be made" or "I strongly support the brand and what they stand for". The percentage of respondents who were negative towards the advertisement was shown by combining the answers of "I strongly disagree with the message of the brand, and I will not buy their products" and "I do not support the brand" were 9,7%.

To further understand why 58,3% were neutral or had no opinion we analyzed (fig. 12), which asked the respondent what their previous opinions towards Gillette were. In order to get a clearer understanding of the gathered empirics, we chose to combine the alternative of answers into three categories. The first category is the one who had a positive opinion about Gillette as a brand before watching the advertisement. The two alternatives of answers which form this category were "I have used their products in the past and will continue to do so" and "I was a strong supporter of the brand and its products," together they represented 25,4% of the respondents. What is interesting is viewing the percentage of respondents who were positive or semi-positive towards the advertisement and combining this with the

percentage of who had a positive attitude towards Gillette as a brand after watching the advertisement. Even though 92% had a somewhat positive attitude towards the advertisement, it only led to an increase of the positive brand attitude from 25,4% to 32%, which in numbers of people, only represent 9 out of the 134 respondents.

The second category is the one who had a neutral opinion about Gillette as a brand before watching the advertisement. To form this category we combined the alternative of the answers of "Neutral" and "I have used their products but never put any thought into the brand" and "I have heard about the brand but never used their products." Together they represented 71,9 % of the respondents, which implicate to a decrement of the ones who were neutral after watching the advertisement with 13,9%, compared with the ones who were neutral before watching the advertisement which was 58,3%. If we were to view it in the perspective of numbers of people 95 out of the 134 respondents were neutral before watching the advertisement. 80 out of the 134 respondents were neutral after watching the advertisement, which implies a decrease of 5 respondents.

The last category is the one who had a negative opinion about Gillette as a brand before watching the advertisement. This category was formed after the answer, "I used their products but was never a strong supporter of the brand." Out of the 134 respondents, 12,7% was negative towards the brand before watching the advertisement. After watching the advertisement, 9,7 % answered that their opinion towards Gillette as a brand was negative, which represent a decrease of 4 respondents.

When analyzing these numbers combined with the findings we got from sorting the respondents into categories of positive, semi-positive, and negative as showing in chapter 4.2, it seems like the advertisement had a slight impact that can be questioned on generating a negative attitude towards Gillette as a brand. When comparing the numbers from (fig. 12), with the ones gathered from the categorization from the chapter above, the advertisement had a positive impact on the attitudes on Gillette as a brand. When viewing the impacts of the ones who in (fig. 13) answered that they had a positive attitude towards Gillette as a brand, which was 32%, one can argue that the advertisement had a very slight impact on the respondent since 92% were positive towards the advertisement.

Furthermore, by the presented facts, we argue that even though the majority of the respondents had a positive attitude towards the advertisement and positive emotions were

created, the theory of Gobé (2001), who meant that one of the most essential aspects in order to gain brand loyalty, is creating emotions, failed. Gillette did not accomplish this activity despite their ability to involve their audience and their emotions. In other words, it seems like the majority of the respondents appreciated the advertisement but not enough to create brand loyalty. If we study the figure below,

Has your perception of Gillette as a brand changed, after you watched the advertisement?

- Do not know
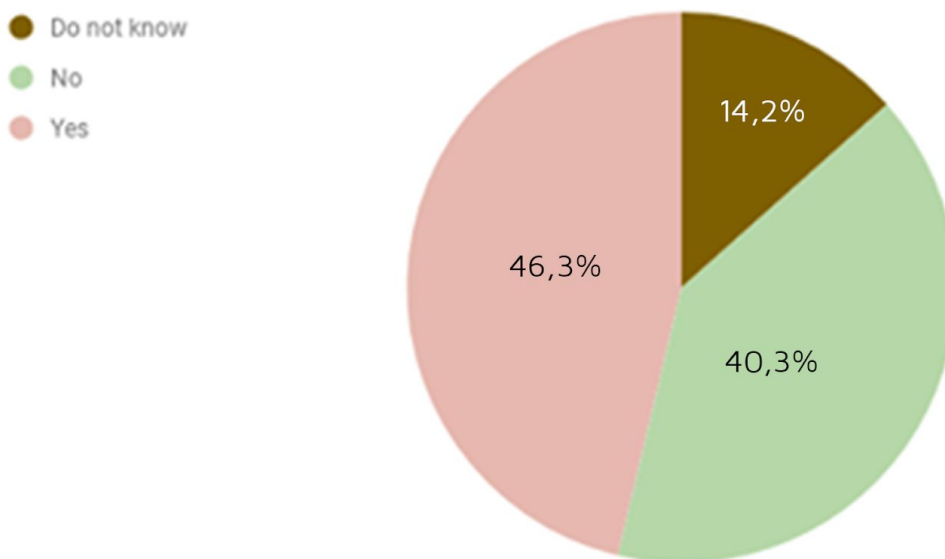- No
- Yes

14,2%

46,3%

40,3%

Figure 14.

