WHO RUN THE WORLD? GIRLS!

A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF FEMVERTISING ON WOMEN

ABSTRACT

Femvertising is a relatively new concept referring to female empowerment advertising. It has gained not only more attention and exposure within advertising (e.g. Dove's *Real Beauty*, Always' *Like A Girl*, and Lindex' *Bravolution*), but has also proven to be financially effective for firms. Femvertising encompasses the use of both non-idealised female models as well as non-stereotypical female roles in advertising. This thesis seeks to examine the effect of femvertising on firms and women, mostly focusing on the latter to see if there are any positive extended effects in society. More specifically, it seeks to study the effects of femvertising on firms by looking at ad and brand attitude, and on women's self-perception.

Drawing on research and theory about female stereotypes and the effects of its use, it is hypothesised that the use of femvertising will increase women's attitudes towards the brands, as well as their own levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, body image, and willingness to help. Based on the theory of the third person effect, it is also hypothesised that women will be positively affected by femvertising due to the third person perception, i.e. the supposed positive view of femvertising by others (women and men). This perception should then moderate any changes in a woman's self-perception, hence the term third person effect.

Two studies were conducted, one about the use of non-idealised female models, and the other about the use of non-stereotypical roles, each focusing on specific variables. Results show that femvertising in both studies has a positive impact on firms in terms of ad and brand attitude. But when it comes to self-perception, there is only support of it positively influencing women in terms of self-esteem when exposed to non-idealised models. Willingness to help was also greater after exposure to femvertising. It did not show any effect on self-efficacy or body image. In addition, the third person effect was concluded to not be an explanatory factor to changes in the variables studied.

KEY WORDS Femvertising, stereotypes, attitude, extended effects, self-esteem, self-efficacy, body image, willingness to help, third person effect.

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Table of Contents

List of figures

List of tables

1. Introduction

The first chapter of this thesis will present an introduction to the chosen subject and the formulated research question, followed by expected contributions and limitations of the study. A short description of the thesis' disposition ends this chapter.

1.1 Background

In magazines, on television, online and when walking the streets, advertising is a natural element in people's lives. Advertisements are there to sell products and brands, but while doing so, they also tend to portray people in certain ways – by e.g. using stereotypes. This does not necessarily have to be an issue; the use of stereotypes has often been justified by being a way of mirroring what the society looks like (Eisend, 2010) and a way to facilitate the reception of a message (Sheehan, 2014). When this person is a woman however, the stereotypical portrayal often has a restricting effect on the way she is viewed in society by e.g. showcasing her as dependent or at home, as opposed to men who are featured as prominent characters (Paek, Nelson and Viella, 2011). Sometimes it even goes to the extent of portraying her as a sex object, i.e. when her sexuality is being used to sell a product. A study of almost 2,000 American print advertisements showed that approximately 52 % of all women were objectified (Stankiewicz and Rosselli, 2008). However, the world of advertising appears to be experiencing a change.

In 2014 the hygiene brand Always launched their online video "Like A Girl", which proved to be a huge success after airing at Super Bowl in 2015 (Berman, 2015). The video challenged female stereotypes by portraying how girls perceived themselves, questioning the phrase "Like a girl" ("Why can't "run like a girl" also mean win the race?"), and giving it new meaning. The video was a huge hit in terms of virality – widely beneficial for the brand – although the VP also claimed it rather supported their mission to "make a difference in girls' confidence" (Griner and Ciambrello, 2015), something Always has reportedly aimed to do for the past 30 years (Always, 2016). Moreover, both women and men expressed a positive change in their attitude towards the phrase after seeing the video (Adweek, 2015). Using positive reinforcement messages like this can therefore reflect the values of a company and what the company thinks is a desirable society (Greenlee, 2004), as part of a wider CSR perspective (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003).

This type of female empowerment advertising is called *femvertising*, a term originally coined by the lifestyle website SheKnows in 2014, and defined as advertising that employs pro-female

talent, as well as messages and imagery to empower women and girls (Ciambrello, 2014). Its purpose is to "reject unattainable beauty standards and gender stereotypes" (Adweek, 2015). Today in 2016, society is moving towards showing more inclusion, as well as positive reinforcement messages towards women within advertising. One recent example is the Swedish national campaign launched in the spring of 2016 by fashion retailer Lindex; "Bravolution" – a print campaign featuring Lindex's own customers of different shapes and sizes (Lindex, 2016). In a sense, firms are "cashing in on feminism", since it has shown to be a strategic move for the firm in terms of enhanced profitability (Davidson, 2015). The beauty skincare line Dove launched their hugely successful "Campaign For Real Beauty" in 2004, an advertising campaign showing women of more natural shape, as opposed to the commonly thin and 'perfect' bodies often used in beauty advertising. The campaign has continuously been praised, and has generated great financial benefits for the brand (Simmons, 2006). In addition, the advertising world itself is rewarding these efforts. The newly stipulated award "The Glass Lion" by the Cannes Awards is to "positively impact ingrained gender inequality, imbalance or injustice" (Cannes Lions, 2016).

1.2 Problem areas and research gaps

The intended effects of advertising are to influence consumers' behaviour and perceptions, e.g. have an impact on brand awareness, brand attitude, and purchase intentions. However, the effects of advertising often stretch beyond the intention and can have extended effects on a societal and cultural level. In a reviewing article, Pollay (2000) outlines a rather negative view of indirect consequences of advertising, and also some criticism to the lack of research on the area. Despite it being 2016, there is still a lot of work to be done.

Although – or perhaps because – stereotypes are still used, it has constantly been shown that women tend to be judged more by physical appearance than men. Women therefore often have more to lose if they do not reach the standards in society (Bar-Tal and Saxe, 1976). Also, women tend to process information differently than men, and make decisions based on incremental reasoning processes (Sheehan, 2014). This build-up of previous experiences, coming from various levels and sources, have led to women having to process an immense amount of information on how they should look in society (Grabe, Ward, and Hyde, 2008). They run a higher likelihood of being negatively affected by these beauty stereotypes (Richins, 1991). Several studies examine the negative effects of stereotyped advertising, in terms of body images and roles, on women (e.g. Richins, 1991; Begley, 2000), but the possibility of *positive* unintended effects remain to be broadly studied, which is why it is a suitable area of research for this thesis.

Advertising aimed at empowering women is gradually increasing its presence. This shift indicates that firms believe it is a beneficial way of reaching the female audience, and it has

also started to gain attention among researchers (e.g. Dahlén, Åkestam and Rosengren, forthcoming). So far, the focus has mainly been on the positive effects on the sender, both in terms of how consumers evaluate firms, and in terms of financial outcome (Simmons, 2006; Ciambrello, 2014; Wallace, 2015). Recent findings have shown that participants experienced a positive effect of their self-esteem after viewing non-idealized images of models (Antioco, Smeesters and Boedec, 2012). Thus, there is reason to believe that the use of *femvertising* has potential in enhancing campaign effectiveness by extending its effect. This way, femvertising is not only a worthwhile marketing strategy, but also includes CSR initiatives within advertising. For Dove, for instance, it is to increase self-esteem among women (Dove, 2016).

Another aspect is: what underlying mechanisms cause these observed effects? *Why* do female portrayals in advertising make them feel or react in a certain way? A common theory used to explain effects on for example self-esteem and body satisfaction is the *social comparison* theory (e.g. Richins, 1991). This theory explains how people are driven to compare themselves to others when there are no non-social means, which makes it clear that people often compare themselves to people portrayed in ads (Festinger, 1954). However, there are other, less researched, possible explanations. In a study on idealised body images, it was shown that participants' perception of other's beliefs had an effect on how they actually felt, the so-called *third person effect* (Milkie, 1999), which is will be the theoretical foundation for this thesis. Much of the previous research is based on the negative mechanism behind this effect, and it is therefore interesting to see how this effect can explain variations based on the reversed effect, i.e. a positive mechanism.

Femvertising is currently an under-researched area; only nine academic articles had been published in March 2016 (Google, 2016). This is a movement worth investigating as it can bring a multitude of effectiveness to society in a true win-win manner, since the term holds so many different aspects: body image, self-esteem, breaking down stereotypes, female empowerment, etc. The aim of this study is to theoretically investigate this possible effectiveness: does femvertising positively affect women's attitudes towards brands, and themselves? Moreover, this study allows for a wider approach by adding social stereotypes to the overall category (i.e. female stereotypes), instead of just focusing on the more commonly studied physical stereotypes, most commonly referred to as the idealised body image.

1.3 Purpose and research question

For advertisers considering a new marketing strategy, the effect on the firm needs to be clear, which is why this study first will seek to examine advertising effectiveness. Further, as the quote by Always' VP suggests, companies breaking advertising norms also have a chance of

generating (positive) societal effects. Just having more creative advertising has been proven to lead to consumers feeling more creative (Rosengren, Dahlén and Modig, 2013).

It has been shown that advertising can have extended effects beyond its impact on sales and brand (Pollay, 2000) and research has been done concerning possible negative effects of the use of female stereotypes. The current study, however, seeks to explore whether women can be positively influenced by femvertising, i.e. the use of *non*-idealised body image and *non*-stereotypical roles. It also attempts to investigate the underlying cause for such effects by using the third-person effect theory.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the understanding of the total impact of femvertising by answering the following research questions:

Does exposure to femvertising positively influence women's attitude towards the brand and their self-perceptions?

And, is the influence on self-perception dependent on what we believe about how femvertising affects others?

1.4 Expected contribution

This study wishes to further explore the advertising phenomenon femvertising as well as add to the body of knowledge concerning advertising's extended positive effects. It expects to widen the understanding of the potential positive influence on society from femvertising and, by raising awareness for femvertising, this study hopes to further engage both academics and practitioners to look into its effects. Also, by shedding light on the reason for the feelings femvertising might induce, this study hopes to combine different theoretical concepts (females' self-perception and the third person effect) to present a unique take on femvertising.

Finally, in addition to firm effects, the study hopes to reveal positive psychological effects from femvertising, and thereby encourage a more diverse use of women in advertising.

1.5 Delimitations

Given the limited amount of time, and necessity to best utilise the resources to enable a deeper understanding of femvertising, some limitations have been done. The study will focus solely on women and the effects advertising has on them; the reason being that studies show that they are more affected by society's demands (e.g. Bartel and Saxe, 1976). Femvertising as a concept focuses on challenging female stereotypes in terms of social stereotypes and the non-idealised body image.

Furthermore, this thesis will only examine two different stereotypes, social and body (excluding the aspect of attractiveness), and not include potential effects of different products (e.g. high/low involvement). Also, potential moderators such as different prior level of domain specific self-esteem and situational vulnerability will be excluded.

Regarding media type, this thesis is limited to examining print ads regarding the body image, and video material when it comes to social stereotypes - this is due to the ease of use and collection of relevant material within each category, which will be further explained in Chapter 3 (Method).

1.6. Disposition

The thesis will be structured in the following way: first, there is an overview of existing *theory* (Chapter 2) along with the implications for the current study, as well as the generated hypotheses that will serve as a foundation for this thesis. A discussion about the choice of approach and a description of the chosen research *method* follows (Chapter 3). In the next chapter, the *results* from the studies are presented (Chapter 4). An *analysis* of these results is conducted (Chapter 5). The report is then wrapped up with a *discussion* of the results, along with the conclusions and implications for professionals and academics, followed by a critical reflection, and suggestions for future research (Chapter 6).

2. Theory and hypothesis generation

The theory used to build the study is presented in this chapter together with the generated hypotheses that the thesis seeks to examine. Four main theoretical areas are brought up; the use of female stereotypes in media, the effects of idealised body image, the effects of social stereotypes, and the third person effect.

