

WHO'S THERE?

- A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF THE SOCIAL CONTEXT ON ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS -

In this thesis the impact of the social context on advertising effectiveness is investigated. This was done by comparing how two different social contexts affected people's perceptions of an advertisement. The contexts were based on reference group theory.

A quantitative laboratory experiment was conducted. The respondents, 201 bachelor students, were exposed to a billboard advertisement where a passive group of people, either from their own group (membership group) or from a group that they did not want to be associated with (dissociative group), was present.

Two kinds of symbolic products were exposed in advertisements with two purposes, either selling or image building. The advertising effectiveness was evaluated through the AIDA-model.

The results revealed that the advertising effectiveness was significantly lower for people exposed to an advertisement together with a dissociative group. Whether or not a membership group was present did not affect the effectiveness of the advertisement. The negative impact of a dissociative group was very large for advertisements with bad ad-brand fit.

Key words: Dissociative groups, Third-person effect, Social context, Symbolic consumption, Advertising effectiveness

Authors:
Frida Fogström 21700
Malin Sundqvist 21124

Discussants:
Eleanor Lichtenstein 21316
Emelie Söderström 20792

Tutors:
Sara Rosengren
John Karsberg

Examiner:
Emre Yildiz

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE MARKETING MANAGER'S WORST NIGHTMARE

Are all consumers always welcome? That question was the start of what would become one semester of research. As products have more than just a functional use (Belk 1988), there has been a shift in marketing practice, from the single focus on large sales figures to actively preventing groups of people from buying.

Many theories seek to explain the drivers behind consumers' purchasing behavior. Two examples are that they fulfill important psychological and social needs (Elliott & Wattanasuwan 1998) and that they are a way for consumers to communicate they want to be perceived and what groups they align themselves with (Escalas & Bettman 2003, 2005). This gives brands a symbolic function, as they help people define who they are (Belk 1988).

The symbolic function of the brand can be utilized by associating the brand to something or someone that possesses the characteristics the brand wants to represent. This is a reason for why celebrity endorsement is one of the most popular forms of marketing. The meanings and values related to the celebrity transfer to the brand, and when buying the brand the consumers can in turn link themselves to the celebrity (Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta 2010).

Unfortunately, brands can have links to celebrities that their customers do not want to be linked to. For instance, by using an androgynous artist in their Chinese TV-advertisement, Coca-Cola experienced a sales-drop caused by the fact that Chinese men did not want to be related to that artist (Wei & Yu 2012).

The companies themselves create the advertisements, but it is hard for them to control links they themselves have not decided to make. Some brands are so afraid of being associated with the wrong celebrities, that they take action against them wearing the brand. French fashion brand Lacoste for example, begged the Norwegian police to ban the mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik from wearing Lacoste to court (Quinn 2011). The

American fashion brand Abercrombie & Fitch went even further and actually paid a reality-show star to stop wearing their brand (Herrmann 2011).

Companies take action both to be associated with the right famous people, but also to dissociate themselves from the wrong famous people. The companies can therefore be assumed to be aware of the importance of being associated with the right people. They take action to reduce associations that can prevent potential customers from purchasing the products of the brand. But these actions regard celebrities; what about all non-famous, anonymous people out there? Do they also affect other people's willingness to be connected to a brand and if so; how?

Interesting questions stemming from that discussion can be: How closely related to a brand must a person be to influence other people's perception of the brand? Do people get affected only by celebrities or do they get affected by regular non-famous people too? Do people have to wear the products, talk about them, or is it enough that they are just visible near them in order to affect others? All of these questions are of interest, but the purpose¹ of the thesis cannot be defined until an overview of previous research in the field of social contexts has been made.

1.2 BACKGROUND

As a background of the study, previous work that touches upon the effects of the social context is presented. This is done in order to get an overview of what is already known so that potential gaps in the current body of knowledge can be found.

The impact of the social context in a marketing sense has previously been studied for different scenarios, such as responses to TV advertising (Jayasinghe & Ritson 2012), consumption (Ratner & Kahn 2002, Ariely & Levav 2000, Argo et al. 2005), spending (Kurt et al. 2011, Dahl et al. 2001), experiences (Ramanathan & McGill 2007) and advertising effectiveness (Puntoni & Tavassoli 2007). Both interactive and non-interactive contexts have been investigated (Jayasinghe & Ritson 2012, Puntoni & Tavassoli 2007). The

¹ See section 1.4

presence of others has not only been analyzed in the offline world but also in the online world (Naylor et al. 2012).

Many researchers have discussed how the presence of other people affects consumption. In an article from 2002, Ratner et al. investigated the effect that other people have on private- compared to public consumption. She proved that people consume with a greater variety when the consumption is public and if variety is favored by the people in their surroundings. The consumption choices of a person are found to be affected by other group members' choices (Ariely & Levav 2000) and (Burnkrant & Cousineau 1975).

