The Power of The Ideal Man

Exploring the Effects of using Him in Media

Josefine Bengtsson
21243

The quick growth of the male beauty market and the increased usage of male models in advertising have left companies and marketers behind when it comes to understanding how to best advertise male consumer products. **The main purpose** *of this thesis is to examine how media image exposure of males can become more effective in Sweden. To do this, three research questions were formulated. The first question examines the characteristics that define an Ideal Man in Sweden. The second- and third questions, study the direct- and indirect effects of media image exposure of such an Ideal Man on consumers.* **The method** *that was used to solve the questions is divided into two steps. Step A uses the concept of Triangulation (qualitative- and quantitative studies) to examine the first research question. In step B, a quantitative questionnaire was used to solve the second- and third research questions.* **The result** *proves that an Ideal Man in Sweden should be Masculine, Sporty and Intellectual, which he could demonstrate by looking Natural and Muscular as well as by giving an Intense Gaze. The direct effects of idealized media images of males are that women's Body Satisfaction and Emotions increase with such exposure. The indirect effects of idealized media image exposure are that men's Buying Intentions increase.* **The conclusion** *is that male models that simulate an Ideal Man should be used in advertising to increase its effectiveness.*
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TUTORS: Micael Dahlén and Jonas Colliander
OPPONENT: Christian Siesenop
EXAMINATOR:
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*"Beauty is the promise of **happiness**,"*

Edmund Burke

*"In the age of TV, **image** becomes more important than substance,"*

S. I. Hayakawa

*"I see how **external** images influence the image that I call my body,"*

Henri Bergson

*"I know a lot of **models** are written off as just bodies. I never felt used for my body,"*

Arnold Schwarzenegger

*"When people see an actor speak, they think they know him, whereas I'm just a face or a **body** to them,"*

Kate Moss

*"Physical fitness isn't only the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of **intellectual** activity,"*

John F. Kennedy

*"The **muscular** type is not representative of the human race, who are varied in their physique,"*

Vivienne Westwood

*"The **ideal** has many names, and beauty is but one of them,"*

Ninon de L'Enclos

*"The **body** is meant to be seen, not all covered up,"*

Marilyn Monroe

*"I kill myself for my **body**,"*

Cher

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The presence and influence of media images in today's society are inescapable; advertisements are everywhere – stemming from TV, magazines, Internet, radio, outdoor posters to name a few (Rosengren, 2008). Diverse forms, styles and concepts have been used to transmit an advertising message, but the most frequent form remains the use of the human body (Ricardo, 2006). Images of the female body have especially been used to sell products to both men and women (Engel et al., 1994). A majority of these media images portray women through a lens of perfection. Photos are altered and edited with technology, which often results in unrealistic and unattainable images of females displayed in media. This has contributed to an objectification of women (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997), which means that females often are regarded as material objects in our society. Moreover, the artificial standard of beauty presented in the media affects women's perceptions of their own attractiveness and can result in damaging consequences such as decreased Body Satisfaction (e.g. Thompson et al., 1999; Muth & Cash, 1997), lowered Self-Esteem (e.g. Bessenoff, 2006; Cahill & Mussap, 2007) and negative Emotions (Tiggemann & Mcgill, 2004). On the other hand, exposure to idealized media images of *female* have generally led to positive consequences for *men* such as increased Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem (Kenrick et al., 1993; Mehann 2009) and positive Emotions (Bersscheid, 1985).

Although many studies have been conducted in this area, it is still unclear why and how people are affected by idealized media imagery (Choi et al., 2008). A growing body of research found that idealized media image effects are not direct but are mediated by people's beliefs about others' expectations of the image ideals presented in media (Thomsen, 2002). These studies suggest that people see themselves through the eyes of others whom they often believe have been significantly affected by idealized media images (Felson, 1985; Thomsen, 2002). In turn, this belief of a media impact on others may motivate people to change their behaviour and for example purchase advertised products, not because the advertising influences them themselves, but because they think others might have been affected (Goodman, 2002).

To sell products today, marketers are gradually using images of males, which similar to women is contributing to an objectification of men in the society (Fallon, 1990; Lee Monaghan, 2002). Not a long time ago, beauty ideals for men barely existed (e.g. Frederick et al., 2007). However, today men are no

longer strangers to tanning salons, waxing or even manicure treatments (Costa, 2011). Research show that 53% of men say that grooming has become expected of them. Meanwhile, 34% of those men say that having a beauty routine would improve their love lives and 25% agree it would enhance their careers (Costa, 2011). Some suggest that this dramatic change might be due to the increasing gender equality in western society (Davis, 2002) where the mass entry of women into the workplace paralleled by the changing structure of modern families have generated a widespread debate around the changing role of men (Mills, 2009). Sweden is recognized worldwide for being one of the most advanced countries regarding gender equality (Tienari, 2010). If equality between the sexes is contributing to a greater usage of males in advertising, one can wonder how idealized media images of males directly and indirectly affect Swedes and what male beauty ideals should be presented to the Swedish population in order to increase advertising effectiveness.

1.2 Problem

In the last years, the male cosmetics market has been growing at twice the rate of the women's category (L'Oréal, 2010). Many predicted that 2010 would be the year that the male grooming industry would boom (L'Oréal, 2010; Costa, 2010). The reality is somewhat more complex than that; while some areas have shown growth, augmentation in other areas has been negligible and some market segments even registered a decline. The reason behind this slower than anticipated growth could be the state of the economy (Mintel, 2012). However, most researchers seem to agree that one of the main causes of the slow growth is the method used by advertisers to target men. The truth is that advertisers are still trying to find the most effective way of communicating with the male audience, but so far, their results have been limited and there is no global success story to date (Costa, 2010).

While taking part in a case competition executed by L'Oréal it became clear to the author that the quick growth of the male beauty market has left cosmetic companies and marketers behind when it comes to understanding how to best advertise beauty products to men. During the competition, several employees in L'Oréal Sweden pointed out that a large problem for them is to find male models for their advertising campaign that could attract both male and female customers. At present in Sweden, men themselves buy only 50 per cent of male beauty products whereas the rest is bough by women, indicating that the chosen models for male beauty campaigns need to attract both genders (Brandstorm, 2011). Previous research suggests that "what is beautiful is good" (Dion et al., 1972) and empirical studies bear out this phenomenon, showing that the physical attractiveness of a person shown in an advertisement increases

the following; direct mail response rates (Caballero & Pride, 1984), advertiser believability (Kamins, 1990), attitude towards the product (Kahle & Homer 1985), willingness to purchase (Petroshius & Crocker, 1989; Kahle & Homer 1985) and actual purchase rates (Caballero & Solomon, 1984). This indicates that effective advertising should always use as attractive and beautiful models as possible. Companies and marketers have a relatively deeper knowledge about the female beauty ideal, which enables them to easily and successfully select models of this gender. However, there are no studies examining what characteristics consumers regard as attractive and beautiful for males. Moreover, previous research suggests that the nature of the male beauty ideal is more multi-faceted and complex than the female beauty ideal (e.g. Olivardia et al., 2004, Pope et al., 2000; Borowiecki, & Cohane, 2001). Also, standards of beauty are shown to be culturally specific (Langlois & Roggman, 1990). Therefore, the author decided to examine what male characteristics are seen as attractive for men and women in Sweden and formulated the first research question:

RQ1: What characteristics define an Ideal Man in Sweden?

However, even if the author would be able to perfectly answer the first research question of this thesis it would still be unclear if such "Ideal Man" should be used as a model in advertising. The reason for this is that an important aspect to consider when selecting models is how images of him or her affect consumers in the short- and long-run. For example, a large body of literature show that idealized media images of females have been proven to result in damaging consequences for women (e.g. Thompson et al., 1999; Muth & Cash, 1997). However, there are barely any studies conducted examining the effect on consumers following exposure of idealized media images of males. The few studies made show inconsistent and weak results. Previous research explains that this inconsistency could be due to the fact that researcher are not sure of what images to use to simulate ideal males (Mehann, 2009), thus, before measuring the effects of idealized images exposure, the ideal held by participants in such experiment need to be examined in detail. Therefore, before investigating how idealized images of models affect consumer, the author found it vital to first answer the first research question of this thesis. Thereafter, the second research question of this thesis could be solved, which is formulated:

RQ2: What are the direct effects of exposure to idealized media images of males on consumers?

Nevertheless, even if the second research question would show no direct negative effects on consumers of idealized images exposure of males, it would still be unclear if images of an "Ideal Man" should be

used in advertising. The cause for this is that some researchers found that idealized media image effects are not direct but are mediated by people' beliefs about others' expectations of the image ideals (Thomsen, 2002). In turn, research proves that this belief of a media impact on others may motivate people to purchase advertised products, not because they themselves are influenced by the advertising, but because they think others might have been (Goodman, 2002). Thus, the author formulated a final research question:

RQ3: What are the indirect effects of exposure to Idealized Media Image of males on consumers?

All in all, these three research questions will be used to solve the expressed difficulties for marketers and companies that are working with male consumer products. In accordance with these challenges, the overall purpose of this thesis is to come to an understanding of how media images of males can be used more effectively in Swedish. The author formulated the following main question:

How can media image exposure of males become more effective in Sweden?

1.3 Intended Knowledge Contribution

The aim of this thesis is to make the media image exposure of males in Sweden more effective. As of today, there has been no research investigating what type of male models should be used in advertising to increase its effectiveness. Besides that, there is a lack of studies examining the direct and indirect effects of male media image exposure on consumers. This thesis will offer a frame to help marketers and companies evaluating how to select male models for their advertising to increase its effectiveness. Such advertising would contribute to reach consumers in a positive way, which in turn probably translates into increased sales both in the short and long term. Moreover, in a socially wider perspective this thesis will hopefully lead marketers and companies to select male models who's exposure do not result in damaging consequences for their consumers. More specifically, by solving the *first* purpose of this thesis, companies and marketers in Sweden will be able to better understand what male characteristics they should consider when looking for models to use in their advertising. This knowledge will also help researchers within the idealized image domain to understand what idealized image of males they should use in their experimental stimuli. The *second* and *third* purpose of this thesis will explain the consequences and implications of using idealized images of males in advertising as well as if images of males or products are most effective to use in communication. The *second purpose* will also help companies and marketers to avoid damaging consequences of advertising and instead create positive effects of marketing for their customers. The *third* purpose will inform companies and marketers about

how advertising indirectly can affect consumers' purchasing behaviour. Besides that, these two purposes will also help researchers to better understand the relationship between direct and indirect effects of exposure to idealized images.

1.4 Delimitations

The author had to reduce the wide field of advertising research spectrum to a specific marketing issue that could be presented within the scale of a master thesis. *Firstly*, the author narrowed the problem down to focus on how to increase the effectiveness of media image exposure of males in Sweden, and more specifically what characteristics a male model should have to attract Swedes as well as how images of such model directly and indirectly affect consumers. However, there are several challenges in the growing male beauty market, thus, focusing on these aspects leaves other problems unexplored such as that men lack of knowledge in regards of how to use male skincare, that men uses products made for females and the norm about masculinity (Leckne, 2011). *Secondly*, considering gender equality and the unique positioning of Sweden in the role of males, the findings are probably only applicable on the Swedish market since cross-cultural differences in the perception of an Ideal Man might exist (Langlois & Roggman, 1990). Likewise, this thesis do not consider cross-cultural differences within Sweden, thus, this thesis examine a general perspective of the Swedish market. *Thirdly*, while there are many variables that could possibly affect consumers after exposure to idealized images of males, the author had to limit the number of variables measuring these effects. Therefore, the three variables that previous researcher most commonly have used were chosen: *Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotions* (e.g. Bessenoff, 2006; Cahill & Mussap, 2007; Jones & Buckingham, 2005). However, also another new variable were added to match the subject of this thesis: *The Perception of the Ideal Man.*

1.5 Outline

In order to give the reader a pleasant reading experience, the structure of this thesis follows an intuitive approach. The author has divided this thesis into five chapters. Following this overview chapter, the second chapter presents the theoretical background used by the author. This section itself is separated into three parts in line with the three research questions of the study. The third chapter deals with the methodology used to carry out the research in this thesis. This section is divided into two main steps following the research process taken by the author. Clarification on the reliability and validity of the method used in this thesis will finish off chapter three. The fourth chapter presents the results of the focus groups, questionnaires and interviews. The final chapter discusses the outcomes as well as highlights the main managerial implications that can be deducted for marketers and companies. The

most interesting findings will be analysed by connecting them back to the theories presented in chapter two. This thesis will be concluded with an argumentative discussion of the results and suggestions for further studies within this field.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical background of this thesis is divided into three subparts following the structure of the three research questions. The first part aims to give the reader an understanding of how an Ideal Man should be defined. Thereafter, the second part will present previous findings and theories explaining consumers' possible reactions to exposure of idealized media images. At last, the third person framework will be defined and discussed in order to provide the reader with awareness of potential indirect effects of exposure to idealized media images of males.

2.1 PART 1 – The Characteristics of an Ideal Man in Sweden

This first part of the theoretical background will predominantly discuss what internal and external characteristics that are important to consider when defining an Ideal Man in Sweden. However, before doing this, three socio-cultural transmitters that are known to influence image ideals will first be discussed, both from a general and a Swedish perspective.

Advertising featuring attractive spokespersons and models fill television screens and print media based on the evidence that attractive people sell more products (e.g. Petroshius & Crocker, 1989; Kahle & Homer 1985; Caballero & Solomon, 1984). It has long been socially accepted that "what is beautiful is good" (Dion et al., 1972) and empirical studies bear out this phenomenon, showing that the physical attractiveness of a person shown in an advertisement increases direct mail response rates (Caballero & Pride, 1984), advertiser believability (Kamins, 1990), attitude towards the product (Kahle & Homer 1985), willingness to purchase (Petroshius & Crocker, 1989; Kahle & Homer 1985) and actual purchase (Caballero & Solomon, 1984). One reason for this is that a physically attractive source often wakes positive sensations, which makes it easier for consumers to process the information of relevant stimuli (Ricardo, 2006). Moreover, by using a model or endorser with attractive and likeable characteristics (Atkins & Block, 1983) their qualities will "spillover" to a certain product or more widely to the company brand (McCracken 1989; Walker et al., 1992; Simonin & Ruth, 1998). Therefore, most advertisements portray appealing, ideal images of the human body. However, standards of beauty are culturally specific and a universal definition is nearly impossible (Langlois & Roggman, 1990), thus, in order to fulfil the first purpose of this thesis, a deeper examination of important characteristics for an Ideal Man in Sweden is required.

2.1.1 Socio-Cultural Influences on Image Ideals

Human beings are social creatures (Arnett, 1995; Davies, 2004), and hence, we are socialized to learn expectations of the culture in which we develop. Socialization includes the ways in which themes of society such as the beauty image ideal are transmitted to and influence individuals (Stice, 1998). A person's conception of one's self is strongly guided by the culture in which he or she grows up (Poran, 2002). This indicates that perceptions of beauty are socially constructed and embedded in this larger social framework of cultural ideals. While there are many socio-cultural transmitters, three sources of influence have been particularly related to beauty ideals: *family* and *friends* in childhood (Abrams & Stormers, 2002) and *media* in adulthood (Engeln-Maddox, 2005; Tiggemann, 2002; Smolak, 2002).

The first cultural institution in a child's life is the *family*. Parents appear to be one of the most influential sources for beauty image ideals since they introduced the standards and values of the society that they ascribe to (Pompper & Koenig, 2004; Spurgas, 2005). Haworth-Hoeppner (2004) notes that interactions within the family might mediate the effects of cultural ideas on the construction of beauty and body image. Nobody is born with a negative image of themselves and it is clear that having either positive or negative early messages at childhood influence people' perception of their beauty images at adulthood (Sarwer, 1998). Secondly, as the child enters school, *friends* and other adults become socializing influences too (Dittmar, 2005). The child's social reputation becomes dependent on its status in the group, and thus the opinions of the child's friends become critical (Davies, 2004). This results in the child's will to participate in social comparison, a characteristic of human social life in which we relate our own features to those of others and vice versa (see more section 2.2.1.3) (Buunk, 2001). These social comparisons have significant effects on the child's development of beauty image ideals (Davies, 2004). Finally, as the child continues to grow into adolescence, the *media* begins to project and reinforce the idealized beauty images that society holds (Engeln-Maddox, 2005).

As previously mentioned, the presence and influence of media images in today's society are inescapable since advertisements are everywhere (Rosengren, 2008) and the most frequent way to transmit an advertising message is by using the human body (Ricardo, 2006). As for friends, the social comparison theory also applies in the media world. It states that people are most likely to compare themselves and those around them to images presented in the media, often represented as realistic goals to attain (Botta 1999). Consequently, the media is one of the most powerful promoters of beauty ideals (Groesz et al., 2002; Tiggeman, 2002).

These three socio-cultural transmitters differ depending on the cultural context. In order to fulfil the first purpose of this study, a deeper examination of the Swedish context and media influences is required. Therefore, the next section will discuss culturally specific aspects that may influence the standards of beauty for males in Sweden.

2.1.1.1 The Swedish Context

Sweden is recognized worldwide for being one of the most advanced countries regarding gender equality, with multiple studies and ranking reinforcing this image (Hausmann et al., 2010). Women now form around 40 per cent of the national parliaments in Sweden, and Sweden figures on top of Hofstede's masculinity index, as the least masculine country in the world (Tienari, 2010). Moreover, the Swedish Governmental Committee on Equality between the Sexes has proved that Swedish men are very eager to live a life based on equality (Jalmer, 2003).

This unique role of men in the Swedish society clearly affects all of the three socio-cultural transmitters, *family*, *friends* and *media,* (Abrams & Stormers, 2002; Engeln-Maddox, 2005; Tiggemann, 2002; Smolak, 2002). Therefore, the author also believes that the standards of beauty of males in Sweden are unique. To understand the overall purpose of this thesis, it is of outmost importance to especially examine how an "Ideal Man" is according to the Swedish population. To do that, the next section will give an overview of the different aspects that need to be considered while defining such man.

2.1.2 Characteristics and Personalities

Previous research on beauty ideals has been focused on women. In western societies, a model-thin body is usually considered a beauty ideal that every woman should admire and aim at resembling (e.g. Tiggeman, 2005; Ogle & Damhorst., 2005; Peralta, 2003; Saucier, 2004; Tiggemann & Mcgill, 2004; Pompper & Koenig, 2004). This ideal is becoming even more extreme, for example, in 2006, two catwalk models died due to self-starvation, which led to a huge "Size Zero Debate" in media and called for a ban on the use of models with dangerously low body weights (Cosgrave, 2006; Olins, 2008). Likewise, at present, major fashion labels such as Prada, Versace and Armani have agreed to ban ultra-thin "Size Zero" models from their catwalks (Daily mail, 2006; BBC, 2012).

In the past years, marketers have gradually started using images of males in their advertising but little research has focussed on the beauty image ideal for men (e.g. Olivardia et al., 2004; Borowiecki &

Cohane, 2004). It has been acknowledged that the nature of the male ideal is more multi-faceted and complex than the female ideal (e.g. Olivardia et al., 2004; Borowiecki & Cohane, 2004). Research states that differences in gender concept between men and women suggest internal characteristics to be more important for men, whereas physical appearance is more important for women when defining ideals (Franzoi, 1995). Likewise, findings show that men believe the most important trait of a woman is her physical appearance. On the other hand, non-physical aspects of male attractiveness signal the traits that women appreciate in a potential partner such as his ability and willingness to invest in offspring (Gottschall, 2007). Furthermore, research found that while women are particularly interested in the physical attractiveness of female models in advertising, males put more importance on the lifestyle or personality of a male featured in advertising (O'Donohoe, 1994). Conversely, another study shows that men concede their external appearance to be more important than they like to admit but that they do not like to talk about beauty image ideals because they perceive it to be a feminine or gay issue (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2003). Therefore, according to both men and women, the attractiveness of a male seems to be not only *External* (face, body) but also *Internal* (personality) (Gottschall, 2007; O'Donohoe, 1994). Furthermore, research suggests that males' external- and internal attractiveness is particularly influenced by their degree of *Masculinity* (e.g. DeBruine et al., 2008; Fan et al., 2004; Law-Smith et al., 2006; Roney et al., 2006; Dixson, 1998; Nelson, 2005). Consequently, it is important to discuss the core characteristics that are used to represent men. Masculinity is probably the most essential and will be presented in the next part. Thereafter, the most important Internal- and External characteristics of males will be examined.