2.1 Stereotypes

2.1.1 Introduction

The official definition of stereotype is "a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). Transferring this notion to mass media, it is essentially portrayals that are frequently showing generalised views about personal characteristics of members of a certain group. Stereotypes rather show an example of a type of person rather than a unique individual (Taylor and Stern, 1997).

2.1.2 The idealised female body image

What is considered attractive in a woman is an ever-changing concept. From full-figured, plump, and pale women in the 1400s-1700s, to the voluptuous hourglass figures in the 1800s, to the 1950's curvy ideal, we arrive at today's slender ideal woman. The general consensus on what makes a woman beautiful in this day and age is down to being young, slim, natural, sensual, and sexual (Wykes and Gunter, 2005). A general development within the depiction of female bodies in media and advertising is this thinness of women, which many females have come to desire throughout the past decades (Polivy and Herman, 1987; Lamb, Jackson, Cassiday, and Priest, 1993, Wykes and Gunter, 2005). The ideal body of a woman is not only thin though, she is big-breasted, 'hair-free', has shining voluminous hair, long eye lashes… the list can go on and on. The general notion within advertising is that "what is beautiful is good" (Solomon, 2009), which facilitates persuasive communication. This justifies the use of attractive women in advertising; by making female consumers buy the brand's products, they can close the gap between the actual self and the ideal self; the latter often constituting an unattainable beauty standard (Solomon, 2009). To quote Berger (1972, p. 134), "The publicity image steals her love of herself as she is, and offers it back to her for the price of the product." This physical stereotype is often referred to as the *idealised female body image*; it is the one that consumers see every day in advertising where models showcase products or services.

2.1.3 Social stereotypes

Roles are socially expected behavioural patterns that depend on the status of an individual in society (Merriam-Webster, 2016). Four types of female social stereotypes portrayed in media today have been identified: the glamorous sex kitten, the sainted mother, the devious witch and the hard-faced corporate and political climber (Sheehan, 2014).

The *social stereotypes* discussed in this theory section are composed of the following: trait descriptors (e.g. concern for others), role behaviours (e.g. taking care of children), and occupation (e.g. housewife) (Deaux and Lewis, 1984). They all encompass the social expectations that are put on women in society, and therefore this thesis will treat them under the same definition.

2.1.4 Reasons for using female stereotypes in advertising

The word "stereotype" generally creates negative associations. However, despite there being some general apprehensive attitudes towards using stereotypes, it does have its advantages. Since a brand only has so much time to present information about your product, using a stereotype means that you can quickly "set the stage", which lowers the amount of processing a consumer has to do before she or he gets to the actual advertising message. In line with this notion, ad effectiveness also increases when the advertised product is presented with an appropriate model (Sheehan, 2014).

Great care still needs to be considered when advertisers use stereotyping. Current events and the surrounding environment need to be taken into account so that an ad doesn't come off as being tasteless, offensive or opportunistic. Despite this risk, practitioners still appear to use stereotyping in an attempt to break the clutter, with the traditional myth of "sex sells". And who better to sell sex than women? Although some contest whether it truly does (Twitchell, 1996), it is certainly enough to grab consumers' attention (Sheehan, 2014). Sex is often used as an advertising strategy when targeting men. A classic contemporary example is Carl's Jr., the US hamburger chain that frequently creates ads portraying women as sex objects in order to sell their burgers. However, their ads have often been accused of being offensive. Their ad for Super Bowl 2015 was subsequently banned after showing a glamour model, wearing a small bikini, walking around in a market place and eating their hamburger in a seductive way (NY Daily News, 2015). This example underlines the vast exposure of female stereotypes that women run into every day. For Carl Jr's, it was a classic case of using a glamorous sex kitten. However, many might question whether it is product-relevant to depict a sexy woman together with a hamburger.

2.2 Effects of stereotypes

Consumers process the information in advertisements to form opinions about themselves, since the ad can suggest to them who they are and how they should be (Dahlén, Rosengren and Smit, 2014; Mehta, 1999). Eisend (2010) proposed that the use of stereotypes becomes problematic when the portrayed category (here: women) becomes restricted due to expectations and judgements.

2.2.2 The effects of idealised body image on women

The use of idealised body images in advertising is not unproblematic. Even though some studies indicate that some women can feel inspired and even experience a positive impact on their self-esteem (Phillips and McQuarrie 2011; Smeesters and Mandel, 2006) the opposite effects appears to be larger and has gained a lot of attention, both in research media and in popular press (e.g. Richins, 1991; Groesz, Levine, and Murnen, 2002; Grabe *et al.*, 2008).

2.2.2.1 Firm-level effects

To date, the impact of a model's body size on advertising effectiveness is yet to be thoroughly and systematically determined. Despite this, the use of idealised body image is often defended with the argument of its ability to sell. However, some studies have found that advertisements using ultra-thin vs. average-sized models (with the same level of attractiveness) are equally effective in terms of ad attitude, brand attitude and purchase intention (e.g. Halliwell and Dittmar, 2004; Halliwell, Dittmar and Howe, 2005). Another study even showed that women feel unmotivated to shop after viewing idealised models (Barry, 2012).

Furthermore, Antioco *et al.* (2012) found that idealised models led to lower purchase intentions, and that the use of non-idealised models were deemed more trustworthy. This in turn generated a higher attitude towards the brand. Trustworthiness has been shown to positively affect brand attitude also in other studies (e.g. Pornpitakan, 2004).

Along with media's reports of positive financial impact from femvertising (e.g. Ciambrello, 2014; Wallace, 2015) it suggests that using non-idealised body image has positive effects on the firm. It is therefore hypothesised that:

> **H1:** **The use of non-idealised female body images in advertising (femvertising) will lead to higher levels of a)** **ad attitude and b)** **brand attitude, than the use of idealised female body images (traditional).**

2.2.2.2 The woman's own body image

Research has shown that media exposure of idealised women is linked to women's general dissatisfaction with their bodies, increased investment in appearance, and increased endorsement of eating disorders (Grabe *et al.*, 2008). Idealised images raise comparison standards and lowers satisfaction with one's own attractiveness (Richins, 1991), and five minutes of exposure to thin-and-beautiful media images have been shown to result in a more negative body image state than an exposure to images of a neutral object (Yamamiya, Cash, Melnyk, Posavac and Posavac, 2005). The effect of body dissatisfaction has been shown to be greater among women than men (Myers and Crowther, 2009). To further prove this point, Fallon & Rozin (1985) found that women tend to overestimate their current body image to the ideal body image (i.e. being heavier) to a much larger extent than men, and putting pressure on themselves to constantly want to lose weight. An interesting aspect was found by Groesz *et al.* (2002), who saw that the effect of body dissatisfaction was greater when the respondents only saw the ideal image, compared to those who had been exposed to both the ideal and normal image. This indicates that a more diverse representation of how women are portrayed in advertising can have a moderating effect.

On a positive note, there are some signs that how altering the portrayed women can have positive effects. One study found that body-focused anxiety decreased in women with a history of eating disorders after viewing advertisements containing average-size models (Halliwell *et al.*, 2005). This result is similar to Peck and Loken's (2004), where larger-sized models were found more attractive. This was related to the extent which women generated positive thoughts about themselves when they were activated with non-traditional beliefs, in this case a magazine that featured large-sized models.

As outlined in this section, there are a number of studies demonstrating the negative consequences in terms of body satisfaction on women when using idealised body image in advertising. There are also some indications of the opposite effect being possible when a non-idealised body image is presented. This is in line with what the thesis suggests – that the previously observed effects can be reversed, i.e. that positive consequences can be reached by using non-idealised body image in advertising, with support from other studies (e.g. Antioco *et al.,* 2012) Therefore the following hypothesis is generated:

> **H2 a:** **The use of non-idealised female body images in advertising (femvertising) will lead to higher levels of body image than the use of idealised female body images (traditional).**

2.2.2.3 Self-esteem

Self-esteem is defined as the overall evaluation of personal worth towards the self (Rosenberg, 1965) and it has been shown to be negatively affected from exposure to thin-ideal advertisements. Also, the following effects have been observed after being exposed to a thin model: increased negative mood, lower body satisfaction and increased levels of depression, compared to average-size models or other neutral stimuli, e.g. news (Groesz *et al.* 2002; Bessenoff, 2006; Turner, Hamilton, Jacobs, Angood and Dwyer, 1997). As Richins (1991) showed in her work, using idealised images of models in advertising proved to have a negative effect on women's self-esteem. And despite Smeesters and Mandel's (2006) finding that exposure to moderately thin models may have a positive impact on one's self-esteem, most academics beg to differ. A vast amount of articles repeatedly show that in many contexts (e.g. print ads, music videos, TV commercials), an exposure to "ideal" thin models makes women experience lower self-esteem (Groesz *et al.,* 2002). Antioco *et al.,* (2012) actually found in their study that participants had higher self-esteem after being exposed to a non-idealised model than an idealised one. Coupled with the many negative studies based on the use of idealised models, this therefore leads to our hypothesis that:

> **H2 b:** **The use of non-idealised female body images in advertising (femvertising) will lead to higher levels of self-esteem than the use of idealised female body images (traditional).**

2.2.3 The effects of social stereotypes on women

The prevalence of female social stereotypes in advertising is apparent (Eisend, 2010), but literature also suggests support for a decrease of gender role stereotypes (Wolin, 2003). Previous research has elaborated on the reasons for using social stereotypes, in terms of ad effectiveness and sales, but can any studied negative effects from the use of social stereotypes be seen?

The main issue about social stereotypes is that they "have the ability to reduce people or objects to classes based on inferences that are made from an individual or social context" (Vanden Bergh and Katz, 1999). Using one-dimensional social stereotypes like the ones mentioned previously can have a negative impact on targeted consumers, who could feel worse after being exposed to an ad with a specific stereotype. One example is the sainted mother stereotype. If you e.g. direct your brand towards a working woman, the stereotype has the risk of making her feel guilty if she is not at home with her children all the time (Sheehan, 2014). When reflecting upon it, it is not too far-fetched that when exposed to one of these one-dimensional stereotypes, one can imagine it limits women to thinking they cannot be more

than just the one type ("If I want to be the devoted mother, then I cannot be the hard-core career women").

