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Empowered Women - Empowered Sales?

The Effect of Femvertising on Consumers' Attitudes towards the Ad,
Brand Gender Perception, and Purchase Intention

by

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Abstract

Thesis Purpose: The purpose of this study is (1) to investigate the direct influence of femvertising on female consumers' attitudes towards the ad, brand gender perception as well as purchase intention and (2) to test the indirect effect of femvertising through attitudes towards the ad and brand gender perception on purchase intention.

Methodology: This study used a random independent group design, assigning the survey respondents into two groups, which were either exposed to a femvertising ad or to a traditional advertising. An experimental in-between subjects approach was chosen to test the four research hypotheses by conducting independent sample t-tests and a two-way ANOVA.

Findings: The findings confirmed that femvertising has a direct positive effect on consumers' attitude towards the ad and purchase intention compared to traditional advertising. In addition, it was found that femvertising can be used to alter a masculine brand perception towards a more neutral to feminine perception. Furthermore, this study provided evidence that a favourable attitude towards the ad positively affects purchase intention, whereas such an effect was not found for brand gender, nor an interaction effect was identified between these two concepts.

Theoretical Contributions: The findings of this study add to a growing body of literature on femvertising and also on brand gender, which is currently affected by societal changes aiming for gender equality. More specifically, this study highlights several positive effects of femvertising and adds a critical perspective on the concept of brand gender.

Managerial Implications: The study proves that femvertising is a powerful communication strategy to attract female customers. Furthermore, the study provides evidence that gender stereotypes portrayed in advertisements are outdated and a trend towards a neutral brand gender perception emerges. Therefore, marketers need to carefully evaluate if and to what extent a specific brand gender should be communicated.

Originality/Value: The uniqueness of this study exists in the fact that it investigates the influence of femvertising on a masculine brand within the high-involvement purchase category. Furthermore, it is the first study that tests the effect of femvertising on consumers' perception of brand gender and how this alteration influences purchase intention.

Keyword: femvertising, advertising, brand gender, purchase intention, consumer perception

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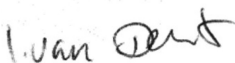
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1 Introduction

The emergence of female empowerment advertising, so-called femvertising, is disrupting the branding and advertising sphere. This opening chapter introduces the reader to stereotypical gender roles in advertising used to give brands a distinct gender in order to attract a specific section of the target group. Subsequently, the link between these traditional practices and the contemporary phenomenon of femvertising that brands are currently adopting is established. Moreover, this chapter introduces the purpose of this study, followed by the formulation of the research questions. Lastly, an outline of the overall thesis is given.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Power of Advertising on Society

97% of US women think that advertising impacts how society views them (SheKnows Media, 2016). Yet, over two-thirds of women believe that they do not see people like themselves in the ads (SheKnows Media, 2016). This dissonance of reality and imagery results from generalised and outdated gender stereotypes historically used in advertising to attract consumers (Becker-Herby, 2016). Especially women are affected by these stereotypes, as they are 1.5 to 4 times more likely to be stereotyped than men, depending on the product category (Eisend, 2010). Not only are women more often subject to stereotyping, but also do these stereotypes categorise women into subordinate, dependent, and unambitious roles while showing men as the dominant gender (Hatzithomas, Boutsouki, & Ziamou, 2016). But even more popular is the sexist portrayal of women in various types of advertising for all kinds of products. From fashion to cleaning products, from car wash services to travel agencies, nearly every industry is subject to sexist stereotypes. Yet, 90% of women believe that ads showing them as sex symbols are harmful (SheKnows Media, 2016).

Indeed, these stereotypes in media influence the beliefs of consumers, who tend to incorporate stereotypes into their own reality and adapt their behaviour accordingly (Knoll, Eisend, & Steinhagen, 2011). Unsurprisingly, particularly girls and women struggle with self-confidence and body satisfaction, as they are constantly faced with unrealistic representations of women in advertising. Showing women mainly as mothers, responsible for caring for children, cleaning the house, and cooking food for the husband might not motivate girls in pursuing careers.

Following from this, the power of advertising in shaping society combined with stereotypical gender representations led to unrealistic roles of women, who are struggling with confidence and impeded life as well as career opportunities (Knoll, Eisend, & Steinhagen, 2011).

1.1.2 Brand Gender Divides the Masses

Not only advertising is affected by but also reinforcing distinct stereotypes based on past and present societal roles of men and women. Similarly, brands and products themselves are subject to the assignment of gender. Avery (2012) argued that “gendered brands contain either masculine or feminine identity meanings that are socially shared among members of a culture. We adorn our gender displays with these brands as tangible markers; gendered brands help materialise gender, enlivening who we are as men or women” (p.323). Historically, gender-based marketing and advertising has been used to segment the market according to demographics, target customers, and position the brand subsequently (Dobscha, 2019). Here, particularly gender segments are commonly used as they are easily identifiable, accessible, measurable, large as well as profitable, and responsive to marketing mix elements (Darley & Smith, 1995). Finally, Lieven, Grohmann, Herrmann, Landwehr, and van Tilburg (2014) confirmed that a distinct and recognizable brand gender, either feminine or masculine, generates higher brand equity.

In this sense, appropriating consumption practices that reflect our gender identity have proven to be a successful tool for decades (Kacen, 2000). In order to increase market share as well as sales, companies often create false differences between products by assigning a gender to normally gender neutral products (Dobscha, 2019). Supermarkets are full of blue razors ‘for men’ or pink pens ‘for her’. However, assigning a gender to products as a mutually exclusive consumption culture is not only used to increase sales but also has the opposite effect of constraining what consumers buy and excluding customer groups (Avery, 2012). It seems as if clear guidelines for male and female consumers exist about where and which products to buy, such as different types and brands of cars suitable for common role portrayals of men and women. Who would ever agree that a Mercedes G-class is a typical car for women?

However, during the last years, a generation shift mostly recognizable from the millennial generation onwards is blurring the lines of gender distinctions and is giving rise to female empowerment and gender equality movements (Becker-Herby, 2016). Also, the UN set gender equality as number five of their Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 (UN Sustainable Development Goals, 2019), emphasizing the importance of this issue. These changes in society are challenging established literature on gendered branding and advertising (Grohmann, 2009; Lieven et al. 2014; Lieven, 2018).

1.1.3 Femvertising as Solution

Termed as the newest trend in advertising, femvertising is seizing the marketing world to uplift women in their everyday life. Femvertising is defined as female empowerment advertising “that challenges female stereotypes” (Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017, p.796) and “empowers women by employing pro-female messages” (SheKnows Media, 2016). Moreover, it intends to celebrate women in their independence, liberality, strength, and confidence rather than to objectify and sexualise them in advertising (Bahadur, 2014; Karulkar et al. n.d.). For a long time, women fought for gender equality not only at home, but also career-wise by gradually obtaining college degrees and gaining employment, which led to changing family roles (Fugate, Decker, & Brewer, 1988). The focus of this so-called feminism lies on political, but also on social and cultural equality and empowerment (Becker-Herby, 2016). More precisely, “it attempts to champion the female right to agency and celebrate the many choices that women make” (Becker-Herby, 2016, p.17). Below, the roots of this new communication strategy are presented.

Feminism Noun <i>“The advocacy of women’s rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes.”</i>	Advertising Noun <i>“The activity or profession of producing advertisements for commercial products or services.”</i>	Femvertising Noun <i>“Advertising that challenges female stereotypes and empowers women by employing pro-female messages.”</i>
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Figure 1.1: Definition Feminism, Advertising & Femvertising (Oxford dictionary, 2019a, 2019b; own definition)

One of the most well-known and most cited examples for femvertising is Dove’s 2004 ‘real beauty’ campaign (Castillo, 2014). Originally, the campaign was created to change the definition of beauty for women, which simultaneously empowered women to accept their flaws (Molitor, 2008). Instead of using very thin models, Dove showed authentic body images of women with all kinds of body types. Another example is Always campaign ‘like a girl’ in 2012, which emphasised the negative connotation of the saying ‘like a girl’. Here, the ad reversed this saying into something positive by highlighting girls’ strengths and empowering them. Studies have shown that those attempts to empower women through femvertising prove to not only have a positive effect on women but also actually show a positive impact on sales (Castillo, 2014). For instance, after the exposure of the ‘real beauty’ campaign, Dove sales jumped from \$2.5 billion to \$4 billion (Castillo, 2014). Furthermore, 53% of US women indicated that they have purchased a product because they like how females are portrayed in the brand’s campaigns (SheKnows Media, 2016), showing the importance of the right advertising to attract customers.

1.2 Problematisation

Overall, the concept of femvertising emerged within the last five years, leading to a limited extent of literature. While these types of advertisements generated enormous media coverage and were championed for communicating positive messages to women, there is still only a low volume of published studies describing if and why these campaigns are effective for female consumers. Concerning the available literature, the majority of studies acknowledged that femvertising has an overall positive effect on consumers' perception of the brand compared to traditional advertising. However, researchers did not agree upon the effectiveness of femvertising in increasing purchase intentions. More specifically, the studies of Drake (2017) and Karulkar et al. (n.d.) stated different findings and opposite arguments than Kapoor and Munjal (2017). On the one hand, Drake (2017) and Karulkar et al. (n.d.) statistically proved that female empowerment in ads has a positive impact on purchase intention of females for fast moving consumer goods (FMCG). On the other hand, Kapoor and Munjal (2017) found that femvertising does influence women's forwarding intention but does not lead to a higher purchase intention. These contradictory statements do not clarify the effectiveness of female empowerment in advertising and serve as a motivation for further research on women's attitudes, perceptions, and intentions.

Furthermore, the available studies on femvertising tested the overall effectiveness with many measurements other than purchase intention but did so solely in regard to FMCG products (Abitbol & Sternadori, 2019; Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017; Karulkar et al. n.d.). However, consumers' decision making process for products such as toiletries is much quicker and includes only little criteria in the evaluation of products and brands in the FMCG sector. Purchases in the high-involvement category, for instance cars, require more informational research and lead to a long consumer decision making process. Therefore, consumers show different perceptions, opinions, and behaviour towards FMCG products than to high-involvement purchases. The influence of one advertisement on consumers' decisions might be different for these two product categories. Clearly, there is a current gap in the literature investigating how femvertising impacts consumers' attitudes as well as perceptions of the brand and their intention to buy a product from a brand in the high-involvement purchase category. In line with this, Karulkar et al. (n.d.) emphasised different industries and product categories of high interest for further studies. Similarly, Drake (2017) called for future research on "how the effects of female empowerment in advertising vary by industry, especially for higher involvement purchases such as luxury brands or cars" (p.598).

The author further mentioned the example of Audi's 2017 Super Bowl ad 'Daughter' as inspiration for future research. This ad indicates that brands with a traditionally masculine brand gender, which predominantly target men, are increasingly using femvertising to attract the opposite sex. In addition to this, femvertising is classified as non-traditional advertising, challenging or reversing the stereotypes of women and men and sending out different gender cues (Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017). As previously stated, stereotypical gender role portrayals are often used in advertising to give brands a distinct gender. Established literature

argued that women prefer products with a feminine gender, whereas men prefer products with a masculine gender (Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Bellizzi & Milner, 1991; Till & Priluck, 2001; Worth, Smith, & Mackie, 1992). Since femvertising is reversing these roles, influences on the brand's gender can be anticipated. However, to the best of authors' knowledge, no report has been found so far studying this influence. Studies in the field of brand gender bending prove that consumers' perception of a brand's gender was altered when strongly masculine brands launched campaigns specifically targeted towards women (Avery, 2012; Jung, 2006). Consequently, the prevalent distinction of products for men or women, gendered as masculine or feminine, may lose relevance, although brand gender is proven to generate brand equity and hence value for the company (Aaker, 1991; Lieven, 2018). Although not explicitly stated within the studies, present femvertising studies solely acknowledged female empowerment advertising in regard to feminine gendered brands and corresponding ads (Abitbol & Sternadori, 2019; Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017; Karulkar et al. n.d.; Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017). Until now, scholars in the field of femvertising have not considered traditionally male brands, nor taken the perspective of brand gender to re-evaluate the importance and applicability of a distinct brand gender today. Here, far too little attention has been paid to the effects of femvertising on consumers' perceptions of a traditionally male gendered brand and how this alteration influences women's purchase intention.

1.3 Research Purpose

Realizing the gap in the extant literature, it clarifies that the effectiveness of the newly emerging strategy of femvertising delivered mixed results and was not tested in the context of high-involvement purchases and masculine brands. Moreover, its influence on the disputed concept of brand gender is unknown. This said, this thesis aims at contributing to the literature stream of femvertising, which is currently emerging (Abitbol & Sternadori, 2019; Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017; Karulkar et al. n.d.; Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017) and brand gender (Grohmann, 2009; Lieven et al. 2014; Lieven, 2018), which is undergoing changes based on societal developments regarding gender dichotomies and equality. Therefore, this study bridges the gap between both literature streams and its purpose is twofold.

The first purpose is to study the direct influence of female empowerment advertising, short femvertising, on women's attitude towards the ad, purchase intention and perception of a brand's gender. More specifically, we investigate these effects in the context of the automotive industry, a high-involvement purchase category with traditionally predominantly masculine gendered brands. Here, we test if female empowerment advertising is a powerful new communication strategy to enhance women's attitudes and to drive consumers' purchase intention, but also if femvertising can be used as a tool to feminise or neutralise an originally masculine brand to make it more attractive for the female target audience. The second purpose of this thesis is to further investigate the indirect effects of femvertising through attitudes towards the ad and brand gender on purchase intention. Here, attitude towards the ad and brand gender are treated as mediating variables. To be more precise, within the setting of this study

we aim to test if a favourable attitude towards the ad and a feminine perceived brand gender affects purchase intention positively.

Moreover, this thesis also aims at providing managerial implications for companies, specifically marketing and brand managers. For companies, it is important to understand the effectiveness of femvertising in generating favourable consumer attitudes and purchase intention. As this communication strategy recently emerged, the effects have only been sporadically investigated and solely within the FMCG industry. For marketing and brand managers, it is necessary to think about the effects of female empowerment advertising on consumers' perception and evaluation of the brand. Especially the typically masculine gendered automotive industry is known for communicating to men but is also constantly looking for new ways to reach female customers. This study is going to clarify whether femvertising can be used to alter a brand's gender and how effective this alteration is in increasing purchase intentions of the female target audience.

1.4 Research Question

Overall, this thesis addresses the following research questions.

Does femvertising increase young women's purchase intention of masculine gendered brands within the high-involvement purchase category?

- *To what extent does femvertising directly influence young women's attitude towards the ad, purchase intention, and the perception of brand gender?*
- *To what extent does femvertising indirectly, through changing young women's attitude towards the ad and perceptions of brand gender, increase purchase intention?*

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

In order to answer the research questions, the following study starts with a thorough elaboration on the previously introduced literature streams of brand gender and femvertising. This review of relevant literature and important theoretical concepts is summarised in a conceptual framework upon which the hypotheses for the study are formulated. Afterwards, the method is outlined, specifying how the study was designed and conducted to test the hypothesis. Following this, the next chapter analyses and discusses the results of the study in regard to the relevant literature. Then, a conclusion summarising the insights gained is given, next to the theoretical contributions and managerial implications as well as limitations of the study. Lastly, future research directions for the two theoretical concepts are presented.

2 Literature Review

In order to create a clear picture of the background literature of this thesis, the following chapter reviews existing literature, theories, and empirical findings in two relevant fields of marketing research, namely brand gender and femvertising. In addition to defining and exploring these two literature streams, the interrelated effects and influences of relevant concepts on each other are stated. Following this, the chapter is concluded with the formulation of hypotheses for this study, on which basis the conceptual framework is established.

2.1 Brand Gender

This section extensively elaborates on the concept of brand gender, meaning that a specific gender can be assigned to a brand through the marketing mix. As brand gender is a relatively scarce research field, the development from brand personality to brand gender is presented. Afterwards, the effectiveness of using gendered brands is described in order to argue for the importance of brand gender in driving purchase intention. Next, prevailing stereotypes of women in advertising are discussed to connect brand gender with the role portrayal of women in advertisements. Finally, the criticism evolving from societal changes is brought up to question gender stereotypes as well as the prevailing distinctions between products for men and women. This has led to the practice of gender bending, which is presented at last.

2.1.1 From Brand Personality to Brand Gender

Brand personality as part of the brand image is an important concept within marketing literature. In 1959, Levy (1959) was among the first marketing researchers to acknowledge that brands not only have a functional but also a symbolic meaning, which is described as personality. Here, Aaker (1997) described brand personality as a “set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (p.1). Moreover, Keller (2013) emphasised the symbolic or self-expressive function of brand personalities rather than focused on the utilitarian or practical functions. Many researchers followed over the years and added their definition to the existing literature. Most definitions either describe brand personality as a set of human characteristics (Aaker, 1997; Allen & Olson, 1995; Keller, 2013) or personality traits (Aaker & Biel, 1993; Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003; Magnusson & Endler, 1977; Keller, 2013; McCracken, 1989), which makes brands comparable to humans (Aaker & Fournier, 1995; Magnusson & Endler, 1977; Kapferer,

2012; Keller, 2013). Hereby, some researchers argue that brand personality is a part of either brand image (Aaker, 1996; Biel, 1992; Keller, 2013) or brand identity (Blythe, 2007; Kapferer, 2012).

Keller (1993) emphasised that brand personality creates unique and favourable brand associations, which builds and enhances brand equity, a driver of purchase intention. Lannon and Cooper (1983) argued that brand personality is important to design appealing advertising, which is in line with Keller (2013) who stated that it is essential that advertising reflects the appropriate type of brand personality. Furthermore, the framework of brand personality builds an emotional perspective to the brand, which can respond to the self-concept or ideal self-concept of a consumer (Landon, 1974) and provides the brand with personal meaning to the consumer (Levy, 1959). In line with this, Belk (1988) argued that consumers perceive brands as extensions of themselves and as markers of identity (Avery, 2012). In this sense, Fournier (1998) stated that consumers see a brand as a friend, when the brand personality seems appealing, which will result in higher loyalty, increased choice likelihood and purchase intention. When done successfully, consumers can identify themselves with the brand, leading to brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth (Kim, Han, & Park, 2001). To conclude, several other researchers also pointed out the concept's relevance to increase consumers' purchase intention (Crask & Laskey, 1990; Fournier, 1998; Keller, 1993; Kim, Han, & Park, 2001; Toldos-Romero & Orozco-Gómez, 2015; Wang & Yang, 2008).

Dimensions of Brand Personality

Considering the above-stated definitions of brand personalities, it clarifies that consumers associate a wide range of human characteristics and personality traits with brands. Here, Aaker's (1997) study on *Dimensions of Brand Personality*, has been the first and most profound study to explore personality traits within the psychology field in association with brand personality and is widely used among researchers (Toldos-Romero & Orozco-Gomez, 2015). Aaker (1997) focused on a metaphorical picture of the brand as a person and the corresponding brand perceptions from a consumer point of view. In addition, she developed the first brand personality framework which is measurable and generalizable. With this said, the identified five dimensions of brand personality and 15 key facets, are:

1. Sincerity (down-to-earth, honesty, wholesome, cheerful)
2. Excitement (daring, spirited, imaginative, up-to-date)
3. Competence (reliable, intelligent, successful)
4. Sophistication (upper-class, charming)
5. Ruggedness (outdoorsy, tough)

Highlighting the impact of this model established in 1997, most research about brand personality is based on Aaker's study, a theory that has been adopted in many other countries (Toldos-Romero & Orozco-Gomez, 2015). Yet, several researchers also criticised the framework (Sweeney & Brandon, 2006; Malik & Naeem, 2013). Sweeney and Brandon (2006) argued that Aaker's (1997) framework is based on a factor-analysis, which consequently reduced the different personality traits to factors and is, therefore, less detailed. Next to the

missing details within the personality traits, the exclusion of negative descriptors, e.g. arrogant, dominant, was also criticised by Sweeny and Brandon (2006). Moreover, while Malik and Naeem (2013) admitted that Aaker's framework is comprehensive and generalizable for different product categories, the authors also highlighted that the framework has been established within American culture and is not adjusted to different cultural settings or country-specific values. Still, Aaker's brand personality framework is one of the most used and cited ones in the marketing literature (Kumar, 2018).