2.1.2.1 Masculinity

Masculinity is the opposite of femininity and it is defined as possessing qualities or characteristics considered typical of a man (Courtenay, 1995). However, both men and women can possess masculine as well as feminine characteristics (Connell, 2005). Previous literature shows that masculinity is important for the perceived attractiveness of males (Iliffe, 1960; Udry, 1965; Zebrowitz et al, 1993). Research also suggests that being masculine is predictive of a positive beauty and body image for men (Meehan, 2009; Borchert & Heinberg, 1996). Likewise, evolutionary theory has been used to understand women's preferences for masculine males. Such theory proves that nonhuman female animals tend to show strong preferences for exaggerated masculine male traits, such as large antlers and peacock's tails (Andersson, 1994; Ryan & Keddyhector, 1992). The reason to these preferences is that the growth of such traits are mediated by immune-stressing steroids such as testosterone, and that as only high quality

males can ''afford'' exposure to immune stress, these traits signal high levels of immunocompetence (e.g. Roberts et al. 2004; Folstad & Karter, 1992). This has in turn generated similar expectations regarding human preferences for males such as that masculine males should be seen as more attractive by women (Thornhill & Gangestad, 1999).

2.1.2.2 Internal Characteristics

When discussing Internal Characteristics of image ideals, a beneficial way is to use personality type research. Personality type refers to the psychological classification of different types of people and it includes the particular combination of emotional, attitudinal, and behavioural response patterns of an individual (e.g. Neil et al. 2010; Angler, 2009). Previous research shows that individuals' hormone balance highly influences their external traits, such as psychological personalities (Wallen, 2011). In fact they are over eighty known hormones that all affect personality (Nardi, 2001).

The anthropologist Helen Fisher completed one of the most recent personality types studies related to hormone levels and she especially studied personality types in men (Fisher, 2009; Fisher, 2011). Fisher (2009) concluded that the level of especially four hormones; *Testosterone, Estrogen*, *Dopamine* and *Serotonin* determines an individual's personality. She found four different personality types each corresponding to a dominance of one of these four hormones (table 1).

PERSONALITY TYPES				
	Director	**Negotiator**	**Explorer**	**Builder**
Hormone Dominance	Testosterone	Estrogen	Dopamine	Serotonin
Characteristics	Achievement Seeker Intellectual Masculine	Harmony Seeker Emotional Feminine	Novelty Seeker Freedom Seeker Impulsive	Rule Keeper Security Seeker Traditional
Exercise	Competitive sports like tennis and bodybuilding.	Mental activities like Yoga and walking.	Action oriented sports like windsurfing and kayaking.	Social activities like golf and boule.

Table 1 – Personality Types

The *Director* is dominated by the sex hormone Testosterone and it has been demonstrated that mainly this hormone is related to the masculinity of humans (e.g. Dixson, 1998; Burriss et al., 2007). Likewise, it is shown that Testosterone levels play an important role in modulating male behaviour (Dixson, 1998; Nelson, 2005; Wingfield et al., 1990). Therefore, the Director is the most masculine type of personality with characteristics such as Achievement Seeker and Intellectual. The second type is the *Negotiator,* and this personality can be seen as the opposite of the Director since it is dominated by the female sex hormone Estrogen. Therefore, characteristics such as Harmony Seeker and Emotional describe the Negotiator. The two remaining personalities are gender neutral but they can still be seen as each other's

opposites. Individuals with a dominance of Dopamine tend to be Novelty Seekers, Freedom Seekers and Impulsive and therefore Fisher (2009) named this personality type, *Explorer*. The forth personality type is called *Builder* since, due to a Serotonin dominance, they have characteristics such as Rule Keeper, Security Seeker and Traditional. As shown in table 1, the hormone dominance also reflects what type of exercise an individual prefers, since different hormones are activated by different kind of accomplishments. For example, Testosterone is activated by competitions, Estrogen by mental activities, Dopamine by action and Serotonin by social events (Fisher, 2009; Wallen, 2011; Nardi, 2001; Dixson, 1998; Burriss et al., 2007).

2.1.2.3 External Characteristics

Not only is men's physiological behaviour dependent on their hormone balance, but also men's physical appearance is a cue of present, past, and even prenatal hormone levels (Burriss et al., 2007; Pound et al., 2009; Fisher 2009). For example, it is shown that the Testosterone level in a man determines the degree of masculinity displayed by his face (Law-Smith et al., 2006; Roney et al., 2006), and body (Jasienska et al., 2004). Moreover, Testosterone is the hormone that supports muscle growth, thus, studies argue that if levels of this masculine hormone is increased the muscle mass will also be expanded (Aceto, 2002). Likewise, the most prevalent physical ideals of males in advertising have been those of muscular men (e.g. Frederick et al., 2007; Pope et al., 2001). This view is supported by evidence that depictions of the male ideal body, such as magazine centrefolds and action toys, have become more muscular (Farquhar & Wasylkiw, 2007; Leit et al., 2001; Pope et al., 2001). Nevertheless, more recently, a similar discussion to the "Size Zero Debate" for women has begun in the media regarding the use of ultra-thin males in the fashion world. McVeigh (2010) highlights a shift in the standard sizing of male fashion models, with demands for thinner male models on the increase. Examples in the mass media include Mark Ronson, Russell Brand, Simone Nobili and a number of top male models with fashion magazines targeted at males including images of this ideal (McVeigh, 2010).

2.1.2.4 The Relationship between Internal- and External Characteristics

The Halo Effect can explain the relationship between Internal- and External characteristics of individuals. The effect is a cognitive bias that involves one trait influencing others in one's judgement of another person or object (Thorndike, 1920). In other words, it is a phenomenon whereby individuals assume that because a person is good at doing task *A* that person will also be good at doing task *B, C* and *D* (Rosenzweig, 2007). In marketing, the Halo Effect explains the bias shown by customers towards

certain products because of a favourable experience with other products made by the same manufacturer or maker (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Moreover, research shows that the Halo Effect is highly influenced by the first impression such as if individuals see a person first in a good light, it is difficult subsequently to darken that light. Therefore, the effect is commonly observed along the dimension of physical attractiveness. Dion et al., (1972) demonstrated that "what is beautiful is good" by proving that the benefits of physical attractiveness are implicitly assumed to pervade all aspects of an attractive person's life. In this case, the Halo Effect states that physically attractive individuals are assumed to possess more socially desirable internal traits, live happier lives, be better parents and become more successful than unattractive people. Similarly, physically unattractive individuals are thought to be less intelligent, friendly, happy, and less successful than their attractive peers (Dion et al., 1972). Likewise, Landy and Sigall's (1974) demonstrated that attractive people are perceived to be more intelligent and more academically competent, which explains why advertisers usually pay heroic actors and beautiful actresses, instead of experts, to promote their products. This often works better since consumers think positively about these actors because they played the role of a hero for example. The same applies for actresses, because they can be made to look incredibly beautiful for a movie. Consumers therefore assume that the actor has a deep knowledge of typical male consumer items like car engines, and that the actress knows everything about beauty products (Rosenzweig, 2007).

2.2 PART 2 – Direct Effects of Idealized Media Images of Males

This second part of the theoretical background will discuss how consumers could be directly affected by exposure to images of an Ideal Man. This part begins with the presentation of four theories that could be used to explain consumers' reactions to idealized media images. Thereafter, these four theories will be used to give an academic discussion of the effects on the three chosen variables for this study; Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotions.

The effects, on *men* and *women*, of idealized media exposure are well documented for images of *females* (e.g. Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; Tiggemann & Mcgill, 2004) but there are only a few studies examining the effect of exposure to idealized media images of *males* and these research papers show inconsistent and weak results. In contrast, the body of literature studying the effects of idealized images of *females*, on the chosen variables (Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotions), show consistent and clear results that obviously differ depending on the observers' sex.

For women, exposure to media depictions of thin and idealized *females* are related to numerous negative consequences (Groesz et al., 2002). Three common effects are decreased Body Satisfaction and Self-Esteem (e.g. Bessenoff, 2006; Cahill & Mussap, 2007; lp & Jarry, 2007) as well as negative Emotions (Jones & Buckingham, 2005; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). Thus, these negative effects on women stand in contracts to Ricardo's (2006) research (Part 1), which states that physically attractive sources wake positive sensations among individuals. On the other hand, Ricardo's (2006) theory seems to hold for *men* who are exposed to idealized media images of *females* because such exposure have been related to positive sensations and effects in men such as increased Body Satisfaction and Self-Esteem (Kenrick et al., 1993; Mehann 2009) as well as more positive Emotions (Bersscheid, 1985).

Due to the lack of previous research studying the effects on consumers' Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotions following exposure to idealized image of *males,* the author decided to specifically examine the influence on these three variables. Before going deeper into the variables, four theories will be presented that might explain a link between exposure to idealized media images of *males* and its subsequent effect on *men* and *women.*

2.2.1 Theories

This section will start off by presenting three theories; Self-discrepancy, Cultivation theory and Social Comparison Theory; that possibly can explain the effects on men after exposure to idealized media images of males. Thereafter, the Affect-Attraction theory will be displayed with the purpose of explaining the effects on women following exposure to idealized images of males.

2.2.1.1 Cultivation Theory

As mentioned, to transmit a message, offer a product or sell a service, marketers usually use idealized images of models. The *Cultivation Theory* states that exposure to media "cultivates" attitudes and beliefs that match the media-depicted world, yet the effect of the media does not fully generalize to the real world (Gerbner, 1969). The reality shown in media creations does not translate into the social reality (McCreary & Sadava, 1999). Therefore, the unrealistic images presented in the media are not seen as such, but as something that is real, normal and achievable (e.g. Carver & Scheier 1988). If consumers are repeatedly exposed to the media "view" of the ideal body and face, they may misinterpret such portrayals as being representative of the "real world" rather than those of the "media world" (Harrison, 2003). For instance, if an advertisement depicts an ultra-thin woman consuming junk food, incomplete

information about the link between diet and body shape are communicated to the viewer, which may fool consumers to believe that eating junk food will make them thin.

2.2.1.2 Self-Discrepancy Theory

Furthermore, marketers are usually trying to make consumers identify themselves with these idealized images of models used by the "media world" (Bessenoff, 2006). *Self-Discrepancy* is a theory that might explain a link between idealized media exposure and the effects that follow. Self-Discrepancies result from differences between how one perceives oneself (Real Self) and how one wants to perceive oneself (Ideal Self). Thus, they are subconscious representations in the self-concept of ways in which one falls short of some important standards (Higgins, 1987). This Ideal Self identification will lead the Real Self to experiment positive or negative Emotional states by advertisements, which for example can result in that the Real Self is persuaded by an advertisement and engage in a purchase act (Daza, 2010). Moreover, individuals possessing beauty image Self-Discrepancies associate their failure to reach their beauty ideals with their self-concept (Bessenoff, 2006), thus, differences between a person's Ideal Self and Real Self are important because they have been linked to various types of emotional distress (Higgins, 1987), including decreased Body Satisfaction (e.g. Botta, 2000; Snyder, 1996; Szymanski & Cash, 1995), low Self-Esteem (e.g. Moretti & Higgins, 1990) as well as Emotional disappointment and dissatisfaction (e.g. Strauman & Higgins, 1988).

2.2.1.3 Social Comparison Theory

As described in the first part of the theoretical background, people have a tendency to rate and evaluate themselves through comparisons with friends or media icons to determine their own levels of abilities and successes (Festinger, 1954). This is explained by the *Social Comparison Theory,* which is the most common theory used when discussing the effects of media exposure. The reason why people engage in social comparison is that humans have a basic drive for self-evaluation and when objective means for self-evaluation are not available, comparing one's self to others often occurs in an attempt to fulfil this drive (Engeln-Maddox, 2005). The Social Comparison Theory differentiates between two types of comparisons: Downward and Upward (Festinger, 1954).

Downward social comparison is a comparison to others, whom people perceive to be less fortunate than themselves in some domain, which generally serves to enhance Emotions and self-evaluation parameters such as Self-Esteem and Body Satisfaction (Wills, 1991).

Upward social comparison is a comparison to others, whom people perceive to be superior to themselves, which generally leads to negative Emotions and threaten the self-evaluation parameters (e.g. Gibbons & Gerard, 1989; Buunk & Mussweiler, 2001).

Relationships between the theories

As the Cultivation Theory explains, today's media do not distinguish between glorified fiction and reality (McCreary & Sadava, 1999). Consequently, people regard media images as realistic representations of beauty and as appropriate reference points. That is to say, the idealized media images often become individuals' Ideal Selves. Therefore, as predicted by the Self-Discrepancy Theory, a gap between the Real Self and this Ideal Self is created (Bessenoff, 2006). In turn, this gap makes people engage in Upward Social Comparison, which as mentioned, generally leads to negative consequences for individuals. Further research has actually proved that such negative effects only occur if consumers engage in Upward Social Comparison with the idealized models (e.g. Gibbons & Gerard, 1989; Buunk & Mussweiler, 2001; Wheeler & Miyake, 1992). Consequently, the Self-Discrepancy Theory and the Cultivation Theory alone do not fully explain the potential negative effects following idealized image exposure. However, when adding the Social Comparison Theory, the link between media exposure of *males* and its subsequent effects on men's Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotions can possibly be clarified (Tiggemann & Mcgill, 2004).

2.2.1.4 Affect-Attraction Theory

As mentioned, Ricardo (2006) proposed that physically attractive sources wake positive sensations among individuals. Nevertheless, considering the three theories that were just presented, this seems not to be true in all cases and especially if the attractive source is of the same sex as the observer. However, when the attractive source is of the opposite sex to the observer, Evolutionary Theory proves that such exposure leads to a state of positive affection in the observer (Byrne & Clore, 1970; Byrne et al., 1968). This can also be explained by the Affect-Attraction model (Lott & Lott, 1974), which shows a relationship between an attractive person and affective reactions (e.g. Byrne, 1971; Kenrick & Cialdini, 1977). Moreover, in a list of various characteristics of the opposite sex, physical attractiveness is shown to make another person the most source of reward (Lott & Lott, 1974). In other words, exposure to attractive people belonging to the opposite sex is rewarding and hence, should result in positive Emotions (Kenrick et al., 1993). Conversely, attractive people belonging to the same sex are unlikely to be associated with reward for the target (excluding homosexuals), thus, such positive Emotions are

unlikely to be generated (Kenrick, 1993; Meehan, 2009). Moreover, previous research shows that positive Emotions is correlated with an improvement in Self-Esteem (Kernis et al., 1993). In turn high Self-Esteem is linked with great Body Satisfaction (Van den Berg et al., 2010; Monro & Huon, 2005; Evans & McConnell, 2003; Thompson & Dolce, 1989). Consequently, this theory can possibly help explain a link between media exposure of *males* and its subsequent effects on *women's* Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotions (Kenrick et al., 1993).

In the next section, these four theories will be used to give an academic discussion of each of the three chosen variables: Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotions.

2.2.2 Direct Effects

This section will discuss each of the three chosen variables (Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotions) separately. First, a definition of the variable will be given. Thereafter, previous discovered direct effects of idealized image exposure on the variable will be discussed. Moreover, throughout this section, a division between men and women as well as between same and opposite sex images will be done. This is because, as mentioned, earlier findings show that the effects of idealized images exposure depend on if the image displays a model of the same or the opposite sex as the observer.

2.2.2.1 Body Satisfaction

Definition

Body Satisfaction is often defined as a continuum of satisfaction with one's physical appearance (Agliata & Tantleff-Dunn, 2004). This is related to body image, which refers to a person's perceptions, thoughts and feelings about his or her body (e.g. Cash et al., 2004; Grogan, 2008). In turn, body dissatisfaction is a person's negative evaluation of his or her body (Grogan, 2008) and has been consistently linked with a range of physical and mental health problems including low self-esteem, depression, social anxiety as well as extreme behaviours such as cosmetic surgery, anabolic steroid use, strict dietary regimes, fasting, laxative abuse, and self-induced vomiting, all aimed at changing body shape and all of which have potentially damaging consequences (Cash et al., 2004; Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002; Grogan, 2008; Ricciardelli & McCabe, 2004). Moreover, in our present time and society, a high proportion of people struggle with body image concerns (e.g. Neighbors & Sobal, 2007). Some researchers suggest that especially the relevance of body image has increased among men and they refer to a new obsession with the body, known as the Adonis Complex or Muscle Dysmorphia. This condition

is an excessive fixation on achieving a perfect body and afflicts boys and men of all ages and from all walks of life (Pope, 2000). Moreover, the main areas that produce dissatisfaction for men are the mid-torso, biceps, shoulders, chest, as well as general muscle tone (Grogan, 2008).

Same Sex Effects

For women, previous research agrees on that when they are exposed to advertisements containing idealized images of *females,* their Body Satisfaction decreases (e.g. Bessenoff, 2006; Cahill & Mussap, 2007, lp & Jarry, 2007; Richins, 1991).

For men, only a few studies have been conducted on their perceived body image after exposure to idealized media images of *males* and the results from these studies point in three different directions. Firstly, several researchers found that same sex idealized images exposure led to decreased Body Satisfaction for girls but not for boys (e.g. Bartlett et al., 2008; Johnson et al., 2007). Secondly, Agliata and Tantleff-Dunn, (2004), suggest instead that exposure to idealized media images of males is related to higher levels of muscle dissatisfaction for men. Likewise, researchers that interviewed bodybuilders found a strong social comparison effect, whereby bodybuilders compared their bodies to those of other men in the gym, which in turn led to decreased Body Satisfactions (Grogan, 2008). Conversely, Humphreys and Paxton (2004) found an increase in Body Satisfaction for adolescent boys following exposure of idealized media images of males. However, considering the negative effects of perceived self-discrepancies and Upward Social Comparisons, the author believes that, even though there are differences between the genders, an increased objectification of males will lead men to struggle with the same enormous pressure to achieve physical perfection that women have dealt with for centuries. This means that men will, also experience similar negative effects on body image concerns as women, such as lowered Body Satisfaction. Therefore, the following is hypothesized:

H1a: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **decreases** men's Body Satisfaction

Opposite Sex Effects

As it was previously mentioned, attractive sources of the opposite sex often lead to a state of positive effects in the observer. In line with this, *for men*, research agrees on that when they are exposed to advertisements containing idealized images of *females,* their Body Satisfaction increases (Kenrick et al., 1993; Mehann 2009). For example, Lavine et al. (1999) found that, compared to men exposed to neutral

advertisements, men exposed to advertisements that portrayed women as sex objects rated their own bodies as more attractive.

Regarding the subject of *women* in this case, no previous study was found that examined their Body Satisfaction following exposure to idealized images of *males*. However, considering the result found for men as well as the expected positive Emotions described by the Affect-Attraction theory and the relationship between the three variables, the author expects the current research to reveal that exposure to idealized media images of males will increase women's Body Satisfaction. Therefore, the reverse to what was expected when men are exposed to idealized media images of males is hypothesized:

H2a: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **increases** women's Body Satisfaction

2.2.2.2 Self-Esteem
Definition
Self-Esteem is the extent to which a person feels either positively or negatively about the subjective self-image they have constructed (Buunk & Mussweiler, 2001). In turn, this self-image refers to an image of the self that a person creates and this may or may not concur with the assessment of others (Festinger, 1954; Spurgas, 2005). Moreover, a person's self-image is not just one image, but comprised of many images that form the whole self, e.g. worker, student, parent, child, sibling, friend, man, woman, etc. (Ogle & Damhorst, 2005; Saucier, 2004; Choate, 2005). Nevertheless, of all the parts of the self that form the whole, how a woman feels about her physical appearance is usually the best predictor of her Self-Esteem (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; Sinclair, 2006). This relationship is positive, thus, the better a woman feel's about her physical appearance, the greater her sense of Self-Esteem (Monro & Huon, 2005; Evans & McConnell, 2003; Thompson & Dolce, 1989).