2.2.3.1 Firm-level effects

Despite the use of social stereotypes having its advantages, research has long argued that using traditional stereotypical portrayals does not always lead to a better perception of a brand. Whipple and Courtney (1985) claimed that within any advertising setting, a modern and liberated depiction of female roles is in general a more effective approach than resorting to the traditional depiction. Focus should be on presenting realistic and natural portrayals, as opposed to false and stereotyped ones. In fact, Lysonski and Pollay (1990) found that consumers developed less favourable attitudes towards firms or products that were connected to stereotyped role portrayals, something which Kilbourne (1986) also indicated: ad evaluations scored significantly higher for professional ads vs. stereotypical housewife versions. Therefore, it is believed that femvertising will score higher in brand evaluations since more realistic and natural women are used. In contrast, one study found that the traditional female portrayal was more effective in terms of ad/brand recall and purchase intention, than any of the tested progressive portrayals (Zawisza and Cinirella, 2010). However, more research shows the opposite; some of which can be explained by the presence of emotions, i.e. the affective responses that are evoked by an ad. Using emotions in advertising have been found to play a part in shaping consumers' attitudes towards ads and brands (Brown and Stayman, 1992). Merely using particular sex role portrayals elicits strong emotional and attitudinal responses among both women and men (Orth and Holancova, 2004). One example of an emotion is *social affection*, which makes the viewer feel good through e.g. happiness or caring representations. It belongs to a positive category of emotions, which has been shown to positively affect ad attitude and the immediate brand attitude (Batra and Ray, 1986). Due to femvertising's construct, it is assumed that it will elicit emotions of social affection, which will lead to positively influenced attitudinal responses towards a brand. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

> **H3:** **The use of non-stereotypical female roles in advertising (femvertising) will generate higher levels of a) ad attitude and b) brand attitude, than the use of stereotypical roles (traditional).**

2.2.3.2 Self-efficacy

A number of studies have found negative extended effects from the use of stereotypes. Some academics have, using stereotype threat theory, shown that stereotypes can negatively affect women's performance (Spencer *et al.*, 1999). One example is when women heard the stereotypical phrase "men outperform women" before doing math tests, they performed worse (Fogliati and Bussay, 2013). Furthermore, the individual most affected by a stereotype is the

person targeted by the stereotype. For instance, Begley (2000) conducted an experiment where respondents were exposed to stereotypical traits of their group (e.g. "blonde women are stupid" and "elderly are forgetful"). Those who were reminded of the stereotypical traits performed worse at the tasks at hand than those who did not – which suggests that if you are not exposed to a stereotypical characteristic of your "group", then you will not be affected by it. Another study showed it is possible to eliminate situational cues that give rise to stereotype threat (Davies, Spencer, Quinn and Gerhardstein, 2002). This suggests that effects originating from the use of stereotypes can be reversed by changing the stereotypical elements towards its female empowering equivalent (i.e. femvertising) in order to enhance the performance. The actual performance has been shown to have a connection to your initial belief of your ability to perform the task at hand (Locke, Frederick, Lee and Bobko, 1984).

The belief of one's capability to achieve goals or ability to influence events that affect their lives is known as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; 2010). This belief affects behaviour both directly and indirectly by affecting its determinants (e.g. goals, outcome expectation and opportunities). The goals and challenges that people set as well as the commitment to them, are influenced by self-efficacy belief and consequently the decisions in what actions to pursue (Bandura, 2006). Self-efficacy has four sources; performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and emotional arousal. Vicarious experience is the self-comparison with and outcomes attained by a model (Bandura, 1977), which e.g. could be female stereotypes. Since this source is dependent on others, it is vulnerable to change which implies that a change in the comparison could induce a change in self-efficacy.

The connection between belief (self-efficacy) and behaviour indicates that what influences our beliefs also has an effect on behaviour, which is precisely what Eisend (2010) suggested to be the problematic part of using stereotypes. Continuously being exposed to stereotypical advertising and evaluated accordingly, can result in incorporating some parts of the stereotype (Lun, Sinclair and Cogburn, 2009; Casper and Rothermund, 2012). Another study found that women who watched gender stereotypical commercials undermined their aspirations and accomplishments in traditionally male domains such as leadership (Davies *et al.*, 2002).

In summary, roles are connected to what is expected of us in society or in closer situations. It has also been shown that the exposure to a stereotype is enough to trigger these expectations, and that the belief of what you can achieve affects your behaviour. It is therefore hypothesised that reversing the stereotypical portrayal – as femvertising is proposed to do – and have women watch an ad that instead empowers women, will enhance the way they see themselves and what they can achieve. It is therefore hypothesised that:

H4 a: **The use of non-stereotypical female roles in advertising (femvertising) will generate higher levels of self-efficacy than the use of stereotypical roles (traditional).**

Research has found a correlation between self-efficacy and self-esteem (e.g. Judge, Erez, Bono and Thoresen, 2002; Lane, Lane and Kyprianou, 2004). Thus, it can be assumed that if social stereotypes have an effect on self-efficacy, then it is very likely that it will also have an effect on self-esteem. It is quite intuitive; if self-esteem is defined as the overall evaluation of personal worth towards the self (Rosenberg, 1965), then the belief of ability is higher among those with high self-esteem. This reasoning leads to the next hypothesis that:

H4 b: **The use of non-stereotypical female roles in advertising (femvertising) will generate higher levels of self-esteem than the use of stereotypical roles (traditional).**

2.2.3.2 Willingness to help

Femvertising aims to empower women by using non-stereotypical roles. The definition of empowerment includes becoming aware of oneself and your situation (Rowlands, 1995). In addition, self-awareness theory states when increasing attention to self, the motivation to help others increases as well. This is due to either increased awareness of the discrepancy between actions and ideal, or the belief of great personal responsibility for others (Duval and Wicklund, 1972). Also, an experiment by Berkowitz (1987) showed that self-directed attention increased participants' willingness to help the experimenter. This can partly be explained by the fact that participants may have generated favourable thoughts about themselves, and therefore been more willing to "do the right thing", as this coincided with their positive self-conception. There are some studies that contradict findings in the original self-awareness theory, however, they do so under conditions of concern for self-worth or personal problems (Berkowitz, 1987) which are some of the emotions found to be induced by traditional, stereotypical advertising. The line of thought is visualised in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The chain of events leading to willingness to help

Femvertising → Empowerment → Self-awareness → Willingness to help

It is therefore expected that exposure to femvertising, which elicits self-awareness, should make people more helpful, leading to the following hypothesis that:

H4 c: **The use of non-stereotypical female roles in advertising (femvertising) will generate higher levels of willingness to help than the use of stereotypical roles (traditional).**

2.3 Third Person Effect

'Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves.'
Berger (1972: 47)

"Women see themselves through men's eyes" (Wykes and Gunter, 2005, p.38); a statement often confirmed by others (e.g. Choi, Leshner and Choi, 2008), which emphasises the importance of other's opinions about oneself. This entails that for women, men's opinions will matter more, and decide how women react and behave. This is supported by Milkie (1999), who claims that "Although they [females] generally understood that the images were unrealistic, the girls perceived that other girls in the school, and especially males, valued such an appearance" (p. 201). The current study will focus on the theoretical definition of this effect, specifically the *third person effect*. Within communication, this phenomenon explains that people believe others are more affected by exposure to mass media than themselves (third person perception). This perception can in itself lead to an action, i.e. people will react according to their beliefs about what "others" think. By doing that, they are indirectly affected by the communication, which can be attributed to the third person effect (Davison, 1983). Another similar theoretical concept is one derived from the third person effect, called the *presumed influence.* It entails that people react to the anticipation of the influence of a message on others, i.e. change behaviours or attitude. The perception occurs regardless of influence on the self, setting it apart from the third person effect (Gunther and Storey, 2003).

The third person effect is often studied in negative contexts, and appears to be even stronger when the communication is seen as socially less desirable or potentially harmful, e.g. pornography (Gunther 1995; Rojas, Shah and Faber, 1996) and cigarettes (Henriksen and Flora, 1999; Shah, Faber and Youn, 1999).

As previously mentioned, femvertising has been used as a mass media communication tool, e.g. by Dove and Lindex. Therefore, it is posited that women will believe that others will be more affected by femvertising than themselves, which may result in attitudinal and behavioural consequences, which are discussed below. This leads us to the hypothesis that will be investigated in both studies (for social stereotypes, the positive influence will be studied, due to the structure of the measurement, see 3.2.4 Measurements).

> **H5:** **Female respondents will perceive femvertising to have a greater effect on a) other females and b) other males, than on themselves.**

2.3.1 Body image and self-esteem

Connecting the third person effect-mechanism to media's portrayal of the female body gives some clues to how and why women are negatively affected by stereotypical advertising. Women's self-esteem, defined as the liking or valuing of oneself and the believed capability of dealing with one's environment (Fitch, 1970), has been shown to be indirectly negatively affected by media because they believed others will evaluate them according to the ideal body image being used (Milkie, 1999; David and Johnson, 1998). Lo and Wei (2002) show how *gender* moderates the third person effect, in a study where both genders thought that online pornography would have greater negative effects on other males rather than other females.

The fact that gendered others have a larger third person effect is mostly explained by social distance. Lee and Yang (1996) have previously shown that people of the same gender have a closer social distance than those of the opposite gender. As social distance increases, so does the strength of the third person effect (Cohen, Mutz, Price and Gunther, 1988; Gunther, 1991; Henriksen and Flora 1999; McLeod, Eveland and Nathanson, 1997; David and Johnson, 1998), and in a study that identified the "others" by gender, it was found that women estimate that men are more affected by the female ideal body image than women (Choi *et al.*, 2008). The study specifically examined the effect of idealised body images on female participants from a third person effect framework, and found that women in fact were *positively* affected in body satisfaction when they experienced a high third person perception for men. However, this finding was surprising to the authors and has not been repeated in other studies.

As previously mentioned, the third person effect is mostly used to examine socially undesirable communication and negative effects. However, this study proposes that the use of the third person effect can also be useful in a positive perspective, more specifically when studying femvertising. The third person effect has been shown to disappear or be reduced to a first person effect when examining effects on socially desirable outcomes (Gunther and Thorson, 1992), and since femvertising can be argued to be such an outcome, there is the risk that the third person effect cannot be attributed to all the proposed effects. Nevertheless, this previous research is largely devoted to areas that differ from femvertising such as prosocial behaviour. Since the variables willingness to help and self-efficacy fall under this category, it seems irrelevant to study them due to the well-documented area (Gunther and Thorson, 1992). Furthermore, from a negative point of view, most studies have looked at self-esteem and body image, leaving room for potential positive third person effects. It is posited that if you believe that others will be more positively affected than you regarding a femvertising advert, then you will react positively. It is therefore hypothesised that:

> **H6: The third person effect is a predictor of the impact from femvertising on a) body image and b) self-esteem.**

2.4 Summary of hypotheses

Table 1. Summary of hypotheses

Non-idealised female body images

H1	The use of non-idealised female body images in advertising (femvertising) will lead to higher levels of a) *ad attitude* and b) *brand attitude*, than the use of idealised body images (traditional).
H2 a	The use of non-idealised female body images in advertising (femvertising) will lead to higher levels of *body image* than the use of idealised female body images (traditional).
H2 b	The use of non-idealised female body images in advertising (femvertising) will lead to higher levels of *self-esteem* than the use of idealised female body images (traditional).

Non-stereotypical female roles

H3	The use of non-stereotypical female roles in advertising (femvertising) will generate higher levels of a) *ad attitude* and b) *brand attitude*, than the use of stereotypical roles (traditional).
H4 a	The use of non-stereotypical female roles in advertising (femvertising) will generate higher levels of *self-efficacy* than the use of stereotypical female roles (traditional).
H4 b	The use of non-stereotypical female roles in advertising (femvertising) will generate higher levels of *self-esteem* than the use of stereotypical female roles (traditional).
H4 c	The use of non-stereotypical female roles in advertising (femvertising) will generate higher levels of *willingness to help* than the use of stereotypical female roles (traditional).

Third person effect

H5	Female respondents will perceive femvertising to have a greater effect on a) *other females* and b) *other males*, than on themselves.
H6	The third person effect is a predictor of the impact from femvertising on a) *body image* and b) *self-esteem*.

3. Method

The following chapter will describe the method used for producing this thesis, together with the reasoning behind it. First, a motivation of choice of approach and research method is presented. A description of the conducted survey follows, along with a discussion of the preparatory work in the form of a pre-study. Finally, there is a review of the study's credibility.

3.1 Initial work, choice of approach and research method

The increasingly common, but still unusual, advertisements that challenge norms in society spurred an interest for the subject, and after an initial read, focus was directed towards challenging female stereotypes, i.e. femvertising. The thesis-writing process continued with a more in-depth investigation of discussions in previous research and in popular press. The mapping showed that the area is under-researched, especially in terms of its unintended extended effects. This information was then used to formulate a research question.