a majority of 53,7% said that the advertisement did not change their opinion of the brand or that they did not know if it did. Hence 46,3 % said that the advertisement did change their opinion about Gillette as a brand, but it might not change it as much as needed, to either has a more negative or positive attitude. After analyzing all of this figures in chapter 4.2 and 4.4 we argue that the advertisement in a very slightly way had a more positive impact on the attitudes towards Gillette as a brand then it had a negative.

To further investigate the connection and identify patterns amongst the three categories and furthermore identify if there were any differences between the categories, we analyzed the answers of (fig. 13) of each category. When looking at the female respondents in the three categories, no significant difference could be identified, since the majority said that their opinion towards Gillette as a brand was neutral. When examining the answers from the

male respond, a more significant difference could be identified. If we compare the positive males with the positive females, the positive males had a more positive attitude towards Gillette as a brand than the positive females who had a more neutral attitude. When examining the semi-positive males, the trend of a more positive attitude continued, and our research showed that the negative males were more negative towards the brand than the negative females. Moreover an identified pattern after analyzing (fig. 13) combined with the categories of positive, semi-positive and negative, argues that the attitudes amongst the men were more either positive or negative towards Gillette as a brand, while the women were more neutral.

5. Conclusion and discussion

5.1 Conclusion

In our study, we have examined and presented our findings on how the audience perceives brands that allude on social movements in their marketing. To be able to identify patterns amongst the audience, we divided the respondents of our conducted survey into three categories; positive, semi-positive, and negative. Furthermore, we examined patterns within these categories based on various numbers of aspects and how these specific aspects affected the audience perception of the advertisement.

One of the findings we ended up with was that despite the advertisements ability to create great emotions amongst its audience, there was no significant effect on the perception of Gillette as a brand. Hence, we could identify a pattern saying that the male respondents had a more either-or attitude while the female respondents had a more neutral attitude towards Gillette as a brand after watching the advertisement. As Dennisdotter (2008) mentions, it is essential to make the story in the marketing trustworthy and our findings in our study show that there exists a skeptical approach amongst the audience towards the purpose of the use of the social movement. They questioned whether Gillette genuinely cares about this issue or if Gillette only wants to capitalize on the movement. This issue is something many of our respondents questions and therefore we would like to emphasize, as Dennisdotter mentions, how essential the trustworthiness of the advertisement is.

Furthermore, we have identified that the majority have expressed a positive attitude towards the advertisement and its message, but we have not been able to provide findings that connect the positive attitude to the advertisement with a more positive attitude towards Gillette a brand. How the advertisement in a long-term will affect the audience perception of the brand is not possible for us to say. However, the effect of the advertisement might change the audience's perception.

A final finding we identified in our analysis was that we could notice a difference among women and men in how the respondents perceived both the use of #Metoo in the advertisement, but also the attitude towards the phenomenon of brands expressing any type of political view in their marketing. Thus we have not been able to find exactly which parts of

Gillette's advertisement that was more appealing to which gender, we believe that by using such a well-known social movement like #Metoo, that in many ways highlight sexual harassment towards women, could lead to visible differences between male and female respondents.

5.2 Discussion

If we were to believe in the quote "there is no such thing as bad publicity", one can argue that it does not matter if the advertisement creates a debate that reflects a negative attitude towards the brand or not, and that the reactions to this advertisement did not really matter for Gillette as a brand. As mentioned in chapter 3.3.1, the advertisement is placed top-20 on Youtube's list of the most disliked videos on their platform, which, to many, could be seen as bad publicity towards the brand. However, our study shows that the majority of our respondents actually had a positive attitude toward the advertisement and the message it shares. One possible argument for why this is might be that the ones with a negative attitude are far more likely to express their anger or frustration than the ones with a more neutral or positive attitude.