Brand Gender

When assigning personality traits to a brand also demographic characteristics such as gender, age, and class are associated with the brand as argued by researchers (Dion, Berscheid & Walster, 1972; Grohmann, 2009; Levy, 1959; Lieven, 2018). Here, especially gender is seen as one key characteristic as customers can associate brands and products to a gender (Levy, 1959). Grohmann (2009) highlighted brand gender as a positioning strategy by assigning masculine or feminine traits to brand personalities in order to differentiate them from other brands. Furthermore, she highlighted the consumer's point of view by emphasizing their "need to express their masculinity/femininity through brand choice and consumption" (Grohmann, 2009, p.106). Moreover, Lieven (2018) stated that a meaningful matching of the personality of consumers with brands personalities is impossible without the gender component. In his research, he compared personalities of employees with personalities of brands using 10 traits derived from Aaker's (1997) model. Here, he added the rating of being "very feminine - rather neutral - or very masculine." (Lieven, 2018, p.8). Doing so Lieven, (2018) discovered that brands with a strong gender perception had high brand equity. In line with this, Dion, Berscheid, and Walster (1972) argued that the most important personality trait is sexual identity. Lastly, much research confirmed that products have a distinct gender which addresses the respective consumer gender (Bellizzi & Milner, 1991; Frieden, 2013; Fugate & Phillips, 2010; Tuncay & Otnes, 2008).

Building upon Aaker's (1997) work of the *Dimensions of Brand Personality*, Grohmann (2009) established the *Gender Dimensions of Brand Personality* by exploring human personality traits associated with masculinity and femininity in regards to brands. Out of a list of 72 items, six feminine and six masculine brand personality items were chosen, which are depicted below.

Table 2.1: Feminine and Masculine Brand Personality Traits by Grohmann (2009)

Feminine Brand Personality	Masculine Brand Personality
Express tender feelings Fragile Graceful Sensitive Sweet Tender	Adventurous Aggressive Brave Daring Dominant Sturdy

Grohmann (2009) presented three reasons why these dimensions are widely and effectively applied to different marketing concepts. Firstly, she stated that masculine or feminine spokespeople used in advertising help marketers in shaping gender dimensions for their brand. Secondly, these dimensions “influence affective, attitudinal, and behavioural consumer responses positively when they are congruent with consumers’ sex role identity” (Grohmann, 2009, p.116) and therefore enable consumers to demonstrate part of their self-concept. Thirdly, extension evaluations and purchase intentions are improved when the gender of the parent brand gender and of the extended product category are similar (Grohmann, 2009).

2.1.2 Brand Gender and Purchase Intention

Many researchers argued for the importance of a clear and distinct brand gender in supporting brand equity and made Grohmann’s scale an established concept in the literature (Alreck, 1994; Avery, 2012; Grohmann, 2009; Hess & Melnyk, 2016; Till & Priluck, 2001; Worth, Smith, & Mackie, 1992; Wu, Klink, & Guo, 2013). One of the most cited studies in this context is a study by Lieven et al. (2014). By testing masculine, feminine, undifferentiated (low in both masculine and feminine gender traits) and androgynous (high in both masculine and feminine gender traits) brands, the positive effect of brand gender on brand equity was confirmed. Further findings of this study proved that brands with a strong positioning and clear gender associations as either masculine or feminine have stronger brand equity in comparison to undifferentiated and androgynous brands. Lieven et al. (2014) also found that “brand gender accounts for brand equity ratings above and beyond other brand personality dimensions” (p.371), meaning that brand gender is the most important characteristic of a brand’s personality. Moreover, the study investigated the underlying psychological reasons for the success of brand gender in generating high brand equity. The authors argued that it is easier for consumers to categorise sex-typed stimuli than brands without a clear distinction.

Similarly, an experiment by Worth, Smith, and Mackie (1992) found that “subjects preferred products described in terms congruent with their self-perceived schema for masculinity or femininity” (p.17). Depending on how strongly masculine or feminine participants perceive themselves, the gender of products preferred mirror their perception (Worth, Smith, & Mackie, 1992). The findings from 1992 were supported by a more recent study by Till and Priluck (2001), which emphasized advertising as an important tool to create brand personality and a gendered meaning. Findings concluded that men are more likely to purchase masculine perceived and gendered brands. Similarly, women are more likely to purchase feminine perceived and gendered brands. Although participants preferred gendered associations, neutral brands with ungendered names or messages are more likely to be purchased by women (Till & Priluck, 2001). Yet, it is questionable if consumers in today’s society, which is undergoing certain changes especially gender and stereotype wise, still act and feel accordingly. Although most literature investigated brand gender in regard to brand association, loyalty, or equity (Lieven et al. 2014), the direct effect on purchase intention was not researched intensively. Additionally, the effectiveness of brand personality was proven by multiple studies in comparison to brand gender (Till & Priluck, 2001; Worth, Smith, & Mackie, 1992).

2.1.3 Female Stereotypes in Advertising

Naturally, gendering brands also lead to gendered advertising, which is one tool of the marketing mix to communicate the brand's identity. Within advertising theory, one central point is the positive attitude towards advertisement as it not only influences consumer's attitudes towards a specific brand but also their behaviour (Shimp, 1981). Mitchell (1986) discovered that indeed the consumer's attitude toward the advertisement influences his or her associated brand attitudes. He also noted that most advertisements do not focus on product attribute information, but rather on building an image for the typical user of the brand or on trying to create emotional feelings towards the ad and, hence, the brand. Additionally, many scholars confirmed the effectiveness of gender cues used in advertising to assign a specific gender to the product (Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; An & Kim, 2006; Bellizzi & Milner, 1991; Fugate & Phillips, 2010; Wolin, 2003) and proved that these cues influence the viewers' perception in regard to the product's gender (Sandhu, 2018). In this sense, Sandhu (2018) argues that "the same gender-typing cues in ads impacts the perception of men and women differently" (p.8). With her study, Sandhu (2018) supported previous findings (Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Frieden, 2013), which indicate that men tend to perceive gender cues and gendered products stronger than women, who have a more moderate perception of brand gender.

In order to promote a brand to the specific target audience, advertising often uses gender stereotypes prevalent in society (Eisend, 2010), which is a prominent topic in the literature since the 1970s (Goffman, 1976). As explained earlier, branding often focuses on gender which is seen as a social construct, implying accepted and expected behaviours of men and women in society (Fugate & Phillips, 2010). Therefore, massively depicting gender-typical roles has led to stereotypical gender portrayals. Vinacke (1957, p.230) defined stereotypes as "any collection of trait-names which are found to be appropriate in characterizing a class of persons." Moreover, Fitts (2009) explained that "gender stereotypes are common beliefs formed in the culture about how men and women behave" (p.1). These common beliefs include attributes such as the four components of stereotyping by Deaux and Lewis (1984), which are trait descriptors, physical characteristics, role behaviour, and occupational status, defining gender roles. Traditionally, the male gender is classified as the dominant gender, leading to lower ranked or submissive depictions of women in society and especially in advertising (Avery, 2012). In order to explain these depictions in more detail, gender stereotypes in advertising, specifically female, are elaborated in the following.

Especially women are subject to stereotypical portrayals in advertising (Eisend, 2010). Therefore, traditional and non-traditional female stereotypes are closely examined in the following. These two distinctions represent the two categories in which gender stereotype portrayals were broken into in research historically, based on societal norms (Dobscha, 2019). Examples of traditional female stereotype imageries show a woman at home caring for her children, whereas non-traditional female stereotype depictions illustrate a woman at the office working while the man stays at home (Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010; Knoll, Eisend, & Steinhagen, 2011). These distinctions of traditional and non-traditional stereotypes are valid for this study. Much research evolved around the field of gender stereotypes in advertising, which

show that gender stereotyping is still prevalent and persists. Eight studies, presenting findings from over four decades, were chosen to serve as an enriching base of literature and are illustrated below (Bartsch, Burnett, Diller, & Rankin-Williams 2000; Ferguson, Kreshel, & Tinkham, 1990; Furnham & Mak, 1999; Goffman, 1976; Grau & Zotos, 2016; Knoll, Eisend, & Steinhagen, 2011; McArthur & Resko, 1975; Zotos & Lysonski, 1994).

Table 1.2: Selection of References Presenting Female Stereotypes Prevalent in Advertising

Source	Study	Female Stereotype
(McArthur & Resko, 1975)	199 TV advertisements in the US	14% more male than female central figures; women were more often portrayed as users rather than as authorities, in dependent roles, in a home setting, offering no arguments for product use, family or male approval as a product-related reward, advertised home products
(Goffman, 1976)	500 print advertisement in multiple countries	Pictorial representations of women encoded in their poses, postures and positioning relative to men conveyed the message of powerlessness, submissiveness, infantilism, fragility, vulnerability and dreaminess
(Ferguson, Kreshel & Tinkham, 1990)	Magazine advertisements from 1973 to 1987	Women have been increasingly portrayed as sex objects
(Zotos & Lysonski, 1994)	11 Greek magazine advertisements during 1982-83 and 1987-88	Negative image of women in advertisements continues, but there is a slight shift toward more positive role portrayals
(Furnham & Mak, 1999)	14 studies on multiple countries from 1973 to 1987	Women being predominantly portrayed as younger than men and being stronger in more gender-traditional countries such as Asia and Africa; even though both men and women were equally often portrayed as authorities, women were still less likely to do voice overs or to be the central figures; females were more often portrayed in dependent roles, at home and with children
(Bartsch et al. 2000)	757 TV advertisements during spring 1998	Gender bias still exists as females are under-represented as product representatives for domestic products and males are over-represented as product representatives for non-domestic products. Gender bias has decreased in terms of voiceovers
(Knoll, Eisend, & Steinhagen, 2011)	183 German TV advertisements in 2008	Showing both genders in traditional roles where professional opportunities of women are limited; women are more likely to be depicted as product users, are younger, are more likely to be depicted with domestic products, and are more likely to be portrayed at home and in dependent roles
(Grau & Zotos, 2016)	Review of current research	Changing role structure in the family and in the labour force has brought significant variation in both male and female roles and subsequently how it is reflected in advertising; there is a culture lag; women were presented in an inferior manner relative to their potential and capabilities, while at the same the data indicated a shift towards more positive role portrayals

Finally, Hatzithomas, Boutsouki, and Ziamou (2016) shed light on gender representations across various product categories in the highly watched and discussed U.S. Super Bowl commercials over a 20-year period. More specifically, the authors presented their findings on shifts in cultural notions of gender constructs in advertisements “targeting the largest and the most demographically diverse audience in US television” (Hatzithomas, Boutsouki, & Ziamou, 2016, p.888). The following table 2.3 summarises the framework and its categories for female stereotypes in advertising.

Table 2.3: Categories for Female Stereotypes in Advertising (Hatzithomas, Boutsouki, & Ziamou, 2016)

Stereotypes	Description
Dependency	Dependent on male's protection In need of reassurance Making unimportant decisions
Housewife	Women's place is the home Primary role is to be a good wife Concerned with tasks of housekeeping
Women concerned with physical attractiveness	To appear more appealing (e.g. youthful) Concerned with cosmetics and jewellery products Concerned with fashion
Women as sex objects	Sex is related to product Sex is unrelated to product
Women in non-traditional activities	Engaged in activities outside the home (e.g. buying a car) Engaged in sports (e.g. golf, tennis, skiing, swimming)
Career-oriented	Professional occupation Entertainer Non-professional (e.g. clerical, bank teller) Blue collar
Voice of authority	The expert
Neutral	Women shown as equal to man

Their longitudinal analysis implied that women are still underrepresented in U.S. Super Bowl commercials and male stereotypes are more frequently used, although female viewership is increasing in NFL Super Bowl games. More precisely, “90% male vs. 47% female stereotypes were used during 1990-1999 and 92% male vs. 49% female stereotypes were used during 2000-2009” (Hatzithomas, Boutsouki, & Ziamou, 2016, p.895). Despite the fact that the frequency of female stereotypes of dependency and housewife decreased, the frequency of stereotypes of women concerned with physical attractiveness and women as sex objects increased heavily over the years. Furthermore, women depicted as career-oriented and as a voice of authority sunk according to the authors. Lastly, the rise of stereotypical neutral imagery together with an extreme increase of the presentation of non-traditional female activities implies changes in society which resulted in brand gender bending, a concept which is explained later on.

Overall, Knoll, Eisend, and Steinhagen (2011) argued that stereotypes do not necessarily have negative implications as they may provide useful guidance in everyday life. However, they can

also “lead to oversimplified conceptions, misapplied knowledge evaluations, and thus to misleading evaluations of subjects of a social category” (Knoll, Eisend, & Steinhagen, 2011, p.869). Especially women feel the negative consequences that may impede life opportunities and reduce self-dignity through unrealistic physical characteristics and beauty ideals. Moreover, disadvantages in women’s careers may develop and opportunities for self-development may be limited when stereotypical traditional role behaviours are internalised (Knoll, Eisend, & Steinhagen, 2011). The negative attitude of women towards gender stereotypes in advertising as well as the mostly indifferent attitude of men towards stereotypical depictions was confirmed in many studies (Becker-Herby, 2016; Knoll, Eisend, & Steinhagen, 2011; Kolman & Verčić, 2012).

2.1.4 Criticism on Brand Gender

A person’s gender, as opposed to a person’s sex, is not genetically or biologically determined. More specifically, gender is constructed and shaped through society and culture (West & Zimmerman, 1987). This leads to expected gender roles ascribed by society (Czarniawska, 2006; Eagly, 2013), through communication (Wood, 2011) and through media (Sandhu, 2018; Sandhu & Singh, 2017), which men and women should fulfil to be part of the norm. Consequently, the distinction between behaving according to being a man or a woman arouse and is constantly reinforced through the previously mentioned influences. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2012) defines gender as follows: “Gender refers to the attitudes, feelings and behaviours that a given culture associates with a person’s biological sex. Behaviour that is compatible with cultural expectations is referred to as gender-normative; behaviours that are viewed as incompatible with these expectations constitute gender nonconformity” (p.2). This concept is relatable to advertising, which classifies stereotypes as traditional, gender conform, or non-traditional, gender nonconform, depictions.

In post-modernity, and especially motivated by the millennial generation, gender dichotomies are blurring, new forms of gender constructs are defined and consumption practices closely tailored towards men or women are changing (Holt & Thompson, 2004). Since consumption plays an important role in the construction of consumer identities, new consumption practices emerged. Marketers cannot simply target men or women separately as more and more people break with cultural expectations and the world is not separated between two genders anymore (Kacen, 2000). In post-modernity, “gender is an individual accomplishment, not a socially constructed one” (Kacen, 2000, p.349). In addition to this, gendering products as a mutually exclusive consumption culture also has the effect of constraining what consumers buy and excluding certain customer groups (Avery, 2012). It seems as if clear guidelines for male and female consumers exist about which products to buy, such as different types and brands of cars suitable for common role portrayals of men and women (Bellizzi & Milner, 1991). Consequently, the practice of assigning one of two genders to a brand loses relevance. Although Grohmann’s dimensions of brand personality is the most used and not changed framework in the field of brand gender, it might not be applicable in post-modernity as it relies on outdated gender roles and stereotypes. More and more scholars highlighted the effect of brands with a

unisex gender and simultaneously criticise the brand gender concept as too traditional (Avery, 2012; Jung, 2006; Sandhu, 2017; Sandhu & Singh, 2017; Tuncay & Otnes, 2008; Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Frieden, 2013; Fry, 1971; Worth, Smith, & Mackie, 1992), which led to the emerging marketing practice of brand gender-bending, explained in the next chapter.

2.1.5 Brand Gender Bending

Previously defined, brands most often possess strong gender identities for their products, stereotyped as masculine or feminine, to define and attract a specific target group. However, the practice of gender bending consumption was recently incorporated by both men and women, who demonstrated these mutually exclusive consumption practices by “co-opting the [...] practices and products of the opposite sex to play with definitions of gender and support new ideologies” (Avery, 2012, p.322). Many scholars dived into the research field of gender bending as a deconstruction of gender exclusivity (Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Avery, 2012; Frieden, 2013; Fry, 1971; Jung, 2006; Sandhu, 2017; Sandhu & Singh, 2017; Tuncay & Otnes, 2008; Worth, Smith, & Mackie, 1992). In other words, men are gradually more often purchasing products branded for women and vice versa, which is further supported by new communication strategies targeting the opposite sex of a brand’s original customer group (Jung, 2006). Consequently, brands and advertisers used the word ‘unisex’ for their products or extend their product line, called cross-gender brand extension, to attract the opposite gender (Sandhu, 2017).

Much research exists that analyses the responses of men and women towards gender bending. In her article, Sandhu (2017) reviewed and summarised studies examining these responses, the relevant female studies are illustrated in the table below:

Table 2.4: Responses of Women to Brand Gender Bending (Sandhu, 2017)

Responses of Women	
Consumer Responses	Rationale for Responses
Greater tolerance than men (Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Frieden, 2013; Fry, 1971)	Supports women's fight for gender equality (Borgeson & Rehn, 2004; Savan, 1994)
	Closes social gap between men and women (Kerr, 1997; Kerr & McKay, 2014)
	Same consumption standards for men and women denote upwards gender mobility for women (Hollows, 2000)
	Symbolises the natural desire of women to undo gender norms (Deutsch, 2007)
Reduced appeal of brand (Worth, Smith, & Mackie, 1992)	Women seek gender identity congruence through consumption (Cowart, Fox, & Wilson, 2002)
	Self-presentational concerns (Worth, Smith, & Mackie, 1992)

Here, different responses to gender bending practices clarified. Men represented the dominant gender group historically and to some degree still do so (Avery, 2012). Consequently, their intolerance for brands bending to the female side is explained and their desire to uphold this dominant position through female exclusion is comprehensible (Sandhu, 2017). On the contrary, an advancement in the female gender status occurs when women enter the male domain (Sandhu, 2017), similar to female empowerment and liberation. Therefore unsurprisingly, women remain relatively indifferent when brands bend over to the male consumer pool (Sandhu, 2017). In line with this argument, Jung (2006) stated that “being strong, independent, and willing to take risks [masculine] are seen more positively than being weak, gullible, and easily influenced [feminine]” (p.68), which is why individuals more strongly desire masculine traits. As stated earlier, brands are used to express one’s personality (Aaker, 1996; Belk, 1988); this desire is reflected in the consumption choices of individuals. Therefore, men are more likely to reject feminine brands, whereas women are more likely to accept masculine brands (Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982). Finally, Sandhu (2017) summarised that “this understanding provides insight into the desire of women to encroach upon male-gendered products and establish the same consumption standards for men and women” (p.161).