A deductive approach was chosen where existing theory was the basis for hypotheses formulation, and those hypotheses where then empirically tested. As the study focuses on testing and verifying hypotheses, a quantitative method is preferable (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005). This is further supported by Bryman and Bell (2011) who recommend a quantitative study when the aim is to make general conclusions through statistical analysis.

An experimental research method was deemed most suitable for the current questions, testing the hypotheses in a one-way between-subjects experiment. The experiment was conducted using surveys, with the purpose of comparing some variables of interest between groups, which led to several versions being made. Two studies were conducted: the first one regarding idealised body image, and the second regarding social stereotypes. The reason for conducting two different surveys was because the chosen stimuli specifically targeted a certain aspect of femvertising. In this manner, more aspects of femvertising could be captured. Each study had an intended different focus in terms of examined variables. The first concerned body image and self-esteem and was used to test H2a and H2b. The second study concerned self-esteem and self-efficacy, testing H4a, H4b, and H4c. Both studies looked at the firm-level effects (H1 and H3, respectively), and the third person effect by testing H5 and H6.

3.2 Survey design

The surveys were identical for both studies in order to simplify the process of analysing the collected data. The survey began with the respondents being exposed to a stimulus. Then they were asked questions concerning their attitude towards the ad and the featured brand, mainly in order to see firm effects but also if these attitudes had an impact on the remaining answers (i.e. could a low initial brand attitude result in negative responses?). This was followed by sets of questions regarding each of the remaining chosen measurements (see 3.2.4 Measurements). Measuring body-image concerns and self-perceptions after exposure to a stimulus is in line with suggestions by Halliwell and Dittmar (2004). Lastly, some questions about the stimulus' level of femvertising and information about demographics (gender, age, and nationality) were asked. Questions about the stimuli were put in the end to avoid biases through priming. The survey in its entirety can be found in Appendix IV.

The surveys were made as short as possible. Study 1 took approx. 5 minutes to complete and Study 2 approx. 5 - 7 minutes. This was done in order to increase the response rate. Time is a vital issue when dealing with survey responses. Demanding more time has been shown to lead to lower response rates (Porter, Whitcomb and Weitzer, 2004).

A complementary study was made to add to the results of Study 1, since the authors wanted to pose the third person effect question differently in regards to the ads' influence on body image perception. The choice of stimuli remained the same, and the respondents were of similar demographics as those used in Study 1 and Study 2. Certain questions were removed to shorten the survey (see Appendix V) to ensure that more respondents would answer. The main focus of the complementary study was to capture the third person perception (and thereby a potential third person effect).

3.2.1 Choice of stimuli

Different types of stimuli were used; print advertisements to demonstrate body image (Study 1) and video commercials to demonstrate social stereotypes (Study 2). The choice of using print ads to show body image was made because this is one of the most commonly used media when testing the effects of the female body on participants in experiments (e.g. Richins, 1991; Milkie, 1999; Choi *et al.,* 2008).

Videos were deemed more appropriate to showcase female social stereotypes, since 1) social stereotypes are more complex than mere body images, hence a video will enable comprehensive role portrayals, and 2) the supply of material is vaster when it comes to videos portraying female social stereotypes (and breaking them) than print ads.

Each type of stimulus had two variations; one that portrays women in a traditional way (traditional) and one that challenges stereotypes (femvertising). For social stereotypes there were two examples of each, so in total four videos. The reason for this is so that the results will not be limited to one sort of product category. Each respondent was exposed to just one of the pictures/videos. The groups exposed to traditional ads or videos would function as control groups in the analysis.

The print ads used were for lingerie and both versions included five women in underwear, with the same message ("For Every Body - Perfect fit. Perfect comfort."), and the brand was blurred (Appendix I). They had previously been used in a similar setting by Dahlén, Rosengren and Åkestam (forthcoming), so it was not necessary to pre-test their suitability. The videos however, had not previously been used in a study like this. The videos were retrieved from YouTube and pre-tested in February 2016.

In summary, there were six different stimuli across media, product category and kind of stereotype. A variety of stimuli have been chosen in order to get generalisable results, as recommended by academics (Vaux, Fidler and Cumming, 2012).

3.2.2 Pre-study

To make sure the video stimulus had the desired effect, a pre-study was made to test how people perceived them. Four videos were selected in two different product categories: science (European Commission and Microsoft) and razors (Braun and Gillette Venus). See Appendix II for a description of each video's content. Using a convenience sample through online communication, the respondents viewed the four videos, and after each one they were asked to answer three graded questions to confirm, 1) whether the commercial could be considered as stereotypical or not, 2) if the commercial challenged female stereotypes, and 3) if the commercial empowered women. This was to assert whether the video could classify as being either femvertising or a traditional portrayal.

The videos were pre-tested on 19 respondents; both female (72 %) and male (22 %) ('Other' constituted 6 %). These respondents did later not take part in the main survey, since they would be familiar with the videos, and might have been able to guess the purpose of the experiment causing bias in their answers.

Femvertising was computed as being a composite of 'challenging female stereotypes', and 'empowering women', since these were highly correlated (Pearson's r = 0.96). Using all three intended components (the third one being 'this ad portrays women in a stereotypical way', with reversed values to align with the previous statements) did not generate a sufficient Cronbach's α (α < 0.7). One sample t-tests were conducted, and the videos considered to embody femvertising scored significantly higher than their traditional counterparts (M_{EU} = 3.05 vs.

$M_{Microsoft}$ = 6.02, p < 0.05); (M_{Braun} = 2.47 vs. M_{Venus} = 5.21, p < 0.05). Each group of videos could be analysed together seen as they scored as high or low. The results were in line with what was expected, therefore the videos could be used for the intended purpose in the main study. For a complete overview of the pre-study results, see Appendix III.

3.2.3 Formulation of questions

The objective of the survey was to measure perceptions and beliefs; therefore an interval scale was used, the most common choice in research for quantitative studies (Bryman and Bell, 2015). A seven-grade scale was used in line with Söderlund's recommendation (2005). The end points represented each other's opposite with low and negative (e.g. disagree) values to the left and high and positive (e.g. agree) values to the right, as recommended by Malhotra (2010). Demographic questions regarding gender, age and nationality were placed at the end of the surveys, in accordance with Söderlund (2005).

Almost all of the questions in the surveys stem from previous research. This was done to ensure the studies' validity, comparability and credibility. Certain questions were formulated by the authors, which is discussed in the next section, 3.2.4 Measurements.

Both the pre-study and the main survey were communicated in English in order to facilitate a larger sample, an international spread, and to avoid translation of used measurements/questions. There is consequently a risk of minor language barriers; Swedish respondents could misinterpret certain words. The majority of the participants were however expected to be young Swedish natives, and considering the high level of English proficiency within this group of people – highest in the world according to the EF EPI – (EF, 2015) this aspect was disregarded.

3.2.4 Measurements

For this thesis, the following variables were studied: ad and brand attitude, body image, self-esteem, self-efficacy, willingness to help, and third person perception. Apart from these variables, ad reactance was also examined since it has the potential to influence the responses. An index was computed when the Cronbach's α was acceptable. In many of the cases, there were more statements presented on the original measurement for a certain variable (e.g. body image and self-esteem). However, reducing the amount to three statements in each case would facilitate calculating the reliability, and also avoid survey fatigue among respondents. Moreover, the aim of this study is to investigate femvertising rather than deeply understand the effects in themselves.

Ad and brand attitude

Both ad and brand attitude were determined through the questions "How do you rate the ad" and "Based on the ad you saw, how do you rate the brand behind it?" with the options being "good - bad", "like - dislike", "positive - negative", as used by e.g. Holbrook and Batra (1987). These measurements were used in order to explore femvertising's effects on firms.

Ad reactance

A set of questions regarding the respondents' reactions to the ad were asked in order to enable a control of ad reactance' potential influence on other responses. This was done in accordance with previous research by Hong (1992), which could in turn explain how respondents are affected by the stimuli, or if they are not.

Body image

There are various ways to measure how one perceives their own body; e.g. body satisfaction, weight satisfaction, physical attractiveness, and body size estimation (Groesz *et al.*, 2002). For this thesis, the Body Image State Scale (BISS) was chosen (Cash, Fleming, Alindogan, Steadman and Whitehead, 2002). Not only because it is recognized within the field of body image assessment (e.g. Yamamiya *et al.,* 2005), but also due to its use of general and appropriate questions that assess a person's overall opinion of their body state (Cash *et al.*, 2002), e.g. "Right now, I feel satisfied with my physical appearance". The six original statements in the scale have been reduced to three and adjusted to follow the "strongly disagree-strongly agree" Likert-scale type answers, in order to maintain consistency within the survey and avoid confusion among respondents.

Self-esteem

To measure the respondent's level of self-esteem, Rosenberg's self-esteem scale, RSE, (1965), was used. It is considered to be a valid and reliable quantitative tool for self-esteem assessment, commonly used by academics (e.g. Richins, 1991; Blascovich and Tomaka, 1993; Durkin and Paxton, 2002). The RSE consists of ten statements where the respondent either agrees or disagrees on a four point scale; an adaption to seven scale was made to fit this study. Furthermore the ten items were reduced to three since the focus of this study is femvertising rather than self-esteem - in this context an example of effect. It has been shown that the measurement can be shortened without compromising the measurement (Gray-Little, Williams and Hancock, 1997).

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy was measured using a five-item seven-point scale. The concept of self-efficacy is not a global trait, but rather a differentiated one that depends on the specific task at hand. Thus, when measuring self-efficacy, the statements used should be connected to the specific domain being examined (Bandura, 2006). Therefore, the current study used statements

tailored to fit the subject of challenging female stereotypes. Since the construct is a judgment of capability the items are phrased "*can do*"*.* Using phrasing such as "*will do*" is rather a reflection of intention (Bandura, 2006), which is neither what the concept is about nor what this thesis seeks to investigate. One example used to determine self-efficacy is e.g. "I can give a presentation in front of people I don't know".

Willingness to help

Part of the definition of femvertising is that it empowers women and as outlined in the theory section, it can be connected to willingness to help. In the beginning of the survey it was formulated that answering the survey would be very helpful and by having respondents estimate a compensation for answering an additional survey it captures to what extent they are willing to help out again. The question was placed at the end of the survey to lessen the likelihood of respondents connecting it to the actual survey. The question in its entirety was: "We are currently improving our survey, and would like to ask you what you think you should be compensated with, if answering a survey like this again. Write down what you think is an appropriate amount, between 0 SEK - 50 SEK." In the online version, the question also included the option of entering € 0 - 5, £ 0 - 5, and $ 0 - 5, to accommodate international respondents' ability to properly answer the question; these answers would later be adjusted in that case.

Third person perception

This measurement was based on the general third person effect questions that Davison (1983) presented, and gendered "others" were used since it has been shown to most relevant in the current area of study. Instead of using several items as Choi *et al.*, (2008) did (since they included social distance), the following questions were used in the survey: "How much do you think each person will be positively (negatively) influenced by this ad?" The answers were presented in a seven-item Likert-scale, ranging from "Not at all influenced - highly influenced", with the options "Me/Other females/Other males". These questions generate a third person perception that was also used to derive the third person effect in the second step of the analysis.

In Study 1's complementary survey, third person perception was measured by asking the question "How much do you think this ad will influence each person's or group of people's view of how a woman should look like?" (formulated by the authors), with the same "others" as above ("Me/Other females/Other males").

3.3 Distribution of survey, data collection and analysing tool

Before the surveys were distributed, the structure and questions were pre-tested by a few respondents (n = 4) to make sure that the questions were understandable, and that the

structure made sense, as suggested by Bryman and Bell (2011). Some minor adjustments were made in accordance with the received comments.