Argo et al. (2005) discussed the impact of non-interactive social presence on consumers' emotions and self-presentation behavior. They found that social size (the number of people present) and presence of non-interactive others influence purchase behavior. Dahl et al. (2001) showed that the embarrassment associated with embarrassing product purchases increase with social presence. Their study was set in a retail setting and showed that both real and imagined social presence can generate feelings of embarrassment (Dahl et al. 2001).

Ramanathan and McGill (2007) examined non-verbal communication and its effect on perceptions of experiences. The authors claimed that the sharing of an experience may lead to a sense of connectedness and that will, in turn; affect the evaluation of the experience. They showed that when an experience is consumed jointly, the evaluation is more similar to the others' than if the experience was consumed separately.

Kurt et al. (2011) has contributed to the impression management field, through explaining how the presence of a friend affects a consumer's spending. The largest effect of social presence is shown for men, who spend significantly more money when accompanied by a friend than they do when they shop alone. This effect is not seen for women in general. When introducing the variable of high and low self-monitoring, however, it was shown that women with high self-monitoring spend significantly less money when a friend is present.

In the case of advertisements, Jayasinghe and Ritson (2012) investigated how social interaction, viewing space, media technology use and time affect the consumers' responses

to TV advertising. Puntoni and Tavassoli (2007) explored the effect of peoples' presence on advertising memory. They showed that the recall of socially advantageous words is stronger when another person is present, compared to neutral words and a setting where the respondent is alone.

Walker Naylor et al (2012) claimed that there are negative effects related to the exposure of the social media supporter base, if the supporters are dissimilar to the consumer. The exposure induces both less brand liking and a weaker purchase intention.

As showed in this background section, previous researchers on how the social context influences people have been made in several fields. Although there is not much done regarding how the composition of the social context, e.g. group affiliation, affects the consumers. This thesis will therefore be focusing on analyzing how much and in what situations consumers are affected by others depending on what they represent.

1.3 PROBLEMATIZATION

A marketing message is seldom experienced alone, in a vacuum. The effects of the social presence have been investigated for purchase behaviors, for example in retail settings (Argo et al. 2005) but it has seldom been examined in an advertising setting. However, research has been made measuring the effect of other contexts on advertising effectiveness (De Pelsmacker et al. 2002, Zanjani et al. 2011). Even though the context where an advertisement is experienced is known to affect the effectiveness of the advertising message, very little research has been done in the field of the impact of the social context.

To further problematize the research area, the properties of the social context may affect the advertising effectiveness. In the field of social context research, the context is often not altered in the same experiment. The lack of comparisons between contexts can therefore be seen as a knowledge gap that has to be filled. Do different social contexts cause different effects on the advertising effectiveness?

Companies have already made use of the research regarding positive reference groups, through for example, celebrity endorsements, but negative reference groups have been proven to have an impact on consumer behavior as well (Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta

2010, Wei & Yu 2012). The attempts to end connections to less favorable celebrities have been noted by mass media during the past years, and have been seen as a rather unflattering crisis management action. These types of connections do clearly have a great impact on the brands, but what about different kinds of non-famous persons, the ones constituting the everyday social context? Alike the deliberate, or not, transfer of the celebrity's attributes to the brand, do the attributes of non-famous persons transfer to the brand as well?

The fact that also non-famous persons may affect the perceptions of a brand calls for an investigation of the matter. Though gaining an understanding of the effects of different kinds of social contexts on the advertising effectiveness, a deeper understanding of the advertising environment is gained. That may, for example, be of use in the advertising planning process of the communication channels.

1.4 PURPOSE

This thesis aims to provide an investigation of how the social context in which an advertisement is experienced impacts the perception of both the advertisement and the brand being advertised. It will be made clear if the social context is an aspect of importance to the advertising planning process. The effectiveness of advertisements in different social contexts will be measured, in order to capture potential changes in the consumers' perceptions. The main purpose of this thesis is: *To determine if and how much the social context properties affect advertising effectiveness.* This purpose is divided into two research questions:

1. Does the social context have an impact on advertisement effectiveness?
2. Does the purpose of the advertisement affect the impact that the social context has on advertising effectiveness?

1.5 EXPECTED KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTION

As described in the background section of this thesis; several different studies have proven that the social context affects peoples' perceptions and behavior. People think and act differently depending on the social context. They adapt their actions in relation to both the characteristics and actions of the other people present.

Companies have understood the importance of which famous people they are associated with and hence who they should include and exclude in their advertisements.

This thesis will contribute with knowledge about how people are affected by non-famous people when exposed to an advertisement. It will be made clear whether or not different social contexts affect people's perceptions of the advertisements themselves and of the brand of the product being advertised. This knowledge would benefit companies when they plan and execute their strategy.

1.6 DELIMITATIONS

Several delimitations have been made in order to fulfill the purpose of the thesis. By decreasing the scope, the results may become more telling. As there are numerous different theoretical frameworks regarding social context, not everyone can be included in the scope of this thesis. Hence, the theoretical framework of this thesis will be built around only three; reference group theory, the third-person effect and symbolic consumption².