Especially the car industry, categorised as strongly masculine, is influenced by this phenomenon (Avery, 2012; Gentry, Doering & O’Brien, 1978; Lieven et al. 2014; Thompson & Holt, 2004). The two studies of Avery (2012) and Sandhu and Singh (2017) enriched existing literature by empirically investigating the effects on the male customer group and purchase intention of gender bending advertising campaigns of Porsche Cayenne in the US and Datsun Go in India. In his netnography study, Avery (2012) found that the extremely masculine in-group of Porsche owners’ reacted with hyper-masculinity to maintain Porsche as an identity marker and exclude the mostly female out-group. Therefore, “consumers’ gender work reverses the firm’s efforts to gender-bend the brand, reinstates Porsche as a masculine marker, and reifies particular definitions of masculinity in the community” (Avery, 2012, p.322). Contrary to this, Sandhu and Singh (2017) prove male acceptance of advertised gender bending of Datsun Go into the female customer group. Yet, it was stated that Datsun Go is not a very masculine gendered brand, which explains the tolerance of men for this gender contamination (Sandhu & Singh, 2017). Overall, five years have passed between both studies and the different cultural backgrounds of both countries and various degree of masculinity of the brand influenced the outcomes. Therefore, this research updates and enriches previous literature in the field of masculine brand gender bending by using femvertising, an emerging communication strategy presented in the next chapter.

2.2 Femvertising

The following chapter presents literature of the last years on the newly emerged concept of femvertising. First, societal changes leading to femvertising are discussed and more detailed definitions of the concept are given. Then, the effectiveness of this communication strategy is

presented with the literature on purchase intention. Finally, the influences of femvertising on consumers' brand gender perceptions are discussed to progressively link the two literature stream of brand gender and femvertising.

2.2.1 Societal Changes Leading to Femvertising

As elaborated on in the previous part, females were and still are displayed in a disadvantaged and deprived stereotypical role in advertisements. Yet, gender stereotyping changed, following societal developments when female empowerment and liberation occurred from the 1960s and earlier based on feminism (Becker-Herby, 2016). This said feminism is defined as “the advocacy of women’s rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes” (Oxford dictionary, 2019b). Gill’s (2008a) work on commodity feminism is one of the first to try to bridge the gap between feminism and advertising. Here, she defined commodity feminism as “the way feminist ideas and icons are appropriated for commercial purposes, emptied of their political significance and offered back to the public in a commodified form – usually in advertising” (Gill, 2008a, p.1). Advertising was seen as the source of sexist imagery of women by feminists, supporting objectification and submissiveness to be visually consumed. As female employment rose, women earned money and presented a new customer base for companies. Therefore, from the end of the 1980s, marketers recognized the importance of women as consumers and the illusionary depiction of female stereotypes in advertising. Hence, marketers tried to incorporate “the cultural power and energy of feminism while simultaneously domesticating its critique of advertising and the media” (Gill, 2008a, p.1).

The rise of feminism and its following changes in family structures and labour force led to significant variation in both male and female roles and, following, how they were shown in advertising (Grau & Zotos, 2016). In light of this, Drake (2017) stated that there has been an increase in positive messages targeted to females, who now have more economic and political power, although there are still many advertisements showing women in stereotypical roles. Despite these positive developments, the majority of advertising still shows stereotypical depictions of both male and female roles (Dobscha, 2019). Hence, Zimmermann and Dahlberg argue (2008) that “modern women who have grown accustomed to offensive or stereotypical advertisements do not think that the portrayal of their gender is realistic” (cited in Drake, 2017, p.593). A study published by Gill (2008b) analysed empowerment and sexism of women in contemporary advertising and recognized three figures of contemporary constructions of female sexual agency. These figures described as “the young, heterosexually desiring ‘midriff’, the vengeful woman set on punishing her partner or ex-partner for his transgressions, and the ‘hot lesbian’, almost always entwined with her beautiful other or double” (Gill, 2008b, p.35) show that female empowerment happened but is still related to sexism. Overall, it clarifies that “gender stereotyping in advertising still prevails despite the change in the roles of men and women over the years” (Knoll, Eisend & Steinhagen, 2011, p.867).

2.2.2 The Concept of Femvertising

Resulting from the previously discussed societal changes, brand gender bending practices and the rise of feminism, the term femvertising is discussed in the following. As it is a rather new field of marketing, little literature exists in regard to its terminology. The term femvertising was officially introduced in 2014 (SheKnows Media, 2016) and was defined as “advertising that employs pro-female talent, messages, and imagery to empower women and girls” by SheKnows Media (2016). Becker-Herby (2016) further explained femvertising as an answer or backlash to commodity feminism, an advertising practice defined earlier. She also stated that Crouse-Dick (2002), perhaps unknowingly or not, anticipated “that advertising has the potential to be a form of female empowerment” (cited in Becker-Herby, 2016, p.17). Abitbol and Sternadori (2019) described femvertising as a communication strategy, which reflects certain advances for women to achieve equality in different aspects of life. Furthermore, Åkestam, Rosengren, and Dahlen (2017) defined femvertising as the use of contemporary advertising to challenge traditional female stereotypes commonly used in advertising. Although traditional stereotypes were altered and liberalized in various forms since the 1960’s femvertising pioneers in questioning the creation as well as reinforcement of female stereotypes in advertising and focuses on self-awareness (Becker-Herby, 2016). Proactively challenging stereotypes to achieve gender equality with femvertising, therefore, is “a major change in the way brands advertise” (Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017, p.796). Thus, advertising is now based on feminist empowerment used to encourage women to confidently take control and responsibility for their identity and choices (Alcoff, 1988).

In his meta-analysis of 64 studies concerning gender roles in TV and radio advertising, Eisend (2010) argued that advertising usually reflects rather than challenges social norms and particularly motivates traditional female stereotypes. Therefore, changes in society were rather not motivated by advertising, leading to female portrayals in advertising that tend to lag behind current changes in society (Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017). Due to the negative consequences of stereotypical advertisements mentioned earlier, it became a social objective and a central concern in gender policy to avert stereotypes and focus on “achieving equal life opportunities for all genders in different spheres of life” (Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017, p.796) such as income and career. Thus, femvertising evolved from these objectives and influenced brands to take an active stand for gender equality and to change their advertised gender roles (Grau & Zotos, 2016). The positive development of female roles in society has also made women more open towards marketing representing their desires (Sivulka, 2009). Yet, Drake (2017) highlighted that marketers have not yet accomplished an accurate picture of their target audiences in advertising but should do so, as it would lead to a better relationship with their consumers and improve brand attitudes.

Overall, femvertising campaigns share similar characteristics. In her paper about authentically reaching female consumers through femvertising, Becker-Herby (2016) identified five pillars or characteristics that are embraced by most femvertising campaigns. These are (1) utilisation of diverse female talent, (2) messaging that is inherently pro-female, (3) pushing gender-norm boundaries/stereotypes; challenging perceptions of what a woman/girl ‘should’ be, (4)

downplaying of sexuality; sexuality that does not cater to the male gaze, and (5) portraying women in an authentic manner. Hereby, Becker-Herby (2016) emphasised authenticity as key when using a femvertising communication strategy.

Next to the presented positive effects of femvertising on female empowerment and a brand's success, some criticism evolved concerning capitalism and related consumption practices, which are stimulated by femvertising (Becker-Herby, 2016; Hunt, 2017; Monllos, 2015). SheKnows Media argued that brands are not NGO's and therefore aim to increase sales through female empowerment advertising to serve business clients' objectives (Monllos, 2015). Becker-Herby (2016) further highlighted the diminishing effort of feminism as a political and social movement, reducing its influence on fighting structural inequalities, when feminist ideals are used for financial gains. Femvertising is further described as a capitalistic drive that made feminist researchers see this trend as a new form of commodity feminism (Becker-Herby, 2016). Likewise, Hunt (2017) shared similar claims by stating "women literally buy into feminist rhetoric, and feel empowered by consumption and well-crafted advertising campaigns rather than viewing consumerist culture as a distraction from the fight for tangible political change" (p.26). Despite the remarkable support for this issue, the author also raised the argument that capitalism cannot be separated from feminism, making those concepts inextricably linked.

2.2.3 The Consequences of Femvertising

As the field of femvertising research emerged within the last years, only a few studies examine the effectiveness and effects of this practice. Especially experimental research answering the question of the effectiveness of traditionally opposed to non-traditionally gendered, so femvertising, advertisements is scarce and gives a mixed picture (Dobscha, 2019).

First of all, Åkestam, Rosengren, and Dahlen (2017) focused on physical characteristics and roles as well as occupations of women in advertising by conducting three experimental studies on print and digital media in Europe. In five different product categories, ad reactance and brand attitudes were tested with a female and male sample. Findings indicated that "femvertising generates lower levels of ad reactance than traditional advertising and that this, in turn, leads to higher ad and brand attitudes" (Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017, p.802). It was therefore confirmed that challenging traditional female stereotypes in advertising can pay off for marketers and brands. Yet, the authors argued that the effects depend on consumers perception of stereotypical depictions used in the advertisement and that marketers could benefit from more proactively and mindfully approaching female depictions in advertising.

Furthermore, Drake's (2017) research on (non-)traditional advertisement of a feminine-gendered FMCG brand evaluated the effectiveness of femvertising from a marketing perspective. The study on female Millennials tested ad opinion, brand opinion, impact on brand opinion, purchase intention, the brand fits, self-image, and brand is like a companion. In all categories, the means for femvertising advertisements were higher than traditional

advertisements, showing the “positive impact on ad and brand opinions, purchase intentions, and emotional connection to brands” (Drake, 2017, p.593). These findings support previous studies, which showed that most women have purchased a product because the ad featured a favourable portrayal of women (SheKnows Media, 2016). However, femvertising does not have a positive influence on the perceptions of female consumer’s on gender role portrayal (Drake, 2017). Similarly, Karulkar et al. (n.d.) studied femvertising and its impact on the buying behaviour of female consumers in India. Results showed that “consumers exposed to femvertising ads have a higher purchase intention, enhanced brand equity, increased persuasiveness towards the ad and positive self-referencing as compared to those exposed to non-femvertising ads of the same brand” (Karulkar et al. n.d. p.2).

Supporting the previous studies, Kapoor and Munjal (2017) researched the influence of self-consciousness and emotions on women’s attitude towards femvertising, forwarding intention and purchase intention in India. Indeed, it was found that women’s attitude towards femvertising is influenced by their private and public self-consciousness. Overall, a positive attitude towards femvertising motivates women to share these advertisements with friends and family. However, it was found that positive attitudes towards femvertising do not influence purchase intention (Kapoor & Munjal, 2017). This finding does contradict previous studies (Drake, 2017; Karulkar et al. n.d.), which confirmed a higher purchase intention after a femvertising commercial was seen by participants.

However, a higher purchase intention as a consequence of femvertising from a corporate social responsibility (CSR) perspective was qualitatively proven by Abitbol and Sternadori (2019), which showed that authenticity, the right company-cause fit and a solid communication strategy can be effective in driving sales. Yet, the study also delivered mixed results on pro-female messages for three differently gendered brands. Interesting in this sense is that the perceived effectiveness of femvertising in changing attitudes towards the product or brand presented different results among men and women. Whereas women showed an increased positive attitude toward some brands, there was no reported change for the same measurement for men (Abitbol & Sternadori, 2019). This can be related back to brand-gender bending studies, which found that men, the historically dominant gender, felt intimidated when women entered their customer group after being targeted by previously masculine brands (Avery, 2012; Sandhu, 2017). As Abitbol und Sternadori (2019) also showed commercials of traditionally masculine brands to men and women, this might be an explanation of the differences between both sexes.

Based on Avery (2012) as well as Sandhu and Singh (2017), it can be assumed that femvertising creates similar consequences on consumer’s perceived brand gender as the practice of brand-gender bending. As Sandhu (2018) confirmed, gender cues in advertising are influencing the perceived gender identity of the advertised product and brand. She also found that men and women have different perceptions of the same influence (Sandhu, 2018). Similarly, Frieden (2013) and also Jung (2006) argued that women have a more positive attitude towards brand gender-bending as well as the brand itself, and a greater perception of the overall fit since they stick less to traditional gender roles. Already in 1986, Debevec and Iyer stated that a progressive role portrayal, meaning a differently gendered spokesperson than the product itself, is more

appreciated by respondents. Hence, their study supported the effectiveness of changing a brand's gender through advertising (Debevec & Iyer, 1986). Historically, traditional gender stereotypes were used to give brands a gender. Based on the previous literature on brand-gender bending and femvertising, it can be assumed that a brand's gender might change under the influence of femvertising.

2.3 Chapter Summary and Conceptual Framework

Our study is positioned within the literature stream of brand gender and advertising, more specifically traditional advertising and femvertising. We, therefore, aim to study the influence of femvertising in comparison to traditional advertising on attitude towards the ad, brand gender perception, and purchase intention of a traditionally masculine gendered brand within the high-involvement purchase category. Doing so, the relationship between those four concepts is further analysed.

Previously established literature in the field of brand gender as a part of brand personality has shown that assigning masculine or feminine traits to a brand is a common practice in marketing to attract a specific target group, increase favourable attitudes towards the ad, and generally increase sales. Scholars also confirmed that having a distinct brand gender helps brands to increase brand equity. When this brand gender is communicated via advertising, stereotypical gender roles are often portrayed, which historically lag behind realistic societal standards. Consequently, men have mostly been portrayed as the dominant and women as the subordinate gender. Yet, society is progressively evolving, and the rise of gender equality movements as well as blurring lines of gender dichotomies have challenged these portrayals and paved the way for non-traditional advertising and brand gender bending. More specifically, brands, which were originally masculine or feminine gendered, have opened their domain to the opposite sex and started using non-traditional gender portrayals in their advertising. These non-traditional gender portrayals show women in liberalised and empowered roles to achieve gender equality, which has resulted in a new communication strategy - femvertising or also called female empowerment advertising. Although this field of research is new and thus scarce, femvertising has been recognized as a successful communication strategy not only for brands but also to empower women in society. Still, the effectiveness of femvertising in the context of high-involvement purchases was not researched intensively. Also, the consequences of femvertising on the gender perception of originally masculine gendered brands are unknown. In order to enrich the recently emerging field of femvertising literature with findings regarding the brand gender perspective as well as the high-involvement product category, several hypotheses have been formed, which are presented in the following section.

2.3.1 Femvertising and Attitudes towards the Ad

The aim of creating favourable attitudes towards the ad is to leave consumers with a positive feeling after seeing the ad, focusing on emotions instead of rationales (Shimp, 1981). Åkestam, Rosengren, and Dahlen (2017), Kapoor and Munjal as well as Drake (2017) investigated the effects of femvertising on attitude towards the ad. All studies discovered a positive change in attitude towards the ad for femvertising in comparison to traditional advertising. To be more concrete, the studies focused on stimuli from the FMCG sector and addressed female students from the European business school (Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017), Indian women living in Delhi (Kapoor & Munjal, 2017) or female Millennials from the United States (Drake, 2017). Moreover, all authors have found similar explanations for their findings. For instance, Drake (2017) suggested that a stronger emotional and positive response towards the ad can be explained by the fact that women can identify themselves better with the shown femvertising than with traditional advertising. By further extent, Åkestam, Rosengren, and Dahlen (2017) stated that femvertising is perceived as less stereotypical than traditional advertising, which leads to a more favourable attitude towards the ad. Following from these findings, we acknowledge that femvertising has a positive impact on attitude towards the ad for FMCGs. In order to further support this argument also for high-involvement purchases, the first research hypothesis is formulated as follows:

RH1: Femvertising has a positive impact on attitude towards the ad.

2.3.2 Femvertising and Brand Gender Perception

Previous literature review has emphasised the importance of a distinct brand gender to increase brand equity (Lieven, 2018). Yet, societal changes have questioned the need for a distinct masculine or feminine brand gender and brand gender bending practices as well as femvertising emerged (Avery, 2012; Jung, 2006; Sandhu, 2017; Sandhu & Singh, 2017; Tuncay & Otnes, 2008; Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Frieden, 2013). As the effects of femvertising on brand gender were only tested to a very limited extent, previous literature on spokesperson in advertising and on brand gender bending was considered to further support this hypothesis.

Here, Till and Priluck (2001) argued that brands use masculine/feminine imagery or spokesperson in advertising to give brands a personality and gender. Furthermore, the authors also stated that advertising can impact the brand gender perception and here, especially self-identification of a consumer within the advertisement can lead to brand preferences. Based on this, one could assume that when changing the traditionally used gender depictions in advertising, such as in femvertising, the originally masculine gendered brand becomes more feminine. This is in line with Åkestam, Rosengren, and Dahlen (2017), who argued that femvertising can challenge gender stereotypes and thereby also brand gender perception. In this sense, Avery (2012) proved that Porsche altered its extremely masculine brand gender when launching the Porsche Cayenne, a rather feminine advertised sport utility vehicle (SUV) that was rejected by men, who fought for the car brand seen as a masculine identity marker.

Furthermore, Sandhu and Sing (2017) showed the “change in participants’ construction of gender identity meanings of the car” (p.139) and the purchase intention after seeing differently gendered ads of the Datsun Go car. More specifically, it was proven that the gender identity of the brand becomes more masculine when showing male exclusive ads or more feminine when showing female exclusive ads (Sandhu & Singh, 2017). Based on this, we assume that consumers perceive a traditional male brand as less masculine or in other words more feminine after watching a femvertising ad as a form of non-traditional advertising. With this said, there is a lack of research examining the influences of femvertising on brand gender perception. Thus, the second research hypothesis tests if the brand gender perception after being exposed to femvertising becomes more feminine and is formulated as follows:

RH2: Femvertising generates a feminine perceived brand gender.

2.3.3 Femvertising and Purchase Intention

Throughout the literature, many scholars have proven the positive effect of femvertising on purchase intention within the FMCG sector as already stated earlier (Abitbol & Sternadori, 2019; Drake, 2017; Karulkar et al. n.d.; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017; Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017). Similarly to 2.3.1 *Femvertising and Attitude towards the Ad*, researchers suggested that by displaying the image of a modern woman without the usage of any stereotypes and thereby actively supporting gender equality, women are more willing to buy the brand. In addition, Kapoor and Munjal (2017) studied not only the effect of femvertising on purchase intention but also on forwarding intention of ad. Yet, it was found that a positive attitude towards femvertising does influence women’s forwarding intention but does not lead to purchase intent. This is explained by the author’s suggestion that women are more educated and rational within their decision-making nowadays and therefore can generally be less influenced through advertisement of any type. In order to further enrich previous findings on the effectiveness of femvertising on purchase intention for products of the high-involvement purchase category, the third research hypothesis is as follows:

RH3: Femvertising has a positive impact on purchase intention.

2.3.4 Brand Gender Perception and Attitude towards the Ad on Purchase Intention

The fourth research hypothesis builds upon the assumption that RH1 and RH3 are accepted, meaning that femvertising generates a positive attitude towards the ad and a feminine perceived brand gender. Consequently, attitude towards the ad and brand gender are seen as mediating concepts between femvertising and purchase intention, as literature has previously proven the importance of both concepts, which can be manipulated through the type of advertisement shown. A brief overview of both concepts and their effect on purchase intention is provided below.

Firstly, much literature exists that emphasises the importance of attitude towards the ad in regard to purchase intention (Shimp, 1981; Bartos, 1980; Ward, 1974). In this sense, Shimp (1981) confirmed that brand attitudes, purchase intentions and even purchase behaviour are strongly influenced by consumers' attitudes toward the ad. Yet, many scholars used attitude towards the ad as a mediator and prove only indirect effects on purchase intention (MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986; Spears & Singh, 2004; Shimp, 1981). In the context of femvertising Kapoor and Munjal (2017) measured women's attitudes towards female empowerment advertising and its effect on purchase intention with the emotional quotient scale by Wells (1964) and two questions examining intentions of purchasing the product advertised. No significant relationship was found between those concepts, showing that women "having positive attitude towards femvertising may not have preference for the respective brand just because of advertisement" (Kapoor & Munjal, 2017, p.12).