Same Sex Effects
For women, previous research has found clear evidence that they experience lowered Self-Esteem when they are exposed to advertisements containing idealized images of *females* (e.g. Bessenoff, 2006; Cahill & Mussap, 2007; lp & Jarry, 2007).

For men, there are only a few studies examining their Self-Esteem after exposure to idealized images of *males*. Most of them show similar results as the female studies, for example, Farquhar and Wasylkiw

(2007) found that young boys who were exposed to images of objectified males (non-active, body-as-object, high levels of nudity and high muscularity) showed lower levels of performance Self-Esteem in comparison to boys who were exposed to non-objectified males (active, body-as-process). Therefore, the author believe that the same result will be found in this study and puts forward the following hypothesis:

H1b: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **decreases** men's Self-Esteem

Opposite Sex Effects

For men, one previous research demonstrated that when they were exposed to advertisements containing idealized images of *females* their general Self-Esteem increased both in the short- and long term (Meehan, 2009).

For women, again, no previous study was found that examined their Self-Esteem following exposure to idealized images of *males*. However, considering the result for men, the Affect-Attraction Theory and the positive relationship between Self-Esteem and Emotions, the author assumes the current research to reveal that exposure to idealized media images of *males* will increase *women*'s Self-Esteem. Therefore, again, the reverse to what was expected when *men* are exposed to idealized media images of *males* is hypothesized:

H2b: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **increases** women's Self-Esteem

2.2.2.3 Emotions

Definition

Emotion is a complex psycho-physiological experience of an individual's state of mind as interacting with biochemical (internal) and environmental (external) influences. Emotions fundamentally involve physiological arousal, expressive behaviour and a conscious experience (Myers, David G, 2004). Humans share at least five basic Emotions: fear, sadness, happiness, anger, and disgust (Gaulin et al, 2003). Moreover, as mentioned, previous research shows a positive relationship between Emotions, Self-Esteem and Body Satisfaction. A plausible explanation may lie in the fact that Emotion is associated with motivation. Motivation directs and energizes behaviour, while Emotions provide the affective component to motivation, positive or negative (Gaulin, et al., 2003). Hence, negative Emotions following idealized media exposure could motivate individuals to engage in damaging behaviours such

as cosmetic surgery, steroid use, laxative abuse, and self-induced vomiting, all aimed at changing body shape (e.g. Cahill & Mussap, 2007; Jones & Buckingham, 2005; Tiggemann & Mcgill, 2004).

Same Sex Effects

For women, previous studies have found clear evidence that exposure to idealized images of *females* result in negative Emotions for them, e.g. increased anger, anxiety and depression (e.g. Cahill & Mussap, 2007; Jones & Buckingham, 2005; Tiggemann & Mcgill, 2004).

For men, again, fewer similar studies have been done that expose them to idealized images of *males* and the results of these studies are inconsistent. One study indicated that men exposed to ideal image advertisements became significantly more depressed than those exposed to neutral ads (Agliata & Tantleff-Dunn, 2004). Likewise, Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2003) found that gender specific idealized commercials led to an increase in negative Emotion for girls and boys. Conversely, Kalodner (1997) found that anxiety increased in women but not in men when exposed to gender specific images of idealized models. Likewise, Humphreys and Paxton, 2004 found no overall change in men's Emotions after exposure to images of idealized males.However, following the same argument as for Body Satisfaction, the author believes that Swedish males and females will experience similar Emotional consequences after watching gender specific idealized images. Therefore, the following is hypothesized:

H1c: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **decreases** men's Emotions.

Opposite Sex Effects

For men, previous research agrees on that when they are exposed to advertisements containing idealized images of *females* they develop more positive Emotions (Bersscheid, 1985).

For women, one previous study exposed them to images of attractive *males* and found that women reacted more positively to an attractive male model than to an average male model (Debevec & Kernan, 1984). This result, together with the expected positive effects of the Affect-Attraction Theory makes the author anticipate the current research to reveal that exposure to idealized media images of males will increase women's Emotions. Therefore, again, the opposite to what was expected when men are exposed to idealized media images of males is hypothesized:

H2c: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **increases** women's Emotions

2.3 PART 3 – Indirect Effects of Idealized Media Images of Males

In this third and last part of the theoretical background, the author will discuss how the consumer could be indirectly affected by being exposed to images of an Ideal Man. This part begins with explaining the Third Person Effect Framework. Thereafter, seven hypotheses will be put forth.

In the previous part it was hypothesized that exposure to idealized media images of males result in negative effects for men and positive effects for women. Although many studies have been conducted in this area, it is still unclear why and how people are affected by idealized media images (Choi et al., 2008). A growing body of research found that idealized media image effects are not direct but are mediated by people's beliefs about others' expectations of the images ideals (Thomsen, 2002). These studies suggest that people see themselves through the eyes of others whom they often believe have been significantly affected by the idealized media images (Felson, 1985; Thomsen, 2002). In turn, this belief of a media impact on others may motivate people to change their behaviour and for example purchase advertised products, not because the advertising influences them themselves, but because they think others might have been effected (Goodman, 2002). Likewise, this perceived effect on others seems to make it difficult for consumers to avoid beauty ideals shown in media even though they are well aware of that the images often are unreal and edited to perfection (Nichter, 2000; Frazer, 1987; Goodman, 2002; Goodman & Walsh-Childers, 2003; Milkie, 1999). Such explanation stand somehow in contrast to what was discussed in part two of the theoretical background where it was assumed (based on the Cultivation Theory) that men would perceive the idealized media images as realistic and attainable goal, thus, (as suggested by the Self-Discrepancy- and Social Comparison Theory) they would compare themselves "upwards" to the idealized media images, which in turn could create negative effects (Martin & Kennedy, 1993; Richins, 1991; Law & Labre, 2002). Due to these conflicting research results, the author decided to also explore the indirect impact of idealized media images of males by using the *Third Person Effect framework.*

2.3.1 Definition of the Third Person Framework

The Third Person Theory was first developed by Davison (1983) and refers to two propositions. Firstly, the core principle is that subjects exposed to effective mass media tend to believe that the message has a greater impact on others than on themselves - this is the Third Person Perception (TPP). TPP would occur because people use different perceptual processes for other- and self-evaluations (Thomsen, 2002). Actually, most people use a relatively naïve schema to evaluate media effects on others, whereas

they use a more complicated conditional-effects model to measure media effects on themselves (McLeod et al., 2001). Secondly, people tend to take action to counteract the messages' influence on others, which often translate into behavioural consequences – this is the Third Person Effect (TPE). The core effect is that people often anticipate and act according to the expected reactions of others, rather than following the message itself (Davison, 1983).

2.3.2 Third Person Perceptions and Idealized Images

The Third Person Perception has been examined in a variety of contexts including advertising, drama, political news media, defamation trials, and a diversity of antisocial media (e.g. Gunther, 1995; Lee & Yang, 1996; Hoffner et al., 2001; Lometti et al., 1994). TPP applied to idealized media images exposure suggests that people believe others are influenced by idealized images more than they are themselves, thus, they mistakenly overestimate the effect of the images on others relative to themselves.

When exposing *women* to idealized media images of *females,* previous research found TPP gaps for several variables such as Body Satisfaction (Choi et al., 2008), Self-Esteem, Ideal Body Weight perception and Eating Disorder likelihood (David & Johnson, 1998). However, the author did not find any previous research that measure TTP gaps while exposing *men* to idealized media images of *females.* Likewise, no previous research was found that measure TTP gaps while exposing consumers (*men* or *women*) to idealized media images of *males.* Therefore, the Third Person Perception is essential to better understand the indirect effects on *men* and *women* after exposure to idealized media images of *males.* Moreover, in order to be able to draw interesting conclusions, the author found it especially interesting to study the variables that were used earlier in this research; *Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotions* as well as *The Perception of the Ideal Man*. In accordance with the results from similar research done for women, the following two hypotheses were derived:

H3a: For men, the perceived effects on Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotions and The Perception of an Ideal Man of idealized media images of males on others will be **greater** than perceived effects on one's self.

H3b: For women, the perceived effects on Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotions and The Perception of an Ideal Man of idealized media images of males on others will be **greater** than perceived effects on one's self.

2.3.2.1 Others Defined in the Third Person Framework

When adopting the TPP framework, Davison (1983) suggests that the question of who the "others" are becomes crucial because the others may reveal the underlying reason to why TPP occurs and, furthermore, why the perception may lead to negative or positive outcomes (TPE). Others have been conceptualized in various ways in TPP studies (Gunther, 1991; Cohen et al., 1988; Eveland et al., 1999; McLeod et al., 1997; Cohen & Davis, 1991).

Others Based on Social Distance

Most researchers defined "others" using the *Social Distance Theory* (Gunther, 1991; Cohen et al., 1988; Eveland et al., 1999; McLeod et al., 1997; Cohen & Davis, 1991). Social distance refers to the difference between the self and comparison groups. Previous research suggests that TPP increases if others' values and attitudes are perceived to be similar with one's own (e.g. Choi et al., 2008; David & Johnson, 1998), which generally occurs when the social distance between individuals is small. This is truly independent of the observer gender. Therefore, the author hypothesizes that as social distance between the self and others increases, TPP gaps resulting from exposure to idealized media image of males will also increase.

H4: TPP gaps resulting from idealized media images of males will be **greater** when the level of equal social distance increases.

Others Based on Gender

Previous research also proposes the importance of gender-based others (male *versus* female) in the beauty image domain (Lo & Paddun, 2001; Salwen & Dupagne, 1999; Choi et al., 2008). When exposing *women* to idealized media images of *females,* findings show that TPP gaps are greater if others are of the opposite sex. The argument behind this is that *women* are influenced by unrealistic media images because they think that men view these images as real and value them (e.g. Goodman & Walsh-Childers, 2003; Choi et al., 2008). That is to say, women do not believe that men are savvy enough to know that media images are unrealistic (Goodman and Walsh-Childers, 2003). The threat of men judging women's bodies and their limited acceptance of the male observation seemed to prevent women from resisting the media images (Milkie, 1999). As mentioned, the author did not find any previous research that measure TTP gaps while exposing *men* to idealized media images of *females.* Likewise, no previous research was found that measure TTP gaps while exposing consumers (*men* or *women*) to

idealized media images of *males.* However, research suggests that in issue-specific fields such as beauty image advertising, defining others on the basis of only social distance theory may not alone explain why TPP occurs (Duffy & Gotcher, 1996; Goodman, 2002; Goodman & Walsh-Childers, 2003; Milkie, 1999; Nichter, 2000). Thus, the author proposes that others should also be defined on the basis of gender in this study and puts forth the following hypothesis:

H5: TPP gaps resulting from idealized media images of males will be **greater** when others are of the opposite sex.

2.3.3 Third Person Perception and Neutral Images

Researchers have found overwhelming support for TPP in many studies. In fact, nearly every study that has specifically tested the TPP hypothesis supports the difference in perception of media effects (Conners, 2005). However, in order for a TPP gap to be significant, the area of research must include a *persuasive* and *effective* message (Davison, 1983). Likewise, as discussed in part 1 of this thesis, the reason why idealized images of models are used in media is because these images are more persuasive and effective than neutral ones (e.g. Caballero & Pride, 1984; Kamins, 1990). Thus, the author proposes that consumers who are exposed to idealized images of males will demonstrate greater TPP than those who are exposed to neutral images.

H6: Perceived effects of stimuli on others will be greater when participants are exposed to idealized media images of males than when they are exposed to neutral images.

2.3.4 Indirect Effects (Third Person Effects)

A large body of literature has focused on documenting the indirect consequences resulting from people's perception of a media impact on others, which is referred to as the Third Person Effect (TPE). TPE occurs when consumers take action and change their behaviour to counteract the perceived messages' influence on others (Davison, 1983). Therefore, the effect that an advertising exposure achieves may not be due to direct reactions of the audience, but rather due to the behaviour of those people who anticipate, or think they perceive, some reaction on the part of others (e.g. Douglas & Sutton, 2004; Gunther, 1991). Multiple studies have found support for this behavioural component of the Third Person Framework including willingness to censorship (Gunther, 1995; Lee & Yang, 1996), political voting outcomes (Hoffner et al., 2001; Lometti et al., 1994) as well as intentions to buy certain products (Tal-Or et al., 2009). In other words, these studies propose that the impact consumers expect media messages

to have on others may lead them to undertake certain actions themselves, such as vote in a specific way or buy a certain product.

The author found the later component, Buying Intention, to be especially interesting when understanding how advertising containing media image of males can become more effective in Sweden, which as explained is the main problem in this thesis. Previous research suggests that the perceived effect of advertising on others relative to oneself can increase consumers' intentions to buy the products being advertised (Tal-Or et al., 2009). Therefore, the author decided to examine if TPP gaps (resulting from idealized image exposure of males) would increase consumers' intentions to buy products that the idealized male is promoting. Therefore, in line with previous research, the following was hypothesised:

H7a: There will be a **positive** relationship between TPP gaps and men's buying intentions, thus, creating TPE.

H7b: There will be a **positive** relationship between TPP gaps and women's buying intentions, thus, creating TPE.

2.4 Summary of Research Questions and Hypotheses

Two separate research areas have been raised to be able to answer the first research question. Moreover, hypotheses are constructed to be able to solve the second- and third research questions. The table below summarizes the research areas and hypotheses in relation to the research questions.

Research Questions	Hypotheses/ Research Areas
PART 1 What characteristics define an Ideal Man in Sweden?	Internal Characteristics
	External Characteristics
PART 2 What are the direct effects of exposure to idealized media image of males on consumers?	H1a: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **decreases** men's Body Satisfaction
	H1b: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **decreases** men's Self-Esteem
	H1c: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **decreases** men's Emotions
	H2a: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **increases** women's Body Satisfaction
	H2b: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **increases** women's Self-Esteem
	H2c: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **increases** women's Emotions
PART 3 What are the indirect effects of exposure to idealized media image of males on consumers?	H3a: For men, the perceived effects on Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotions and The Perception of an Ideal Man of idealized media images of males on others will be **greater** than perceived effects on one's self.
	H3b: For women, the perceived effects on Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotions and The Perception of an Ideal Man of idealized media images of males on others will be **greater** than perceived effects on one's self.
	H4: TPP gaps resulting from idealized media images of males will be **greater** when the level of equal social distance increases.
	H5: TPP gaps resulting from idealized media images of males will be **greater** when others are of the opposite sex.
	H6: Perceived effects of stimuli on others will be **greater** when participants are exposed to idealized media images of males than when they are exposed to neutral images.
	H7a: There will be a **positive** relationship between TPP gaps and men's buying intentions, thus, creating TPE.
	H7b: There will be a **positive** relationship between TPP gaps and women's buying intentions, thus, creating TPE.

Table 2 – Summary of Research Questions and Hypotheses

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research design of this thesis. The chapter begins with a description of the defined problem and an explanation of the chosen data-collection methods. Thereafter, the credibility of this thesis is discussed by addressing the validity and reliability of the chosen research methods.

3.1 Choice of Topic

The inspiration to write about the ideal image of males and its effects on consumers was given by a strong interest in the male beauty market following a case competition executed by L'Oréal named Brandstorm. In 2011, when the author took part in the competition, the task was to launch a new beauty product for the male segment and while accomplishing this, it became clear to the author that the quick growth of the male beauty market has left cosmetic companies and marketers behind when it comes to understanding how to best advertise beauty products to men (Brandstorm, 2011). Therefore, the author decided with eager intentions to decrease this research gap by writing her master thesis in the area of the male beauty market. To find out a specific problem within this market, the author contacted Richard Leckne, a graduate student from Stockholm School of Economics who now works at L'Oréal in Stockholm. Moreover, in order to narrow down the problem so that it could be solved within the scope of a master thesis, the topic was also further discussed with two of the author' tutors at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE), Micael Dahlén and Jonas Colliander. Moreover, when the topic of this thesis had been decided on, a comprehensive literature research was conducted on relevant theories.

3.2 Scientific Approach

The main approach of this thesis is deductive since the author studied existing theories within the research area and formulated three research questions that were tested through qualitative and quantitative methods (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This approach made it possible to grasp the inner self of individuals and understand consumers' emotions and reactions following exposure of idealized images. Moreover, the second part of this study assumes an explanatory form, seeking to explain a situation and analyse a causal relationship between the variables. The intention is to enable the findings to be used as input into marketing and strategic decision-making.

3.3 The General Research Design

The research process of this thesis was divided into two main steps (A and B). In step A, the first research question was analysed through a triangulation method. In step B, the second- and the third research questions were examined using a quantitative approach.

3.3.1 STEP A – Research Design for Part 1

The first research question examines the present idealized media image of males in Sweden (RQ1). The research methods were applied in consideration with the character of the research topic. To answer this question, multiple research-methods were used. Malhotra (2004) suggests qualitative research to precede quantitative research whenever a new marketing problem is addressed. Therefore, to begin with, a qualitative method was used in the form of an in-depth interview as well as two focus groups. Moreover, to secure the results in this thesis, the author has used the method of *triangulation*. Triangulation applies an integration of several research methods in the study of the same social phenomena. This is particularly useful in a relatively unexplored research field, and accordingly the author found this research method to best suit the first purpose of this thesis. By crosschecking the output of quantitative and qualitative research methods, one can be more confident with an answer to the question if different methods lead to the same result (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Moreover, this method increases the credibility and validity of the results (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). Thus, a quantitative research method, in the form of an online questionnaire, followed the initial qualitative approach. The questionnaire was based on the most relevant findings from the qualitative discussions. In the final stage of the study, a direct qualitative approached was used again. This time, another in-depth interview was conducted to further understand the results from the focus groups, the first interview and questionnaire.

3.3.1.1 Focus Groups

Two focus group interviews divided by gender, with seven participants each were conducted. Both of them took place at the author's apartment, participants were offered snacks and drinks. The first focus group consisted of seven men and was conducted at 6 pm on the 13th of July 2011 and the second focus group consisted of seven women and was conducted at 6 pm on the 17th of July 2011. Each focus group lasted for approximately 1,5 hours and they were organized after Morgan Kjaer Jensen's (1991) and Malhotra's (2004) guidelines how to plan and conduct a focus group. The author had prepared discussion questions concerning Internal- and External characteristics of an Ideal Man. The author took the role as head moderator but to increase the credibility of this thesis, another student from Stockholm School of Economics, Romain Aubert, was present during the sessions and took notes as well as helped out as a moderator. Romain Aubert was well informed about the topic and purposes of this thesis. All discussions during the focus group sessions were recorded. The sessions started with a short presentation of the moderators and the main purpose of this thesis. Thereafter, the members presented themselves. With the intention of answering the purpose of this thesis, the prepared questions were discussed but not

strictly applied, as the author wanted the discussion to go on naturally. The discussion was divided into three distinctive parts. Firstly, external characteristics of an Ideal Man were debated and to get the discussion going, photos of famous men and other chosen photos from magazines were shown to the participants. Secondly, a discussion about internal characteristics of an Ideal Man was held and at this point, four fictive Facebook profiles (explained in 3.4.1.1), created by the author, were shown to the participants in order to get the discussion going as well as see their reactions to specific personality traits. Thirdly, an open discussion regarding the importance of masculinity in males was held.

Participants

The seven men participants in focus group 1 were aged from 22 to 25 years. They all lived in Stockholm and were studying business or had been studying business. The seven women participants in focus group 2 were aged from 23 to 26 and were all students from Stockholm. Although gender and age were part of the research design requirement, natural grouping was also preferred. Since the goal was to explore collective understanding or shared meanings of the Ideal Man, the author used participants that were members of the same group (similar education, jobs, social background) (Kjaer Jensen, 1998). Previous research claims that this type of grouping enables participants to develop sincerity and a deeper level of intimacy, which creates a more open and honest discussion (Malhotra, 2004). Likewise, the choice to divide the focus groups by gender was also based on the personal and sensitive character of the questions (Hoppe et al, 1995). The members of the focus groups were recruited via Facebook. Users received an email with a short message that the author looked for participants for a thesis study at Stockholm School of Economics. To increase the incentives to participate, each member was offered a beauty product to a retail value of 100 SEK.