For Study 1, the data was collected physically at various universities in Stockholm between 15/03/2016 and 16/03/2016.

Study 2 contained a video that had to be seen online, so the online survey tool Qualtrics was used to conduct the survey and collect data. The responses were collected via so-called snowball sampling, i.e. the survey was distributed to a convenience sample containing a number of friends, family and colleagues within the authors' social spheres, and they were then encouraged to send it out to their friends, etc. (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Due to this way of sampling, it is difficult to report the response rate of the asked participants. Data was collected between 15/03/2016 and 30/03/2016.

After removing incomplete surveys and one male response, a total of 156 (61+95) responses were collected. Each respondent was randomly assigned to a specific stimulus. In the complementary study, collected between 05/04/2016 and 07/04/2016, a total of 74 complete responses were recorded. The distribution of received responses can be seen below:

Table 2. Distribution of surveys

	Study 1 (picture)	Study 2 (video)	Complementary study (picture)
Traditional	N = 31	N = 52	N = 37
Femvertising	N = 30	N = 43	N = 37
Total	N = 61	N = 95	N = 74

Having a minimum of 30 respondents in each group enables the assumption of normal distribution (Söderlund, 2005) which in turn facilitates analysis. The analyses were made using the statistical analytics software IBM SPSS (version 23). Statistical methods include Cronbach's α, independent and paired samples t-tests to compare means, and regression analyses. The conventional significance level of 5% has been accepted.

3.4 Credibility of study

The credibility and quality of this study will now be reviewed using the two interrelated measures *reliability* and *validity*.

3.4.1 Reliability

High reliability implies that a study can be repeated and should in general generate the same results (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

One of the ways *internal* reliability was ensured in this thesis, was by using several, similar statements on multi-item scales (all on seven-point scales to ensure internal consistency) in the surveys, and then calculating Cronbach's α to see if the statements fit well together (Söderlund, 2005). The statements that together had a Cronbach's α exceeding 0.70 were accepted, which Bryman and Bell (2015) regard as "good". They were then computed into indexes that could then be used to test the hypotheses.

To enhance reliability, most questions used in the survey were taken from carefully selected academic papers that have become established (e.g. Rosenberg, 1965; Choi *et al.,* 2008; Cash *et al.*, 2002). Some questions that were formulated by the authors, can of course be regarded as less reliable, since they have not previously been studied. However, these questions (level of femvertising) proved to have Cronbach's α over 0.70, which deters this issue.

Apart from the pre-study, having others look over the survey to see that the questions were appropriately asked was also a way to make sure that the final study had relevant questions. Despite all these reliable precautions, issues have arisen regarding some aspects of the survey, which are discussed in 6.2 Critical review.

3.4.2 Validity

A study's validity can be explained as the extent to which the study measures what it sets out to measure. The main types of validity are; measurement validity, internal validity, external validity and ecological validity (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Measurement validity concerns whether or not a measurement reflects the concept it is supposed to measure, and it presupposes that a measurement is reliable (Bryman and Bell, 2011). To ensure measurement validity in the current study, only established and well-used measures and questions were used (directly or adapted), apart from the question regarding the perceived level of femvertising.

An experiment is considered to be *internally valid* if the findings are caused by the manipulation (Weber and Cook, 1972), i.e. that the findings say that x causes the variations in y (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In this study, the internal validity concerns whether it can be assumed that it is the stimuli that has an effect on the responses. A pre-test was conducted to ensure that the videos in the survey were perceived as being empowering, challenging stereotypes and

whether they were stereotypical (traditional) or not (femvertising), and thereby can be considered to manipulate in the intended way. To increase the internal validity, control questions were used in the main survey concerning ad reactance and level of femvertising in the ad/video (to act as a manipulation check and see if the results from the pre-study reflects those presented in the main study). Brand and ad attitude were, apart from being directly examined, also used in the same manner. Additionally, gender was asked for since the study sets out to only examine the effect on women. Thus, the gender field functioned as a control question; had someone filled in that they were male (although when distributing the surveys, only the female audience was targeted), then their response could easily be removed.

External validity refers to the degree to which the experiment findings can be generalised and applied to other situations (Söderlund, 2005). Although the prior research on femvertising is very scarce, the investigated dimensions are well researched when it comes to traditional advertising. Consequently, research can be considered to be compatible with the current study, which enhances the external validity. Having a representative sample is also important to generate high external validity (Bryman and Bell, 2011), which makes this a concern for the current study, since a mixture of convenience sample and snowball sampling was used.

Ecological validity refers to if the findings can be applied to people's everyday, natural social settings (Bryman and Bell, 2011). As the experiment was conducted using a survey the artificial nature should be considered (Söderlund, 2005). However, real life commercials and ads were used, and it is assumed that people are likely to be exposed to advertisements online as well as offline. Therefore having people take the survey online on a computer gives some ecological validity. In the same manner, the survey with the print ad was collected manually, which has similarities to being exposed to an ad in a magazine.

4. Results

The results from the studies will be presented in the following chapter, split into the two studies and the hypotheses are examined in the order they are introduced in the theory chapter. Furthermore, some additional results, not directly relevant to the research question, are presented as they add an interesting dimension to the topic.

4.1 Study 1

The aim of the first study was to find out whether there were any differences in the feelings induced by print advertisements that depicted the traditional, idealised body image versus the non-idealised one (femvertising).

In total there were 61 female participants, mainly students, M_{age} = 24.11. Using Cronbach's α, indexes were created for ad attitude (α = 0.965), brand attitude (α = 0.938), self-esteem (α = 0.859) and body image (α = 0.892).

The manipulation check regarding femvertising confirmed that the videos were perceived as intended ($M_{traditional}$ = 2.39 vs. $M_{femvertising}$ = 5.01, $p < 0.05$). Controlling for ad reactance and manipulation did not make a difference in the outcome, therefore all responses were analysed in order to ensure significant results. No extreme fluctuations in the responses could be traced back neither to ad or brand attitudes.

4.1.1 Firm-level effects

Firm-level effects were examined by analysing ad and brand attitude. The ad and brand attitude means of those who were exposed to the traditional ad vs. femvertising were compared by doing independent t-tests. The two groups differed in their ad attitude ($M_{traditional}$ = 3.52 vs. $M_{femvertising}$ = 5.67, $p < 0.05$) and brand attitude ($M_{traditional}$ = 4.31 vs. $M_{femvertising}$ = 5.40, $p < 0.05$), with femvertising scoring higher on both variables. Therefore, there is support for accepting both H1 a and H1 b.

4.1.2 Body image

It was hypothesised that the use of non-idealised body image in advertising (femvertising) would lead to higher levels of body image. To analyse the body image an independent t-test was conducted. Though displaying a small indication, no significant differences in mean value could be found between the ones exposed to the traditional ad and the ones exposed to

femvertising ($M_{traditional}$ = 5.20 vs. $M_{femvertising}$ = 5.28, *n.s.*). Therefore, there is no support for H2 a, and it has be rejected.

4.1.3 Self-esteem

In addition, it was hypothesised that the use of non-idealised body image in advertising would generate higher levels of self-esteem. An independent t-test was conducted to compare the means, and it showed that self-esteem scored significantly higher among those who had seen the femvertising ad, compared to the traditional ad ($M_{traditional}$ = 5.47 vs. $M_{femvertising}$ = 6.12, *p* < 0.05). This means there is support for H2 b, and has to therefore be accepted.

Table 3. Summary of mean comparisons in Study 1

	Traditional	Femvertising	Mean difference	Sig.
Ad attitude	3.52	5.67	+ 2.15	0.000
Brand attitude	4.31	5.40	+ 1.09	0.001
Body Image	5.20	5.28	+ 0.08	0.394
Self-esteem	5.47	6.12	+ 0.65	0.007

4.1.3 Third person effect

Third person perception

The starting point to study the third person effect is to first see if there is a third person perception in place, i.e. if respondents believed that others would be more influenced by the ad than themselves. The belief of others' perception of the ideal female body was investigated in the complementary study. It was hypothesised that femvertising would be seen as having a greater effect on others than on oneself.

The third person perception was analysed by comparing means, using both independent sample t-tests and paired samples t-tests. The mean comparison was done to see if there were any differences between the different components within the groups (me/other females/other males) and also between the two groups.

Table 4. Mean comparisons third person perceptions in Study 1.

	n	Me	Comparison groups	
			Other females	**Other males**
Traditional	37	4.97	5.76* (+0.79)	5.57* (+0.60)
Femvertising	37	4.08	4.95* (+0.87)	3.84 (-0.24)

* *p* < 0.05 Mean differences between (me+subject) in parentheses.

All values for me/other females/other males in the traditional vs. femvertising condition were significantly different from each other, *p* < 0.05. They show that the influence in general is believed to be greater for traditional advertising than for femvertising.

Respondents who had seen the femvertising ad thought that other females would be more influenced than themselves. However, the influence of femvertising on other males was lower than on the self and also not significant. Therefore there is support for H5 a, but not for H5 b that is rejected.

Third person effect
To see if there is a third person effect involved in the development of self-esteem or body image, regression analyses were made.

The manipulation is represented by the stimuli variable, β_1, which was coded as a dummy variable where 0 represents the traditional ad and 1 femvertising. The variable β_2 represents the net value of how much more respondents believe others view of the ideal body is influenced compared to oneself; men and women were looked at separately given the difference in third person perception mean with females having a higher value than the self and men a lower value (not significant however). β_3 represents the interaction effect between the stimuli and net value of influence.

Self-Esteem = β_0 + β_1Stimuli + β_2NetvalueFemale/Male + β_3(Stimuli*NetvalueFemale/Male) + μ
Body image = β_0 + β_1Stimuli + β_2NetvalueFemale/Male + β_3(Stimuli*NetvalueFemale/Male) + μ

To confirm a third person effect, a significant positive result in β_3 is necessary.

Table 5. Regression analyses in Study 1.

	Female other	Male other	Female other	Male other
Dependent variable	Self-esteem	Self-esteem	Body image	Body image
β_1Stimuli	0.594**	0.499	0.412	0.361
β_2NetvalueOther	- 0.015	- 0.063	0.316**	0.201
β_3(Stimuli*NetvalueOther)	- 0.081	0.119	- 0.287	0.013
R^2	0.060	0.062	0.044	0.081

Unstandardised coefficients. *$p<0.05$ **$p<0.1$

None of the regressions revealed a significant result in β_3 meaning hypotheses H6 a and b are rejected.

4.2 Study 2

The aim of the second study was to find out whether there were any differences in the feelings induced by video commercials that depicted the traditional, stereotypical female role versus the non-stereotypical femvertising one.

In total there were 95 female participants in Study 2, $M_{age} = 30.40$. Using Cronbach's α, indexes were created for ad attitude (α = 0.955), brand attitude (α = 0.973), self-esteem (α = 0.927), self-efficacy (α = 0.715) and femvertising (α = 0.863) (For femvertising, all three components were included as a part of the index, as opposed to two components in the pre-study).

Respondents who saw the two traditional videos (EU and Braun) were analysed as one group and the ones who saw the femvertising videos (Microsoft and Venus) were also merged into one. The manipulation check regarding femvertising confirmed that the videos were perceived as intended ($M_{traditional} = 2.33$ vs. $M_{femvertising} = 4.85$, $p < 0.05$). As in Study 1, all responses were analysed since neither here extreme fluctuations in the responses could be traced back to ad reactance, manipulation check, ad or brand attitudes.

4.2.1 Firm-level effects

In parity with Study 1 firm-level effects were investigated through a mean comparison of ad and brand attitude, using an independent t-test to compare the control group and the group who saw the femvertising video.