Secondly, reviewing the literature has also shown the relevance of the congruence between brand gender and the consumer's gender to increase sales (Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Avery, 2012; Grohmann, 2009; Lieven et al. 2014; Till & Priluck, 2001; Worth, Smith, & Mackie, 1992). More specifically, the early work of Alreck, Settle, and Belch (1982) showed that consumers prefer products of a brand congruent with their own gender. By assigning masculine or feminine brand names and designs to neutral products, the authors proved the effectiveness of a brand's gender to generate purchase intentions of the according target group. Moreover, the study of Bellizzi and Milner (1991) about automobile repair service advertisement supported these findings. After showing either masculine, feminine or neutral image to consumers, it was proven that women preferred the feminine and men the masculine ad or brand (Bellizzi & Milner, 1991). Finally, Worth, Smith, and Mackie (1992), as well as Till and Priluck (2001), found similar results on the congruence between the customer's gender and the brand's gender to drive purchase intentions. Since femvertising typically shows non-traditional female stereotypes and empowers women in superior roles, we assume that a brand's gender also becomes more feminine as discussed in the previous section. Consequently, the importance of attitude towards the ad and brand gender as mediators and their effect on purchase intention was shown. Therefore, the fourth and last research hypothesis has to be:

RH4: When a brand gender is perceived as feminine and the attitude towards the ad is positive, then purchase intention is higher.

Concluding the literature review and summarising the formulated research hypotheses, the following conceptual framework was established.

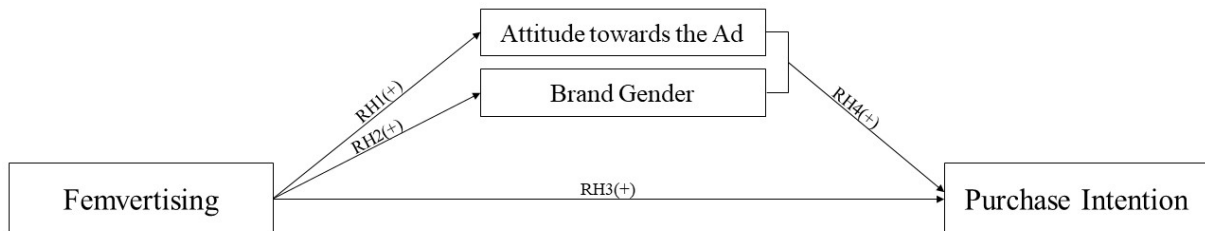


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

3 Methodology

The methodological approach of this study is closer explained in the following. Overall, several concepts are considered, starting with the research philosophy. Then, a detailed description of the research design is presented, which consequently leads to the establishment of the questionnaire. Moreover, also the data collection method is described as well as the degree to which this study is valid and reliable. Lastly, the plan of data analysis is introduced, which directly connects the methodology part with the following analysis section.

3.1 Research Philosophy

To begin with, a researcher's philosophical position strongly influences the aim of a study as well as the choice of a suitable research design (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Hence, elaborating on the philosophical stance of the researcher, in the beginning, is of high importance as it serves as a base for the study. Here, philosophical debates concern matters of ontology, defined as "the nature of reality and existence" (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015, p.46) and epistemology, described as "set of assumptions about way of inquiring into the nature of the world" (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015, p.47). The following sections explain why internal realism as ontological stance and positivism as epistemology were suitable selections for this study.

Based on the research questions presented earlier, we are interested in testing cause-and-effect relationships found in the context of femvertising (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). More specifically, we seek to determine the direct effects of femvertising in comparison to traditional advertising on attitude towards the ad, brand gender perception and purchase intention. Then, we intend to study the indirect effects of attitude towards the ad and brand gender, previously influenced by either femvertising or traditional advertising, on purchase intention.

Due to the nature of cause-and-effect relationships, this study can be described as conclusive research and with a quantitative nature (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). Thus, a deductive approach is employed for this study which is reflected in the set-up of the conceptual framework (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Here, previous literature and empirical findings in the field of femvertising and traditional advertising, as well as the concept of attitude towards the ad, brand gender and purchase intention, are used to deduce hypotheses, which will be empirically tested (Bryman & Bell, 2011). These concepts are operationalised and reduced into the simplest possible elements

(Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Following from this, it clarifies that we believe in the objective existence of these concepts and casualties. Furthermore, it is assumed that femvertising, attitude towards the ad, brand gender, and purchase intention exist independently of the researcher and are treated as real phenomena. Although facts exist, it may be difficult to access or measure them directly (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). In order to overcome this, data collection techniques, such as surveys, are used that enable individuals to express their internal attitudes and intentions. Here, we believe that it is possible to access and measure the previously discussed concepts and translate them into quantitatively measurable data. Finally, these statistical tests and related findings allow us to confirm or reject our hypotheses (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Overall, these choices and considerations reflect the choice of an internal realist ontology and a positivist epistemology.

3.2 Research Design

The research design is referred to as the overall framework of a research project by specifying the details of the research procedure. As shortly discussed earlier, research design can be broadly subdivided into two classifications, namely exploratory and conclusive (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). As the latter aims to examine relationships by testing hypotheses, it is considered to be the best fitting approach for this study. In the following, all elements building the study's research design are shortly elaborated on.

3.2.1 Experimental Research Design

The nature and characteristics of the relationship and thereby the information needed to gather defines the research design method (Burns & Burns, 2008). Hence, an experimental research design was chosen for this study as it explores the cause-and-effect relationship best (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Malhotra & Birks, 2003). Furthermore, experimental studies were considered to be the most effective when comparing causal hypotheses (Mutz, 2011). Within an experimental research design, the independent variable (IV), in this case the type of advertising (femvertising/traditional advertising), was manipulated to investigate the effect on the dependent variable (DV) in this case purchase intention (Burns & Burns, 2008; Bryman & Bell, 2011). To do so, a treatment was introduced, which can manipulate the IV and can cause measurable effects or changes (Burns & Burns, 2008). Overall, many forms of experimental studies exist. Hence, the concept of true experimental studies was relevant for this study, since the researcher randomly assigned the treatment to experimental groups (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). Therefore, it was necessary to form at least two groups, namely the experimental and the control group. Here, the experimental group received the treatment whereas the control group did not. In other words, the control group can be referred to as control condition or benchmark to which the experimental group results can be compared. By comparing two groups the research design is typically called between groups (Burns & Burns, 2008). In general, the performance of

treatment can either be evaluated through a pre- and post-treatment testing or only through a post-treatment performance measurement. Mutz (2011) stated, that pre- and post-treatment testing are most commonly used within-group testing, but when the comparison of performance within between groups is in focus, such as in this study, a post-control performance is considered. On this basis, we chose a random independent group design (Burns & Burns, 2008) as most suitable one, which concentrated on comparing the results of control and experimental group while neglecting a pre-test (Malhotra & Birks, 2003).

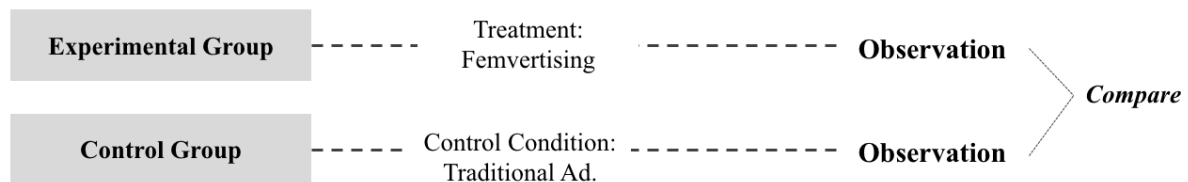


Figure 3.1: Experimental Research Design for this Study (based on Burns & Burns, 2008)

Figure 3 highlights the experimental research design for this study. The experimental group received the manipulated independent variable, so the femvertising TV spot, whereas a traditional TV spot of the same brand was shown to the control group as control condition. After the treatment, the observations of both groups were compared. Important to note is that all participants were randomly assigned to one group.

3.2.2 Sampling

In a first step during the sampling process, the target population was designed. On this basis, a sampling frame and a sampling technique were decided on, and finally, a suitable sample size was determined (Malhotra & Birks, 2003).

Target Population

The target population, or sometimes referred to as the population of interest, was formed by elements that were relevant for the researcher and consequently responded to the research needs (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). Considering this, the target population for this research was formed by the following key criteria.

- Age: 20-29 years
- Gender: Female
- Country: Sweden
- Profession: Students
- Driver's license: yes
- Brand Awareness for Audi
- Active on Social Media

Young Professionals in the age of 20 to 29 were chosen as they represent part of the millennial generation and are driving societal change in the direction of gender blurring and female empowerment. Moreover, only women were considered for this study as they are most affected by femvertising and we were interested in seeing if and how their gender perception of the originally male gender brand will change. Sweden was decided as the location of research as the country is generally known to be very developed and modern in regards to gender equality. In order for the study to be relevant for the participants, a driver's license and brand awareness of the brand Audi were criteria for participation in this survey. Finally, participants must be active on social media since Facebook served as the distribution medium of the questionnaire.

Sampling Frame

Based on the identified target population, a sampling frame was set up. This sampling frame consisted of a list of Lund University students, who met the target population characteristics. To be more concrete, the Facebook group list *MSc International Marketing & Brand Management* and *Lund University Students* were used as a basis, upon which suitable respondents fulfilling the criteria were selected and personally addressed through Facebook messenger. Here, we aimed to increase the response rate by addressing each potential respondent personally. The participants randomly received either the experimental or the control group questionnaire.

Sampling Technique

Considering the target population elements as well as the determined sampling frame, we used a non-probability sampling technique by selecting the respondents in a non-random way (Burns & Burns, 2008). Here, the sampling was built upon the personal judgement of the researchers, who consciously decided which elements to include (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). Furthermore, we decided to use the non-probability sampling technique of convenience sampling. Convenience sampling, also called opportunity sampling, is the most accessible sampling technique (Burns & Burns, 2008). Basically, the most accessible members of the target population falling under the criteria were approached (Wilson, 2006). Although there are many critics of this technique, Wilson (2006) clarified that convenience sample can produce useful information when the selected sample is reasonable.

Sample Size

In general, the central limit theorem illustrates that a sample should at least entail 30 members in order to enable a normal distribution (Burns & Burns, 2008), which is needed to conduct the planned analysis. Therefore, we decided upon a sample size of $n > 30$ for each group. Overall, the goal was to acquire a minimum sample size of at least 120 respondents, which equalled a sample size of 60 per group. To be more concrete, it was aimed to collect 30 respondents for the two age groups 20-24 years and 25-29 years from the target population.

3.3. Questionnaire

3.3.1 Specification of Information Needed

While constructing the questionnaire, several variables, which are a reflection of the concept on a measurable level, had to be included (Burns & Burns, 2008). The specific information needed are stated below.

Table 3.1: Specification of Information Needed

Variable	Specification of information
Demographic information	Age, sex, country of residence and driver's license are the demographic information of interest for this study in order to ensure that respondents belong to the target population.
Brand Awareness	The awareness of the brand is tested before exposing the respondent to the stimuli. For this purpose, awareness is referred to as the knowledge of the brand.
Femvertising (IV)	Advertising and communication strategies that empower women by employing pro-female messages and imagery to promote gender equality in all aspects of life.
Traditional Advertising (IV)	Traditional advertising refers to an advertisement which pictures traditional gender roles (a dominant, working male gender and a rather subordinated women at home caring for children).
Brand Gender (MV)	Brand gender, as part of brand personality, is seen as one key characteristic as consumers can easily relate to it. Thus, brand gender is a driver for brand equity and thereby also for purchase intention.
Attitude towards the Ad (MV)	Consumer's feelings and opinions of the ad they just saw.
Purchase Intention (DV)	Purchase intention measures the consumer's intention to buy a certain brand or product.

3.3.2 Questionnaire Design

Further elaborating on the previous section and the identified information needed, the different variables were then translated into a questionnaire. In order to test the hypotheses, variables had to be measured. This was done by operationalization the different concepts (Burns & Burns, 2008). Naturally, these items had to be carefully chosen in order to accurately measure the underlying concept (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). All variables were translated into measurable items. An explanation about the questionnaire flow, the measurement as well as scaling technique for each variable is provided below.

	Knock-out criterion	Treatment/ Stimuli	Observation
Experimental Group	Demographics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Age ▪ Gender ▪ Country of residence ▪ Driver's license Brand Awareness	Treatment: Femvertising	Attitude towards the Ad Brand Gender Purchase Intention
Control Group	Demographics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Age ▪ Gender ▪ Country of residence ▪ Driver's license Brand Awareness	Control condition: Traditional Advertising	Attitude towards the Ad Brand Gender Purchase Intention

Figure 3.2: Overview of Questionnaire Design

Before the actual questionnaire began, an introduction that clearly defined the purpose of the research was stated. In addition, the reason to conduct the survey was clearly communicated as well as a short description on how to complete the survey and an estimate of the duration was stated, which was based on Burns and Burns (2008) recommendation in order to encourage the participants to complete the questionnaire. In the following, the different questionnaire sections, which were separated by a page within the questionnaire, are now chronologically explained in more detail. Please take a look at Appendix A for a complete overview of the questionnaire.

Demographic Information

In order to ensure that respondents fulfilled the target population characteristics, demographic information were checked in a first step. More specifically, the elements sex, age, country of residence and driver's license as well as the brand awareness of the brand Audi were asked. For all types of questions closed questions were used, where the respondents had the possibility to choose from a predefined list of answers (Wilson, 2006). This consequently led to nominal values. Important to note is that several criteria were considered as knock-out criteria. These were: male respondents, respondents younger than 20 years or older than 30 years old, respondents without a driver's license and respondents who were not aware of the brand Audi. When selecting these criteria, respondents immediately ended the survey. In the next step and after receiving the treatment, either femvertising or traditional advertising, the respondents were asked to rate their attitude towards the ad, brand gender perception, as well as purchase intention. All these questions were formulated in Likert scales, which is a measurement scale, where respondents can rank between strongly disagree and strongly agree to the following statement (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). Originally developed by Reniks Likert in 1932, the scale enables to form total scores about the respondent's favourable or unfavourable attitude towards subjects and overall brand gender perception (Wilson, 2006).

Mediating Variable: Attitude towards the Ad

Similar to Kapoor and Munjal's (2017) study, we decided to use the emotional quotient scale defined by Wells (1964) to measure consumers' attitude towards the ad. The scale is built upon descriptive statements consumers made about a shown advertisement, which has been tested several times to generate validity. The scale differentiates between high and low emotional appeals towards advertisement and consists of 12 statements, of which six statements are of negative and the remaining six are of positive nature, which is illustrated below.

Table 3.2: Emotional Quotient Scale Statements adapted from Wells (1964)

Favourable statements	Unfavourable statements
This ad is very appealing to me. This is a heart-warming ad. This ad makes me want to buy the brand it features. This ad makes me feel good. This is a wonderful ad. This is a fascinating ad.	I would probably skip this ad when it appears on TV. This ad has little interest for me. I dislike this ad. This is the kind of ad you forget easily. I'm tired of this kind of advertising This ad leaves me cold.

The statements are measured within a 7-point Likert scale, strongly agree (7) to strongly disagree (1), within this study. As we aim to explore the positive attitude towards the ad, the unfavourable statements are measured reversed, strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (7). In addition, it is important to note that we have adjusted the first negative statement as the original statement by Wells (1964) was 'I would probably skip this ad when featured in a magazine' and amended it to 'I would probably skip this ad when it appears on TV' again similar to Kapoor and Munjal (2017), to meet the purpose of this study.

Mediating Variable: Brand Gender

The mediation variable brand gender is measured in two different ways. First, through Grohmann's scale of brand gender femininity or masculinity perception and second, through a direct question asking for the respondent subjective opinion on brand gender perception as rather masculine or feminine. Both are further explained in the following.

Brand Gender Scale

Although there are several scales to measure the personality of a brand (Aaker, 1997), only Grohmann (2009) identified specific characteristics which classify brands as either feminine or masculine. As already introduced within the literature review, Grohmann (2009) developed a two-dimensional scale, validated through seven studies, which is able to measure the extent to which a brand is associated to as masculine or feminine. With this scale, the perception of a brands masculinity or femininity can be measured, but it can also be used as a tool to identify the current positioning of a brand or discover possible reposition strategies while comparing it with competitors. The scale was developed by testing a list of 72 items. Through exploratory as well as confirmatory factor analysis, Grohmann (2009) discovered the following six feminine and masculine adjectives describing a brand:

Masculine characteristics: Adventurous, Aggressive, Brave, Daring, Dominant, Sturdy

Feminine characteristics: Express tender feelings, Fragile, Graceful, Sensitive, Sweet, Tender

These items were tested through several studies to generate generalizability of the scale across brands from utilitarian and symbolic product categories. Other researchers have also used the scale within their research, such as Lieven (2018), as a way to explore the relationship between brand gender and brand equity. Similar to his research design, we again used a 7-point Likert scale in this study to measure the brand gender perception, where strongly agree (7) and strongly disagree (1) is accounted for the feminine items and strongly agree (1) and strongly disagree (7) for the masculine items. This reversion is due to the fact that this study aims to explore the overall degree of feminine brand gender perception.

Brand Gender Index

As already indicated in the literature review *2.1.4 Criticism on Brand Gender*, Grohmann's (2009) scale might not be applicable in post-modernity as it is built upon outdated gender roles and stereotypes. Therefore, a test question was created to directly ask the respondent's subjective opinion about the brand's gender. Here, the left anchor variable is called 'masculine' and the right anchor variable is 'feminine', displayed again on a 7-point scale. The result of this question is referred to as brand gender index in this study.

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Broadly said, a purchase intention scale is used to identify the consumer's intention to buy a certain product. Here, a straightforward scaling technique is most commonly used, which directly asks the consumer's subjective judgment on a potential purchase decision (Wilson, 2006). Out of several scales used to measure purchase intention, we decided on Juster's scale due to the following reasons. Day, Gan, Gendall, and Esslemont (1991) highly recommended considering Juster's (1996) scale as an appropriate assessment tool to measure future purchase intention, especially for cars. Also, Juster (1966) found that his scale is most accurate to predict car purchase compared to normal household goods. Therefore, we decided to use Juster's scale (1966) in this research study. The scale entailed eleven points, starting from 'certain probability' to buy the product (10) in the future to 'no chance' (0) to buy the product or brand in the future. The complete scale was build up in the following way:

- 10 - Certain, practically certain
- 9 - Almost sure
- 8 - Very probable
- 7 - Probable
- 6 - Good possibility
- 5 - Fairly, good possibility
- 4 - Fair possibility
- 3 - Some possibility
- 2 - Slight possibility
- 1 - Very slight possibility
- 0 - No chance, almost no chance

Within the questionnaire, the two anchor labels ‘certain’ and ‘no chance’, as well as the middle value of ‘fairly good possibility’ (5) were displayed, which is commonly done in scaling questions (Wilson, 2006).

3.3.3 Experimental Stimuli

As previously stated, two different kinds of stimuli were used in this study, namely femvertising and traditional advertising. This study aims to especially discover the effect of femvertising on originally masculine gendered brands within the higher involvement purchase section. A product category perfectly suitable for these criteria is the automotive industry. Several reasons are given on why car brands and more precisely Audi was selected for this study. First of all, cars are symbols of masculinity (Avery, 2012) and might probably be the first product thought of when thinking of male-dominant products (Gentry, Doering, & O’Brien, 1978). Audi can be considered a strongly masculine brand as argued by Lieven et al. (2014). It was found that out of 140 tested brands from different industries, Audi is one of the brands with the highest brand awareness and strongest perceived masculine brand gender (Lieven et al. 2014). This consumer perception evolved due to the stereotypical depiction of men and subordinated women in advertisements of the company. But most importantly, Audi has demonstrated a change in its communication strategy by using femvertising as a message to empower women within the company and also within society in general. This is in line with Hatzithomas, Boutsouki, and Ziamou (2016), who highlighted the development of stereotypically marked advertisement shown during the Super Bowl, previously described. Furthermore, Drake (2017) described Audi’s Super Bowl advertising 2017 as a perfect example of femvertising and also as one of the first in the high-involvement purchase category. Therefore, it was decided to use two different Audi TV spots as stimuli, which were both shown during the Super Bowl in different years. In the following, the different themes of both advertisements are shortly described.