3.3.1.2 Questionnaire 1

In the next step, a quantitative survey (Appendix A) was designed to crosscheck the findings from the focus groups. In particular, the author intended to examine if the internal characteristics mentioned to be important in the focus group discussions were important for Swedish people in general.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire and a pre-test of the questionnaire were both constructed with Stockholm School of Economics' free survey service, qualtrics.com. To reduce the risk of questions being missed or skipped, all questions in the questionnaire were marked as mandatory. This first survey was divided in two main

question-sets, both aiming to understand the preferred Internal Characteristics of an Ideal Man in Sweden.

Question-set 1 – Internal Characteristics (Facebook Profiles)

For the first question, the four fictive Facebook profiles that were shown for the focus group participants were now improved and used again. The four profiles were created to simulate males with the four different personality types, *Explorer, Negotiator, Director* and *Builder,* developed by Helene Fisher (2009) and described in chapter two of this thesis (See section 2.1.2.2). When creating the fictive profiles, the author filled in all information (e.g. education, job, interests and favourite quotations) in accordance to the characteristics of each personality. Thereafter, profile pictures were selected for each personality. To minimize external variables, the four photos needed to be of the same person while still representing the aspect of each personality. Also, to make the profiles more trustworthy, the photos needed to be of a person unknown to the respondents. To fulfil those requirements, the author contacted a volunteer outside Sweden to have access to several photos of the same person in different postures and styles. For the *Director* profile, the model wore a suit in order to signal masculinity, intellect and achievement seeking. To demonstrate that the *Negotiator* personality is feminine, emotional and seeks harmony, a photo in the nature was selected on which the model smiled into the sun. Moreover, to signal that the *Explorer* is impulsive, seeks freedom- and novelty as well as that he likes action sports, the model wore a wetsuit and was windsurfing in this image. At last, to show that the *Builder* is traditional and seeks security, a photo where the model looked proper and happy together with his family was selected. Finally, the remaining information was filled in identically for the profiles.

In the survey, respondents were asked to choose which one out of the four fictive profiles they thought were closest to an Ideal Man.

"Please take a while to look at the following Facebook profiles, pay attention to 'interests' and 'about' sections. Which of the profiles do you think is closest to an Ideal Man?"

Question-set 2 – Internal Characteristics (Adjectives)

To increase the reliability as well as put emphasis on only the Internal Characteristics of Fisher's four personality types, the second question asked the respondents to rate the importance (for an Ideal Man) of

the personalities' different Internal Characteristics. To measure this, the respondents were asked to choose between seven pairs of opposite adjectives (Internal Characteristics). First, the three masculine characteristics (*Achievement Seeker, Intellectual* and *Masculine)* of the Director were compared to the opposite feminine characteristics (*Harmony Seeker, Emotional* and *Feminine*) of the Negotiator. Thereafter, the gender-neutral characteristics of the Explorer (*Novelty Seeker, Freedom Seeker* and *Traditional)* were put against the opposite and also gender-neutral characteristics of the Builder *(Rule Keeper, Security Seeker* and *Impulsive).*

In the survey, the respondents were asked to rate, on a 5-point Likert-scale, each of the pair of describing adjectives. For example, the respondents were asked to state if the Ideal Man should be an "*Achievement Seeker*" (Negative number) or a "*Harmony Seeker"* (Positive number). If a respondent though the Ideal Man needed equally much of each describing characteristics they were asked to mark the number 0. All in all, in the result part, negative numbers will indicate preferences for characteristics of the Directors or Explorers, thus, positive numbers will demonstrate that the characteristic of Builders or Negotiators are preferred.

Questionnaire Distribution

A pre-test of the online questionnaire was distributed to a small sample of respondents with the purpose of improving the questionnaire by identifying and correcting potential problems. After some modifications, the questionnaire (Appendix A) was distributed via email and online social networks to approximately 1100 people. The respondents in the questionnaire were sampled through a convenience sample and not a random sample from the Swedish population, which according to Malhotra (2004) might be considered as negative as the sample does not reflect an average of the population as a whole. Of the total 224 respondents, data from 214 respondents was included in the final analysis. 10 respondents were subsequently excluded, due to unfinished questionnaires or non-Swedish origin.

Participants' Characteristics

Table 3 shows the number of respondents, country of origin and average age for male and female respondents. (Frequency Tables Appendix B)

SURVEY 1	Men	Women
Respondents (nr)	127	87
Age (Mean)	30.23	28.07
Swedish	100%	100%

Table 3 – Participants' Characteristics (Survey 1)

3.3.1.3 In-depth Interviews

To interpret the findings from the focus groups and the questionnaire, two semi-structured in-depth interviews were performed. The semi-structured interview differs from the unstructured interview as the interviewer has a list of several specific topics to cover, rather than letting the respondent answer and associate freely (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The candidates chosen for interviews were selected because of their expertise and possibility to contribute to an understanding of the purposes of this thesis. First, an interview was held with Richard Leckne who at that time was a Brand Manager for Men Expert at L'Oréal Paris. Leckne was chosen because of his profound experience within the beauty market and particularly the male beauty market. Secondly, an interview was conducted with Pierre Björk, who is a recognized Fashion Photographer in Stockholm and New York. Björk was selected because of his deep knowledge about the fashion industry and especially the process and criteria that are used for selecting models. The first interview was conducted at 2 pm on the 1st of July 2011 and the second interview was conducted at 10 am on the 11th of April 2012.

3.3.2 STEP B – Research Design for Part 2 and 3

In step B, the second- and the third research question were examined. The second research question considers the direct effects of exposure to images of an Ideal Man (RQ2) and the third research question is about the indirect effects of such exposure. Again, the research methods are applied in consideration of the character of the research topic. Therefore, to answer these questions, a quantitative and experimental method was used in form of an online questionnaire.

3.3.2.1 Questionnaire 2

To facilitate the experimental elements of the research, this second questionnaire (Appendix C) was modified into two versions and each respondent had only access to one of them. Each version of the questionnaire begun by showing the respondents six images. The first version showed images of six male models that were chosen to resemble the Ideal Man in Sweden found in part one of this thesis (Figure 1). The second version presented neutral images in form of six beauty products (Figure 2). The rest of the questions in the survey were identical between the two versions.

Figure 1 – Ideal Stimuli

Figure 2 – Neutral Stimuli

Pre-test

As mentioned for the first version of the second survey, the criterions found in the first part of this thesis were used as a base for selecting the images of Ideal Men (See 5.1.1). However, to validate that the respondents perceived the selected images of models to be idealized images of males, an additional check was also done in form of a pre-test. In the pre-test, 24 respondents were asked, using a 6-point Likert-Scale, to rate from "not at all" to "extremely" the "Attractiveness" and "Closeness to Ideal" of 14 models. To find the images, the author looked through photos of models from three of the biggest model agencies in Sweden: Mikas, Stockholms Gruppen and Avenue Modeller. In a first step, 50 models were selected. However, the images needed to be similar in light, shape and form and have limited externally influential elements, thus, only photos with neutral background could be used. Also, the bodies of the male models needed to be clearly displayed, and hence, all selected models were shirtless and showed their face and upper-bodies. Thus, only 14 of the images could be used for the pre-test. The six images with the highest ratings remained in the actual survey (Table 4).

Models Nr	Ideal Rate	Selected
1	5.67	✓
6	5.00	✓
9	4.96	✓
5	4.18	✓
10	4.04	✓
4	3.96	✓
2	3.83	
3	3.83	
7	3.79	
14	3.79	
11	3,46	
8	3.08	
13	3.04	
12	2.88	

Table 4 – Pre-test

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire and the pre-test were both constructed with the survey service provided by Stockholm School of Economics, qualtrics.com. All instructions were written in the questionnaire. To reduce the risk of questions being missed or skipped, all questions in the questionnaire were marked as mandatory. In order for the experiment to work, the real purpose of the questionnaire could not be revealed. Instead, the participants were told that the purpose was to do a marketing research for a launch of a new male beauty brand called Alliance.

"*We are helping a cosmetic company launching a new brand for men called Alliance. Your opinion matters a lot whether you are a man or a woman*"

The brand Alliance does not exist but was created by the author for L'Oréal's case competition in 2011. Moreover, to build the neutral-stimuli version of the survey, the author needed neutral images of products that were not known for the respondents. Therefore, it was convenient to use this brand since both logotype and images of product samples were already created.

The second questionnaire was also divided into two main question-sets. However, at first, the respondents were asked to select one image (of males or products) as well as to rate this image in terms of "*Attractiveness*" and "*Closeness to Ideal*". The purpose of these questions was twosome. Firstly, it worked as an additional and third check on the perception of respondents to certain images. Secondly, it forced the respondents to have a closer look at the images, which was vital for the outcome of the two following question-sets. Moreover, the respondents were also asked how likely they were to buy a product that the selected model promoted. The purpose of this question was to be able to test if the intended purchasing behaviour correlated with the perceived media effects on others (RQ3).

Question-set 1 – Direct Effects

The first question-set was set up to answer the second research question of this thesis. The set of questions included a series of 18 question aimed at capturing the feelings and state of mind of the respondent in order to specifically assess if the images had an effect of the participants Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotions. As previously mentioned, the author expected an impact on these three variables for the participants that were displayed to the idealized images of males but not for the participants that were displayed to the neutral images of products. Prior research examining exposure

to idealized images of females confirms the validity of these three variables as measures of effects on consumers (e.g. Bessenoff, 2006; Cahill & Mussap, 2007; Jones & Buckingham, 2005). In order to measure the impacts, the participants were first exposed to the following message:

"*To design the communication for Alliance, we would like to know what you were feeling and thinking when you saw the previous photos. Please answer the following questions based on your first impression after seeing the photos.*"

Thereafter, questions from "The Current Thought Scale" created by Heatherton and Polivy (1991) were used to measure the respondents' Body Satisfaction (e.g. "I am pleased with my appearance") and Self-Esteem (e.g. "I feel confident about my abilities"). To measure the respondents' Emotions (e.g. "I am happy") inspiration from a research done by Bessenoff (2006) was used. Using a 5-point Likert-Scale, participants were asked to describe, for each of the 18 questions, if their feelings ranged from "not at all" to "extremely" (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991).

In the questionnaire, five to seven similar questions were asked for each of the three measures: Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotions. This made it possible to crosscheck the results and create specific indexes (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Cronbach's Alpha (CA) values, for each measure, indicated which questions that could be merged into more general indexes. Only CA values over or close to 0.7 were excepted when creating Indexes (Marketing Research, 2010). For the parameter Body Satisfaction four questions (*Attractiveness, Weight, Appearance* and *Muscle-tone)* could be included in an index (CA=0.79) and one question (*Body-Look*) could not be included. For the parameter Self-Esteem three questions (*Smart, Pleased with myself* and *Good about myself)* could be included in an index (CA=0.79) and four questions *(Insecure, Inferior, Impression and Failure)* could not be included. For the parameter Emotion three questions (*Excited, Inspired* and *Happy)* could be included in an index (CA=0.66) and three questions *(Irritated, Depressed, Jealous)* could not be included. Furthermore, an *"Ideal"* index could also be created for the three variables (*Attractiveness, Closeness to Ideal, Buying Intention*) which all concerned the attractiveness of the image stimuli (CA=0.74).

INDEX	Cronbach's Alpha
Body Satisfaction	0.786
Self-Esteem	0.785
Emotion	0.657
Ideal Stimuli	0.738

Table 5 – Indexes

Question-set 2 – Indirect Effects

The purpose of the second question-set was to examine the third research question and the corresponding hypotheses. Hypothesis 2-6 aimed at capturing if the perceived effect of idealized images on others were greater than the perceived effect on oneself. That is to say, if there existed TPP gaps. As discussed, the author expected greater TTP gaps to appear for the participants that were displayed to the idealized images of males than for the participants that were exposed to the neutral images of products. Further, Hypothesis 7 was designed to capture if such TPP gaps change people' buying intentions. In order to do this, participants were told that marketing communication tools have an effect on consumers with the following message:

"Critics argue that advertisement and media images can cause damage to people' Self-Esteem, distort their body perception and decreases their Emotions. Imagine the photos you just saw as media images shown in advertising. How much influence do you think this images have on…"

The perceived influence was measured using a 7-point Likert-Scale, where 0 = "Not influenced" and 7 = "Highly influenced".   Participants were asked to rate their perception of four variables: Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotions and The perception of the Ideal Man. Respondents were first asked to rate their own perception of the effects on these four variables (e.g. "How much influence do you think these types of media images have on *your* perception of *your* Body Satisfaction"). Subsequently, the participants were asked how much influence, on the four variables, they thought the images had on other people (e.g. "How much influence do you think these types of media images have on *other males'* perception of *their* Body Satisfaction"). Moreover, it was hypothesized that the TTP gaps depended on how well the respondent knew the person defined as "other" as well as if this person were of the same- or the opposite sex as the respondent (David et al., 2002). Therefore, other people were divided into four different categories: *Close Male Friends, Close Female Friends, Other Males* and *Other Females*.

Questionnaire Distribution

A pre-test of the online questionnaire was distributed to a small sample of respondents with the purpose of improving the questionnaire by identifying and correcting potential problems. After some modifications, the author distributed the questionnaire via email and online social networks to 1100 people. In addition to getting a wider age spread, the author's parents each invited 100 of their friends

and workplace colleagues to fill in the questionnaire. Moreover, to increase the sample as well as make it more random, a snowball sampling method was used, which is a non-probability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances (Goodman, 1961). Giving the respondents a beauty/grooming product from L'Oréal to send the questionnaire to their friends and families was a successful incentive and around 30 respondents helped out to recruit future subjects. This message was written at the end of the questionnaire:

To receive a beauty/grooming product (approximate retail value of 100 SEK) to your home please email the message below to 5 Swedish friends (men or women).

Due to usage of a snowballing method, it is impossible to exactly state how many people that the questionnaire was sent to. However, in round numbers the questionnaire was sent to around 1450 people (1100 + 200 + (30*5)). Of these people, 345 respondents answered parts of or the full questionnaire. However, only data from 254 respondents was included in the final analysis. 91 responses were subsequently excluded, due to unfinished questionnaires or non-Swedish origin. Of these, 145 respondents answered the questionnaire with *idealized images of males* and 109 respondents answered the questionnaire with *neutral images of products*.

Participants' Characteristics

In order for this experiment to give valid results, it was vital that the characteristics of the respondents in the two different groups were alike. Independent T-tests revealed no significant differences in *Age, BMI, Country of Origin, Exercise Habits* or *Beauty Product Usages* between the respondents in the two versions of the survey. However, as expected, one significant result was found for the perceived *attractiveness* of the Stimuli for both genders. Men in the ideal image condition regarded the stimuli to be significantly more attractive than men in the neutral condition (Ideal Stimuli M=8.11, Neutral Stimuli M=7.26, t(74)= 2.212, *p*=0.030). Also, women in the ideal condition regarded the stimuli to be significantly more attractive than women in the control condition (Ideal Stimuli M=9.05, Neutral Stimuli M=6.25, t(84)=6.96 *p*=0.000) Besides that, women regarded the idealized image stimuli to be significantly more attractive than men (Women M=9.05, Men M=8.11, t(87)= -2.5 *p*=0.013). (Frequency Tables Appendix D)

SURVEY 2	Men		Women	
	Ideal Stimuli	**Neutral Stimuli**	**Ideal Stimuli**	**Neutral Stimuli**
Number	42	38	49	34
Age	33.05	30.32	29.96	31.47
BMI	24.6	23.9	21.2	22.1
Swedish	100%	100%	100%	100%
Exercise*	5.31	5.62	5.43	4.89
Beauty products	3.14	3.24	7.14	6.00
Attractiveness	8.11	7.26	9.05	6.25

Table 6 – Participants' Characteristics (Survey 2)
*Never (1). less than once a week (2). ones a month (3). 2-3 times a month (4). one a week (5). 2-3 times a week (6). Daily (7).

3.4 Instruments and Methods of Analysis

To analyse the data given from the questionnaire, SPSS 20.0 was used in order to perform correlations, frequencies and mean comparisons in form Independent T-tests and Paired Sample T-tests. The instruments used in the qualitative studies were a voice recorder and also Kjaer Jensen's- and Malhotra's interview preparation guidelines.

3.5 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and Validity are parameters used in order to evaluate the precision and applicability of the recorded results. *Reliability* is the measure of consistency of a concept while *Validity* refers to whether or not an indicator or a set of indicator measures the concept intended by the researcher. These measures depend both on *External* and *Internal* factors (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Malhotra, 2004). Moreover, the measures have different applications on whether quantitative or qualitative analysis is used to solve a problem (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As seen, the first step of the research process uses both methods to solve the first research question whereas the second step of the process only uses a quantitative method to answer the second- and third research question.

3.5.1 Reliability

The *Reliability* refers to the level of consistency in a study, consequently if similar results of that sample can be expected for another sample of respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2011)

3.5.1.1 Qualitative Reliability

Malhotra (2004) proposes different factors when considering the qualitative reliability of the method. The qualitative reliability of this thesis was controlled by *External-* and *Internal Reliability.* The *External Reliability* refers to the degree to which the study can be replicated. This is quite difficult to do with qualitative research since it is impossible to freeze a social setting and all circumstances of a study to make it possible to replicate. Widerberg (2006) suggests that qualitative reliability can be estimated

by evaluating the quality of methods to collect data and of the researchers. To ensure qualitative reliability in this thesis, all of the focus group and interview dialogues were recorded and transcribed afterwards. The discussions were also thoroughly prepared by the author, writing discussion questions and researching on theoretical interview guidelines. *Internal Reliability* refers to whether or not the members of the research team agree about what they observe. At first, it was problematic to establish this in this thesis since it only has one author. However, to increase the qualitative internal reliability, a classmate from the Stockholm School of Economics was present and involved in the focus group discussions and the first interview. The classmate was well aware of the purpose of this thesis, which enabled him to engage as a moderator.

3.5.1.2 Quantitative Reliability

Malhotra (2004) proposes different factors when considering the quantitative reliability of the method. The quantitative reliability of this thesis was controlled by *Internal Reliability* and *Inter-Observer Consistency.* The *Internal Reliability* controls that a multiple-item measure, with several questions aggregated to one score, has indicators that relate to the same thing or the same concept. In survey 2, this was measured through Chronbachs alpha, where all indexed variables had correlation close to 0.7, which is a good level of internal reliability (Malhotra, 2004). Moreover, in survey 1, the two question-sets were used to measure the same thing twice. The *Inter-Observer Consistency* concerns the consistency between different observers methods of recording observations and data. A high Inter-Observer Consistency is signified by common ways of categorizing content or open-end questions, or the way of structuring observations. The author has secured high Inter-Observer Consistency of the study by using only verified measurement variables of the concepts, known from several previous studies (Söderlund, 2005; Malhotra, 2004).

3.5.2 Validity

Validity estimates if and how close the research results approach correctly measures the concept.

3.5.2.1 Qualitative Validity

Malhotra (2004) proposes different factors when considering the qualitative validity of the method. *Theoretical-, Interpretive- and Communicative Validity* controlled the qualitative validity of this thesis. The *Theoretical Validity* is estimated by the degree a theory or theoretical explanation developed from a research study fits the data. In other words, it estimates to which extent the same result is produced also when using different measurement methods. As mentioned earlier, the first part of this thesis uses a

Triangulation method to cross-examine research results, to be more confident with the given results and there by achieve high theoretical validity. *Interpretative Validity* estimates the degree to which the researchers correctly depict the opinions given by participants. This was achieved by letting the focus group participants and the two interviewed people read through citations and documentations of the dialogues to ensure there were no misinterpretations. *Communicative Validity* concerns how well the researcher communicates the process to the reader and how the research process itself might have affected the legitimacy. In order to secure this, detailed descriptions of data collection, research and analysis process are described in this thesis and both the questionnaires are attached (Widerberg, 2006).