Furthermore, after analyzing our empirics, we came to wonder why the women who are questioning the advertisement are more skeptical than the men doing the same. One speculation we have why this might be the case is, that this highly is due to the specific movement used in this advertisement. Feminism and movements like #Metoo, which is about women and mainly for women, we believe can mean more to a woman than to a man. By that reason, it might be more upsetting for women that something that to most women is very personal, is being used for marketing a brand that is selling razors mainly aimed at men. That is one aspect we believe could be a reason why women were more questioning and skeptical, but we are open to that there could be other factors as well. Furthermore, the male respondents had more precise thoughts about their opinion towards Gillette as a brand after watching the advertisement. As presented above, we believe this might be due to the fact that Gillette is a brand for men which may generate more distinct emotions.

Moreover, an interesting reflection of ours that we made after analyzing our empirics was how the advertisement would be perceived if the brand name och slogan would not appear in the advertisement at first, but be revealed at the end of the advertisement. We

believe that this could be an effective way of reducing the voices that are skeptical towards why the brand chose to use a social movement in their marketing and also shed more light on the movement itself and not just the brand and its products. Since not connecting the brand with the advertisement at first may help to reduce the questioning of the purpose, by the reason that the message is in the spotlight, not the brand, nor the product of the brand.

Finally, one reflection that we think is important to discuss regarding our study is the fact that we only have been able the measure and examine the first and spontaneous reaction by our respondents. By this, we mean that we have not been able to say something about how the advertisement "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be" will affect the perception of Gillette as a brand in a longer term. It might be possible that in the long run, the majority that now has neutral opinions about Gillette as a brand changes their opinions.

5.3 Further research

While writing this study, our understanding of the complexity of this issue has significantly expanded to a wider understanding. We have continuously discovered new aspects that can be examined to get a deeper understanding of why the audience perceive the advertisement in the way they do, and also discovered segments that could be both examined and compared with one other similar cases. First and foremost, we suggest a comparison between low and high involvement products, since consumers are more likely to emotionally invest in high involvement products they might also be more likely to show more emotions towards advertisements like "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be." Meaning that brands who produce and sells high involvement products must be even more careful when producing such advertisements than brands who produces and sells low involvement products. This thought of ours was constituted after we identified that the majority were neutral towards Gillette as a brand despite that the majority also found the advertisement positive. We thought about this finding and wondered if it may depend on the fact that Gillette and its razors can be seen as low involvement products and that many consumers might not put much thought into their purchase?

Secondly, we suggest that this phenomenon should be studied in a longer time frame where the writers have the opportunity to say something about the memorization of the brand as being brought up as an aim with storytelling. As we have further discussed in our study,

we have not been able to study the perception of Gillette as a brand over a longer time. Further, we believe that if studying this phenomenon in a longer time frame as suggested, it may also be possible to examine how brand loyalty has developed as the purpose of emotional branding which is a clear strategy applied on this advertisement.

Our third and final suggestion is to study this phenomenon in a deeper context both socially and culturally to be able to identify if there are any differences that need to be considered amongst different audiences in order to succeed with this type of advertisements. This aspect is especially interesting to examine when conducting studies on a global level.

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Appendices

Appendix 1-Introduction to the survey

Perceptions and attitudes towards Gillette's advertisement "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be"

This survey will be a part of our bachelor thesis at the Institute of strategic communication at Lund University.

This survey aims to create a deeper understanding of the audience perception and attitudes towards brands who decide to make references to socio political movements in their marketing. In this study, the main aim is to find out if this strategy proves beneficial for brands in creating successful marketing campaigns or vice versa. We have strategically selected a specific advertisement as the main subject for our study because of the share magnitude of media coverage based regarding the brands. This advertisement proved to be very controversial and raised a lot of discussions regarding the current socio and political views of most people around the world, most notably the U.S.

This survey aims to answer attitudes and perceptions towards Gillette's advertisement "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be." The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to answer, and it will be divided into two steps. First, we kindly ask you to watch the advertisement from the beginning to the end, if you have already seen the advertisement, please watch it again to refresh your memory. We then ask you to answer our following questions about the advertisement. You answer the questions by choosing one of the options, apart from question number four where you will be asked to answer with you own thoughts and words.

Your answers will be completely anonymous, and only the result of the study will be presented in our thesis. If you want to get in touch we us regarding the survey, please email kri14jbe@student.lu.se

We sincerely thank you for your participation and your contribution to our bachelor thesis.

Kind regards,

Johanna & Karolina