Treatment: Femvertising

Audi’s ‘Daughter’ advertising spot shown during the Super Bowl 2017 is one strong evidence that also originally masculine brands use femvertising as Drake (2017) indicated. The spot shows a little girl, who participates in a children car race and indirectly adopts behaviour traditionally associated with masculinity. While driving and fighting to overtake her male competition, the audience can listen to the thoughts of her father, who thinks about the inequality his daughter might face being ‘worth less than a boy’ and how to explain it to her. In the meantime, the daughter wins the race and her father happily picks her up. While walking to their Audi car, the father seems more optimistic and thinks ‘or maybe I’ll be able to tell her something different’ which is followed by a fade in which states ‘Audi America is committed to equal pay for equal work - Progress is for everyone’. The spot ends with showing how the new Audi S5 drives away. Please take a look at Appendix B for further information on the TV spot. Building upon the five pillars characterising femvertising defined by Becker-Herby (2016), one can say that all elements can be found within this advertisement.

Control condition: Traditional advertising stimuli

As a control condition, a traditional advertisement from Audi was shown which highlights typical masculine characteristics. To be more concrete, the decision was made for Audi's 'Prom Advertising', which was also shown during the Super Bowl in 2013. The protagonist in this advertisement is a high school boy, who is about to attend his prom on his own. In the beginning, he seems to be unmotivated to go alone, until his father hands him his Audi car keys. The fast car driving experience seems to change his attitude completely and girls are screaming at him when driving by. Once arrived at the prom location, the boy steps out of the car full of energy and determinedly walks into the prom and immediately kisses the prom queen without any questions. Following from this risky behaviour, a fight arises with her boyfriend. The next scene shows the boy screaming out of joy and driving the car, although his new black eye reveals that he has just been in a rumble. The spot ends with Audi's slogan 'Bravery. It's what defines us.' Please take a look at Appendix C for further details about the spot.

3.4 Data Collection Method

3.4.1 Web Survey

Based on the previously illustrated questionnaire design, two self-completion online surveys were established. Here, only the type of stimuli, either femvertising or traditional advertising, shown in the survey differed whereas everything else remained constant. As surveys allow for a range of questions format such as multiple choice or scale questions (Burns & Burns, 2008), they were the most suitable option for our study because the questions of our questionnaire were either close-ended or required a selection of options within a Likert scale. This is in line with Malhotra and Birks (2003) description of a typical survey, where most questions offer a range of predetermined responses from which the respondent can choose. In addition to that, online self-completion surveys are most commonly used for standard questionnaire and can be quickly distributed among the target population (Wilson, 2006).

We used the online tool SoSci Survey to collect the data. The tool enabled a random assignment of questionnaire types (traditional advertising and femvertising) while keeping an equal weighting between the two surveys and number of respondents. Also, the order of the twelve stated variables for attitude towards the ad and the twelve items of Grohmann's (2009) brand gender scale were randomly shuffled for each respondent to avoid any bias. In addition, an export of the final data set directly to SPSS was possible, which eliminated the risk of data entry errors (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015).

3.4.2 Pilot Study

The purpose of a pilot testing, or also called pre-testing, of a questionnaire is the improvement of the questionnaire by eliminating any possible problems (Malhotra & Birks, 2003; Grimm, 2010; Wilson, 2006). To be more concrete, Grimm (2010) argued that the objective of pretesting is to ensure that all questions accurately reflect the information needed. The respondents of a pilot testing should be part of the overall sample population and normally between 10 - 40 respondents are questioned (Wilson, 2006). Considering this, a pretest sample size of 15 was chosen from our target population. As Malhotra and Birks (2003) suggested, pilot testing is most successful when conducted through personal interviews. Hence, the pilot sample was exposed to the participants, who were personally asked questions about the survey structure. Based on Grimm (2010) suggested questions, the respondents were asked about the clarity of questions, the accurateness of answering options, willingness to answer each question, understanding of instructions, perception of potential bias within the formulation of questions, logical flow of questionnaire and if the duration to complete the survey feels reasonable. In addition, the overall perception of the questionnaire and additional comments or remarks were asked for. For a more detailed list of questions asked, please see Appendix D. Overall, we have received a positive reaction towards the questionnaire and especially the short duration was valued by the sample group. However, based on the feedback, slight adjustments in wording and question formulation were made in order to eliminate the risk of data collection error (Burns & Burns, 2008).

3.5 Reliability, Validity, and Error Prevention

3.5.1 Reliability

The extent to which a scale produces consistent results is referred to as reliability (Malhotra & Birks, 2003; Wilson, 2006). Since established scales were already tested in terms of validity and reliability, they are generally very beneficial to use (Bryman & Bell, 2011). However, we also measured the reliability of scales in the context of this study. Therefore, the Coefficient Alpha, or also called Cronbach Alpha's for the different scales was calculated. In order to ensure internal consistency reliability, a value of at least 0.6 or 0.7 for good acceptance has to be reached. Cronbach α for the first scale 'attitude towards the ad' equals 0.945 and for the second scale, Grohmann's (2009) brand gender scale, Cronbach α equals 0.836. Moreover, when grouping the feminine variables α is 0.702 and while grouping the masculine variables the Cronbach α is 0.856. Consequently, all scales' α values exceed the minimum of 0.6 and even surpass 0.7, signalling an internal consistency and therefore, reliability of the scale.

3.5.2 Validity

The concept of validity answers the questions “to what extent does the testing instrument actually measure the construct/concept/variable it purports to measure?” (Burns & Burns, 2008, p.426). To do so, it can be subdivided into two different groups: internal and external validity (Burns & Burns, 2008). Firstly, internal validity describes the degree to which the manipulation of the independent variable is actually caused by the dependent variable (Malhotra & Birks, 2003) and can be established by randomly assigning subjects to respondents and by choosing the research design of control versus experimental groups (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, internal validity is generally seen as very high for experimental design studies (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). Therefore, we argue that this study has a high internal validity. Secondly, external validity is concerned with the question whether the discovered cause-and-effect relationship can be generalised or not or whether the findings of this research can be generalised to the population (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). As we set up our experimental design in a controlled environment, Burns and Burns (2008) argue that in experimental design, studies are not able to reflect reality and therefore, no generalisation of study results is possible. Therefore, this study has poor external validity.

3.5.3 Type I and Type II Error

While testing the hypotheses, we have to prevent Type I and Type II error as good as possible. Hereby, type I error occurs when a null hypothesis is rejected although it is actually true (Burns & Burns, 2008). To minimise the probability to run into a Type I error, an appropriate alpha level had to be chosen (Pallant, 2016). The alpha level, or also called the level of significance, defines outcomes that are very unlikely. For this study, the level of significance was 5% ($p=0.05$), which is the highest level generally accepted for statistical significance (Burns & Burns, 2008) and therefore acknowledged as an appropriate level of significance for all analysis conducted. Type II error describes a situation, where we accept a null hypothesis despite the fact that it is actually false (Burns & Burns, 2008). To decrease the probability of Type II error, a larger sample size of 100 or more should be aimed for. Thereby, the power of the conducted tests can be increased, which decreases the chance for Type II errors (Pallant, 2016).

3.6 Plan of Data Analysis

3.6.1 Data Screening

Once the sample size was reached and all surveys were collected, the data set was exported. Here, the software SoSci survey enabled us to download a CSV file suitable for SPSS and already coded all variables. However, before the data set was imported, an editing process was

conducted where all gathered information were screened in order to increase accuracy and precision (Malhotra & Birks, 2003).

In a first step, we screened out all survey respondents who did not meet the criteria of our target population, respondents who cancelled the survey before reaching the last page or respondents who too quickly skipped the second page showing the ad. We received a total of 167 respondents from which 27 were not eligible and therefore removed from the data set. This led to a total sample size of 140, which surpassed the previously indicated minimum sample size of 120. In the next step, we checked the sample for equal distribution, which was ensured. This said we had an equal distribution between the experimental group and the control group of each 70 respondents. Furthermore, we also acknowledged an equal distribution between the control variable of each, leading to 35 respondents for age group 2 (20 - 24 years old) and age group 3 (25 - 30 years old) for each test group.

3.6.2 Data Preparation

Once the data set was imported into SPSS, further slight adjustments were taken before the first analyses were conducted with the data. To start, we created group variables for the experimental as well as the control group. Respondents who were exposed to the femvertising were part of group 0, whereas respondents who watched traditional advertisement were part of group 1. This made it possible to split the data file and compare the two groups directly with each other for each test. Furthermore, we created a grouped variables for attitude towards the ad in order to measure a total score of positive attitude towards the ad. Moreover, we also created a total score for the variable brand gender aiming to detect the total score for feminine perception. In addition, total scores for femininity as well as masculinity perception of the brand variable were created. Finally, all scales were tested for internal reliability by conducting the Cronbach Alpha test. As already stated within section 3.5.1 *Reliability*, all scales scored alpha values higher than the minimum of 0.6 and were therefore acknowledged as reliable. On this basis, it was possible to run the first descriptive test followed by testing the research hypotheses through independent t-tests and two-way ANOVA.

3.6.3 Preliminary Analysis

As previously touched upon, the total sample size equals 140 respondents. Here, all participants fulfilled the targets population criteria and were female, living in Sweden, current students, owning a driver's license as well as know the brand Audi. To be more concrete, the survey tool SoSci ensured equal distribution of respondents within the two tested groups as well as the two measured age groups 20-24 and 25-29 years. Further described statistics tests have shown the following results illustrated in table 3.3 for the experimental (femvertising) and in table 3.4 for the control group (traditional advertising).

Table 3.3: Descriptive Statistics Femvertising Group

Femvertising	Mean	St. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Minimum	Maximum
Attitude towards the Ad	61.99	12.587	-0.602	-0.138	27	83
Brand Gender Scale	47.46	10.356	-0.177	-0.347	22	67
Brand Gender Index	3.47	1.595	0.153	0.287	1	7
Purchase Intention	7.31	2.429	-0.298	-0.588	1	11

Table 3.4: Descriptive Statistics Traditional Advertising Group

Traditional Advertising	Mean	St. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Minimum	Maximum
Attitude towards the Ad	45.41	15.166	0.283	-0.738	19	80
Brand Gender Total score	35.76	8.596	-0.519	-0.343	12	60
Brand Gender Index	2.29	1.218	1.213	0.287	1	7
Purchase Intention	6.24	2.618	-0.133	-0.902	1	11

Lastly, through creating stem and leaf box plots, it can be stated that no outliers were found within the three tested variables attitudes towards the ad, brand gender and purchase intention.

3.6.4 Plan of Hypotheses Testing

Two different statistical tests were run to test the hypotheses, namely independent sample t-tests and two-way ANOVA, which are both further explained in the following. Firstly, to test the research hypotheses RH1 - RH3, independent sample t-tests were conducted. Independent sample t-tests are generally used to compare the mean score of two different groups (Pallant, 2016). However, before running the t-tests, we first needed to consider the assumptions that apply. This means that the correct level of measurement, independence of observation, normal distribution and homogeneity of variance had to be given to conduct the tests (Burns & Burns, 2008). Consequently, these assumptions were all checked and considered as fulfilled before answering research hypotheses RH1- RH3. Moreover, next to checking whether the mean differences were significant or not, also the effect size had to be calculated. The effect size, or also called the strength of associations, refers to the “degree to which the two variables are associated with one another” (Pallant, 2016, p.212). For this study, we used Cohen’s effect size conventions of 0.2 = small effect size, 0.5 = medium effect size and 0.8 = large effect size (Cohen, 1988).

Secondly, to test research hypothesis four a two-way between groups, also called factorial, ANOVA was conducted. Here, the necessary assumptions were that level of measurement, independent of observations, normal distribution and homogeneity of variance must be given to be able to run an ANOVA (Pallant, 2016). Therefore, all assumptions were checked and were seen as fulfilled for this study. A two-way ANOVA was conducted in order to test the main effects of independent variables attitude towards the ad and brand gender on purchase intention. In addition, we also explored whether an interaction effect of both variables exists. Preliminary

to testing the two-way ANOVA, the independent variable needed to be grouped internally. Thus, brand gender was grouped in either masculine, feminine or neutral groups and attitude towards the ad was split into positive and negative attitude based on the scores reached in the survey. Moreover, we also considered the effect size of the different variables for our results, which were displayed in the column Partial Eta Squared and are also divided into Cohen's previously introduced classifications.

4 Analysis: Hypotheses Testing

The main analysis of the collected data is presented below. To answer the first three research hypotheses, three independent sample t-tests are conducted to test for significant differences in means between the two groups, which were exposed to either femvertising or traditional advertising, in regard to attitude towards the ad, purchase intention, and brand gender. The last hypothesis is tested through a two-way ANOVA, examining the effect of attitude towards the ad and brand gender on purchase intention as well as a possible relationship between the two dependent variables. In general, the results of the statistical hypotheses tested are stated first, upon which the corresponding research hypotheses are answered.

4.1 Femvertising and Attitude towards the Ad

RH1: Femvertising has a positive impact on attitude towards the ad.

As previously stated, the first research hypothesis is tested through an independent t-test. More precisely, the computed total score for attitude towards the ad and all 12 variable testing the attitude are treated as test variables and the grouping variable is defined as group 1: femvertising (f) and group 2: traditional advertising (ta). Naturally, the corresponding statistical hypothesis has to be:

$$H_0: \mu_f - \mu_{ta} = 0$$

$$H_1: \mu_f - \mu_{ta} \neq 0$$

Important to consider is that the attitude towards the ad is measured through a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree is accounted for the six positive statements and the reversed way for the six negative statements. This means a maximum score of 84 is possible, signalling a positive attitude towards the ad. Hence, we see the mean score of 42 points as a neutral attitude towards the ad, < 42 as a negative attitude towards the ad, and > 42 as a positive attitude towards the ad. In general, one can say that the higher the score of a variable or the higher the total score, the higher the overall positive attitude towards the ad.

The results of the independent t-tests are as follows. Overall, all tested variables and total score have an associated t-statistics (7.035) probability below 0.05. Therefore, we reject all H_0 of all equal means, which signals that a significant difference between means exists. Here, the mean difference of the total score between femvertising ($M = 61.99$, $SD = 12.587$) and traditional

advertising ($M = 45.41$, $SD = 15.166$) is high with 16.571. This is supported by a very large effect size of Cohen's d value of 1.190.

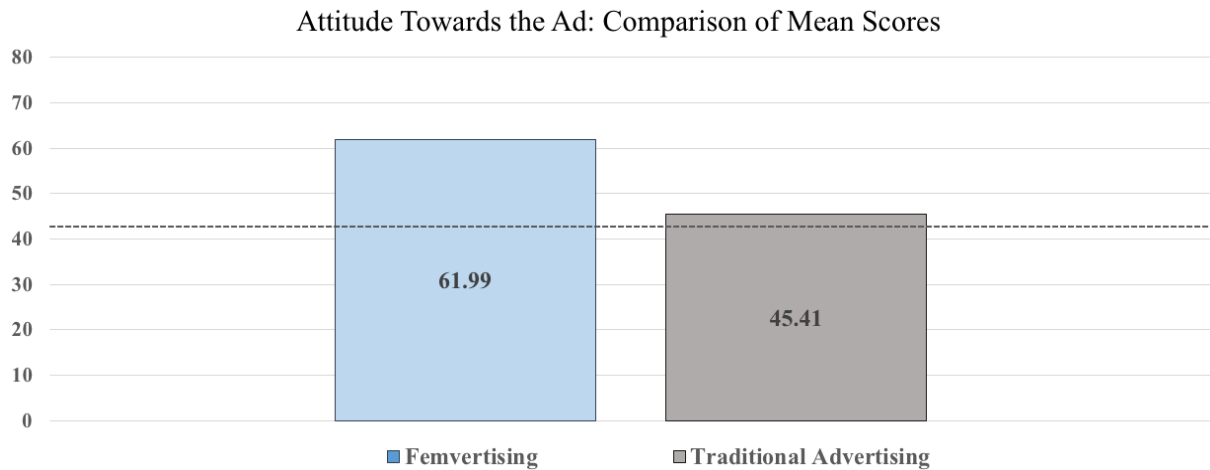


Figure 4.1: Positive Attitude towards the Ad: Comparison of Mean Score between Groups, neutrality line indicated

While examining the individual variables measuring attitude towards the ad, the highest mean discrepancies between the groups are found for the positive statements 'This is a wonderful ad' ($MD = 1.708$, $t = 6.881$, $p = 0.00$) and 'This is a heart-warming ad' ($MD = 1.596$, $t = 9.42$, $p = 0.00$). Moreover, higher discrepancies between the means for negative statement are identified for 'I dislike this ad' with a mean difference of 1.414 ($t = 5.501$, $p = 0.00$), 'This is the kind of ad you forget easily' ($MD = 0.957$, $t = 3.459$, $p = 0.002$), and 'This ad leaves me cold' ($MD = 0.885$, $t = 5.248$, $p = 0.00$). With this said, all variables reach higher scores for the femvertising (experimental) group compared to the traditional advertising (control) group. Please review Appendix E for a detailed overview of the results.

To conclude, we accept research hypothesis 1 '*Femvertising has a positive impact on attitude towards the ad*' due to the fact that the direct comparisons of means between femvertising and traditional advertising groups show significant differences. More specifically, femvertising scores higher within all tested variables/ statements and consequently also for in the commuted total score. Therefore, one can say that femvertising has a positive impact on attitude towards the ad when compared to traditional advertising.

4.2 Femvertising and Brand Gender Perception

RH2: Femvertising generates a feminine perceived brand gender.

The second hypothesis is also tested through an independent t-test. As previously explained, the tested variable brand gender is subdivided into two tested variables, namely brand gender scale (H2a) and brand gender index (H2b). The group variables remain the same as in H1. Therefore, the overall statistical tested hypothesis is once more:

$$H_0: \mu_f - \mu_{ta} = 0$$

$$H_1: \mu_f - \mu_{ta} \neq 0$$

In the following, the results of research hypotheses a and b are presented and combined to answer the overall research hypothesis 2 in the end.

4.2.1 Femvertising and Brand Gender Perception based on Grohmann

RH2a: Femvertising generates a feminine perceived brand gender based on Grohmann.

Before testing H3a, it is important to note once more that the brand gender scale is measured through a 7-point Likert scale. As it aims to discover the total feminine gender perception of a brand, all feminine attributes are measured by 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. On the other hand, all male attributes have to be measured in a reversed way, namely 1 = strongly agree and 7 = strongly disagree. Thus, the total score of all feminine adjectives, as well as masculine adjectives and the overall total score, always indicate the feminine perception. With regard to the purpose of this study, one can say that the higher the variable score the more feminine. While considering the results of the independent t-test, testing all masculine, feminine variable as well as total scores for all six masculine, six feminine and overall brand gender perception (12 variables), the following results can be drawn.

Firstly, the overall total score of brand gender shows a significant difference in means ($t = 138$, $MD = 11.7$, $p = 0.00$). To be more precise, the experimental group (femvertising) scores a mean of 47.46 ($SD = 10.356$) compared to the control group (traditional advertising) with a mean of 35.76 ($SD = 8.596$). The total possible score of a commuted brand gender scale equals 84 points signalling femininity. Logically, 42 points equal a neutral gender perception. Therefore, the brand gender total score indicates a feminine brand gender perception (> 42) for the experimental group and a masculine brand gender perception (< 42) for the control group.