3.5.2.2 Quantitative Validity

Bryman and Bell (2011) propose that in order to ensure high quantitative validity and to achieve causal relationships between the exposure to the images and the effects on people, the influence of external variables during the experiment must be minimized. To ensure high quantitative validity of this thesis, the author controlled similar influences by collecting answers from all respondents within a period of two weeks in order for the external conditions to be as similar as possible for all of the respondents. Furthermore, the respondents received identical information regarding the study. The respondents were also randomly assigned to the questionnaire of either idealized images of males or neutral images of products, which also reduce the effect of external variables in the second questionnaire (Malhotra, 2004). However, the author was not able to control when or where the questionnaires were filled in and this has possibly affected the results. Nevertheless, the author assumes that the measures taken to control the influence of external factors were satisfactory. Moreover, as the questions in the questionnaire were based on acknowledged academic research studies (e.g. Choi et al., 2008; David & Johnson, 1998; Cahill & Mussap; Jones & Buckingham, 2005; Bessenoff, 2006; Cahill & Mussap, 2007; lp & Jarry, 2007), a high *Face Validity* was achieved, which means the content in questions and answer alternatives represent the theoretical variables in a good way. Also, the usage of previously secured measurement variables and hypothesis affected the *construct validity* positively, measuring how the observed results related to the theoretical variable at hand (Söderlund, 2005). Furthermore, the author has also assured the validity by paying regard to the relative order of the questions (Malhotra 2004).

All in all, although constructed and long questionnaires affect construct and content validity positively, the author wanted the surveys to be as short as possible and to provide a satisfying level of validity and reliability. This is due to the fact that respondents tend to choose overly indifferent answer alternatives

in longer questionnaires (Söderlund, 2005). Given the discussion above, the author considers the overall reliability and validity of this thesis to be satisfactory and sufficient.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

When collecting and analysing data, issues concerning ethics in business research may arise. The most common concern is the relationship between the researchers and research participants. This relates to aspects such as harm to participants; lack of informed consent; invasion of privacy; and deception (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The topic of this thesis is sensitive since it involves people's inner thoughts about their own Body Perception, Self-Esteem, Emotions and Perceptions of an Ideal Man. Therefore, the confidentiality of data relating to the research participants in the focus groups, questionnaires and interviews will be maintained. Moreover, a major ethical concern of this thesis was the creation of the fake brand *Alliance,* since one could state that the author deceived people to believe that the brand was real. However, to overcome this unethical issue, an explanation of the experiment was made at the end of the questionnaire as well as at the end of the focus group sessions. Another ethical concern of this thesis is the use of images of men in underwear, which might bother and negatively affect some respondents. A final ethical concern of this thesis is the method used to receive responses for the surveys. In order to receive responses, people received the following message *"Answer the questionnaire and receive a beauty/grooming product"*. Nevertheless, only people that answered the questionnaire as well as sent it to five other people received a beauty/grooming product. This was however, stated at the very end of the questionnaire, which made people respond to the questionnaire without this knowledge.

4. RESULTS

In this chapter, the outcome from the empirical study is presented. The section is divided into three parts, following the structure of the theoretical background (chapter two) of this thesis. Consequently, the first part will discuss the characteristics of Ideal Man Sweden (RQ1), the second part will give statistical results about the direct effects on consumers of exposure to images of the Ideal Man (RQ2) and the third part will examine the indirect effects of exposure to such images (RQ3).

4.1 PART 1 – The Characteristics of an Ideal Man in Sweden

Three different methods; questionnaire, focus groups and interviews; were used to examine two major themes; Internal- and External Characteristics of an Ideal Man. First, the outcomes considering the Internal aspects of the Ideal Man will be presented. Thereafter, the results regarding the External Characteristics will be revealed.

4.1.1 Internal Characteristics

The Internal Characteristics of an Ideal Man were measured through *the focus groups, the first questionnaire* and *the interviews*.

Focus groups

In general, no major differences were found between the discussions in the two focus groups. However, one small difference between the two focus groups was found, which concerned their self-rated Self-Confidence. When they were asked to rate their own self-confidence from 1-10, all men said 10 while women ratings were much lower and with a wider spread. Otherwise, the men participants in focus group 1 and the women in focus group 2 generally agreed on matters regarding the Internal characteristics of an Ideal Man. Firstly, the participants stated that an Ideal Man must be defined by his characteristics and not only by his look. To prove this, the following quotes were mentioned:

"A guy wouldn't identify himself with a man only because of looks." Man, 24

"Richard Bransson is close to the Ideal Man. Not for his looks but because he is successful, adventurous and put his own limits." Man, 25

"For a one-night stand, I consider the look of a man but otherwise I found his personality to be as important." Woman, 26

Secondly, all participants believed that an Ideal Man should have a masculine personality.

"I want a manly guy, not a hairdresser kind of guy" Woman, 24

"Hemingway is the ideal man. He hunts, and he drinks….He is manly!" Man, 24

Thirdly, the participants were asked to talk about characteristics that were important for an Ideal Man to possess. At this point, the fictive Facebook profiles were used to get the discussion going. The characteristics they thought were especially essential were *Sporty, Achievement Seeker, Adventurous, Tough, Powerful, Creative, Successful, Impulsive, Self-confident, Intelligent* and *Intellectual*.

"He must be extremely confident about himself and signal that he can protect me and my kids." Woman, 26

"The ideal man must know things, he must be smart and be able to answer my questions". Woman, 25

"A successful guy is more manly than a non successful one." Man, 24

"The ideal man is the one who score the goals…he must be sporty, just like Zlatan!" Man, 25

Questionnaire 1

Questionnaire 1 was divided into two main question-sets, both aiming to further understand the importance of the Internal Characteristics of an Ideal Man that were mentioned in the focus group discussions and the first interview (see further down).

Question-set 1 – Internal Characteristics (Facebook Profiles)

The first question-set asked the participants to indicate which one out of the four fictive Facebook profiles they perceived to be closest to an Ideal Man. As table 7 demonstrates, most men and women perceived the *Explorer* personality (Men = 40.6%, Women = 37.5%) to be closest to an Ideal Man, followed by the *Director* personality (Men = 29.7%, Women = 23.6%). For men, the *Negotiator* personality (Men = 14.9%) and the *Builder* personality (Men = 14.9%) were together ranked as least similar to an Ideal Man. For women, the *Negotiator* personality (Women = 20.7%) was rated on the third place followed by the *Builder* personality (Women = 18.2%).

	Explorer	Director	Negotiator	Builder
Men	40.6%	29.7%	14.9%	14.9%
Women	37.5%	23.6%	20.7%	18.2%

Table 7 – Facebook Profile Preferences (divided by gender)

Question-set 2 – Internal Characteristics (Adjectives)

The second question asked the respondents to rate the importance of different Internal Characteristics of an Ideal Man. In this case, characteristics of the four different personality types described by Helen Fisher were used again. Table 8 and 9 display the results of section two where negative numbers indicate preferences for characteristics of the *Director* or *Explorer,* and positive numbers demonstrates that the characteristics of the *Builder* or *Negotiator* are instead preferred.

As seen in table 8, out of three characteristic pairs, all of the *Director's* traits; Masculine (Men= -1.38; Women=-1,42), Intellectual (Men= -1.18; Women= -0.65) and Achievement Seeker *(Men= -0.45; Women= -0.48)* were more important for men and women than the opposite characteristics, Feminine, Emotional and Harmony Seeker, of the *Negotiator*.

DIRECTOR vs NEGOTIATOR

Table 8 – Characteristic preferences (Director vs Negotiator)

Moreover, as seen in table 9, out of three characteristic pairs, all of the *Explorer*'s traits, Impulsive (Men= -0.40, Women= -0,63), Freedom Seeker (Men= -0.53; Women= -0.40) and Novelty Seeker (Men= -0.45, Women= -0.33) were more important for men and women than the opposite characteristics, Rule Keeper, Traditional and Security Seeker, of the *Builder*.

EXPLORER vs BUILDER

Table 9 – Characteristic preferences (Explorer vs Builder)

In-depth Interviews

Pierre Björk – Fashion Photographer

First of all, Björk explained that while selecting a model, photographers usually talk about personality traits instead of physical appearance. For example, he mentioned, *"Instead of asking for a guy with high cheek bones and brown hair, we would say a smart looking or sporty guy"*. Moreover, Björk suggested

that it is more complex and difficult to select male models than female models. For example, he said, "When *selecting a female model we search for a perfect looking woman and usually physical appearance is the only factor we consider. However, in general, when choosing a male model we don't want him to look too perfect, instead it is more important that his other personal characteristics are clearly apparent."* Further, Björk explained the complexity of selecting male models by saying, *"All women dream about becoming the next top-model since modelling gives women status. However, for men, modelling is regarded as something bad or feminine".* He believes that the reason for this difference between the genders is that, "a *real man should not care about his looks and he should certainly not build his whole life around his physical appearance".* Moreover, the characteristics Björk mentioned as most important for an ideal male model to possess were Intelligent and Masculine. For example, he said, "Guys *who looks stupid go away immediately".* Furthermore, when asking what famous person he thought was most similar to an Ideal Man, Björk suggested David Beckham. He explained, *"Beckham is definitely not perfect looking in terms of skin, hair and so on, instead he is natural, sporty and best of all - he is successful and always in emotional control."*

Richard Leckne – Brand Manager at L'Oréal

After working two years as a Brand Manager for Men Expert (one of L'Oréal's' male beauty brands), Leckne has developed a deep knowledge about the male beauty market. He claimed that the four main problems within the market are that (i) men have a lack of knowledge in regards to what to buy and how to use male skincare, (ii) males buy/uses products made for females instead of products for male skin, (iii) the norm about masculinity and (iv) they have not found a way to communicate to the male consumers in a relevant way. Further, he argued that finding the right models and spokespersons for their products could be a good way to increase acceptance of beauty products among men. He described, *"It is usually the head office in Paris that selects models and spokespersons for all countries in Europe. However, often these models or spokespersons do not attract Swedes, either because they are not perceived as attractive, having an interesting personality, or because they are not famous in Sweden."* Considering the notoriety aspect, he clarified, *"an extremely beautiful female model generally attracts women to buy beauty products, but to get men to buy such products, a famous man who the consumers fancy is usually more efficient. Nonetheless, this is not the whole story, consumers appreciate models that are not only aesthetic but also have a strong personality. Many of L'Oréal's spokespersons are passionate about something else then just beauty which I believe that the consumers value a lot and*

make the models more aspirational as well as better role models for society". He explained that in order to buy "feminine" beauty products, many men need approval from, for example, a famous person that they look up to and perceive to be manly. Likewise, due to the feminine perception of beauty products, he emphasised the importance of selecting male models and spokespersons with masculine characteristics.

4.1.2 External Characteristics

The important External Characteristics of an Ideal Man was measured through *the focus groups* and *the interviews*.

Focus groups

Firstly, the men participants in focus group 1 and the women participants in focus group 2 generally agreed on that even though the personality of a man is very important, his physical appearance is also vital in today's society. The discussion circled around equality between the genders and the participants believed that the importance of physical appearance for males had increased in Sweden during the last couple of years.

"When you are better looking, you have a funnier life." Man, 25

"It is not easy to be a Swedish man. The society expect us to have it all… money, brain, muscles, fashion clothes, tan..." Man, 22

"*Some men seems to think that they will get girls just by having a great salary. That is not how it works in Sweden at least."* Woman, 24

Nevertheless, the participant thought that the physical appearance of a man should be natural and that it should never be evident that a man puts effort into his looks.

"A guy who put to much attention on his look is girly. Guys should just relax and look cool." Woman, 26

"Yesterday, I came back from the gym, I was sweaty, and grey, and I felt hot and very manly." Man, 23

"*My Ex was extremely conscious about his look. The comment that made him go from Boyfriend to Ex was: 'Darling, look at me in this light'."* Woman, 25

Moreover, the participant thought that the eyes of a man were important for his appearance.

"It sounds like a cliché, but beautiful eyes is the one thing I consider to be most important for his physical appearance." Woman, 24

"I can usually tell by the gaze of a guy if he is smart" Man, 24

"I perceive men who don't look into my eyes as insecure and trivial" Woman, 25

At last, the participants were asked to talk about the look of an Ideal Man. At this point, the photos of famous people and models were used to get the discussion going. In general, the participants agreed on that the Ideal Man should look *Manly*, *Muscular*, *Natural, Tall* and *Ruff* instead of *Feminine* and *Too Perfect.*

"The ideal man is not Brad Pitt looking. He should look ruff, natural and adventurous." Man, 24

"I don't want to feel fat next to a man. The Ideal Man is definitely tall and muscular." Woman, 23

"*Girls should strive for the perfect hair, skin and nails but a real man shouldn't look too perfect."* Man, 23

In-depth Interviews

Pierre Björk – Fashion Photographer

Björk argues that advertising containing male models is increasing and that men often are used as sex objects nowadays. He said, "*Today, I often take photos of males showing their naked torsos, especially for underwear or perfume commercials."* Therefore, he believes that the importance of appearance for males is rising. Moreover, Björk argued that an Ideal Man, independent of the culture, would always look very masculine and muscular. To explain this he said: *"Even though, rock star looking and skinny male models have been used recently, the most popular media images of males will always display bare and muscular torsos because that is perceived as manly - that is what fascinate people!"*

Richard Leckne – Brand Manager at L'Oréal

When discussing the ideal male model for L'Oréal, Leckne describes him as manly, not too young, a person that is admirable because he has a deep passion, and especially not too perfect looking. He said, *"Some brands uses young, skinny and "perfect" looking male models but from what I know, Swedes perceive those men as feminine."*

4.2 PART 2 – Direct Effects of Idealized Media Images of Males

To examine the direct effects of exposure to the idealized image of males found in Part 1, an experiment in form of a questionnaire with two versions was done. First, the direct effects on men following exposure to either idealized image stimuli or neutral image stimuli will be presented. Thereafter, the direct effects on women of such exposure are revealed.

4.2.1 Direct Effects

Hypothesis 1 predicted that exposure to idealized media images of males, decreases males Body Satisfaction (a), Self-Esteem (b) and Emotions (c). Table 10 presents the results of independent T-tests. Hypothesis 1 was not supported. For the indexed variables*, Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem* and *Emotions*, no significant effects were found on men after exposure to Ideal Stimuli compared to Neutral Stimuli. Moreover, for the variables *Body Satisfaction* and *Emotion,* the tendencies are even reversed to what was hypothesized.

Actual Influence (Men)	Ideal Stimuli	Neutral Stimuli	*P*
Body-Satisfaction	2.97	3.14	np
Self-Esteem	3.73	3.65	np
Emotion	2.76	2.82	np

Table 10 – Direct Effects on Men. Cell entries are mean differences. (*p < 0.05)

H1a: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **decreases** men's Body Satisfaction
REJECTED

H1b: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **decreases** men's Self-Esteem
REJECTED

H1c: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **decreases** men's Emotions
REJECTED

Hypothesis 2 predicted that exposure to idealized stimuli of males, increases females Body Satisfaction (a), Self-Esteem (b) and Emotions (c). Table 11 presents the results of independent T-tests that demonstrate support for hypothesis 2 (a) and 2 (c) but not for 2 (b). In line with what was expected, exposure to the Ideal Stimuli increased women's *Body Satisfaction* more than exposure to the Neutral Stimuli, (Ideal Stimuli M=3.12, Neutral Stimuli M=2.75, t(85)= 2.144 p=0.02). Likewise, for women, exposure to Ideal Stimuli led to more positive *Emotions* than exposure to Neutral Stimuli, (Ideal Stimuli M=3.18, Neutral Stimuli M=2.86, t(85)= 1.615 p=0.05). No significant result was found for women's *Self-Esteem* after exposure to Ideal Stimuli compared to exposure to Neutral Stimuli.

Actual Influence (Women)	Ideal Stimuli	Neutral Stimuli	*P*
Body-Satisfaction	3.12	2.75	0.02*
Self-Esteem	3.62	3.43	np
Emotion	3.18	2.86	0.05*

Table 11 – Direct Effects on Women. Cell entries are mean differences. (*p < 0.05)

H2a: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **increases** women's Body Satisfaction
ACCEPTED

H2b: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **increases** women's Self-Esteem
REJECTED

H2c: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **increases** women's Emotions
ACCEPTED

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4.3 PART 3 – Indirect Effects of Idealized Media Images of Males

To examine if there exist indirect effects of exposure to the idealized image of males found in Part 1, an experiment in form of a questionnaire with two versions was conducted. First, the indirect effects on men following exposure to either idealized image stimuli or neutral image stimuli are presented. Thereafter, the incidental effects on women of such exposure are also shown.

4.3.1 Third Person Perceptions and Idealized Stimuli

Hypothesis 3 predicted that *men* (a) and *women* (b) would perceive the effect of idealized media images of males on others to be greater than the perceived effect on themselves. Table 12 presents the results of paired sample T-tests that demonstrate acceptance for hypothesis 3 (a) but only partly support for hypothesis 3 (b). For *men*, the TPP gaps were significant for comparisons of self to others for *Body Satisfaction* (others, $M = 3.98$; self, $M = 3.60$; mean difference = 0.38, $t(41) = 1.64$ $p = 0.05$), *Self-Esteem* (others, $M = 3.57$; self, $M = 2.57$; mean difference = 1.00, $t(41) = 4.122$, $p = 0.00$), for *Emotion* (others, $M = 3.48$; self, $M = 2.40$; mean difference = 1.08, $t(41) = 5.12$, $p = 0.00$) and for *The Perception of the Ideal Man* (others, $M = 4.48$; self, $M = 3.40$; mean difference = 1.08, $t(41) = 5.20$, $p = 0.00$). For *women*, the TPP gaps were significant for comparisons of self to others for *Self-Esteem* (others, $M = 3.90$; self, $M = 3.20$; mean difference = 0.70, $t(48) = 3.68$, $p = 0.00$), but no statistical significance was found for a comparison of self to others for *Body Satisfaction* (others, $M = 4.28$; self, $M = 4.06$; mean difference = 0.22, $t(48) = 1.09$, $p = $ np), *Emotion* (others, $M = 3.84$; self, $M = 3.73$; mean difference = 0.11, $t(48) = 0.55$, $p = $ np) or *The Perception of the Ideal Man* (others, $M = 4.45$; self, $M = 4.33$; mean difference = 0.12, $t(48) = 0.43$, $p = $ np).