In line with previous results the two groups showed a significant difference in their ad attitude ($M_{traditional}$ = 3.87 vs. $M_{femvertising}$ = 5.90, $p < 0.05$) and brand attitude ($M_{traditional}$ 4.19 vs. $M_{femvertising}$ = 5.13, $p < 0.05$) with femvertising yielding a more positive result in both cases. This shows support for H3 a and b, which means both are accepted.

4.2.2 Self-efficacy

It was hypothesised that the use of non-stereotypical roles in advertising (femvertising) would generate higher self-efficacy than using traditional advertising with stereotypical roles. An independent t-test was made to compare the means between the two treatments.

There was no significant difference in self-efficacy between the groups ($M_{traditional}$ 5.53 vs. $M_{femvertising}$ = 5.51, $n.s$). In addition, the statements within the index were analysed separately, but no significant differences were visible, neither were there any on an individual level. Hence, there is no support for H4 a and it is therefore rejected.

4.2.3 Self-esteem

It was hypothesised that the use of non-stereotypical roles in advertising (femvertising) would generate higher self-esteem than using traditional advertising with stereotypical roles. To test the influence on self-esteem, an independent t-test was conducted in order to compare the means of those in the traditional vs. the femvertising condition.

There is a very small indication of a difference in the expected direction, however, it is not significant ($M_{traditional}$ 5.48 vs. $M_{femvertising}$ = 5.55, $n.s$). Consequently, there is no support for H4 b and it is therefore rejected.

4.2.4 Willingness to help

It was hypothesised that the use of non-stereotypical roles in advertising (femvertising) would generate higher willingness to help than using traditional advertising with stereotypical roles. An independent t-test was used to compare the means between the stated compensations between the two groups (traditional vs. femvertising). Results show a significant difference in the expected direction. Respondents who watched a traditional video demanded a three times higher compensation for their effort than those who watched a femvertising video ($M_{traditional}$= 10.58 vs. $M_{femvertising}$= 3.33, $p < 0.05$). To be prepared to answer a survey for a smaller compensation indicates a higher willingness to help among the femvertising watchers, thereby there is support for accepting H4 c.

Table 6. Summary of mean comparisons in Study 2.

	Traditional	Femvertising	Mean difference	Sig.
Ad attitude	3.87	5.90	+ 2.03	0.000
Brand attitude	4.19	5.13	+ 0.94	0.000
Self-efficacy	5.53	5.51	+ 0.02	0.466
Self-esteem	5.48	5.55	+ 0.07	0.401
Willingness to help	10.58	3.33	- 7.55	0.004

4.2.5 Third person effect

Third person perception
As in Study 1 the third person perception was analysed by comparing means, using both independent sample t-tests and paired samples t-test.

Given the positive perspective of femvertising in this thesis, it was hypothesised that respondents would perceive femvertising to have a greater effect (here: positive) on others than on themselves.

Table 7. Mean comparisons positive third person perception in Study 2.

Positive influence			Comparison groups	
	n	Me	Other females	Other males
Traditional	52	3.02	3.58* (+0.56)	3.13 (+0.08)
Femvertising	43	5.02	5.42* (+0.40)	3.37* (-1.65)

* = p < 0.05. Mean differences in third person perception between subjects in parentheses.

The values for me/other females/others in the traditional vs. femvertising condition were significantly different from each other, $p < 0.05$ (but not the difference concerning only men). This shows that the positive influence in general is believed to be greater for femvertising than for traditional.

There was a visible positive third person perception with regards to other females for both conditions, but not for men, nor for the groups merged together as those values scored lower than for the self. Interestingly, there was little belief of any positive influence from femvertising

on men (mean difference: - 1.65). The hypothesis is generally formulated to "have a greater effect"; in this context the positive influence is studied, as argued in 3.2.4 Measurements. Therefore, there is support for H5 a, but not for H5 b.

In addition, to retrieve a comprehensive understanding, the negative influence was analysed:

Table 8. Mean comparisons negative third person perception in Study 2.

Negative influence			Comparison groups	
	n	Me	Other females	Other males
Traditional	52	3.19	3.44 (+0.25)	2.73* (-0.71)
Femvertising	43	1.81	1.91 (+0.10)	2.40* (+0.59)

* = p < 0.05. Mean differences in third person perception between subjects in parentheses.

Negatively influenced third person perception was found for men and others with regards to femvertising. In the traditional group males were believed to be less negatively influenced than the self. Another result that was derived was that there was a significant ($p < 0.05$) difference between femvertising and traditional results.

Third person effect
For Study 2, the third person effect was examined concerning self-esteem and as in Study 1 a regression analysis was used.

The videos were deemed more complex than the print ad's so to mitigate the possibility of the videos being perceived differently than expected the regression was made using the manipulation check index rather than the stimuli variable, in order to truly capture the true effect of femvertising. A high value in the index indicated a high level of femvertising. The variable β_2 represents the net value of how we believe others (men and women) are positively influenced in comparison to oneself. β_3 represents the interaction effect between femvertising and the net value. A significant positive result in β_3 means there is a third person effect.

$$\text{Self-Esteem} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Femvertising} + \beta_2 \text{NetvaluePosOthers} + \beta_3 (\text{Femvertising x NetvaluePosOthers}) + \mu$$

To fully understand the subject, a regression was also made in the opposite direction to find out if a belief of more negatively influenced others moderates the effect of femvertising.

$$\text{Self-Esteem} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Femvertising} + \beta_2 \text{NetvalueNegOthers} + \beta_3 (\text{Femvertising x NetvalueNegOthers}) + \mu$$

Table 9. Regression analyses Study 2.

	Female other	Male other	Female other	Male other
Influence	Positive	Positive	Negative	Negative
Dependent variable	Self-esteem	Self-esteem	Self-esteem	Self-esteem
β_1Femvertising	- 0.027	0.150	0.098	0.144
β_2NetvalueOther	- 0.549*	0.133	0.272	- 0.166
β_3(Femvertising*Net valueOther)	0.074	0.007	**- 0.146****	- 0.007
R^2	0.055	0.044	0.046	0.049

Unstandardised coefficients. * $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.1$

The results show no third person effect on self-esteem on a 5% significance level. There were some indication that the belief of more positively influenced others enhances the effect of femvertising, as hypothesised, although the results were neither large nor significant. The results do show ($p = 0.076$) that when female respondents think other females are more negatively influenced by femvertising, its impact on self-esteem is lowered ($\beta_3 = - 0.146$), this effect was not visible for men or both groups merged together. In conclusion, there was no positive third person effect meaning H6 b is rejected.

4.3 Additional findings

Study 1
Although the regressions showed no significant third person effects from femvertising, some interesting results could be found when studying the general effect of perceived influence on others. This meant acknowledging that others would be influenced, not specifically that others were *more* influenced than oneself, often referred to as *presumed influence*. In this case, the overall values of influence on other females and males were studied rather than the net value between the others and the self. The one significant finding was that although femvertising on its own has a positive effect on self-esteem $\beta_1 = 0.355$, the effect is negatively affected ($\beta_3 = - 0.114$) when respondents believed other females were negatively influenced by the ad (see Appendix VI).

4.3 Summary of results

Table 10. Summary of hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis	Study	Verdict	Interpretation
H1	Study 1	ACCEPTED	There is support that the use of non-idealised female body images (femvertising) will generate higher levels of a) *ad attitude* and b) *brand attitude* than the use of idealised female body images (traditional).
H2 a	Study 2	REJECTED	There is no support that the use of non-idealised female body images in advertising (femvertising) will generate higher levels of *body image* than the use of idealised female body images (traditional).
H2 b	Study 2	ACCEPTED	There is support that the use of non-idealised female body images (femvertising) in advertising will generate higher levels of *self-esteem* than the use of idealised female body images (traditional).
H3	Study 1	ACCEPTED	There is support that the use of non-stereotypical female roles (femvertising) will generate higher levels of a) *ad attitude* and b) *brand attitude* than the use of stereotypical female roles (traditional).
H4 a	Study 2	REJECTED	There is no support that the use of non-stereotypical female roles in advertising (femvertising) will generate higher levels of *self-efficacy* than the use of stereotypical female roles (traditional).
H4 b	Study 2	REJECTED	There is no support that the use of non-stereotypical female roles in advertising (femvertising) will generate higher levels of *self-esteem* than the use of stereotypical female roles (traditional).
H4 c	Study 2	ACCEPTED	There is support that the use of non-stereotypical female roles in advertising (femvertising) will generate higher levels of *willingness to help* than using traditional advertising with stereotypical female roles.
H5 a	Study 1 & 2	ACCEPTED	There is support that female respondents will perceive femvertising to have a greater (positive) effect on other females.
H5 b	Study 1 & 2	REJECTED	There is no support that female respondents will perceive femvertising to have a greater (positive) effect on other males.
H6	Study 1 & 2	REJECTED	There is no support that the third person effect from femvertising is a predictor of the impact on a) *body image* or b) *self-esteem*.

5. Analysis

This chapter is devoted to an analysis of the retrieved results using the theoretical framework previously outlined in Chapter 2.

The overall aim of this thesis was to widen the understanding of femvertising by exploring firm and extended effects of femvertising on women, to see if there were positive effects to be gained by altering the way women are normally portrayed in advertising, and if these effects could be explained by the third person effect.

5.1 Attitude

To enable a more comprehensive understanding of femvertising, and with regards to advertising's primary purpose to generate advertising effectiveness, firm-level effects were examined in terms of ad and brand attitude.

As expected, it was found that femvertising generated higher liking among women. Both ad and brand attitude values were higher for femvertising than for traditional advertising and this was the case for both print and video advertising. The results challenge the general notion that thinness is the most profitable way to depict women in advertising, in line with previous research (e.g. Halliwell and Dittmar, 2004; Antioco *et al.*, 2012). The latter also found participants with high self-esteem to be more positive towards an idealised model, which provides further weight to the current findings that displayed a difference, despite the high overall level of self-esteem among the respondents. The difference can also be explained by the emotions that the femvertising ads activated, seen as social affection can increase the ad and brand attitude (Batra and Ray, 1986).

Orth and Holancova (2004) found in their research that "consumers responded most favourably to exclusive portrayals of members of their in-group" (p. 86). Furthermore, Kozar (2010) found that perceived similarity in advertising increased participants' purchase intentions. In the light of the results, this suggests that the female respondents identify more with the women in the femvertising ads than those in the traditional ads, which accounts for the high values.

5.2 Body image

The body image is defined as how satisfied you are with your body and physical attractiveness (Richins, 1991; Cash *et al.*, 2002). Several studies within this area have shown that after seeing idealised models, respondents showed general dissatisfaction with their bodies (e.g.

Grabe *et al.*, 2008), while some studies show positive effects; body-focused anxiety decreased in women with a history of eating disorders after viewing advertisements containing average-size models (Halliwell *et al.,* 2005). Therefore it was believed that non-idealised models (femvertising) would induce higher levels of body image. Alas, this was not the case in the current study. No significant differences could be found between the traditional and femvertising treatment.

This could be explained by the fact that this study did not contain participants who had reported a history of eating disorders. Also, although Peck and Loken (2004) showed that respondents found larger models more attractive (going against the thin-ideal), this result did not predict the effect on self-perception (here: body image). Perhaps these are reasons for why body image is not affected by exposure to femvertising. In addition, respondents took their own time studying the image and may have not have thoroughly processed the ad enough for it to have an effect, in contrast to Yayamiya *et al.* (2005) who let their participants look at an idealised body image for five minutes. However, this is difficult to achieve when it simultaneously is important to ensure as much of a natural setting as possible. In addition, the study by Yayamiya *et al.* (2005) saw a difference when comparing the models to neutral objects. This suggests that femvertising cannot be seen as a neutral object, but rather something that is meant to evoke some sort of emotion – social affection (Batra and Ray, 1986). This might explain why no significant differences were found.