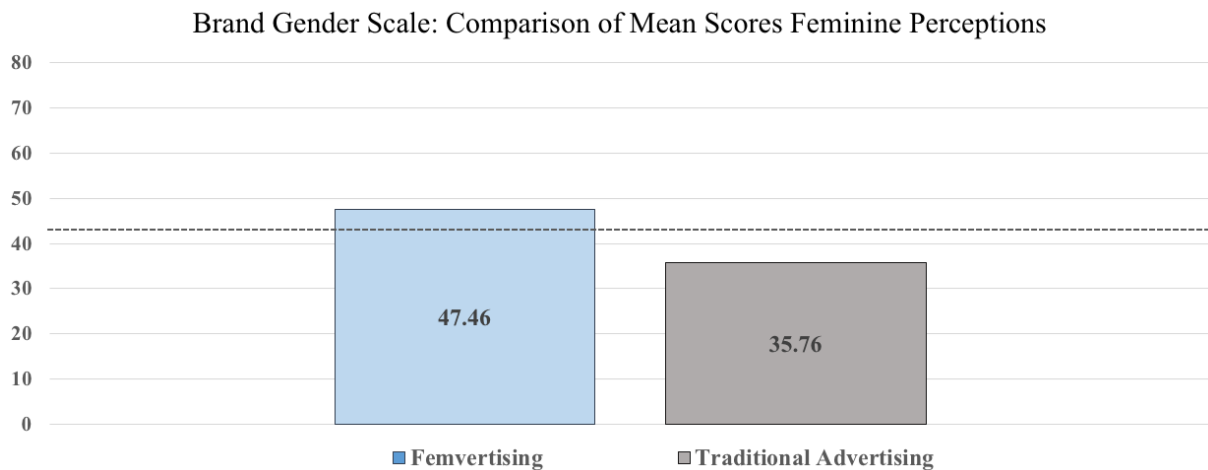


Figure 4.2: Brand Gender Scale: Comparison of Mean Scores Feminine Perceptions between Groups, neutrality line indicated

Secondly, the computed scores for either feminine brand gender variables or masculine brand gender variables support this statement further. Both scores have an associated t-statistics probability of 0.00, which is below the significant level of 0.05. We, therefore, reject the H_0 of no differences in mean and accept H_1 of differences in means exists. Moreover, the means for the total score of masculine variables (femvertising: $M = 22.86$; traditional advertising: $M = 18.37$) as well as for the feminine variables (femvertising: $M = 24.36$, traditional advertising: $M = 17.39$) are higher for the experimental group ($MD = 4.486$, $t = 5.49$, $p = 0.00$). This indicates a feminine perception of Audi after watching femvertising compared to traditional advertising. Thirdly, considering all individual feminine and masculine variables proposed by Grohmann (2009), we can say that nearly all resulted in a two-tailed significance level lower than 0.05, which leads to rejecting the H_0 and to significant differences in mean.

Concentrating on the masculine variables, both brave ($t = -0.64$, $p = 0.949$, $MD = -0.14$) and daring ($t = -0.142$, $p = 0.887$, $MD = -0.29$) were exceptions, as no significant difference in mean exists. The variables score means in the range of agreement in both groups. On the contrary, the masculine variable dominant ($t = 6.74$, $p = 0.00$) scores one of the highest mean differences with 1.729, which is also reflected in the corresponding large Cohen's d value of 1.134. Here, the mean value for the experimental group is 4.11, which equals neutral to slightly disagree, and for the control group is 2.39, which equals agree. Also, the variable aggressive ($t = 5.461$, $p = 0.00$) scores a high mean difference of 1.586, which is also reflected in a large Cohen's d value of 0.926. More precisely, the experimental group showed a mean of 5.53, equalling disagree, and the control group showed a mean of 3.94, equalling neutral to slightly agree. Finally, the two masculine variables sturdy ($t = 4.688$, $p = 0.00$, $MD = .886$) and adventurous ($t = 2.023$, $p = 0.045$, $MD = 0.329$) only show slight changes in means. For sturdy, the control group mean is 3.39, which equals slightly agree, and the experimental group mean is 4.27, which equals neutral to slightly disagree. Similarly, for adventurous, the control group mean is 2.5 and the experimental group mean is 2.83, both showing disagreement. Below, the different means for all masculine variables of the experimental and the control group can be reviewed.

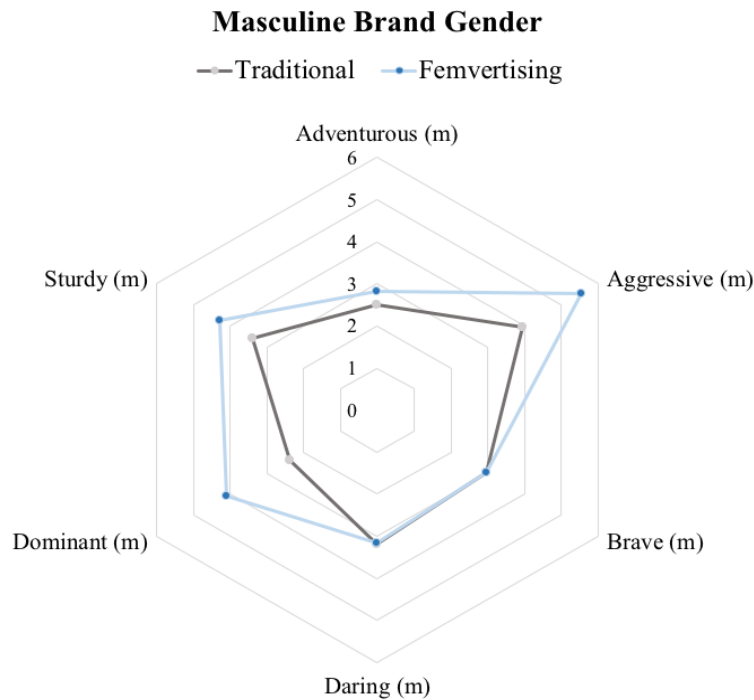


Figure 4.3: Distribution of Masculine Brand Gender Variables between Groups

Concentrating on the feminine variables, only a slightly significant difference in means is found for fragile ($t = 2.223$, $p = .028$, $MD = 0.471$), where both means lie in the range of disagreement for both groups. In contrast, the variables sweet ($t = 6.159$, $p = 0.00$, $MD = 1.771$) and sensitive ($t = 6.404$, $p = 0.00$, $MD = 1.586$) score the highest significant differences in means, which is both reflected in a large effect size of Cohen's d value of 1.046 and 1.079 respectively. More specifically, the means of both sweet ($M = 2.41$) and sensitive ($M = 2.63$) show disagreement in the control group, but are equalling neutral to slight agreement in the experimental group (sweet: $M = 4.19$, sensitive: $M = 4.21$). Furthermore, express tender feelings ($t = 4.461$, $p = 0.00$, $MD = 1.171$), graceful ($t = 4.545$, $p = 0.00$, $MD = 1.129$), and tender ($t = 4.725$, $p = 0.00$, $MD = 1.086$) show a similar significant differences in means. Here, express tender feelings scores a mean of 4.44 in the experimental group, which equals neutral to slightly agree, and a mean of 3.27 in the control group, which equal slightly disagree. Also for the variable graceful, the mean of 4.93 in the experimental group indicates slight agreement, whereas the mean of 3.8 in the control group indicates neutrality to slight disagreement. The means of tender are 4.11 in the experimental group, which equals neutral to slightly agree, and 3.03 in the control group, which equals disagree. Below, the different means for all feminine variables of the experimental and the control group are presented. Please review Appendix F for a detailed overview.

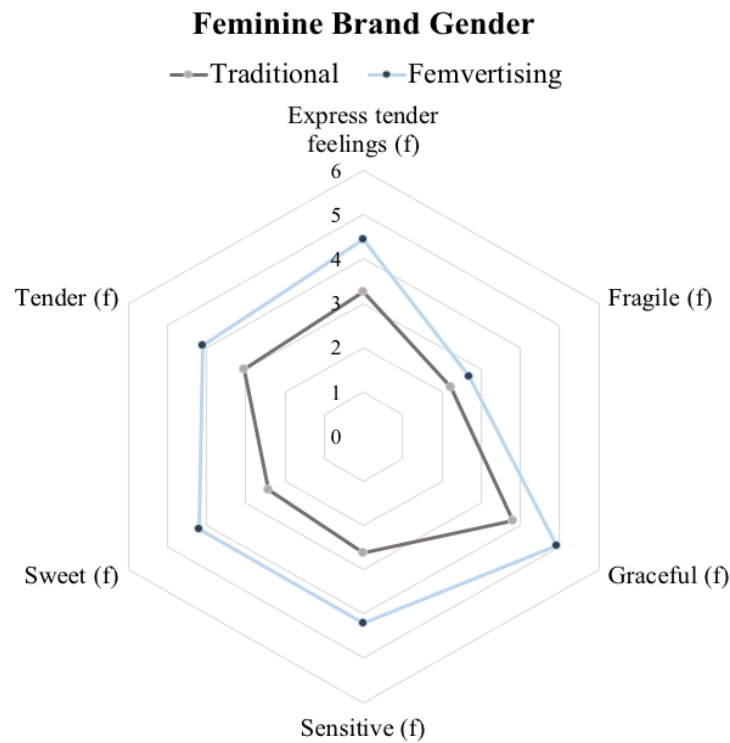


Figure 4.4: Distribution of Feminine Brand Gender Variables between Groups

To conclude, ten out of twelve variables indicate a significant mean difference between the two groups. Exceptions are the two masculine variables brave and daring. Considering the mean scores of all variables, we can say that femvertising overall generates higher means than traditional advertising. This leads to the conclusion that femvertising intensifies the feminine perception of a brand. Therefore, we accept research hypothesis 2a *'Femvertising generates a feminine perceived brand gender based on Grohmann.'*

4.2.2 Femvertising and Brand Gender Perception based on Index

RH2b: Femvertising generates a feminine perceived brand gender index.

Before testing H2b, one needs to consider that the brand gender index is measured through a single-item question, a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = masculine, 4 = neutral and 7 = feminine. While again considering the purpose of this hypothesis, one can say the higher the score the more feminine the brand gender perception.

The independent t-test reveals a t-statistic of 4.945 with an associated significant level of 0.00, which is below the significance level of 0.05. We, therefore, reject the H_0 of equal means and accept H_1 of significant difference between the means. While considering the mean values for femvertising ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 3.47$) and traditional advertising ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 1.218$), it clarifies that femvertising scores higher. However, as the scale shows, ~ four is a neutral value in between a masculine or feminine perception of the brand, where every value lower than four

is in the masculine range and every value higher than four is in the feminine range. This means that both mean values are lower than four and thus in the masculine range.

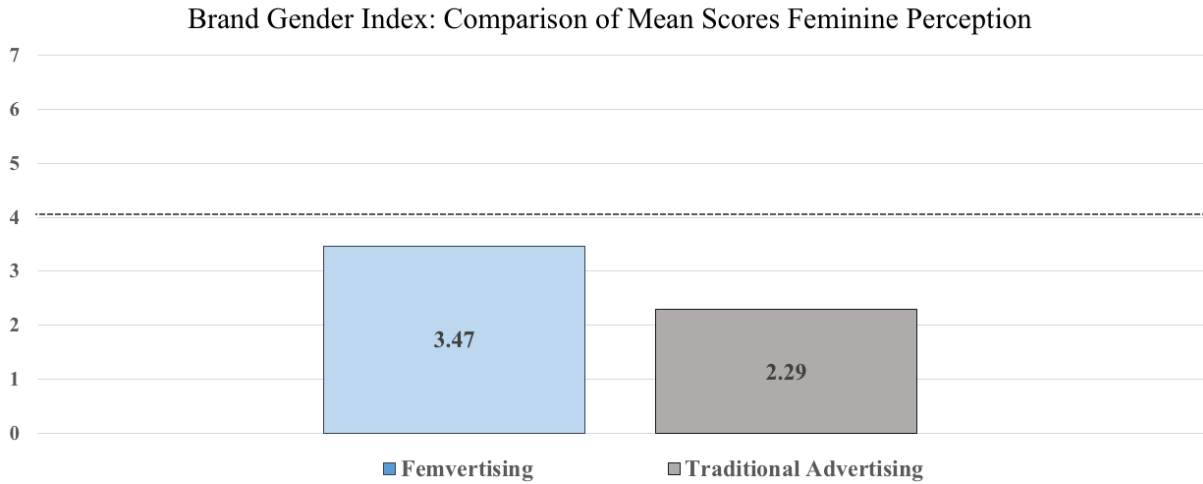


Figure 4.5: Brand Gender Index: Comparison of Mean Scores Feminine Perception between Groups, neutrality line indicated

We, thus, cannot accept research hypothesis 2b '*Femvertising generates a feminine perceived brand gender index*', and have to reject it. Still, it can be seen that after watching traditional advertising, the brand is perceived more masculine than after watching femvertising, which means that femvertising reduces the masculinity of the brand and makes it rather neutral.

To conclude, we can only partially accept research hypothesis 2 '*Femvertising generates a feminine perceived brand gender*'. This is due to the fact that we are able to accept H2a and recognize a feminine perceived brand gender measured through Grohmann's scale for the experimental group influenced through the femvertising ad, but have to reject RH2b as the brand gender is still perceived as masculine to neutral within both groups when measured through the index.

4.3 Femvertising and Purchase Intention

RH3: Femvertising has a positive impact on purchase intention.

Similar to the first two hypotheses, this hypothesis is also tested through an independent t-test. Now, the variable purchase intention is treated as the test variable and the grouping variables are again divided into group 1: femvertising (f) and group 2: traditional advertising (ta). This leads again to the following statistical hypothesis:

$$H_0: \mu_f - \mu_{ta} = 0$$

$$H_1: \mu_f - \mu_{ta} \neq 0$$

Considering that purchase intention is measured through the Juster scale, which is build up as an 11-point scale ranging from 0 = no chance to 10 = certain/practically certain, a higher score equals a higher purchase intention.

The results of the independent t-test show an associated probability of the t-test (2.655), which is near to zero ($p = 0.009$). Therefore, we reject the H_0 of equal means and accept H_1 of differences in means. The group statistics show the means for femvertising 7.36 (SD = 2.314) and traditional advertising 6.24 (SD = 2.618), resulting in a mean difference of 1.114 and a small to moderate Cohen's d effect size of 0.451. This indicates that the purchase intention score is higher for the experimental group, which was exposed to femvertising, compared to the control group.

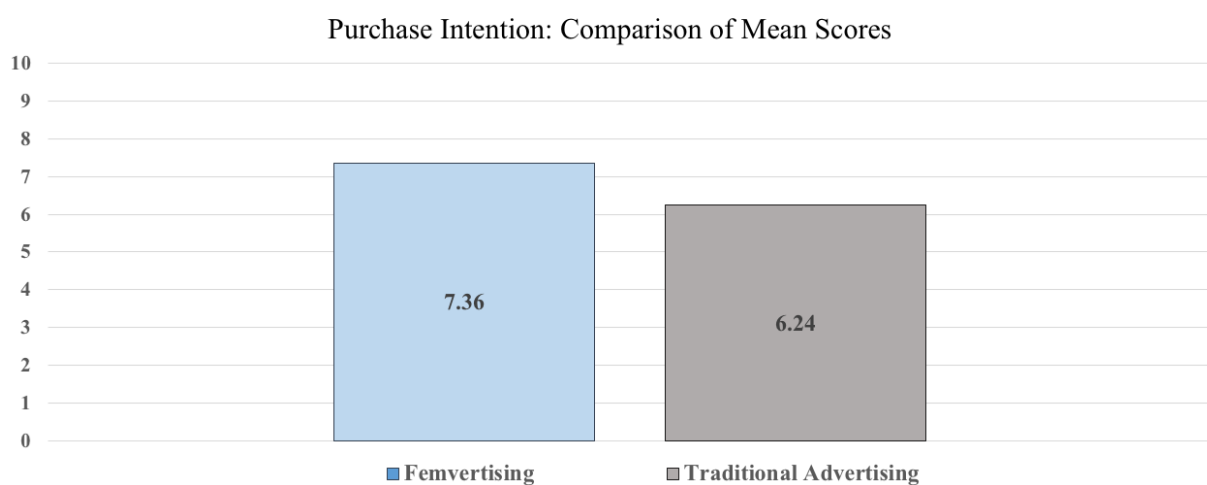


Figure 4.6: Purchase Intention: Comparison of Mean Scores between Groups

To conclude, we accept research hypothesis 3 '*Femvertising has a positive impact on purchase intention*' since the independent t-test shows a significant difference in mean between femvertising and traditional advertising. Although the effect size is only low to moderately strong with 0.451, the mean statistics clearly highlights a higher purchase intention for the experimental group (femvertising) compared to the control group (traditional advertising).

4.4 Brand Gender Perception, Attitude towards the Ad, and Purchase Intention

RH4: When a brand gender is perceived as feminine and the attitude towards the ad is positive, then purchase intention is higher.

The fourth hypothesis is tested through a two-way ANOVA. To be more concrete, the variables attitude towards the ad (negative/positive) and brand gender (feminine/masculine) are treated as independent variables and purchase intention as the dependent variable. Comparable to the previous hypothesis, brand gender is again split up into the two variables brand gender scale tested in H4a and brand gender index tested in H4b. In the first step, the descriptive statistics

are stated, followed by the analysis of between-subjects effects. A post-hoc test is not necessary as only two groups are compared.

4.4.1 Brand Gender Perception based on Grohmann, Attitude towards the Ad, and Purchase Intention

RH4a: When a brand gender based on Grohmann is perceived as feminine and the attitude towards the ad is positive, then purchase intention is higher.

The results of the descriptive statistics for the two-way ANOVA are illustrated in table 4.1 below. Some key figures are stated in the following. To start, 49 of 70 respondents of the experimental group perceive Audi as a feminine brand, whereas 46 of 70 respondents of the control group perceive the brand as masculine, which is a clear contrast. A figure both groups have in common is that only three respondents within each group perceive the brand as neutral. Furthermore, in addition to the perceived brand gender also the attitude towards the ad is considered. Overall, purchase intention is lower when respondents indicate a negative attitude towards the ad regardless of the perceived brand gender or exposed stimuli. The highest purchase intention mean is reached within the femvertising group for respondents who have a positive attitude towards the ad and perceive Audi as masculine ($M = 7.53$, $N = 17$) but also for those respondents who perceive the brand as feminine ($M = 7.54$, $N = 46$). However, an equally high purchase intention is reached within the control group for respondents who have a positive attitude towards the ad and perceive the brand as masculine ($M = 7.55$, $N = 22$). These results can be reviewed in the table below.

Table 4.1: Overview Descriptive Statistics Two-Way ANOVA (H4a)

Group	Attitude Towards the Ad	Brand Gender (Grohmann)	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Femvertising	Negative Attitude	Masculine	4.00	0.000	1
		Feminine	5.33	1.155	3
		Total	5.00	1.155	4
	Positive Attitude	Masculine	7.53	2.183	17
		Neutral	6.67	2.082	3
		Feminine	7.54	2.419	46
		Total	7.50	2.322	66
	Total	Masculine	7.33	2.275	18
		Neutral	6.67	2.082	3
		Feminine	7.41	2.415	49
		Total	7.36	2.341	70
Traditional Advertising	Negative Attitude	Masculine	4.88	2.610	24
		Neutral	3.00	0.000	1
		Feminine	5.60	2.302	5
		Total	4.93	2.518	30
	Positive Attitude	Masculine	7.55	2.405	22
		Neutral	7.00	2.828	2
		Feminine	6.81	2.073	16
		Total	7.23	2.259	40
	Total	Masculine	6.15	2.828	46
		Neutral	5.67	3.055	3
		Feminine	6.52	2.136	21
		Total	6.24	2.618	70

The associated probability of the Levene's test statistic is 0.405 for the experimental group and 0.619 for the control group, which is larger than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis of homogeneity of variance.