TPP Gaps (Other minus self)				
	Body Satisfaction	Self-Esteem	Emotions	The Ideal Man
Men	0.38 *	1.00*	1.08 *	1.08*
Women	0.22	0.70 *	0.11	0.12

Table 12 – TPP Gaps. Cell entries are mean differences. (Dark Green*$p < 0.05$)

H3a: For men, the perceived effects on Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotions and The Perception of an Ideal Man of idealized media images of males on others will be **greater** than perceived effects on one's self.
ACCEPTED

H3b: For women, the perceived effects on Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotions and The Perception of an Ideal Man of idealized media images of males on others will be **greater** than perceived effects on one's self.
PARTLY SUPPORTED

Consequently, the relevant results for the remaining hypotheses (4, 5 and 6) are for those variables where TTP gaps were found. That is to say, for men, all four variables; *Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotions* and *The Perception of the Ideal Men* must be considered whereas for women only *Self-Esteem* is of interest. However, all numbers will be presented.
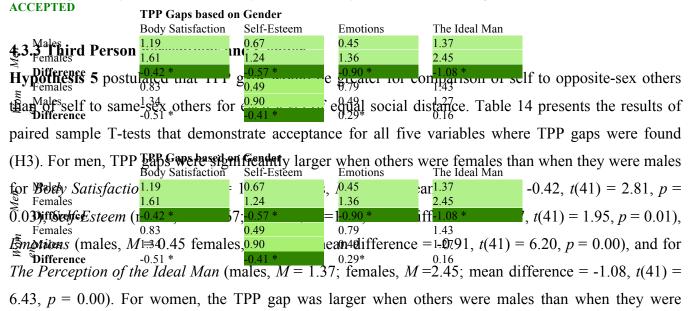
4.3.2 Third Person Perceptions and Social Distance

Hypothesis 4 postulated that TPP gaps would be greater when the level of social distance increases for both men and women. Table 13 presents the results of paired sample T-tests that demonstrate acceptance for all five variables where TPP gaps were found (H3). For men, TPP gaps were significantly larger when others were not close friends for *Body Satisfaction* (close friends, *M* = 1.28; other people, *M* = 1.51; mean difference = -0.23, *t*(41) = 1.70, *p* = 0.05), *Self-Esteem* (close friends, *M* = 0.79; other people, *M* = 1.12; mean difference = -0.33, *t*(41) = 2.36, *p* = 0.01), *Emotion* (close friends, *M* = 0.78; other people, *M* = 1.02; mean difference = -0.24, *t*(41) = 1.68, *p* = 0.05) and for *The Perception of the Ideal Men* (close friends, *M* = 1.73; other people, *M* = 2.08; mean difference = -0.35, *t*(41) = 2.80, *p* = 0.00). For women, the TPP gap was significantly larger when others were not close friends for *Self-Esteem* (close friends, *M* = 0.53; other people, *M* = 0.85; mean difference = -0.32, *t*(48) = 2.56, *p* = 0.01). Also, significant results were found for the variables *Emotion* and *The Perception of the Ideal Man.* However, since no TTP gap was found for these variables (H3b) they will not be further considered.

| | | TPP Gaps based on Social Distance | | | |
		Body Satisfaction	Self-Esteem	Emotions	The Ideal Man
Men	Close Friends	1.28	0.79	0.78	1.73
	Others	1.51	1.12	1.02	2.08
	Difference	- 0.23 *	- 0.33 *	- 0.24 *	- 0.35 *
Wom	Close Friends	1.06	0.53	0.51	1.20
	Others	1.10	0.85	0.77	1.49
	Difference	- 0.04	- 0.32 *	- 0.26 *	- 0.29 *

Table 13 – TPP Gaps based on Social Distance. Cell entries are means and mean differences. (Light Green=Relevant; Dark Green**p*< 0.05)

H4: TPP gaps resulting from idealized media images of males will be **greater** when the level of equal social distance increases.
ACCEPTED

| | TPP Gaps based on Gender | | | |
	Body Satisfaction	Self-Esteem	Emotions	The Ideal Man
Males	1.19	0.67	0.45	1.37
Females	1.61	1.24	1.36	2.45
Difference	-0.42 *	-0.57 *	-0.90 *	-1.08 *
Females	0.83	0.49	0.79	1.43
Males	1.34	0.90	0.49	1.27
Difference	-0.51 *	-0.41 *	0.29*	0.16

4.3.3 Third Person Perceptions and Gender

Hypothesis 5 postulated that TPP gaps would be greater for comparison of self to opposite-sex others than of self to same-sex others for equal social distance. Table 14 presents the results of paired sample T-tests that demonstrate acceptance for all five variables where TPP gaps were found (H3). For men, TPP gaps were significantly larger when others were females than when they were males for *Body Satisfaction* (males, *M* = 1.19; females, *M* = 1.61; mean difference = -0.42, *t*(41) = 2.81, *p* = 0.03), *Self-Esteem* (males, *M* = 0.67; females, *M* = 1.24; mean difference = -0.57, *t*(41) = 1.95, *p* = 0.01), *Emotions* (males, *M* = 0.45 females, *M* = 1.36; mean difference = -0.91, *t*(41) = 6.20, *p* = 0.00), and for *The Perception of the Ideal Man* (males, *M* = 1.37; females, *M* = 2.45; mean difference = -1.08, *t*(41) = 6.43, *p* = 0.00). For women, the TPP gap was larger when others were males than when they were

females *Self-Esteem* (females, *M* = 0.49; males, *M* =0.90; mean difference = -0.41, $t(48)$ = 2.08, p = 0.02). Moreover, significant results were also found for the variables *Body Satisfaction* and *Emotion.* However, since no TTP gap could be underlined for these variables (H3b) they are not considered.

		TPP Gaps based on Gender			
		Body Satisfaction	Self-Esteem	Emotions	The Ideal Man
Men	Males	1.19	0.67	0.45	1.37
	Females	1.61	1.24	1.36	2.45
	Difference	-0.42 *	-0.57 *	-0.90 *	-1.08 *
Wom	Females	0.83	0.49	0.79	1.43
	Males	1.34	0.90	0.49	1.27
	Difference	-0.51 *	-0.41 *	0.30*	0.16

Table 14 – TPP Gaps based on Gender. Cell entries are means and mean differences. (Light Green=Relevant; Dark Green*p< 0.05)

H5: TPP gaps resulting from idealized media images of males will be **greater** when others are of the opposite sex
ACCEPTED

4.3.4 Third Person Perceptions and Different Stimulus

Hypothesis 6 stated that TPP gaps would be greater when participants were exposed to idealized image stimuli than when they were exposed to neutral stimuli. Therefore, again, only the parameters where TPP gaps were found are presented (H3). For men, as table 15 shows, moving from Neutral stimuli, to Ideal Stimuli, there were significant increases in TTP gaps for *Self-Esteem* (Ideal Stimuli, *M* = 0.95; Neutral Stimuli, *M* =0.46; mean difference = 0.49, $t(75)$ = 1.43, p = 0.08), *Emotions* (Ideal Stimuli, *M* = 1.07 Neutral Stimuli, *M* =0.49; mean difference = 0.58, $t(75)$ = 1.80, p = 0.04), and *The Perception of the Ideal Man* (Ideal Stimuli, *M* = 1.07; Neutral Stimuli, *M* =0.52; mean difference = 0.55, $t(75)$ = 1.74, p = 0.04). No statistical significance was found for *Body Satisfaction* (Ideal Stimuli, *M* = 0.37; Neutral Stimuli, *M* =0.67; mean difference = -0.30, $t(75)$ = -0.92, p = np) and for this parameter the result points in the opposite direction to what was expected. For women, there were significant increases for *Self-Esteem* (Ideal Stimuli, *M* = 0.70; Neutral Stimuli, *M* =0.19; mean difference = 0.51, $t(85)$ = 1.85, p = 0.03), the one and only parameter that showed TPP differentials for women.

		TPP Gaps based on Stimuli			
		Body Satisfaction	Self-Esteem	Emotions	The Ideal Man
Men	Ideal Stimuli	0.37	0.95	1.07	1.07
	Neutral Stimuli	0.67	0.46	0.49	0.52
	Difference	-0.30	0.49 *	0.58 *	0.55 *
Wom	Ideal Stimuli	0.22	0.70	0.11	0.12
	Neutral Stimuli	0.19	0.19	0.34	0.32
	Difference	0.03	0.51 *	- 0.23	-0.20

Table 15 – TPP Gaps based on Stimuli. Cell entries are means and mean differences. (Light Green=Relevant; Dark Green*p< 0.05)

H6: Perceived effects of stimuli on others will be **greater** when participants are exposed to idealized media images of males than when they are exposed to neutral images.
PARTLY SUPPORTED

4.3.5 Indirect Effects (Third Person Effects)

Hypothesis 7 stated that there will be a positive relationship between TPP gaps and consumers' Buying Intentions (men's (a) and women's (b)), thus creating Third Person Effects. For men, as seen in table 16, exposed to the Ideal Stimuli, there were positive correlation between their Buying Intention and perceived effects of Ideal Stimuli on others' *Body Satisfaction* ($r = 0.39$, $p = 0.02$), *Self-Esteem* ($r = 0.23$, $p = 0.08$), *Emotion* ($r = 0.38$, $p = 0.01$) and *The Perception of the Ideal Man* ($r = 0.29$, $p = 0.07$). For women exposed to the Ideal Stimuli, there was no correlation between their Buying Intention and perceived effects of Ideal Stimuli on others' *Self-Esteem* ($r = 0.12$, $p = $ np).

Third Person Effect – Correlations with Buying Intention				
	Body Satisfaction	Self-Esteem	Emotions	The Ideal man
Men	0.39 *	0.23 *	0.38 *	0.29 *
Women	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.15

Table 16 – Third Person Effects. Cell entries are correlations (r). (Light Green=Relevant; Dark Green*p< 0.05).

H7a: There will be a **positive** relationship between TPP gaps and men's buying intentions, thus, creating TPE.
ACCEPTED

H7b: There will be a **positive** relationship between TPP gaps and women's buying intentions, thus, creating TPE.
REJECTED

4.4 Result Summary of Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Questions	Hypotheses/ Research Areas	Result
PART 1 What characteristics define an Ideal Man in Sweden?	Internal Characteristics	Characteristics of the Explorer- and Director such as *Masculine, Sporty,* and *Intelligent.*
	External Characteristics	*Natural, Muscular* with *an Intense Gaze*
PART 2 What are the direct effects of exposure to idealized media image of males on consumers?	H1a: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **decreases** men's Body Satisfaction	REJECTED
	H1b: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **decreases** men's Self-Esteem	REJECTED
	H1c: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **decreases** men's Emotions	REJECTED
	H2a: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **increases** women's Body Satisfaction	ACCEPTED
	H2b: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **increases** women's Self-Esteem	REJECTED
	H2c: Exposure to idealized media images of males, **increases** women's Emotions	ACCEPTED
PART 3 What are the indirect effects of exposure to idealized media image of males on consumers?	H3a: For men, the perceived effects on Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotions and The Perception of an Ideal Man of idealized media images of males on others will be **greater** than perceived effects on one's self.	ACCEPTED
	H3b: For women, the perceived effects on Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotions and The Perception of an Ideal Man of idealized media images of males on others will be **greater** than perceived effects on one's self.	PARTLY SUPPORTED
	H4: TPP gaps resulting from idealized media images of males will be **greater** when the level of equal social distance increases.	ACCEPTED
	H5: TPP gaps resulting from idealized media images of males will be **greater** when others are of the opposite sex.	ACCEPTED
	H6: Perceived effects of stimuli on others will be **greater** when participants are exposed to idealized media images of males than when they are exposed to neutral images.	PARTLY SUPPORTED
	H7a: There will be a **positive** relationship between TPP gaps and men's buying intentions, thus, creating TPE.	ACCEPTED
	H7b: There will be a **positive** relationship between TPP gaps and women's buying intentions, thus, creating TPE.	REJECTED

Table 17 – Result Summary of Research Questions and Hypotheses

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Analysis and General Discussion

5.1.1 PART 1 – The Characteristics of an Ideal Man in Sweden

Three different methods, focus groups, questionnaire and interviews, were used to understand the characteristics of an Ideal Man in Sweden. The outcomes from the different methods pointed in the same direction. Initially and in line with the previous research, the results revealed that when defining an Ideal Man in Sweden it is important to not only consider External but also Internal Characteristics. This was strongly stressed by the participants in the focus groups. For example, one man mentioned, *"It is not easy to be a Swedish man. The society expect us to have it all… money, brain, muscles..."*(Focus Group 1, 2011). Likewise, the Fashion Photographer said that the criterions for selecting models often differed depending on the gender and he especially emphasised the importance of personality traits when selecting male models (Björk, 2012). Also, the Brand manager agreed on this point by saying "*Consumers appreciate models that are not only aesthetic but also have a strong personality. Many of L'Oréal's spokespersons have deep passion for something else then just beauty…"* (Leckne, 2011). This is clearly aligned with ideas expressed by O'Donohoe (1994), who stated that while *women* are particularly interested in the physical attractiveness of female models in media, *men* put more importance on the lifestyle or personality of a male featured in advertising. Nevertheless, the result also revealed, in accordance with previous research (e.g. Pope, 2003), that physical attractiveness of males is becoming more important in today's society and that attractive men are assumed to be superior to unattractive people. For example, one male participant said, *"When you are better looking, you have a funnier life"* (Focus Group 2, 2011). Therefore, this thesis also validates the Halo Effect by showing that physically attractive individuals are assumed to live happier lives than unattractive people (Dion et al., 1972). Moreover, the Halo Effect helps explain the relationships between the Internal- and External Characteristics (Dion et al., 1972; Landy & Sigall, 1974) that were mentioned in the focus groups and interviews, which will be discussed further down.

The focus group discussions revealed that an Ideal Man should have *Manly, Muscular, Natural, Tall* and *Ruff* External Characteristics and at the same time have *Sporty, Achievement Seeker, Adventurous, Tough, Powerful, Creative, Successful, Impulsive, Self-confident, Intelligent* and *Intellectual* Internal Characteristics (Focus Group 1, 2011; Focus Group 2, 2011). Especially two of Fisher's (2009)

personality types, the *Explorer* and the *Director,* can be explained by these characteristics. Likewise, these two personality types (simulated as Facebook profiles) were selected by the respondents in the questionnaire to be most similar to an Ideal Man. Moreover, as an additional check, the respondents in the questionnaire were asked to evaluate the importance of the characteristics of each personality type. At this point, the *Director* was compared to the *Negotiator* and the *Explorer* to the *Builder*. Here, negative numbers indicated preferences for characteristics of the *Directors* or *Explorers,* positive numbers demonstrated that the characteristics of *Builders* or *Negotiators* are preferred and number close to zero indicated that none of the two opposite characteristics are important for an Ideal Man to possess. The result showed that the characteristics of the *Director* and the *Explorer* were perceived to be more important than the opposite adjectives that described the *Negotiator* and the *Builder*. Moreover, as mentioned, it is worth considering the actual rate of each characteristics pair since that gives implications to the overall and actual importance of that pair, in comparison to the other pairs. For example, women rated the characteristics pair "Freedom Seeker and Security Seeker" as very close to zero, which indicates that none of these two opposite characteristics are fundamental when describing an Ideal Man. The reason for this is that the two characteristics are antonyms, thus, it does not advance the research to claim that an Ideal Man should be both a Freedom Seeker and a Security Seeker. However, the characteristics pair "Masculine and Feminine" got a very negative rating (not close to zero), indicating that it is important that an Ideal Man is ***Masculine*** instead of feminine*.* The importance of masculinity for an Ideal Man is clearly aligned with ideas expressed in the focus groups. For example, one woman said: *"I want a manly guy, not a hairdresser kind of guy"* (Focus Group 2, 2011). Likewise, the Brand Manager implicitly expressed the same claim by speaking about that spokespersons and models who are representing L'Oréal's male beauty brands cannot be feminine or too perfect looking (Leckne, 2011). Similarly, a woman in the focus group said, "*Girls should strive for the perfect hair, skin and nails but a real man shouldn't look too perfect"* (Focus Group 1, 2011). Moreover, these arguments are in line with previous research, which suggest that being *Masculine* is predictive of a positive beauty and body image for men (Meehan, 2009; Borchert & Heinberg, 1996). Also, Evolutionary Theory proves that females tend to show strong preferences for exaggerated masculine male traits (Andersson, 1994; Ryan & Keddyhector, 1992; Thornhill & Gangestad, 1999). Furthermore, another characteristic pair that got a very negative rating (not close to zero) was "Intellectual and Emotional", which indicates the importance of intellect for an Ideal Man. Especially, the male respondents seem to favour Intellectual men over Emotional. Moreover, a similar characteristic,

Intelligence, was emphasised by both the focus group participant and the Fashion Photographer as vital for an Ideal Man. For example, a woman in the focus group mentioned, *"The ideal man must know things, he must be smart and be able to answer my questions"*. Likewise, the photographer stated "*Guys who looks stupid go away immediately"* (Björk, 2012)*.

If only *Masculinity* and *Intelligence* would be important for an Ideal Man, the author claims that the respondents should have rated the *Director* personality as closest to the Ideal. However, as seen in the questionnaire result, both men and women selected the *Explorer* as the most idealistic male personality. To understand why this personality was selected as the most popular, the author suggests that the chosen profile picture might have played a larger role than what was projected while creating the fictive Facebook profiles. Van Der Heide et al., (2012) demonstrated that words are not really necessary on Facebook because the profile photo tells viewers all they need to know in order to form a first impression. Consequently, if the profile pictures are more important than text on Facebook it is worth to more carefully reflect on the photos that were selected for each of the fictive profiles as well as try to understand the signals these pictures might have sent out about the profiles' internal characteristics. As mentioned, the same man was used as a model for all of the Facebook profiles but the outfits he wore and the backgrounds that surrounded him differed depending on the personality he was supposed to simulate (Appendix C). As seen, the *Director* wore a suit to signal that this personality is Intelligent, Masculine and seeks Achievement whereas the *Explorer* personality wore a wetsuit and was windsurfing to signal that he is Impulsive as well as seeking Novelty- and Freedom. However, if the respondents only considered the photos and did not read the text when selecting profile, other characteristics than the intended might have been more evident to the respondents. For example, an image of a windsurfer might signal that the model's personality is ***Sporty*** rather than Impulsive, Freedom- or Novelty Seeking. However, according to Helen Fisher' (2009) both the *Director* and *Explorer* should be seen as sporty. For example, research suggests that due to high Testosterone levels, the Director personality is usually sporty and muscular (Fisher, 2009; Aceto, 2002). Moreover, when considering the characteristics that were emphasized in the focus groups and interviews as important for an Ideal Man, *Sporty* was frequently mentioned. For example, one man claimed: *"The ideal man is the one who score the goals…he must be sporty."* Also famous sport stars like David Beckham and Zlatan Ibrahimovic were mentioned as Ideal Men (Focus Group 1, 2011; Björk, 2012). Since *Sporty* seems to be an important characteristic of an Ideal Man, the author believes that one reason to why the *Explorer*

was more popular than the other profiles might not have been only due to this profile's characteristics, but also because the profile was perceived as the *Sportiest*. In turn, this might imply that if a *Sporty* profile picture would have been selected for the *Director* personality too, this profile might have been as popular as the *Explorer* profile, according to the author. Nevertheless, the aim of the first research question was not to perfectly understand which of Fisher's (2009) personality types that are closest to an Ideal Man. Instead, those profiles were used in order to illustrate different personality traits more subtle and thereby be able to better define important characteristics of an Ideal Man, which was the goal of this research question. When considering the outcomes from all of the three methods, it is clear that three of the most important internal characteristics of an Ideal Man in Sweden are *Masculine, Intelligent* and *Sporty*.

For advertisers, it is important to understand what external characteristics of males that make consumers to believe that a model is *Masculine, Intelligent* and *Sporty*. In other words, they should consider the Halo Effect and thereby figure out the relationships between External- and Internal characteristics. Firstly, this thesis shows that there are different ways for males to externally demonstrate internal *Masculinity*. For example, one woman stated, *"A guy who puts too much attention on his look is girly. Guys should just relax and look cool"* (Focus Group 2, 2011). Likewise, a man claimed, *"The ideal man is not Brad Pitt looking. He should look ruff, natural and adventurous"* (Focus Group 1, 2011). Also, the Brand Manager expressed similar views by saying *"Some brands use young, skinny and "perfect" looking male models but from what I know, Swedes perceive those men as feminine"* (Leckne, 2011). This indicates that it should never be evident that a man puts effort in his looks, thus, a word that explained this in a good way is, according to the author, ***Natural***. Therefore, to signal masculinity, this thesis shows that it is important for an Ideal Man to look *Natural*. Secondly, to signal *Intelligence,* previous research suggests that the model should look attractive since handsome people are perceived to be more *intelligent* (Landy & Sigall, 1974). Moreover, the way a man stares, such as if he has an ***Intense Gaze,*** seems to signal if he is perceived as intelligent or not. For example, two focus group participants said, *"I can usually tell by the gaze of a man if he is smart"* and *"I perceive men who don't look into my eyes as insecure and trivial"* (Focus Group 2, 2011). Lastly, this thesis demonstrates the importance of an Ideal Man to be ***Muscular,*** which obviously is linked to the third essential external characteristic of this thesis; *Sporty.* Both the focus group discussions and interviews indicated the importance of muscles for an Ideal Man. For instance, a woman mentioned: *"I do not want to feel fat next to a man. The Ideal*

Man is definitely tall and muscular" (Focus Group 1, 2011). Likewise, a muscular ideal is clearly aligned with most previous research (e.g. Frederick et al., 2007; Pope, 2003). For example, Grogan (2008) showed that the main areas that produce dissatisfaction for men are the mid-torso, biceps, shoulders, chest, as well as general muscle tone. However, it goes against McVeigh's (2010) ideas regarding a shift in the standard sizing of male fashion models, with demands for thinner male models on the increase. Nevertheless, the Fashion Photographer claimed, "…*even though, some aspects of beauty ideals change over time, the most popular media images of males will always display bare and muscular torsos because that is perceived as manly - that is what fascinate people!"* (Björk, 2012).