5.3 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is the ability to believe in your abilities and what you can achieve (Bandura 1977; 2010). Exposure to social stereotypes has been shown to trigger certain expectations, mostly in a negative fashion with regards to self-efficacy. It was therefore hoped that exposure to femvertising would lead to higher levels of self-efficacy due to the empowering nature of the ad (e.g., in Microsoft's ad we hear "We think you'll create something great for us one day"). However, there was no support that self-efficacy changed for the better when exposed to a femvertising ad. The values were high overall, but not significantly different at all.

This could be explained by the fact that the vicarious experience (comparing yourself with a model, in this case a female stereotype) is so ingrained in women's self-perceptions because of the constant exposure to female stereotypes today (e.g Lun, Sinclair and Cogburn, 2009; Casper and Rothermund, 2012), that a one-time exposure to a femvertising ad (albeit a video commercial) is not enough to significantly change one's self-efficacy for the better.

5.4 Self-esteem

Using non-idealised body images

Many studies have shown that exposure to thin-ideal advertisements and idealised models, has led to lower self-esteem (Groesz *et al.*, 2002; Richins, 1991). In addition, Antioco *et al.* (2012) showed in their study that self-esteem was significantly higher when exposed to a non-idealised body image. This study echoed those latter results, with femvertising yielding a higher level of self-esteem – and thus confirms that the use of non-idealised body images are beneficial to women's self-esteem. Interestingly, this study showed higher values to begin with ($M_{traditional} = 5.47$ vs. $M_{femvertising} = 6.12$, $p < 0.05$), compared to Antioco *et al.* (2012) ($M_{non-idealized} = 4.41$ vs. $M_{idealized} = 4.10$, $p < 0.05$, converted from a 5-point scale). An overall analysis of these high values is done in 5.6 High mean values.

Using non-stereotypical roles

Self-esteem is the overall evaluation of personal worth towards the self (Rosenberg, 1965). Several studies have noted a high correlation between self-efficacy and self-esteem (e.g. Judge *et al.*, 2002), which is why it was believed that an exposure to femvertising would increase levels of self-esteem, in line with the previous hypothesis regarding self-efficacy.

Results showed however, that there was no significant difference between the traditional and femvertising treatment, although it was observed once more that the results were relatively high overall. Consequently, one can say that this is in line with previous research reporting a correlation between self-efficacy and self-esteem - since the respondents do not increase their levels of self-efficacy by watching femvertising, it is quite logical that self-esteem did not increase either.

5.5 Willingness to help

Theory suggests a connection between empowerment and willingness to help. Seen as femvertising embodies empowerment, it was hypothesised that respondents seeing a femvertising ad would be more willing to help (i.e. demand less money for answering a survey), since they activate self-awareness which affects the way they see themselves. In line with our hypotheses, results showed that the ones exposed to the traditional stimuli demanded a higher compensation, than the ones who watched the femvertising videos. Seen as the femvertising stimuli often presented empowering messages, it can be argued that respondents activated more favourable thoughts about themselves, and therefore acted in a way that would be in line with their positive self-conception (Berkowitz, 1987). The results are in line with Åkestam's research (*forthcoming*) that found that norm-breaking advertising (in the article: portrayals of homosexuality) makes people more empathic.

5.6 High mean values

Overall

What is interesting to note for all the variables: self-esteem, self-efficacy, and body image, is that the mean values were on a surprisingly high level. This could be why a significant difference was found only in one of the cases (self-esteem from print ad). If the values are high to begin with (here: in the traditional group) it might be difficult to enhance them further. There are several possible explanations as to why high values were retrieved also for traditional advertising.

In Study 1 several respondents filled in the surveys while sitting in groups, facilitating between-participants interaction. Their responses were partly visible to others, which could have had an effect on the quality of the answers. Studies on focus groups have found that respondents have the tendency to answer differently when asked in a private setting vs. a public setting (e.g. Wight, 1994). Some social pressure could explain why respondents did not want to flaunt their insecurities for their friends to see, which in turn could have resulted in the relatively high values. The answers in Study 1 cannot be seen as invalid though, since "We are none of us self-contained, isolated, static entities; we are part of complex and overlapping social, familial and collegiate networks" (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 117). However, Study 2 was conducted online, implying more privacy for the respondents, and still, the same high values were retrieved, which suggests that biased answers are not the cause.

Body image

Some reports claim that body image advertising could also make young women feel thinner as the ad's depiction of an idealised body can lead to a "light euphoria, a lessening of depression levels" (Myers and Biocca, 1992, p. 127), which could partly explain why women feel good about themselves after seeing the traditional ad. But the results are still surprising when taking other research into account, where it has been found that young women are more prone to be vulnerable to body image pressures (Hesse-Biber 1989; Pyle *et al.* 1986).

Self-esteem and self-efficacy

Self-esteem scored relatively high as well on the scale in both treatments. Research has found that women tend to feel inspired, creative and stimulated by fashion ads, which could therefore generate higher values (Phillips and McQuarrie, 2011). This is especially transferable to Study 1, which focused on the idealised female body image. However, it is also interesting that the values were high for self-esteem and self-efficacy when social stereotypes were studied, since the stimuli did not advocate for fashion specifically.

5.7 Third person effect

The second aim of this thesis was to investigate if the third person effect could explain and enhance the anticipated effect of femvertising on self-esteem and body image. Previous work show negative effects derived from what we believe about others' perception, and it was hoped that this study would establish an effect in the opposite direction as well. The hypothesis regarding third person perception was investigated in both studies, although different measurements were used ("positively influenced" and "influence view of the ideal body"). The third person effect on self-esteem was studied in both studies while it was only researched in Study 1 in regards to the body image.

Third person perception
Results revealed a third person perception in place for femvertising only with regards to other females, contrasting results in other studies looking at negative third person effect, where the third person perception has been found to be greater towards men, since a woman's body image is mostly determined by the opposite sex (David and Johnson, 1998). However, neither of the studies showed that there was a belief of femvertising positively influencing men nor of it affecting men's view of the ideal female body. However, a third person perception was found towards other males for traditional advertising in Study 1. Furthermore, looking at influence on the view of the ideal female body all together, it was believed to be greater for traditional advertising than for femvertising, which is interesting – maybe the message from femvertising is not as strong as it sets out to be. Combining these findings with the research by e.g. Milkie (1999), who found that women believed men valued the appearance depicted in ads, implies that the current idealised body image is deeply rooted and perhaps difficult to alter in a quick manner.

On a positive note, results in Study 2 showed that the believed negative influence is significantly larger for traditional advertising than for femvertising, which can be regarded as a positive aspect of femvertising. Since advertising in general has a negative reputation (e.g. Aitchison, 2008) and believed to be bad for others, it is an advantage for firms to use advertising that is believed to have a less negative influence.

Third person effect
Since the third person perception to begin with was only present for other females it was difficult to examine if there is a general third person effect that enhances or explain the effect of femvertising. Results showed no evidence in any of the studies of third person effect being a predictor for femvertising's impact on neither self-esteem nor body image for either of the groups of "others". Though contradicting the hypotheses, these findings are in line with research looking at socially desirable outcomes were third person effect has been shown to

disappear or change into a first person effect (Gunther and Thorson, 1992). It is therefore very possible that femvertising falls under that category.

Additional finding – presumed influence

An interesting additional finding in connection to negative third person effect was retrieved in Study 2 and provides another perspective. After removing the gap between believed impact on others and the self, and looking only at *presumed influence,* it was found that the belief of negatively influenced others moderated femvertising's effect by lowering its impact on self-esteem. There was no evidence of the same being true in the opposite direction, in conformity with the results for third person effect. This might mean that women are more inclined to account for negative influences, which, coupled with the lack of findings regarding positive third person effect on self-esteem and body image, would further confirm the theory on third person effect as an explanatory factor only for harmful and/or negative communication.

6. Discussion

In this section an attempt to answer the research questions will be presented along with conclusions that can be drawn from the results and the implications they have. The chapter ends with a short critical reflection on the study and some suggestions for future research.

6.1 Conclusions and implications

The expected contribution of this study was to add to the body of knowledge concerning the advertising phenomenon femvertising and advertising's extended effects by answering the research questions:

Does exposure to femvertising positively influence women's attitude towards the brand and their self-perceptions?

And, is the influence on self-perception dependent on what we believe about how femvertising affects others?

In summary, the results show support for femvertising improving brand and ad attitude for both print and video as well as higher levels of self-esteem from the use of non-idealised models. There was no support of video evoking the same effect on self-esteem. Further, neither body image nor self-efficacy showed higher levels for femvertising. On a positive note, femvertising proved to increase women's willingness to help. Furthermore, female respondents perceive femvertising to have a greater (positive) effect on other females than themselves, but not other males, and there was no support that the third person effect is a predictor of the impact on body image or self-esteem.

It was hoped to show that femvertising empowers women. Unfortunately, the findings do not entirely allow for such a conclusion. Neither do the results suggest the third person effect as an explanatory factor. Nevertheless, the results do have some implications, and since the experiment touched upon many aspects both practical and theoretical implications will be discussed.

6.1.1 Practical implications

The use of femvertising has so far proven to be financially successful for brands like Dove and Always (Simmons, 2006; Ciambrello, 2014; Wallace, 2015). When observing ad and brand attitude values, notably higher values for femvertising than for traditional advertising could clearly be seen. This alone should encourage firms from a bottom-line perspective to depict

women in a non-stereotypical way in their advertising, since it increases advertising effectiveness.

Ad and brand attitude aside, it does not appear to be beneficial for women to witness non-stereotypical female roles, nor does it seem detrimental to watch traditional advertising containing social stereotypes. The effects on their self-perceptions in terms of self-esteem, and self-efficacy remain virtually the same.

Results revealed the surprising fact that body image did not differ significantly between the two treatments implies that firms can continue using idealised models without harming women's body image. However, the results did show that using non-idealised female bodies in print advertising positively influenced women's self-esteem. Combined with femvertising's more favourable ad and brand evaluations a win-win situation for firms and society has been encountered. Dove is obviously doing something right, and other firms should follow their lead. Also, femvertising was perceived to have less negative influence on others than traditional advertising. This is an additional advantage, given advertising's general bad reputation, which should encourage firms to oversee how they portray women in their advertising.

Does femvertising make women kinder? The results showed that exposure to femvertising yielded a higher willingness to help. In terms of campaigns and events directed towards benevolence (e.g. charity events) or when promoting certain attributes such as fair production, the use of femvertising would be truly beneficial. This could simply be done by using non-stereotypical female roles in advertising.

6.1.2 Theoretical implications

The current study has started to fill the gap in research regarding femvertising and the mixture of accepted and rejected hypotheses provide some insights valuable for academics.

Femvertising exists. The thesis paves way for the definition of femvertising to include not only the frequently studied non-idealised female body images, but also female social stereotypes. Combining the two allows for a wider definition within research; a relevant approach as the phenomenon attracts more attention and acceptance among practitioners.

One of the aims of this thesis was to study the possibility of *positive* unintended effects in society, generated by femvertising. Since femvertising did appear to have a positive impact on women's' self-esteem when exposed to non-idealised body image, the thesis has partly reached its goal of uncovering positive unintended effects of advertising. This confirms previous findings by e.g. Antioco *et al.* (2012).