The ANOVA test of between-subjects effects indicates that only attitude towards the ad has a significant effect in the experimental group ($F = 4.315$, $p = 0.042$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.62$) as well as in the control group ($F = 5.784$, $p = 0.19$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.083$), whereas brand gender is not significant in neither of both group (experimental group: $F = 0.325$, $p = 0.723$; control group: $F = 0.322$, $p = 0.726$). Although attitude towards the ad shows a significant effect, only 6.2% - 8.2% in variation of purchase intention can be explained through the variable, which is a very low effect size. Lastly, no interaction effect between attitude towards the ad and brand gender scale is found ($F = 0.228$, $p = 0.635$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.003$).

To conclude, we can only partially accept research hypothesis 4a 'When a brand gender based on Grohmann is perceived as feminine and the attitude towards the ad is positive, then purchase intention is higher.' The descriptive statistics indicate a higher purchase intention mean when respondents reacted positively to the ad compared to a negative reaction for both groups. By further extent, also the ANOVA of between-subjects effects shows that attitude towards the ad affects purchase intention positively. However, only a very small effect size is found. In comparison, a more feminine perceived brand gender does - compared to a masculine perceived brand gender - not seem to affect the purchase intention mean based on descriptive statistics.

This assumption is strengthened within the results of the ANOVA of between-subjects, which indicate no significant effect of brand gender on purchase intention. Therefore, we can only accept the assumption that a positive attitude towards the ad leads to a higher purchase intention.

4.4.2 Brand Gender Perception based on Index, Attitude towards the Ad, and Purchase Intention

RH4b: When a brand gender based on the index is perceived as feminine and the attitude towards the ad is positive, then purchase intention is higher.

The results for the two-way ANOVA testing the independent variables attitude towards the ad (positive/negative) and brand gender index (masculine/feminine perception) as well as the dependent variable purchase intention are as follows. Similar to beforehand, first the descriptive statistics are presented, followed by an examination of test for effects or interaction effects.

Table 4.2 below displays a detailed overview of the descriptive statistics. Here a few indicators are especially interesting to observe. First, while considering the overall brand gender perception between the two groups, we can clearly identify that a majority of 59 of 70 respondents perceive the brand as masculine after watching the traditional advertising, whereas only 36 of 70 respondents have the same perception after watching the femvertising advertising. Consequently, for the experimental group, more respondents perceived the brand as feminine (20 vs. 3) and neutral (14 vs. 8). This is in line with our previous finding for research hypothesis 2, which partially acknowledges that femvertising generates a feminine perceived brand gender compared to traditional advertising. Second, while also considering the variable attitude towards the ad, the following key findings can be drawn. The two highest purchase intention scores within the femvertising group can be found when the respondents have a positive attitude towards the ad and perceive the brand as feminine ($M = 9$, $SD = 1.747$). An equally high score can be found within the traditional advertising group for respondents who also have a positive attitude toward the ad but perceive the brand as gender neutral ($M = 9$, $SD = 1.414$). However, the latter sample size was really small ($N = 6$) compared to the sample size for the experimental group ($N = 20$). Furthermore, all measured purchase intention scores are lower for both groups when the attitude towards the ad is negative. These results can be reviewed below.

Table 4.22: Overview Descriptive Statistics Two-way ANOVA (H4b)

Group	Attitude Towards the Ad	Brand Gender (Index)	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Femvertising	Negative Attitude	Masculine	4.00	0.000	2
		Feminine	6.00	0.000	2
		Total	5.00	1.155	4
	Positive Attitude	Masculine	6.53	2.164	34
		Neutral	7.75	2.340	12
		Feminine	9.00	1.747	20
		Total	7.50	2.322	66
	Total	Masculine	6.39	2.181	36
		Neutral	7.50	2.245	14
		Feminine	9.00	1.747	20
		Total	7.36	2.341	70
Traditional Advertising	Negative Attitude	Masculine	4.67	2.481	27
		Neutral	7.50	2.121	2
		Feminine	7.00	0.000	1
		Total	4.93	2.518	30
	Positive Attitude	Masculine	7.03	2.265	32
		Neutral	9.00	1.414	6
		Feminine	5.00	0.000	2
		Total	7.23	2.259	40
	Total	Masculine	5.95	2.629	59
		Neutral	8.63	1.598	8
		Feminine	5.67	1.155	3
		Total	6.24	2.618	70

The Levene's test of equality of error in variance shows an associated probability of 0.016, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05 for the femvertising group, and 0.085, which is higher than the significance level of 0.05 for the traditional advertising group. Consequently, we have to reject the first null hypothesis of homogeneity of variance is given and can only accept the second H0 for the control group. However, as the sample size ($N = 140$) is relatively large and the ANOVA tends to be very robust, we still continue and analyse the results of the between-subjects test.

For the experimental group, the main effect of brand gender index ($F = 6.886$, $p = 0.002$) is significant and has a small effect size on purchase intention with a partial η^2 of 0.175 (17.5%). The associated probability of attitude towards the ad ($F = 3.923$, $p = 0.052$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.057$) is only 0.002 above the significance level of 0.05 but below the significance level of 0.1. Therefore, we decide to still reject the null hypothesis of no effect and can state that the effect of attitude towards the ad is also significant, but only with a very small effect size of 5.7%.

For the control group, we can find a similar situation for the variable brand gender index. Here, the associated F-statistic (3.013) equals $p = 0.056$ and is therefore only very slightly above the significance level of 0.05. Consequently, we again decide to reject the null hypothesis and acknowledge brand gender index as having a significant effect on purchase intention. In other words, brand gender index can explain 8.6% of variation in purchase intention (partial $\eta^2 = 0.086$), which is again only a very small effect size. Moreover, the associated probability of

attitude towards the ad for the control group ($F = 0.299$, $p = 0.587$) is clearly higher than the significance level of 0.05 and therefore not significant. Finally, the interaction effect between both variables is not significant ($F = 0.130$, $p = 0.719$, $\text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.002$).

To conclude, we can only partially accept H4b *'When a brand gender based on the index is perceived as feminine and the attitude towards the ad is positive, then purchase intention is higher.'* The descriptive statistics indicate that the highest purchase intention is measured within the femvertising group for respondents who perceive the brand as feminine, but also an equally high purchase intention is measured within the control group for respondents who indicate a neutral perceived brand gender. Still, the sample size for each group shows strong variation, which must be acknowledged. However, we still have to reject the assumption that a feminine perceived brand leads to a higher purchase intention within this study. Yet, the ANOVA of between-subjects effects indicate an effect, but only a small one, of brand gender on purchase intention. Furthermore, the descriptive statistics show that the highest purchase intention is always reached when a positive attitude towards the ad is indicated. This is further supported by the ANOVA of between-subjects effects which indicates a significant effect of attitude towards the ad on purchase intention within the experimental group. Contradictory, no effect can be found within the control group. Therefore, we decide to only weakly accept the assumption that a positive attitude towards the ad leads to a higher purchase intention.

Overall, we can only partially accept the overall research hypothesis 4 *'When a brand gender is perceived as feminine and the attitude towards the ad is positive, then purchase intention is higher.'* To be more concrete, we have to reject the assumption that a feminine brand gender leads to a higher purchase intention for several reasons. The descriptive statistics of H4a show no indication of relationship between feminine perceived brand gender and purchase intention. This is in line with the ANOVA tests of between-subjects effects, which indicate no significant effect on brand gender. In comparison, a significant effect of brand gender within the experimental group in H4b is found. However, here the descriptive statistics show no indication that feminine perceived brand gender leads to a higher purchase intention. Therefore, we have to reject the overall assumption that a feminine perceived brand leads to higher purchase intention. Furthermore, we can accept the assumption that a positive attitude towards the ad leads to higher purchase intention, but also rather weakly. The descriptive statistics of both H4a and H4b indicate that an effect of a positive attitude towards the ad on purchase intention exists. This assumption is mainly strengthened through the ANOVA test of between-subjects effects, which shows a significant effect of attitude towards the ad for three out of four cases. However, also when a significant effect of attitude towards the ad is proven, the effect size is always very small to small.

4.5 Hypotheses Overview

Below an overview of our hypotheses testing is given, which states all tested hypotheses and their corresponding results.

Table 4.3: Overview of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis		Results
RH1	Femvertising has a positive impact on attitude towards the ad.	Accepted
RH2	Femvertising generates a feminine perceived brand gender.	Partially accepted
RH2a	Femvertising generates a feminine perceived brand gender based on Grohmann.	Accepted
RH2b	Femvertising generates a feminine perceived brand gender index.	Rejected
RH3	Femvertising has a positive impact on purchase intention.	Accepted
RH4	When a brand gender is perceived as feminine and the attitude towards the ad is positive, then purchase intention is higher.	Partially accepted
RH4a	When a brand gender based on Grohmann is perceived as feminine and the attitude towards the ad is positive, then purchase intention is higher.	Partially accepted
RH4b	When a brand gender based on the Index is perceived as feminine and the attitude towards the ad is positive, then purchase intention is higher.	Partially accepted

5 Discussion of Results

After thoroughly testing the research hypotheses, the study presented multiple results. In the following chapter, these results will be extensively discussed by relating them back to the theories presented in the literature review. More specifically, explanations for the analysis outcome of direct influence from femvertising on attitude towards the ad, brand gender perception and purchase intention are given. Moreover, also the results of the analysis of indirect effects from femvertising on purchase intention through a positive attitude towards the ad and feminine brand gender perception are closely discussed.

5.1 The Beneficial Effects of Femvertising

5.1.1 Attitude towards the Ad

In the emerging literature stream of femvertising, researchers have thus far argued that femvertising creates more favourable attitudes towards the ad compared to traditional advertisements, which display stereotypical gender portrayals. However, these studies have solely focused on the FMCG industry (Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017; Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017). The results of our study further strengthen previous research by confirming the anticipated positive effect of femvertising on attitude towards the ad. By these means, this study agrees with previous scholars and adds the dimension of the high-involvement purchase category to the literature of femvertising.

There are two major reasons that explain this effect. The first reason explaining women's positive attitude towards femvertising can be referred back to Becker-Herby's (2016) five pillars characterizing femvertising. To be more precise, Audi's femvertising ad showed the utilization of diverse female talent and sent an inherently pro-female message. Moreover, the car brand pushed gender-norms and challenged gender stereotypical portrayals of what a woman or girl should be like. Finally, Audi's ad did not show any sign of sexuality as often featured in traditional ads of the brand. On the contrary, Audi actively chose to display a young authentic girl as the protagonist of its advertisement. After reviewing and clearly identifying these five pillars within Audi's femvertising ad, it clarifies that the ad reflected current changes in society regarding gender equality and thus appealed more to the emotions of women than traditional advertising, leading to a more favourable attitude towards the ad.

Secondly, Audi actively engaged in the current feminism debate, which is a recent and important topic for many young women, by broadcasting female empowering advertising. Here, Audi, a traditionally strongly masculine brand, set an example of crossing gender stereotypical attributes by highlighting the equality of all genders, which is explained in more detail in the next chapter. Therefore, Audi can be described as a forerunner within the automotive industry. Here, a positive attitude towards the ad can be explained by Audi's bravery to stand out and the courage to dare to be different. With this femvertising ad, Audi clearly addresses consumers' feelings instead of rationales and can thus easily create favourable attitudes with a well-designed advertisement.

5.1.2 Brand Gender Perception

Femvertising is uncharted academic territory, which means that not all marketing concepts have been researched in depth, such as the concept of brand gender. Therefore, our study adds a new and insightful perspective on the femvertising discussion by testing its effects on brand gender. Previous literature on spokesperson in advertising (Till & Priluck, 2001) and in the field of brand gender bending (Avery, 2012; Jung, 2006; Sandhu & Singh, 2017) indicated a strong effect of differently designed advertisements on a brand's gender. The results of our study further confirmed this assumption for the field of femvertising based on two measurements.

For Grohmann's scale (2009), which indirectly measured brand gender through testing stereotypical adjectives, we found that femvertising, in fact, generate a brand gender that is perceived as feminine after watching the ad. Therefore, femvertising can be used as a communication strategy of masculine brands to gender bend the brand to the feminine sphere, which will be perceived positively by women. Consequently, the same consumer responses towards brand gender bending of Sandhu's study (2017) presented in *2.1.5 Brand Gender bending* can be assumed for our study and would serve as an additional explanation of why females have a favourable attitude towards the femvertising ad.

When considering the specific variables within the scale, it can be seen that the masculine variables brave, daring, and adventurous demonstrate no to only slight significant differences in means, of which all lie in the range of agreement for both traditional advertising and femvertising. Based on the literature about female stereotypes in advertising, these variables are regarded as strong, masculine character traits in society in comparison to most feminine, rather weak regarded variables. Hence, Audi's femvertising ad served its purpose of empowering women since the same strong, but originally masculine, characteristics are recognized in both type of ads. Consequently, this provides evidence that also women and girls are seen as brave, daring, and adventurous, emphasizing that these variables are not gender specific anymore and that the classification as masculine variables is losing relevance.

Another masculine variable that emphasises the diminishing relevance of the brand gender scale by Grohmann (2009) is dominant. Here, a strong difference was found, which changes from agreement in traditional advertising to neutrality in femvertising. This means that the brand,

embodied through the protagonist, was previously recognized by the consumers as very dominant, which was not the case for the female empowerment advertising. In other words, no dominant masculine gender was perceived and the identified brand gender for femvertising indicated neutrality. Consequently, this result is a strong indicator for achieved gender equality communicated in the female empowerment ad by the previously very masculine and dominant car brand Audi. Therefore, femvertising meets its purpose of uplifting women to achieve gender equality. Conversely, the feminine variables sweet, sensitive, and tender changed from disagreement in the traditional advertising to neutrality in the femvertising. Here, it clarifies that not every feminine characteristic becomes strong through female empowerment advertising, rather does it neutralize several characteristics, emphasising again gender equality. Still, these variables will differ depending on the design of the traditional and the femvertising ad of a masculine brand. To conclude, it can be seen that Grohmann's (2009) scale is based on stereotypes historically prevalent in society. However, as progress is made towards gender equality, these stereotypes are no longer a true reflection of society and diminish the importance of a distinct brand gender.

In order to emphasise the criticism on the concept of brand gender and specifically on the popular Grohmann (2009) scale, the findings from the index questions, which directly asked for the participants' brand gender perceptions, are considered in the following. Here, the results indicate a change in perception from a strongly masculine to a neutral - rather than to a feminine - brand gender perception, after watching the femvertising ad. This indicates that femvertising can be used to alter the masculine brand gender towards a more neutral direction in order to encourage gender equality by reversing stereotypes. Additionally, the comparison of indirectly and directly asking for consumers' brand gender perception highlights the stereotyping in Grohmann's (2009) scale. Furthermore, the results indicate that young consumers' perceptions of gender and the subsequent stereotypes have evolved to a more neutral perception between the time Grohmann's (2009) scale was established and today, as the two identified brand gender perceptions do not match.

Finally, some other factors have to be considered when discussing Audi's brand gender change. As stated by Lieven et al. (2014), Audi is the second strongest masculine perceived car brand in Germany. Therefore, such a strong masculine perception of the brand cannot be changed with one femvertising ad. Yet, our findings have indicated that several advertisements showing no stereotypical role behaviour of either men or women would potentially have the power to change the brand gender to neutral. However, we also have to admit that we were not able to capture how inherently anchored certain stereotypes are in consumers' minds. As previously explained, gender is seen as a social construct and cannot be objectively defined. Hence, it cannot be determined what normal and what gender neutral to consumers is. Furthermore, An and Kim (2006) have closer researched gender portrayal in advertising around the world. To be more precise, the authors have built up their work on Hofstede's (2001) masculinity index rating and further expanded it towards the advertising field. Overall, Sweden out of 53 countries has the lowest masculinity index observed in advertising, which indicates an extremely low gender culture gap and could possibly explain the low masculinity ratings within the femvertising group of our research

5.1.3 Purchase Intention

Previous literature in the field of femvertising acknowledged its positive effect on female consumers' purchase intention, which built the base for our third research hypothesis. Confirming previous studies of Drake (2017) and Karulkar et al. (n.d.), who found stronger women's intentions to purchase a product of the FMCG industry after a femvertising ad, our study also identified a higher purchase intention for femvertising in the high-involvement purchase category. Consequently, these findings add substantially to the literature of femvertising within the high-involvement purchase context.

Similarly to *5.1.1 Attitude towards the Ad*, there are several reasons which explain the positive effect. Firstly, the illustration of a women/girl in an authentic rather than stereotypical way is one explanation for an increase in purchase intention. Secondly, the proactive support of gender equality also positively influences purchase intention. However, our study has also demonstrated that femvertising influences purchase intention for high-involvement products only to a limited extent. This can be explained through a longer and more complex consumer decision making process for the high-involvement purchase category. As these products require a reasonable amount of investment, consumers typically include more criteria in the process, such as the knowledge of the sales personnel or product attributes. Hence, it clarifies that one advertisement might not be able to profoundly affect purchase intention in the high-involvement purchase category compared to the FMCG industry, which was investigated by previous studies.

5.2 The Importance of Attitudes towards the Ad and Brand Gender Perception for Purchase Intention

In our study, we also tested for indirect effects of femvertising through the concepts of attitude towards the ad and brand gender on purchase intention. More precisely, we built upon the previous findings that attitude towards femvertising is favourable and brand gender is perceived as feminine and tested their effects on purchase intention. Overall, our study has found rather mixed outcomes for the different groups and also different concepts, which are closer discussed in the following.

Although many scholars have studied the influence of consumers' attitude towards the ad on purchase intention, research could not prove that favourable attitudes towards the ad directly lead to a stronger intention to purchase the advertised product (MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986; Spears & Singh, 2004; Shimp, 1981). Our study acknowledged that a favourable attitude towards the ad positively affects purchase intention in most cases but only to a very limited extent. In other words, the indirect effect of femvertising on purchase intention through creating a more favourable attitude towards the ad is confirmed but has a very weak influence. By finding only a weak effect, our study agrees with previous research aforementioned.

On account of this, this finding might be classified as significant but realistically does not increase consumers' intention to purchase a product from this brand noticeably. Hence, the previously stated explanation in 5.1.3 *Purchase Intention* that a single advertisement does not have a profound impact on purchase intention, especially for expensive high-involvement purchases, can be applied again. Favourable attitudes towards the advertisement rather serve different purposes, for example, to create positive brand associations, attributes, and image. Also, additional marketing activities are necessary to motivate consumers to purchase a car. Yet, we acknowledge that the influence of attitudes towards the ad on purchase intention was more consistent for femvertising than for traditional advertising, which highlights that female empowerment advertising is a better choice to create favourable consumer attitudes and slightly increase purchase intentions.

Concerning the influence of brand gender, scholars have emphasised the importance of congruence between a consumer's and a brand's gender by proving that men prefer masculine ads and products and women prefer feminine ads and products, which often results in a purchase intention for that specific brand (Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Avery, 2012; Grohmann, 2009; Lieven et al. 2014; Till & Priluck, 2001; Worth, Smith, & Mackie, 1992)). The results of our study overall indicated no relationship between a feminine perceived brand gender and an increased purchase intention. However, it has to be noted that the results of the conducted tests were extremely mixed and a few indicated slight positive effects of feminine brand gender perception on purchase intention.