5.1.2 PART 2 – Direct Effects of Idealized Media Image of Males

Based on the Social Comparison-, Cultivation-, Self-Discrepancy- and Affect-Attraction Theory, it was expected that the current research would reveal that *men* would experienced a decrease in self-perceived Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotions following exposure to idealized media images of *males* whereas it was hypothesized that women would experience positive effects of such exposure.

Women's reactions for the variable Emotion was in line with the expectations (and the Affect-Attraction theory) since *women's* Emotions increased following exposure to idealized images of *males* compared to neutral image stimuli. Likewise, this result is in line with Debevec and Kernan (1984) study, which found that women react more positively to an attractive male model than to an average male model. Besides that, women's increased Body Satisfaction is also in accordance to previous research done for males showing that their Body Satisfaction increases after watching female models (Kenrick et al., 1993). However, even though, the result regarding women's Self-Esteem pointed in the expected directions, no significant result was found for this variable, which is not in accordance to either previous research done for men (Meehan, 2009) or studies suggesting that positive Emotions usually increases people's Self-Esteem (Kernis et al., 1993). Therefore, the author chose not to make any clear statements regarding the effect on the variable Self-Esteem for women. However, this study indicates that *women's* Body-Satisfaction and Emotions are more influenced by idealized images of *males* than their Self-Esteem.

Likewise, the author cannot make any strong conclusions concerning the effects on *men* following exposure to idealized images of *males* because no significant differences were found, between the experimental and control group, in men's Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem or Emotions. As mentioned,

these results are in accordance with some studies. For example, Humphreys and Paxton, 2004 found no overall change in men's Emotions after exposure to images of idealized males and several researchers found that same sex idealized images exposure led to decreased Body Satisfaction for girls but not for boys (e.g. Bartlett et al., 2008; Johnson et al., 2007). Nevertheless, the author found this result unexpected, since the Cultivation-, Self-Discrepancy- and Social Comparison Theory predict that men would be affected negatively after exposure to idealized images of males as well as because a large body of literature showed negative effects on these three variables for *women* following exposure to idealized images of *females*. Consequently, the author will further elaborate on the absence of influence on men in this study. Three potential reasons will be discussed that might explain this lack of effect on men.

Firstly, the men in the study might not have engaged in Upward Social Comparison with the male models used for the idealized stimuli. As mentioned, research proves that if consumers do not compare themselves with idealized media images, they will not develop any negative effects of such image exposure either (e.g. Gibbons & Gerard, 1989; Buunk & Mussweiler, 2001; Wheeler & Miyake, 1999). Moreover, in order for individuals to engage in social comparison, differences between how they perceive themselves (Real Self) and how they want to perceive themselves (Ideal Self) must exist (Higgins, 1989). Therefore, it might have been so that the ideal stimuli in this study did not correspond to the Ideal Selves of the respondents, suggesting that no self-discrepancy occurred, which made the respondents *not* engage in Upwards Social Comparison. Nevertheless, on a scale from 1-10, men rated the images of males in this study as 8.11 in terms of "Attractiveness", "Closeness to Ideal" and "Buying Intention", which according to previous research is high enough to state that the images used in this study should be attractive enough to influence consumers (e.g. George, 2010, Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004). Consequently, neither a lack of self-discrepancy, nor, the idealized image stimuli should be the reason for a lack of engagement in Upward Social Comparison according to the author. Instead, a study conducted by Spitzer (1962) might explain why men in this study probably did not engage in social comparison with the idealized image stimuli. He showed that even though individuals perceive self-discrepancies while exposed to idealize media images, they are capable of being critical towards the images so that they do not engage in Upward Social Comparison with exposed models (Spitzer, 1962). Moreover, Jones (2001) proved that men usually engage in less appearance-related social comparisons than women, which is further explained by Van den Berg et al., (2007). The latest one argues that when women often compare themselves to model images, men are more likely to compare themselves to famous figures where the characteristics of the comparison target are more obvious, such as for sports

stars. Leckne implicitly agreed saying, *"an extremely beautiful female model generally attracts women to buy beauty products, but to get men to buy such products, a famous man who the consumers fancy is usually more efficient"* (Leckne, 2010). Thus, since the target of comparison for this study was appearance related, this further indicates that the absence of influence of men in this study is due to a lack of engagement in Upward Social Comparison. Supporting this hypothesis, evidence shows that men are significantly more likely to engage in social body comparison with famous sports athletes than with male models in magazines (Karazsia & Crowther, 2009). Besides that and in line with the conclusions made in the first part of this thesis, research states that differences in gender concept between men and women suggest characteristics to be more important for men, whereas physical appearance is more important for women (Franzoi, 1995). Consequently, it might have been so that the respondents found the images of males in this study to be attractive, but since the characteristics of the exposed models where not very evident, the respondents might not have compared themselves with these males. Therefore, the author suggests that further research should examine the effects on men following exposure to idealized images of famous males, whose characteristics are well known for the respondents.

Secondly, another potential reason for the absence of influence on men in this study could be explained by previous research suggesting that men usually have a more positive body image than women, which may protect them against idealized media messages (Humphreys & Paxton, 2004). Moreover, research shows that people with high Body Satisfactions are not affected by idealized imagery because they either have a body similar to the models or they base their self-worth in areas unrelated to body image (Posavac et al., 1998). Likewise, in this study men respondents had significantly higher Body Satisfaction than the women participants considering respondents exposed to neutral stimuli since they were supposedly not affected by their image stimuli (Males, M=3.14, Females, M=2.75, $t(73)$=2.05, p= 0.02) . Therefore, arguments considering a generally more positive body image for men than women can probably help explain the lack of media influence on men in this study according to the author.

Thirdly, the author put forth a completely different explanation to the lack of influence, which is that the male respondents might not have been completely honest when they answered the questionnaire. This is in line with some statements made in the first part of this thesis. For example, when comparing the discussion in the focus group for men with the one for women, it was evident that all men did not reveal

the complete truth during the session. For example, when the participants were asked to rate their self-confidence from 1 to 10, all men said 10 while women's ratings were much lower and with a wider spread. Supporting this argument, evidence show that men concede their physical appearance to be more important than they like to admit and that they do not like to talk about feelings or body image because it is a feminine or gay issue (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2003). Another indication that the men who were exposed to the idealized stimuli in the survey were not completely honest is that no correlations were found between their influence on Emotion and Body Satisfaction as well as between Emotion and Self-Esteem (Appendix E). However, previous research shows that it usually exist a strong correlation between all these variables (Monro & Huon, 2005; Evans & McConnell, 2003; Thompson & Dolce, 1989). Likewise, for women exposed to the idealized stimuli in this study a correlation between all of the variables were found. Moreover, all the variables correlated positively for both men and women that were exposed to the neutral stimuli. Another indication showing that *male* respondents might not have revealed their true feelings in the survey is that when comparing respondents' "Believed" influence on their own Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotion, the group that was exposed to neutral images rated their influence on their own Self-Esteem and Emotions to be significantly higher than the group that was exposed to idealized images (Appendix F). This is very odd since previous research proved that images of beauty products should have no impact on consumers' Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem or Emotion (Birkeland et al., 2005), which also is in line with the results for women showing that their "Believed" influence on all of the three variables were significantly higher for women who were exposed to idealized images than for women who were exposed to neutral stimuli.

5.1.3 PART 3 – Indirect Effects of Idealized Media Image of Males

As discussed in part 2, the author cannot draw any strong conclusions concerning the direct effects of idealized media images of males in *men's* Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, and Emotions nor could any announcements be made concerning the direct effects of such images in *women's* Self-Esteem. However, the data revealed that the impacts on consumers of idealized images might not be direct and instead mediated by third person perceptions.

The results revealed that *men* perceive other people to be more influenced than themselves on all the measured variables (Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotion and The Perception of the Ideal Man) by idealized media images whereas a TPP gap for *women* only was found for the variable Self-Esteem.

These results are interesting since TPP gaps were found only for the four variables that did not show any direct effects on consumers in part 2. No other researcher has examined both the direct and indirect effect on consumers in the same study, which makes it difficult to compare and interpret this relationship. However, by considering a study conducted by Gunther & Thorson (1992) the relationship between direct- and indirect impact might be easier to grasp. The key point of their research is that TPP gaps do not always occur even though the media message is persuasive and effective. People usually estimate a greater impact of the media on other people and less on themselves when the media's messages are perceived to be harmful and undesirable. However, when the messages are perceived as positive, the effect is often attenuated or even reversed (Gunther & Thorson, 1992). Therefore, the reason to why no TPP gaps were evident for Body Satisfaction and Emotion when asking women might be because they thought that *other* people would react the same way as they did after exposure to idealized images, thus, being positively influenced on these two variables. Likewise, this explains why TPP gaps were found for Self-Esteem when asking women as well as for all the four variables when asking men. As shown in part 2, these variables were not significantly improved following idealized image exposure, thus, the participants were not positively influenced on these variables.

Moreover, this thesis validates the finding about social distance theory, but extends beyond to also include effects of idealized images of males. This is because, in line with hypothesis 4, for all variables where TPP gaps were found, the data revealed an increase in these gaps when the others were defined as not "close friends". However, the social distance theory predicts that the closeness of both "close female friends" and "close male friends" is equal as well as the closeness of "other females" and "other males", which indicates that the TPP gaps should not differ depending on gender. However, the data of this thesis revealed, in accordance with hypothesis 5, that TPP is greater when others are of the opposite sex in the ideal image domain. Therefore, this study proves that not only the generalized closeness (e.g. close friends) of others explain TPP gaps in male beauty image research also the gender of others play a significant role. Previous research that exposed women to idealized images of females suggests that the argument behind this gender-difference is that *women* are influenced by unrealistic media images because they think that *men* will view those images as real and value them (e.g. Goodman & Walsh-Childers, 2003; Choi et al., 2008). It also suggests that women do not believe that men are savvy enough to know that media images are unrealistic (Goodman & Walsh-Childers, 2003). Therefore, the author suggests that this argument also applies to *men* such as that men do not believe women to be savvy

enough to know that media images are unrealistic. Moreover, as expected, participants who were exposed to idealized media images compared to those exposed to neutral product images reported greater TPP gaps on all variables of interest expect for Body Satisfaction for men. Therefore, the author cannot make as strong conclusion about the TPP gap for this variable as for the other variables.

However, even though TPP gaps are interesting, the indirect consequences of such gaps are more important to consider when understanding how advertising containing media image of males can become more effective in Sweden, which as stated is the main problem of this thesis. In line with previous research (Tal-Or et al., 2009) as well as with hypothesis 7, there are positive relationships between men's intention to buy products (that an Ideal Man is promoting) and their perceived effects of idealized images on others' Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Emotion and The Perception of the Ideal Man, thus creating Third Person Effects. However, for women no such relationship is evident. Nevertheless, this study proves that as the perceived influence of idealized media images on others increase, so do men's Buying Intentions. Consequently, if idealized males are used as models in advertising it is more likely that men will buy the product that the model is promoting. That is to say, the positive effects (increased sales) that such advertising exposure achieves are not due to men's direct reactions but rather due to the indirect behaviour that follows from men's anticipated reactions of others (e.g. Douglas & Sutton, 2004; Gunther, 1991). However, positive effects of idealized image advertising can be due to women's direct reactions since exposure to Ideal Men make women to feel good, which in turn is shown to increase their buying intentions (My Body Beautiful, 2012). The reason for this is that advertising containing attractive males, triggers innate sexual needs for women and such sexual connotations in adverting are known to evoke positive emotions, which are then subconsciously transferred to brands and products. When the person encounters the brand in a purchase situation, positive Emotions that they have previously associated with the brand (not the sexual context in which they originally saw the ad) will significantly increase the possibility that the person will buy the product (My Body Beautiful, 2012).

5.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this thesis have practical implications for male beauty companies and all other businesses that are offering male products, as well as for actors who are involved in the selection of male models such as model, media and advertising agencies. This study guides these players in selecting male models for their advertising in order to increase its effectiveness. For many of these actors it is

important to please both genders when selecting models, as mentioned men themselves buy only 50% of male beauty products that are sold today (Brandstorm, 2011). Firstly, this study shows that *men* and *women* react differently to idealized media images of *males*, which companies and marketers should consider both when they chose models as well as when they measure the effect that an advertisement achieves. Secondly, this thesis indicates that marketing stakeholders could benefit from using images of Ideal Men in their communication since only positive effects of such exposure were evident. Women buyers in the sample were positively influenced by such images, which in turn is shown to increase their buying intentions. At the same time men consumers were not (as assumed) negatively affected by such images, which in a socially wider perspective indicates that these actors might not need to worry about that advertising containing idealized male models will result in damaging consequences for their consumers. Moreover, by using idealized images of models instead of only product images in their communication, this thesis suggests that men's purchasing intentions often also increases due to indirect effects. Therefore, a third implication is that these actors should consider both direct and indirect effects while designing an advertisement. Fourthly, this study has more specific suggestions for some companies and agencies that are operating in Sweden such as that they could benefit from selecting male models that are *Masculine, Sporty* and *Intellectual* at the same time, as they look *Natural* and *Muscular* as well as having an *Intense Gaze.* Additionally, the outcomes indicate that marketers and companies would gain by choosing famous people as male models since their external characteristics more easily come though in an advertisement.

Besides that, other researchers within the idealized image domain will also be able to use this description when they are studying direct- and indirect effects of idealized media images of males. Also, by indicating that a relationship between direct- and indirect effects of exposure to idealized images exists, this thesis can also help academics to improve and develop their studies.

5.3 Potential Criticism

Critique towards the study can be raised in some aspects regarding the sample, manipulations, and research approach. The critique for each of the two steps used in this study will be discusses separately.

In step A, the research design consists of two focus groups, one questionnaire and two in-depth interviews. This thesis demonstrated several characteristics that probably are important for an Ideal Man in Sweden. However, due to the complexity in defining such ideal it is impossible to state that only these

characteristics matter for a man. Instead, the outcome from the first part of this thesis should be used as directions and guidelines for actors that are about to select ideal male models. No study will be able to perfectly define an Ideal Man since all methods have some weaknesses. The author found several reasons as to why a perfect definition of an Ideal Man could not be presented in this thesis. Firstly, the participants in the focus groups had similar characteristics - students living in Stockholm in the ages of 22 and 26. The discussion might have been different if the participants had alternative characteristics, such as employed, older or not from Stockholm. However, the author used participants that were members of the same group (similar education, jobs, social background) since the goal was to explore collective understanding or shared meanings of the Ideal Man and to enable that natural grouping is preferred (Kjaer Jensen, 1998). Another potential critique with the focus group session for men could have been that the author (who also was the moderator) is a woman, which may have led the male participants to be less honest while discussing sensitive topics. Also, more than two interviews would have been desired in order to be able to better compare different people' opinions and answers. However, in terms of time, this was not available for the author. Nevertheless, even though, survey 1 was sampled through a convenience sample and not a random sample from the Swedish population, this questionnaire was distributed to a wide sample of respondents to better interpret the result from the focus groups and interviews. However, the design of this questionnaire could have been improved. Firstly, the survey used a hypothetical situation asking respondents to "imagine" what Facebook profile they perceive to be most idealistic, as opposed to a real world situation testing actual preferences. Evidence suggests that observational studies might be a more accurate measurement of how the consumer would actually behave (Bryman & Bell, 2011). To come over this problem, the author tried to do a real experiment on Facebook by sending out 500 friend requests to random Facebook users from the four fictive profiles. The author wanted to see if the profiles that were rated as most popular in the survey also got most accepted friends, which better would test people' actual preferences. However, Facebook has a policy that they block profiles after a while if they suspect profiles to be fictive, which made this experiment impossible. Moreover, in terms of ethical considerations, such an experiment could also be questioned. As mentioned, another problem with the fictive Facebook profiles is that, as demonstrated by Van Der Heide et al., (2012), the respondents might have only considered the photos and not the text when selecting profile, thus, other characteristics than the intended might have been more evident to the respondents. Secondly, the rating scales that were used when evaluation the importance of different characteristics made it impossible to precisely compare all the characteristics

between each other. However, the underlying reason to why pair wise ratings were used, was because all the characteristics could be seen as positive for an Ideal Man, and thus, if the characteristics would not have been put against each other the respondents might have rated all of them as very important for an ideal man. This would in turn not give any further implications as to what characteristics an Ideal Man in Sweden should possess.

In step B, the research design consisted of a questionnaire and the author found five main weaknesses with this method. Firstly, no pre-measures were taken of the respondents' Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotions, which therefore only made it possible to infer the effects of exposure from the difference between experimental groups, and not from an actual change in those variables. This also meant that it was not possible to control participants' pre-existing (before they did the experiment) body image, self-image or mood, which nevertheless have been shown to influence how people react to idealize media images (Durkin & Paxton, 2002; Humphreys & Paxton, 2004). However, the design was carefully chosen not to include pre-measures of these variables because doing so would have focussed participants' attention on, for example, their body and would have primed them towards appearance-related information therefore potentially confounding the experimental manipulation. Secondly, the images of male beauty products used in the neutral version of the second survey might not have been seen as completely neutral as such products might send out signals about, for example, the importance of beauty. However, such images were used in order for the respondents to make sense of the questions in the neutral version of the survey. Moreover, previous research proves that appearance-related products are not enough to produce an effect on the three chosen variables (Birkeland et al., 2005). Thirdly, the images used for the ideal version of the survey simulated male models in isolation and did not include any product or brand, which made the stimuli to simulate actual advertising less than if real features taken from magazines had been used as stimuli. However, since such stimuli included external factors it would have been more difficult to state where the discovered effects originated. from. Fourthly, only one control group was used. To enhance the credibility of the results, another version of the second survey could have been formed with pictures of for example, images of neutral looking males. However, to do that following a scientific approach, an in-death investigation on how Swedish people perceive a neutral looking man would have been required, which the author unfortunately did not had time to do. Fifthly, while experimental studies allow inferences about the acute effects of media exposure on Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotions, they lack in being able to examine long-term effects (Grabe et al., 2008), which highlight that longitudinal and prospective studies are important in assessing men's

vulnerability to body image concerns and Self-Esteem, however there are relatively few of these studies in publication.

At last, critique can also be put forward regarding the low response rate of both the surveys, as a response rate for postal questionnaires below 50% is unacceptable according to Mangione (1995). Low response rates are a concern as respondents' answers may differ from the potential answers of non-respondents, and can therefore lead to biased results (Sheehan, 2001). However, Bryman & Bell (2011) state that many published research articles achieve response rates of approximately 18-25%, and based on the declining response rate for online questionnaire, the approximately 18-20% response rate in this thesis can be regarded as sufficient.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The findings and methodological limitations of this study point to a number of avenues for further research, some of which have already been suggested throughout earlier in the discussion part. Several main areas will be highlighted.

This study found some important Internal- and External Characteristics of an Ideal Man in Sweden. Future research should aim at more carefully and specifically describe an Ideal Man as well as name concrete suggestions of famous people or models that simulate such description. Moreover, studies should be conducted that examine how image ideals differ depending on age, education, religion, cultural as well as on personality type. Furthermore, even though speculations can be made about the cumulative effect of daily exposure to image ideals, future research should aim to identify specific long-tem effects of media exposure. As described, it is possible that the idealized stimuli used in this study did not signal the internal characteristics of an Ideal Man, and hence, future research could consider exploring the influence of exposure to images of male personalities for whom physical function is important (such as sports personalities). At last, this study shows that idealized image exposure of males indirectly increases men' purchase intentions. What further research could study is if women' purchase intentions are indirectly effected by idealized images of females. Even more interestingly would be to see how idealized image exposure affects consumers' actual purchase intentions, which further research could observe. A couple of years ago such experiments would only have been possible by doing in-store experiments and observations, which usually is complex and costly. However, due to the recent increase

in e-commerce, such research could be done online instead, which would decrease the costs as well as make it easier to track actual buying behaviour and demographic characteristics of consumers.

5.5 Conclusions

5.5.1 What Characteristics define an Ideal Man in Sweden?

This study demonstrated that both External- and Internal Characteristics are vital to consider when defining the Ideal Man in Sweden. The Ideal Man needs to be *Masculine* and *Sporty*, which he could show with a *Natural* look and by being *Muscular*. Moreover, the Ideal Man should be *Intelligent,* which he could demonstrate with an *Intense Gaze,* such as by looking people deeply into their eyes.