Also, the thesis acts as a criticism towards the arguments used for employing stereotypes in advertising as the higher ad and brand attitude implies advertising effectiveness is greater for femvertising. It definitely serves as a starting point to start questioning commonly used phrases such "sex sells"!

Our results do not confirm third person effect as an explanatory factor although third person perception was found among females. To quote Gunther and Storey (2003): "one critical aspect of the third person effect model is that it only appears for messages with apparently undesirable consequences." (p.200). The current study indicates that the outcome of femvertising is found to be socially desirable, which might seem intuitive, but now also has support in research.

Our results indicate a more complex relationship women have with themselves in terms of self-perception. That third person effect is not a possible explanation triggers a discussion as to what other factors are involved. Time could be an interesting aspect in this case; there are possibly short term issues with femvertising, since "stereotypes are created by the continual, extended exposure of consumers to patterns of imagery" (Sheehan, 2014, p. 91) – maybe femvertising is in need of the same type of continuous exposure in order to really have an effect on how we believe others are influenced.

6.2 Critical review

Some limitations of the study needs to be taken into account when assessing the findings. While the chosen method was deemed most appropriate for the topic, it does open up for some criticism. To begin with, a quantitative method is by its nature rather artificial and static. It can give a false sense of precision and accuracy at the same time as it provides a result that might not be in accordance with people's actual behaviour.

Another drawback is parts of the execution of the experiment. Firstly, the number of respondents in the pre-study is rather low (n = 19). Secondly, the print ad used in Study 1 was presented in black and white, which might have had an impact on its efficiency, although it is likely not in terms of accuracy, but rather strength of reaction. Thirdly, the questions regarding third person effect for social stereotypes could have been formulated in a way that more clearly connects to role expectations but it was a trade-off done in order to secure the study's measurement validity.

Additional criticism is if the chosen measurements are suitable for a short term study. It is possible that measures like body image and self-esteem are developed over time, thus causality from a one-time, short period stimuli might be difficult to detect.

Finally, given the clues found in previous research regarding third person effect and its ability to disappear in positive surroundings one can discuss if maybe another possible explanatory factor should have been considered (e.g. social comparison theory).

6.3 Future research

As stated in the very beginning of this thesis, femvertising is a rather new phenomena that is currently under-researched. This thesis has taken some initial steps into understanding femvertising but to fully comprehend the concept and what effects it might have, more research is necessary.

Future research could include men as well when studying the effects, to see how they perceive this phenomenon, both as an unintended audience and when being the target market. Furthermore, effects on firms should be examined by analysing other aspects of advertising effectiveness such as purchase intention. Ad and brand attitude can be seen as simplistic measurements, and an array of brand evaluations could yield clearer implications for practitioners in terms of impact on the bottom line, providing a valuable incentive for increasing the use of non-stereotypical advertising.

Given the relatively high values retrieved regarding the examined measurements in the current study, it would be of interest to investigate if respondents' prior levels impact their reaction.

Lastly, since there is a possibility of some female stereotypes being deeply rooted and difficult to alter, it would be interesting to see if the results for third person effect would be different if the respondents are actively told about others' belief instead of having them estimate what they believe about others. Also, other possible explanatory factors for femvertising's effect such as social comparison theory or social identification should be looked at.

6.4 Final words

During the work of this thesis, it has become apparent just how one-dimensional women are depicted in society today, and the advertising industry is part of that problem. The authors want to encourage further use of femvertising and make sure firms contemplate the way they portray women in their advertising. Even if femvertising did not prove to completely change a woman's self-perception, it should be part of any firm's strategy. Why not make it a mission to increase girls' self-esteem? Why not help paint the picture of what she can achieve? Why not use it if it has been shown to also improve your bottom line? Because, if not now, when? It is the hope of the authors that future generations of girls and women will live to believe that being a woman means being able to do anything.

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8. Appendices

Appendix I

Femvertising:

Traditional:

Appendix II

European Commission: Science, It's a Girl Thing

The commercial wishes to attract women to science by showing that make-up is also chemistry. It features three women walk around in high heels, giggling, posing, as well as make-up (e.g. lipstick) being analysed in a lab.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zj--FFzngUk

Microsoft: Girls Do Science

The commercial wishes to attract girls to pursue their interests in science; it shows how despite that girls are interested within the subject (who are featured in the video), many girls do not work with it later in life. In the end, all receive a letter from Microsoft encouraging them to carry on with their scientific interests.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eJYW4ew5eg

Braun: Silk-Épil SkinSpa

The commercial markets the new Braun Silk-Épil, an epilator that promises smooth legs. The video shows two women in bath tubs, caressing their legs and smiling.

https://www.youtube.com/v/qi7fr7XDiy8

Venus: #UseYourAnd

The commercial wants to encourage women to stop using one-dimensional labels on themselves, and instead "use your and", i.e. that you get the confidence to say that you are and can be many things.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFEaj2rNknU

Appendix III

	N	Mean
Non-stereotypicality EU	19	2,68
Non-stereotypicality Microsoft	19	5,42
Non-stereotypicality Braun	19	1,95
Non-stereotypicality Venus	19	4,84
Femvertising EU	19	3,05
Femvertising Microsoft	19	6,03
Femvertising Braun	19	2,47
Femvertising Venus	19	5,21

All differences are significant, $p < 0.05$

Appendix IV

Study 1

Hi,

We are two Master students examining how people perceive different ads. We would very much appreciate your help by answering this survey. It will take approx. 5 min and considerably increase your karma-account. Please answer all questions even if they are similar, and remember - there are no right answers.

Thank you in advance!
Elin & Desirée

Have a look at the following ad. The brand wants to be anonymous for the time being.

[PICTURE- FEMVERTISING/TRADITIONAL]

Now we are going to ask you a few questions! Just answer without thinking too much - we want your instant reaction.

Have you seen this ad before?
- ❍ Yes
- ❍ Maybe
- ❍ No

How would you rate the ad?

Bad	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Good
Negative	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Positive
Dislike	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Like

How do you rate the brand behind the ad?

Bad	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Good
Negative	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Positive
Dislike	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Like

How much do you think each person or group of people would be positively influenced by this ad?

	None at all	-	-	-	-	-	A great deal
Me	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other females	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other males	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How much do you think each person or group of people would be negatively influenced by this ad?

	None at all	-	-	-	-	-	A great deal
Me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other females	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other males	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I take a positive attitude toward myself.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
I can go to party where I don't know anyone.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can give a presentation in front of people I don't know.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can go to a beach or a swimming pool where I will wear a bathing suit/bikini.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can lead a group at school, at work or in an association.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can express my opinion even when it goes against the majority.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
Right now, I feel satisfied with my physical appearance.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Right now, I feel satisfied with my body and size.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Right now, I feel physically attractive.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Right now, I feel happy about my life.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Right now, I feel satisfied with my life.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Right now, I feel content about my life.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
The ad makes me want to be the opposite.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I do not approve of how the ad tries to affect me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The choice of models bothers me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
This ad portrays women in a stereotypical way.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This ad challenges female stereotypes.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This ad empowers women.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Finally, we want to know a little bit about you!

Gender:
- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Other

How old are you? (in numbers)

_____

What's your nationality?

_____

We are currently improving our survey, and would like to ask you what you think you should be compensated with, if answering a survey like this again. Write down what you think is an appropriate amount, between 0 SEK and 50 SEK.

_____SEK

Thank you ever so much!
Elin and Desirée

Study 2

Hi,

We are two Master students examining how people perceive different ads. We would very much appreciate your help by answering this survey. It will take approx. 5 min and considerably increase your karma-account. First we will ask you to watch a short video. Unfortunately you cannot see the video on your phone, so answer the survey on your computer.

Please answer all questions even if they are similar, and remember - there are no right answers.

Thank you in advance!

/Elin & Desirée

>>

Powered by Qualtrics

We will now show you a video. Please watch the whole thing!

Braun Silk-épil 7 SkinSpa - TV commercial

>>

Now we are going to ask you a few questions! Just answer without thinking too much - we want your instant reaction.

Which brand was featured in the video?

Have you seen this video before?

Yes

Maybe

No

62

How would you rate the video?

Bad	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Good
Negative	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Positive
Dislike	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Like

How do you rate the brand behind the ad?

Bad	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Good
Negative	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Positive
Dislike	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Like

>>

How much do you think each person or group of people would be *positively* influenced by this ad?

	None at all	-	-	-	-	-	A great deal
Me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other females	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other males	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How much do you think each person or group of people would be *negatively* influenced by this ad?

	None at all	-	-	-	-	-	A great deal
Me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other females	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other males	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

>>

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I take a positive attitude toward myself.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
I can go to party where I don't know anyone.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can give a presentation in front of people I don't know.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can go to a beach or a swimming pool where I will wear a bathing suit/bikini.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can lead a group at school, at work or in an association.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can express my opinion even when it goes against the majority.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
Right now, I feel satisfied with my physical appearance.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Right now, I feel satisfied with my body and size.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Right now, I feel physically attractive.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Right now, I feel happy about my life.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Right now, I feel satisfied with my life.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Right now, I feel content about my life.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

>>

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
The video makes me want to be the opposite.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I do not approve of how the video tries to affect me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The video bothers me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
This commercial portrays women in a stereotypical way.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This commercial challenges female stereotypes.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This commercial empowers women.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

>>

Finally, we want to know a little bit about you!

Gender:

Male

Female

Other

How old are you? (in numbers)

What's your nationality?

We are currently improving our survey, and would like to ask you what you think you should be compensated with, if answering a survey like this again. Write down what you think is an appropriate amount, between 0 SEK - 50 SEK. (£0-£5 or €0-€5 or $0-$5)

Thank you ever so much!

Elin and Desirée

>>

Appendix V

Complementary study

Hi,

We are two Master students examining how people perceive different ads. We would very much appreciate your help by answering this survey. It will take approx. 5 min and considerably increase your karma-account. Please answer all questions even if they are similar, and remember - there are no right answers.

Thank you in advance!
Elin & Desirée

Have a look at the following ad. The brand wants to be anonymous for the time being.

[PICTURE- FEMVERTISING/TRADITIONAL]

Now we are going to ask you a few questions! Just answer without thinking too much - we want your instant reaction.

How much do you think this ad will influence each person's or group of people's view of how a woman should look like?

	None at all	-	-	-	-	-	A great deal
Me	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other females	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other males	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I take a positive attitude toward myself.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
Right now, I feel satisfied with my physical appearance.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Right now, I feel satisfied with my body and size.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Right now, I feel physically attractive.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
The ad makes me want to be the opposite.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I do not approve of how the ad tries to affect me.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The choice of models bothers me.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How well do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	Strongly agree
This ad portrays women in a stereotypical way.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This ad challenges female stereotypes.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This ad empowers women.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Finally, we want to know a little bit about you!

Gender:
○ Male
○ Female
○ Other

How old are you? (in numbers)

_____

Thank you ever so much!
Elin and Desirée

Appendix VI

Regressions Study 1 - presumed influence

	Female other	Male other	Both	Female other	Male other	Both
Influence	Positive	Positive	Positive	Negative	Negative	Negative
Dependent variable	Self-esteem	Self-esteem	Self-esteem	Self-esteem	Self-esteem	Self-esteem
Constant	6.230	5.132	5.942	4.160	4.927	4.373
β_1Femvertising	- 0.034	- 0.039	- 0.178	0.355*	0.220	0.995*
β_2Other	- 0.289	0.086	- 0.161	0.366*	0.157	0.998 (p=0.083)
β_3(Femvertising* Other)	0.039	0.020	0.055	- 0.114*	-0.069	- 0.331*
Adjusted R^2	0.020	0.009	-0.016	0.027	0.003	0.018

Unstandardised coefficients. * p<0.05