Following from these mixed results and the small effects, it becomes evident that brand gender is to some extent a motivation for consumers to purchase a product, but not an important one. Here, it has to be acknowledged that previous literature on the importance of a distinct brand gender is outdated and does not reflect current changes in society, as already indicated earlier on. Therefore, our study should be positioned within the literature stream of brand gender by adding a critical and updated perspective on the topic. Since gender dichotomies are blurring and gender equality is pursued in all aspects of society, consumers might not be receptive for gendered marketing anymore. The fact that most young women have indicated quite a high purchase intention for a masculine and expensive car brand such as Audi demonstrates that certain brands and products are not produced, designed, or advertised to only one gender anymore. Therefore, showing stereotypes in advertising is no longer triggering consumers, especially females. This is supported by the fact that we have seen much backlash online on social media platforms for several companies who still use stereotypical gender roles in advertising, which clashes with the purpose of femvertising and feminism. Here, brands must be cautious while communicating gender equality since it is a really recent and controversial topic.

6 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter summarises the main findings of this study by first reviewing the purpose and then presenting the key insights, while focusing on the two concepts of femvertising and brand gender. Furthermore, theoretical contributions as well as managerial implications are given. In the end, we elaborate on the limitations of this study and propose directions for further research in the field of femvertising as well as brand gender.

6.1 Key Insights

The purpose of this study was twofold. The first purpose was to study the direct influence of femvertising on female consumers' attitudes towards the ad, brand gender perception, and purchase intention. Here, the effect of female empowerment advertising was compared to traditional advertising, which was defined as showing stereotypical gender roles. Moreover, the study is contextualised within the automotive industry, which is characterised as a high-involvement purchase category with typically masculine perceived brands. The second purpose was to investigate the indirect effects of femvertising through attitudes towards the ad and brand gender on purchase intention. More precisely, the study aimed to test if a favourable attitude towards the ad and a feminine brand gender perception lead to higher purchase intentions of women. By these means, the study was designated to contribute to the body of literature on femvertising (Becker-Herby, 2016; Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017; Karulkar et al. n. d.; Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017) and brand gender (Grohmann, 2009; Lieven et al. 2014; Lieven, 2018). In order to fulfil these purposes, several research hypotheses were set up based on established literature.

Similar to our expectations and to findings in the relevant literature, femvertising increases young women's favourable attitudes towards the ad and purchase intentions of masculine brands within the high-involvement purchase category. In this sense, women indicated a more favourable attitude towards femvertising than to traditional advertising and also indicated a stronger purchase intention after watching the female empowerment advertising. Moreover, we measured the brand gender perception through two different approaches, one resulting in a feminine perception, although only slightly, and one signalling a neutral brand gender perception. Consequently, our results support the previously indicated effectiveness of femvertising (Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017; Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017) and also add a new dimension to the literature of femvertising by examining its influence on

brand gender and showing that instead of completely feminising a strongly masculine brand gender, femvertising is rather neutralising it and making it less distinct.

Furthermore, we tested if purchase intention is higher when attitudes towards the ad are positive and the brand gender is perceived as feminine. On the one hand, we found that consumers attitude towards the ad, which was more favourable for femvertising, only slightly increases purchase intention. With this result, our study supports previous literature in the field of advertising (MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986; Spears & Singh, 2004; Shimp, 1981), which argued that consumers attitude towards the ad leads only to a very limited extent to a stronger intention to purchase the product advertised. On the other hand, we found that consumers' perception of the brand gender does not influence their purchase intention. Here, scholars emphasised the importance of congruence between the consumers' gender and the brand's gender to attract the selected target group (Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Avery, 2012; Grohmann, 2009; Lieven et al. 2014; Till & Priluck, 2001; Worth, Smith, & Mackie, 1992). However, we found that brand gender is not important to increase purchase intention, which can be explained by societal changes that are also addressed in and reflected by advertising. Consequently, femvertising indirectly increases purchase intention to a limited extent through changing young women's attitude towards the ad and perceptions of brand gender.

Overall, these findings lead to several theoretical contributions and managerial implications, which are discussed in the following sub-chapters.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

Overall, there are four theoretical contributions of this study, particularly within the two major literature streams of femvertising and brand gender. First of all, our study contributes to the literature of femvertising (Abitbol & Sternadori, 2019; Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017; Karulkar et al. n.d.; Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017) as a non-traditionally designed advertising and expands the knowledge of its effects on the concepts of attitude towards the ad, brand gender, and purchase intention. Until now, established literature focused on other concepts such as ad reactance (Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017), brand attitudes (Abitbol & Sternadori, 2019), and emotional responses of women (Kapoor & Munjal, 2017). Moreover, previous scholars looked into femvertising from the context of FMCG brands. What differentiates this research from other studies is that it tests the three previously mentioned concepts within the context of a high-involvement purchase category, namely the automotive industry. With the found results, this paper agrees with previous scholars on the mostly positive effects of femvertising but does so in a different and highly relevant context. Furthermore, the context of the automotive industry was further narrowed down to masculine gendered brands, which have previously targeted mainly men with their advertising and have now changed their communication strategy. In contrast to previous studies of femvertising, which focused on feminine brands (Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017; Åkestam, Rosengren, & Dahlen, 2017), our study investigated female responses to femvertising within the context of masculine brands

that are now stepping into the female target group. Here, our study can confirm the anticipated positive effects of femvertising also on masculine brands. Hence, the previously established literature stream of femvertising was expanded to the context of masculine brands within the high-involvement sector.

Next to different contexts, our study adds a new and interesting perspective to the femvertising discussion by testing its effects on brand gender. Here, the study aimed at investigating how the masculine perceived brand gender changes when a female empowerment advertising is shown to women. For this, previous literature on spokesperson in advertising (Till & Priluck, 2001) and in the field of brand gender bending (Avery, 2012; Jung, 2006; Sandhu & Singh, 2017) was taken into consideration. More specifically, our study contributes to the research field of femvertising by finding that femvertising can be used to alter a masculine brand gender towards a more neutral direction. By doing so, our study indicated that the brand gender scale by Grohmann (2009) might no longer be applicable in today's society. As femvertising is reversing stereotypical gender role portrayals in advertising, consumers do not perceive a strong brand gender anymore. Therefore, the classification of several items on the Grohmann (2009) scale as masculine or feminine should be revised, as well as the general classification of a masculine or feminine brand. Consequently, our study contributes to the literature of brand gender (Grohmann, 2009; Lieven et al. 2014; Lieven, 2018) but adds a critical perspective to it.

Moreover, our study adds a new dimension to the brand gender literature by examining its effects on purchase intention. In contradiction to previous studies emphasizing congruence between consumers' and the brand's gender to increase purchase intention (Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Avery, 2012; Grohmann, 2009; Lieven et al. 2014; Till & Priluck, 2001; Worth, Smith, & Mackie, 1992), no such effect was found in our study. More specifically, we found that a brand's gender does not influence female consumer's intention to purchase a product from the brand, which can be related back to femvertising defined as advertising that reverses stereotypical gender role display. Consequently, our study expanded but also challenged previous research on brand gender and purchase intention.

Finally, our study contributes to the literature of advertising by investigating its impact on purchase intention. Here, previous research indicated only minor influences of consumers' attitude towards the ad on their intention to purchase the advertised product (MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986; Spears & Singh, 2004; Shimp, 1981). But what is different in our study is that it investigates this relationship on the base of the emerging practice of female empowerment advertising. Although femvertising is creating more favourable ad attitudes, we also only found a slight effect on purchase intention. Therefore, our study supports previous literature in the field of advertising effectiveness and adds the dimension of the emerging communication strategy of femvertising to the discussion.

6.3 Managerial Implications

Along with theoretical contributions, our study also offers managerial implications which are of high relevance for companies, particularly for marketing and brand managers, who have brands in their portfolio that are traditionally perceived as masculine and attract male customers. This study has focused on the high-involvement purchase category, to be more precise in the automotive sector, and hereby acknowledged the results of previous literature concentrating on the FMCG sector. Therefore, the following implications are of importance for companies operating in one of the two industries.

These findings enhance our understanding of femvertising as a powerful tool to attract female customers, especially through creating a more favourable attitude towards the ad and a measurable higher purchase intention in comparison to traditional advertising. In other words, the concept of femvertising has been proven to be interesting and worth exploring while designing marketing communication, such as TV advertisements. Furthermore, the study has also proven that traditionally used stereotypes within advertisements are outdated and a trend towards a neutral brand gender perception, especially for young females, can be stated. Our study has further indicated that the concept of brand gender is losing relevance as a differentiation tool for brands as the impact on purchase intention is nearly not noticeable anymore. Consequently, marketers need to be careful when communicating strong gender messages in order to avoid any backlashes. Finally, femvertising can be used as a tool to actively target female customers, which have previously been neglected by masculine brands. This further supports the previous statement that brand gender is no longer seen as a way to differentiate oneself from the competition. Instead, gender lines are becoming blurry, which offers marketers the opportunity to target both sexes.

Overall, our study has demonstrated that by creating a femvertising advertisement and thereby proactively engaging in the current societal discussion supporting gender equality, a company can benefit from an increased purchase intention among young women. Therefore, the results of this study should encourage marketers to use femvertising within their communication strategy. In addition, marketers should generally be aware of societal changes and movements by choosing a mindful approach to portray females but also males in advertisements to meet the current demand for gender-neutral communication.

6.4 Limitations and Future Research

During this study we faced several limitations, but also many avenues for further research opened up. Both aspects, starting with the limitations, are further elaborated on in the following. Firstly, our study was limited to the comparison of one single brand within the high-involvement purchase automotive category. We have also narrowed down our target population

to females studying at Lund University, who are 20-29 years old and own a driver's license. Secondly, there are also limitations that arose from our chosen research design. Non-Probability sampling was used to select our survey respondents. On one hand, non-probability sampling is less cost-intensive and can be quicker conducted. On the other hand, it also leads to a higher chance of sampling error and results are regarded as indicative rather than definitive (Wilson, 2006). Therefore, this study faces a weak external validity and can only be generalized to a limited extent for the population. Moreover, although the sample size met the predefined size, unequal distribution of respondents was found during the two-way ANOVA test, which impedes a representative comparison of results for the research hypothesis fourth. Furthermore, as we applied an experimental design, the research was conducted in a semi-laboratory setting in order to control for external variables, which again minders the generalizability of the outcomes (Malhotra, 2010). However, it was only possible to control these environmental influences to a limited extent. Influences such as noise or a prejudged attitude towards the brand might still had an influence on the participants' responses. Thirdly, a quantitative research design heavily relies on its participants and on what respondents say they think or would do. Therefore, we were only able to capture shallow opinions. Here, a qualitative research design would have potentially explored the underlying perceptions, especially about gender stereotypes captured in consumers' mind, in more depth (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Deriving from the above-stated limitations and also from our overall findings, several suggestions for further research are made. To start, further experimental investigations should consider more brands as well as a more diverse target population, particularly in terms of occupation, age, country of residence and the opposite sex. Here, of special interest is to investigate the male perception of femvertising within the high-involvement purchase category to further relate possible findings to brand gender bending (Avery, 2012; Sandhu & Singh, 2017). Interesting in this sense is that men tend to perceive gender cues and gendered products stronger than women (Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Frieden, 2013; Sandhu, 2018). Furthermore, we also have to acknowledge the socio-cultural environment in which this study was conducted. Considering the findings of An and Kim (2006), which indicated a low gender culture gap in Sweden, this study should be replicated in different cultural environments to analyse gender perceptions and increase the study's generalisability. Moreover, this study has questioned the stereotypical variables used to describe a feminine and masculine brand gender with special regards to the Grohmann (2009) scale. Here, further research is needed in order to determine whether stereotypical attributes become truly obsolete in today's society. This would add interesting aspect to the just emerging gender neutrality debate within advertisements. Lastly, a qualitative study closer investigating the stereotypical perception of brands could add further insights to the debate.

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Appendix A - Questionnaire

Welcome!

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey, which is part of our master thesis at Lund University. With this said, our master thesis explores the influence of advertisements on purchase intention and brand perception. Here, your thoughts and opinion will provide us with valuable insights!

This survey should only take around 5-8 minutes to complete. Please be assured that all answers you provide will be kept confidentially. Please click "Next" to begin.

Page 02

Please indicate your sex

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other

Please indicate your age group

- ☐ Below 20
- ☐ 20-24
- ☐ 25-29
- ☐ Above 30

In which country do you currently live?

[Please choose]

What is your current occupation?

- ☐ Pupil
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Currently not employed
- ☐ Others

Do you have a driver's license?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you know the brand Audi?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

1. Audi Advertisement

Please watch the whole advertising before you continue with the survey.

Enjoy watching!



After you have watched the advertisement, please indicate to which degree you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Undecided	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would probably skip this ad when it appears on TV.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This ad has little interest for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This is a heart-warming ad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This is a wonderful ad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This ad makes me want to buy the brand it features.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This ad makes me feel good.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I dislike this ad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This ad is very appealing to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This is a fascinating ad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This ad leaves me cold.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm tired of this kind of advertising.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This is the kind of ad you forget easily.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Below, a list of adjectives is presented which are used to describe a brand. Please indicate to which degree you agree or disagree with the following descriptions of the brand Audi.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Undecided	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Brave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sweet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sensitive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aggressive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Daring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graceful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Express tender feelings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fragile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adventurous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sturdy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dominant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate.

Masculine

Feminine

☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Please indicate.

0 – No chance

1

2

3

4

5 – Fairly good possibility

6

7

8

9

10

10 – Certain

[illegible]

We truly value the information you have provided. Your responses will contribute to our analyses.

Your answers were successfully transmitted, you may close the browser window or tab now.

Many thanks,

Imke & Bettina

Appendix B - Femvertising TV Spot

Femvertising stimuli: Audi “Daughters” TV spot, Super Bowl 2017

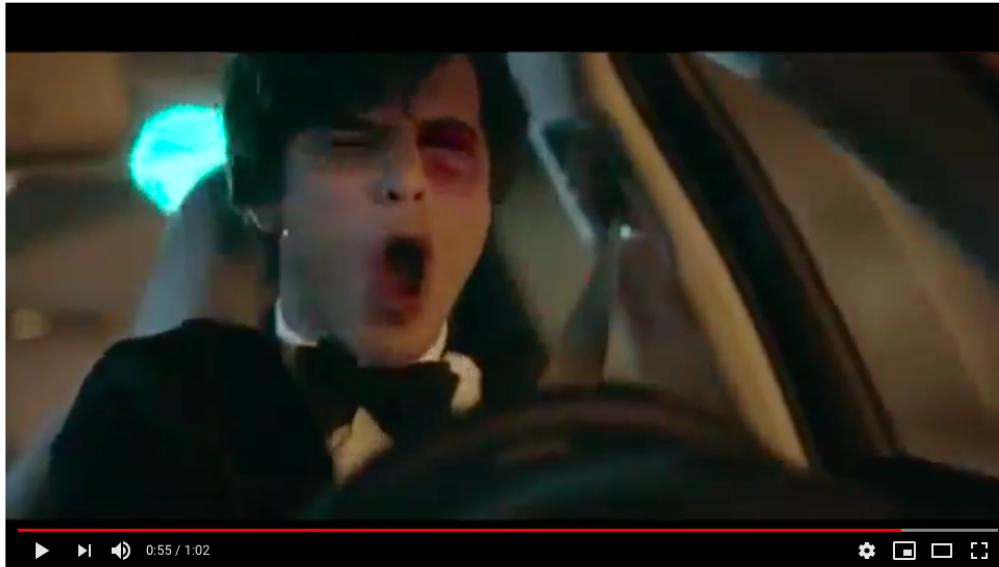
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iksaFG6wqM>



Appendix C - Traditional Advertisement TV Spot

Traditional advertising stimuli: Audi TV Spot Super Bowl 2013

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ky7ic1Ro9yw>



Appendix D - Pilot testing questions

Pilot testing list of questions adapted by Grimm (2010)

1. Were you able to clearly understand all questions? Or were there any difficulties with the wording or formulation of questions?
2. While answering the questions, did you miss any answer options?
3. Were you willing to answer all questions or did anything offend you personally?
4. Did you think the instructions were clear enough?
5. Did you think that any questions were already indicating a preferred answer? / were the formulation of questioned biased by us?
6. How did you like the flow of the questionnaire, was it logical?
7. Did the time to conduct the questionnaire seem reasonable?
8. In general, what do you think about the questionnaire? Or do you have any additional comments or remarks?

Appendix E - Attitude towards the Ad T-Test Results

Variable	Group	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Cohen's
Total score Attitude towards the Ad	Femvertising	61.99	12.587	7.035	0.000	16.571	1.19
	Advertising	45.41	15.166				
Appealing Ad	Femvertising	5.23	1.332	7.053	0.000	1.757	1.194
	Advertising	3.47	1.604				
Heartwarming Ad	Femvertising	5.66	1.361	9.42	0.000	2.314	1.596
	Advertising	3.34	1.541				
Buy the brand	Femvertising	3.91	1.586	3.472	0.001	0.9	0.587
	Advertising	3.01	1.479				
Makes me feel good	Femvertising	5.2	1.431	5.951	0.000	1.529	1.007
	Advertising	3.67	1.604				
Wonderful	Femvertising	5.27	1.424	6.881	0.000	1.829	1.708
	Advertising	3.44	1.708				
Fascinating Ad	Femvertising	4.66	1.413	4.725	0.000	1.214	0.802
	Advertising	3.44	1.621				
Skip the Ad	Femvertising	4.66	1.693	3.085	0.002	0.929	0.522
	Advertising	3.73	1.864				
Little interest	Femvertising	5.16	1.421	6.275	0.000	1.586	1.063
	Advertising	3.57	1.566				
Dislike Ad	Femvertising	5.97	1.179	5.501	0.000	1.414	0.927
	Advertising	4.56	1.799				
Forget easily	Femvertising	5.39	1.397	3.459	0.001	0.957	0.586
	Advertising	4.43	1.846				
Tired of this kind of Ad	Femvertising	5.06	1.614	3.221	0.002	0.9	0.544
	Advertising	4.16	1.691				
Ad leaves me cold	Femvertising	5.83	1.076	5.248	0.000	1.243	0.885
	Advertising	4.59	1.664				

Appendix F - Brand Gender T-Test Results

Variable	Group	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean difference	Cohen's
Brand Gender scale totalscore	Femvertising	47.46	10.356	138	0.000	11.7	1.229
	Advertising	35.76	8.596				
Masculine gender totalscore	Femvertising	22.86	4.819	5.49	0.000	4.486	0.929
	Advertising	18.37	4.849				
Adventurous	Femvertising	2.83	1.049	2.023	0.045	0.329	0.343
	Advertising	2.5	0.864				
Aggressive	Femvertising	5.53	1.648	5.461	0.000	1.586	0.926
	Advertising	3.94	1.785				
Brave	Femvertising	2.96	1.256	-0.64	0.949	-0.14	0.008
	Advertising	2.97	1.383				
Daring	Femvertising	3.16	1.058	-0.142	0.887	-0.29	0.025
	Advertising	3.19	1.311				
Dominant	Femvertising	4.11	1.945	6.74	0.000	1.729	1.134
	Advertising	2.39	0.906				
Sturdy	Femvertising	4.27	1.166	4.688	0.000	0.886	0.787
	Advertising	3.39	1.067				
Feminine gender totalscore	Femvertising	24.6	7.328	6.651	0.000	7.124	1.123
	Advertising	17.39	5.355				
Express tender feelings	Femvertising	4.44	1.621	4.461	0.000	1.171	0.753
	Advertising	3.27	1.483				
Fragile	Femvertising	2.71	1.364	2.223	0.028	0.471	0.375
	Advertising	2.24	1.135				
Graceful	Femvertising	4.93	1.397	4.545	0.000	1.129	0.769
	Advertising	3.8	1.538				
Sensitive	Femvertising	4.21	1.658	6.404	0.000	1.586	1.079
	Advertising	2.63	1.241				
Sweet	Femvertising	4.19	2.149	6.159	0.000	1.771	1.046
	Advertising	2.41	1.083				
Tender	Femvertising	4.11	1.44	4.725	0.000	1.086	0.794
	Advertising	3.03	1.274				