5.5.2 What are the Direct Effects of Exposure to Idealized Media Images of Males on consumers?

This study established that exposure to idealized media images of *males* increases *women's* Body Satisfaction and Emotions. However, no clear conclusions can be drawn about the influence on *men* of such exposure. The author put through three reasons that might explain the absence of influence on men in this study. Firstly, men might not have engaged in Upward Social Comparison with the appearance related Stimuli. Secondly, men have high Body Satisfactions that protect them from being influenced by idealized images. Thirdly, men might not have revealed their true feelings.

5.5.3 What are the Indirect Effects of Exposure to Idealized Media Images of Males on consumers?

This thesis revealed that when a direct effect on oneself of idealized media is not evident, people tend to perceive that the effect of idealized media images of males on others is greater than the effects of idealized images one's self. Moreover, these TPP gaps tend to increase if the social distance to others increases as well as if others are of the opposite sex to the observer. More importantly, this thesis also proves that as the perceived influence of idealized media images of *males* on others increase, so does *men's* buying intentions. However, for women no such effect was found. That is to say, the positive effects (increased sales) that such advertising exposure achieves is not due to the direct reactions of men, but rather due to indirect effects in the form of the behaviour that follows from men's anticipated reactions on others (e.g. Douglas & Sutton, 2004; Gunther, 1991).

5.6 Main Conclusion – How can Media Image Exposure of Males become more Effective in Sweden?

Previous research suggests that "what is beautiful is good" (Dion et al., 1972) and empirical studies bear out this phenomenon, showing that physical attractiveness of a person shown in an advertisement lead to positive outcomes for companies such as increased advertiser believability (Kamins, 1990) and willingness to purchase (Petroshius & Crocker, 1989). In turn, this indicates that effective advertising always should include as attractive and beautiful models as possible, which is proved to be true when it comes to the use of *female* models. However, this thesis demonstrates that the ideal *male* model needs to be more than just beautiful. The author found out that an Ideal Man should be *Masculine, Sporty* and *Intellectual,* which he could signal by looking *Natural* and *Muscular* as well as giving an *Intense Gaze.*

Moreover, research suggests that for *women,* exposure to same sex idealized media images lead to negative effects. Conversely, this study luckily demonstrates that same sex media images do not negatively affect *men's* Body Satisfaction, Self-esteem or Emotions. Instead, this thesis proves that as the perceived influence of idealized media images of *males* on others increase, so do *men's* Buying Intentions. Consequently, if idealized males are used in advertising it is more likely that men will buy the product that the idealized model is promoting. And best of all, such images make women happier and increase their body satisfaction, which in turn also increases their purchase intentions.

Therefore, the author recommends companies and marketers to take advantage of the power of the Ideal Man and use him in their advertising, which in turn will make media image exposure of males become more effective!

5.7 Final words

The goal of equality between men and women is now reality in Sweden, which has lead to many positive outcomes such as same job opportunities and salaries. Certainly, this has also contributed to that not only images of females, but also of males, are used in today's media. Nevertheless, advertisers have still not found an effective way of communicating by using male models (Costa, 2011). Probably, you can name several successful female models, but can you name one famous male model? Male models, even the few who work at the top of the fashion industry, are usually unknown to the general public (Streib, 2008). Actually, evidence suggests that this is the only industry in the world where women make more money than men (Blakeley, 2008). One reason for this could be that marketers are using the same

logic when selecting male models as when choosing female models, thus, picking the most perfect looking models in term of appearance. However, even though, men and women should have equal opportunities, there are important differences between the genders (Conner, 2008). This thesis demonstrates that women and men are influenced differently by advertising and also that the criteria for defining the ideal image of males differ from those of females. By recognizing these differences and deeply study all potential effects of advertising, actors will be able to create successful advertising that only result in positive consequences for their consumers.

The author has found that the ideal male model needs to be more than just beautiful in order to influence the buying public. The Ideal Man should not only be attractive but needs to convey a sharp intellect as well.

Appendix

Appendix A – Questionnaire 1

Question-set 1 – Facebook Profiles (Internal Characteristics)

Please take a while to look at the following Facebook profiles, pay attention to 'interests' and 'about' sections.

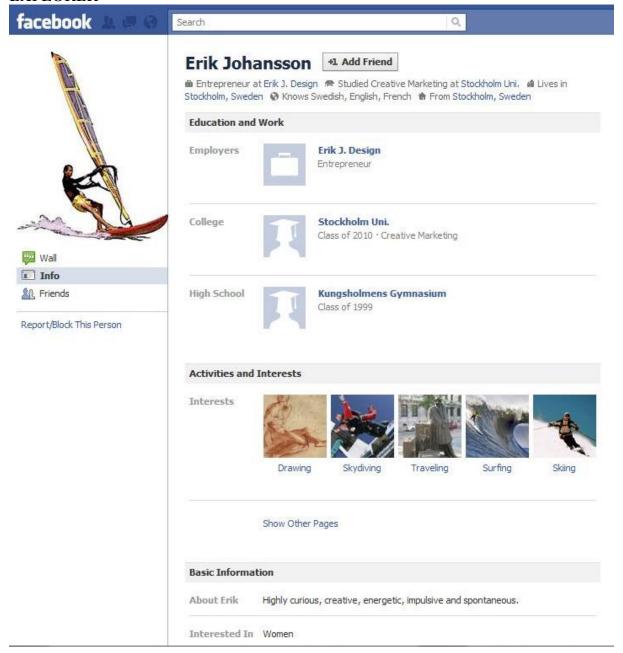Which of the profiles do you think is closest to an Ideal Man?

DIRECTOR

NEGOTIATOR

facebook 👥 💬 🌐   Search 🔍

Johan Andersson   +1 Add Friend

💼 Pshykolog at Capio S:t Görans sjukhus   🚌 Studied pshykologi at Stockholm Uni.   🏢 Lives in Stockholm, Sweden   🌐 Knows Swedish, English, French   🏠 From Stockholm, Sweden

Education and Work

Employers		**Capio S:t Görans sjukhus** Pshykolog
College		**Stockholm Uni.** Class of 2010 · pshykologi
High School		**Bromma Gymnasium**

Activities and Interests

Interests

Self improvement   Human Welfare   Cooking   Volunteering   Reading and Writing

Show Other Pages

Basic Information

About Johan	Imaginative, intuitive, empathetic, and emotionally expressive, and have good verbal and social skills.
Interested In	Women
Sex	Male

Wall
Info
Friends

Report/Block This Person

EXPLORER

Erik Johansson +1 Add Friend

Entrepreneur at Erik J. Design Studied Creative Marketing at Stockholm Uni. Lives in Stockholm, Sweden Knows Swedish, English, French From Stockholm, Sweden

Education and Work

Employers		**Erik J. Design** Entrepreneur
College		**Stockholm Uni.** Class of 2010 · Creative Marketing
High School		**Kungsholmens Gymnasium** Class of 1999

Activities and Interests

Interests

Drawing Skydiving Traveling Surfing Skiing

Show Other Pages

Basic Information

About Erik   Highly curious, creative, energetic, impulsive and spontaneous.

Interested In   Women

Wall
Info
Friends

Report/Block This Person

BUILDER

Question-set 2 – Adjectives (Internal Characteristics)

Think of the Ideal Man...

Now rate to which extent he has the following characteristics:

Freedom Seeker	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Security Seeker
Impulsive	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Traditional
Novelty seeker	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Rule Keeper
Achievement seeker	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Harmony seeker
Tough Minded	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Empathic
Intellectual	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Emotional
Masculine	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Feminine

Thank you very much for your time, do not hesitate to share the survey link with your friends, on facebook, twitter... it would really mean a lot to us.

Write your home address in the box below if you want a chance to win a product from L'Oréal.

If you have any further comments, please write them here as well.

Appendix B – Age Frequencies (Questionnaire 1)

Age

MALE		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	3	2,4	2,4	2,4
	21	1	,8	,8	3,1
	22	5	3,9	3,9	7,1
	23	20	15,7	15,7	22,8
	24	23	18,1	18,1	40,9
	25	14	11,0	11,0	52,0
	26	12	9,4	9,4	61,4
	27	13	10,2	10,2	71,7
	28	3	2,4	2,4	74,0
	29	1	,8	,8	74,8
	30	4	3,1	3,1	78,0
	32	2	1,6	1,6	79,5
	33	2	1,6	1,6	81,1
	35	2	1,6	1,6	82,7
	36	2	1,6	1,6	84,3
	37	1	,8	,8	85,0
	38	2	1,6	1,6	86,6
	39	1	,8	,8	87,4
	40	3	2,4	2,4	89,8
	41	1	,8	,8	90,6
	44	2	1,6	1,6	92,1
	47	1	,8	,8	92,9
	48	1	,8	,8	93,7
	49	1	,8	,8	94,5
	50	1	,8	,8	95,3
	54	1	,8	,8	96,1
	55	1	,8	,8	96,9
	57	1	,8	,8	97,6
	58	1	,8	,8	98,4
	63	1	,8	,8	99,2
	67	1	,8	,8	100,0
	Total	127	100,0	100,0	

Age

FEMALE		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	17	2	2,3	2,3	2,3
	18	1	1,1	1,1	3,4
	20	2	2,3	2,3	5,7
	21	5	5,7	5,7	11,5
	22	5	5,7	5,7	17,2
	23	23	26,4	26,4	43,7
	24	18	20,7	20,7	64,4
	25	10	11,5	11,5	75,9
	26	4	4,6	4,6	80,5
	27	3	3,4	3,4	83,9
	28	1	1,1	1,1	85,1
	29	1	1,1	1,1	86,2
	31	1	1,1	1,1	87,4
	32	1	1,1	1,1	88,5
	37	1	1,1	1,1	89,7
	38	1	1,1	1,1	90,8
	40	1	1,1	1,1	92,0
	48	1	1,1	1,1	93,1
	49	1	1,1	1,1	94,3
	50	1	1,1	1,1	95,4
	54	1	1,1	1,1	96,6
	55	2	2,3	2,3	98,9
	57	1	1,1	1,1	100,0
	Total	87	100,0	100,0	

Appendix C – Questionnaire 2

Hello,
We are helping a cosmetic company to launch a new brand for men called *Alliance*. Your opinion matters a lot to us whether you are a man or a woman.

To thank you for your help, as soon as you have fully completed this survey and followed the instructions at the end, we will send you a beauty/grooming product (approximate retail value of 100 SEK)

Be sure to answer all questions, your answers are strictly anonymous!

Thank you very much in advance!

Click below to start

VERSION 1 – Ideal Stimuli

In advertising, models and spokespersons are vital for a brand's success. We would like to know which model is the most suitable to represent *Alliance*. Please have a close look at the following photos and indicate which model you would rather see in their advertising.

Be careful about your own feeling and thinking when you are looking at the photos. Try to remember these feelings and thoughts throughout the survey.

VERSION 2 – Neutral Stimuli

In order for the cosmetic company to match your preferences, they want your opinion on what product that is most important to include in the *Alliance* product line. Please have a close look at the following products and indicate which product you would like to see in their assortment.

Be careful about your own feeling and thinking when you are looking at the pictures. Try to remember these feelings and thoughts throughout the survey.

Please evaluate your choice from 0 to 10... 0 being not at all, 10 the maximum

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How attractive is the man you selected?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How close is he to your own definition of a "perfect looking man"?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How likely are you to buy a product that he is promoting?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Question-set 1 – Direct Effects

To design the communication for Alliance, we would like to know what you were feelings and thinking when you saw the previous pictures. Please answer the following questions based on your first impression after seeing the pictures.

	Not at all	A little bit	Somewhat	Very much	Extremely
I am happy	○	○	○	○	○
I feel attractive	○	○	○	○	○
I feel insecure with myself	○	○	○	○	○
I am irritated	○	○	○	○	○
I feel satisfied with the way my body looks right now	○	○	○	○	○
I feel as smart as others	○	○	○	○	○
I am excited	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with my weight	○	○	○	○	○
I feel pleased with myself	○	○	○	○	○
I am depressed	○	○	○	○	○
I feel good about myself	○	○	○	○	○
I feel inferior to others at this moment	○	○	○	○	○
I am inspired	○	○	○	○	○
I am pleased with my appearance right now	○	○	○	○	○
I feel concerned about the impression I am making	○	○	○	○	○
I am jealous	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with my muscle tone	○	○	○	○	○
I worry about whether I am regarded as a success or failure	○	○	○	○	○

Question-set 2 – Indirect Effects

Critics argue that advertisement showing extremely attractive people set impossible standards for beauty, which in turn can cause damage to people' self-esteem, distort their body perception and lower their mood. Imagine the men you just saw as media images shown in advertisement...

How much influence do you think these types of media images have on **your** perception of...

	Not at all influenced	2	3	4	5	6	Highly influenced
your Self-Esteem?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
your Body Perception?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
your Mood?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
the perfect looking man?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How much influence do you think these types of media images have on **your 3 closest male friends'** perception of...

	Not at all influenced	2	3	4	5	6	Highly influenced
their Self-Esteem?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
their Body Perception?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
their Mood?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
the perfect looking man?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How much influence do you think these types of media images have on **your 3 closest female friends'** perception of...

	Not at all influenced	2	3	4	5	6	Highly influenced
their Self-Esteem?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
their Body Perception?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
their Mood?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
the perfect looking man?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How much influence do you think these types of media images have on **other males'** perception of...

	Not at all influenced	2	3	4	5	6	Highly influenced
their Self-Esteem?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
their Body Perception?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
their Mood?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
the perfect looking man?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How much influence do you think these types of media images have on **other females'** perception of...

	Not at all influenced	2	3	4	5	6	Highly influenced
their Self-Esteem?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
their Body Perception?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
their Mood?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
the perfect looking man?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

To match you preferences for product assortment and communication design, we would like to know a little more about you. Again, all your answers are anonymous.

What is your gender?

Male ○   Female ○

How old are you?

Are you a Swedish citizen?

Yes ○   No ○

How tall are you? (Please write in meters the following way: X.XX, for instance 1.78)

How often do you exercise?

○ Never

○ Less than Once a Month

○ Once a Month

○ 2-3 Times a Month

○ Once a Week

○ 2-3 Times a Week

○ Daily

Do you subscribe to any fashion/beauty magazines?

Yes	No
○	○

What is your weight? (Please specify in kilograms)

If you have any additional comments, please write them here!

Thank you very much for taking part in this research!

For your information, this survey is actually part of of a thesis project, and therefore a simulation (the brand Alliance do not exist). The purpose of our research is to examine how idealized media images affect consumers.

To receive a beauty/grooming product (approximate retail value of 100 SEK) to your home please email the message below to 5 Swedish friends (men or women). Include this address as a copy in the same email: getbeautyproduct@ymail.com.

As soon as we have received your email we will contact you to find out where you want us to send the product (within Sweden). Your contact details will not be used for any other purpose. We will give products to the first 50 respondents. Thereafter, this survey will be inactivated.

Message to send:
"Hej! Jag har just hjälp två Handelsstudenter med en enkätundersökning och som tack för hjälpen fick jag en grooming/skönhetsprodukt. Om du också vill göra enkäten och få en produkt kopiera följande länk i en ny flik: https://hhs.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_1Bm2wdPTXm5BgNK. Det tar bara fem minuter!"

Click below to save your answers.

Appendix D – Age Frequencies (Questionnaire 2)

Age

MALE		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	22	4	5,3	5,3	5,3
	23	8	10,5	10,5	15,8
	24	16	21,1	21,1	36,8
	25	14	18,4	18,4	55,3
	26	3	3,9	3,9	59,2
	27	4	5,3	5,3	64,5
	28	3	3,9	3,9	68,4
	29	1	1,3	1,3	69,7
	33	1	1,3	1,3	71,1
	34	2	2,6	2,6	73,7
	35	1	1,3	1,3	75,0
	36	1	1,3	1,3	76,3
	39	1	1,3	1,3	77,6
	41	2	2,6	2,6	80,3
	44	1	1,3	1,3	81,6
	45	2	2,6	2,6	84,2
	47	1	1,3	1,3	85,5
	49	1	1,3	1,3	86,8
	50	1	1,3	1,3	88,2
	53	1	1,3	1,3	89,5
	54	1	1,3	1,3	90,8
	58	1	1,3	1,3	92,1
	59	1	1,3	1,3	93,4
	60	2	2,6	2,6	96,1
	63	1	1,3	1,3	97,4
	65	1	1,3	1,3	98,7
	69	1	1,3	1,3	100,0
	Total	76	100,0	100,0	

Age

FEMALE		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	18	1	1,1	1,1	1,1
	20	1	1,1	1,1	2,3
	21	2	2,3	2,3	4,6
	22	3	3,4	3,4	8,0
	23	8	9,2	9,2	17,2
	24	26	29,9	29,9	47,1
	25	15	17,2	17,2	64,4
	26	3	3,4	3,4	67,8
	27	1	1,1	1,1	69,0
	28	1	1,1	1,1	70,1
	30	1	1,1	1,1	71,3
	31	1	1,1	1,1	72,4
	33	1	1,1	1,1	73,6
	34	1	1,1	1,1	74,7
Valid	36	1	1,1	1,1	75,9
	39	2	2,3	2,3	78,2
	40	1	1,1	1,1	79,3
	41	1	1,1	1,1	80,5
	42	1	1,1	1,1	81,6
	45	1	1,1	1,1	82,8
	46	1	1,1	1,1	83,9
	48	5	5,7	5,7	89,7
	51	2	2,3	2,3	92,0
	52	1	1,1	1,1	93,1
	53	1	1,1	1,1	94,3
	55	3	3,4	3,4	97,7
	63	1	1,1	1,1	98,9
	71	1	1,1	1,1	100,0
	Total	87	100,0	100,0	

Appendix E – Correlations between the Body Satisfaction, Self-Esteem and Emotion

Correlations Ideal Stimuli *(Men)*		Emotion	Body Satisfaction	Self-Esteem
Emotion	r	1	0.07	-0.09
	p		np	np
Body Satisfaction	r	0.07	1	0.65
	p	np		0.00*
Self-Esteem	r	-0.09	0.65	1
	p	np	0.00*	

Note: Cell entries are are r and p values *$p < 0.05$

Correlations Ideal Stimuli *(Women)*		Emotion	Body Satisfaction	Self-Esteem
Emotion	r	1	0.29	0.28
	p		0.02*	0.03*
Body Satisfaction	r	0.29	1	0.75
	p	0.02*		0.00*
Self-Esteem	r	0.28	0.75	1
	p	0.02*	0.00*	

Note: Cell entries are are r and p values *$p < 0.05$

Correlations Neutral Stimuli *(Men)*		Emotion	Body Satisfaction	Self-Esteem
Emotion	r	1	0.30	0.36
	p		0.03*	0.02*
Body Satisfaction	r	0.30	1	0.70
	p	0.03*		0.00*
Self-Esteem	r	0.36	0.70	1
	p	0.02*	0.00*	

Note: Cell entries are are r and p values *$p < 0.05$

Correlations Neutral Stimuli *(Women)*		Emotion	Body Satisfaction	Self-Esteem
Emotion	r	1	0.49	0.53
	p		0.00*	0.00*
Body Satisfaction	r	0.49	1	0.82
	p	0.00*		0.00*
Self-Esteem	r	0.53	0.82	1
	p	0.00*	0.00*	

Note: Cell entries are are r and p values *$p < 0.05$

Appendix F – Believed Influence of Idealized Media Images

Measure: *Believed Influence (Men)*	Ideal Stimuli	Neutral Stimuli	t	df	P
Body Satisfaction	3.60	3.22	1.01	76	np
Self-Esteem	2.57	3.25	-1.84	76	0.03*
Emotion	2.40	3.06	-1.74	76	0.04*

Note: Cell entries are mean differences *p* < 0.05

Measure: *Believed Influence (women)*	Ideal Stimuli	Neutral Stimuli	t	df	P
Body Satisfaction	4.06	3.21	1.96	85	0.02*
Self-Esteem	3.20	2.95	0.60	85	np
Emotion	3.73	2.63	2.93	85	0.00*

Note: Cell entries are mean differences *p* < 0.05

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