The first delimitation is to define the reference groups based on university affiliation. Since both reference group and Third-person Effect literature often uses university affiliation when comparing groups, this choice made. Only one membership group and one dissociative group, chosen based on a pre-study, compared to delimit the scope of the investigation.

The second delimitation is that, in the manipulations, the groups present were passive. The active/passive distinction has been made in social context literature, and due to limited time and resources, only one of them could be tested. Since the theory regarding third-person effect is based on a passive third-person, this scope was chosen.

Thirdly, in the manipulation, the social context did only consist of people from either a membership group or a dissociative group in order to increase the manipulation effect.

The fourth delimitation regards the advertisements. The study only looked at symbolic products, as they are a way to shape the self-image and show group affiliation. The study

² The theoretical frameworks will be described in section 2 Theory and hypotheses

used two brands, chosen through a pre-study, and four advertisements, based on another pre-study. This procedure was chosen to get more generalizable results.

The fifth delimitation was that the study looked at two kinds of clothes, since clothes are proven to have more than a functional use.

In the manipulation, the advertisements were said to be shown on a billboard, to facilitate a credible social context.

The advertising effectiveness was measured with the AIDA³ model as a framework. The model was chosen since it is very basic and easy to grasp. The model will be further described in section 2.4.3.1, in the theory chapter.

Image-building advertisements were defined as soft-selling advertisements whereas selling advertisements were defined as hard-selling advertisements. The definitions were chosen with the guidance of Erik Modig, assistant professor at the Center for Consumer Marketing at Stockholm School of Economics.

1.7 DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

This thesis contains terms and expressions that the reader might be unfamiliar with. The following definitions are included to provide the necessary explanations and clarifications of the words critical for understanding this thesis. As the reader is expected to be familiar with basic marketing theory and terms, only words specific to the chosen theoretical delimitation are defined.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Social context | In this thesis, it is defined with regards to the people present, what they represent and how they act and think |
| Symbolic consumption | Consumers utilize the symbolic meaning of products to communicate information about some aspect of themselves to others (Levy 1999) |
| Reference group | “A reference group is any group to which a person relates his/her attitudes” (Hyman 1942) |

³ Attention, Interest, Desire and Action

Third-person effect The effect that occurs when people change their reactions to a mass communicated message based on how they perceive others will react to the communicated (Davison 1983).

Advertising types In this thesis, advertisements are categorized in terms of hard-sell and soft-sell advertisements. Hard-sell advertisements have a more direct approach to selling with focus on encouraging a quick purchase, while soft-sell advertisements focus on building brand image (Okazaki et al. 2010).

Advertising effectiveness Can be measured both in terms of the contribution to the company's profit and on what effects are created in the mind-set of the consumers (Srinivasan et al. 2010). In this thesis, it is evaluated with the AIDA-model. High scores on the four dimensions imply that the advertising is highly effective.

1.8 THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis is divided into five main sections; introduction, theory and hypotheses generation, method, results and analysis and discussion. The first section *Introduction* includes a short introduction to why the subject should be further analyzed, a short background of general research in the area of social context, how this thesis will contribute and the delimitations of the study. The second section, *Theory and Hypotheses generation*, includes a theoretical framework and previous research in the field and an explanation for the hypotheses generation. The third section, *Method*, presents the method used when conducting the research. The pre-studies, choice of manipulations and a description of the main study are also included. The fourth section, *Results and analysis*, presents the result and the corresponding analysis. The fifth and final section, *Discussion*, discusses the results based on the existing literature and presents some managerial implications, criticism of the study and suggestions of topics for further research.

2 THEORY AND HYPOTHESES GENERATION

Previous research indicates that the social context in which an advertisement is consumed, may affect people's perception of the advertisement itself and the product being advertised. This chapter will describe the theoretical framework and the previous research that this thesis is based on, followed by the hypotheses generation. In the first section, the reader will learn more about how the social context, in different ways, affects people's actions. Three theoretical frameworks, reference group theory, the third-person effect hypothesis and symbolic consumption, will be presented that will be used to investigate the field. Based on the theoretical frameworks chosen, the hypotheses will be generated.

First, the concept of *symbolic consumption* will be presented. The nature of the product itself can influence how people perceive it in different contexts. Some products are of a symbolic nature and are not only purchased for their functional use. The main reason for the purchase is to shape the self-image and to show membership of a social group. Depending on the context, the product's symbolic function may be changed and in turn, people's perception of it.

Secondly, *the reference group* theory is presented. People evaluate themselves and others based on their frame of reference. The concept can be analyzed for *in-group*, a person's own group, compared to *out-groups*, groups that a person is not part of, or for in-group compared with different kinds of out groups. In this thesis, the focus will be on the comparison between in-group and different kinds of out-groups. This choice is made since all out-groups are not perceived in the same manner. Three types of reference groups will be discussed in this thesis; membership groups (a person's own groups), aspirational groups (groups that a person aspires to be part of) and dissociative groups (groups that a person does not want to be associated with). This theoretical framework is important to include, since group affiliation affect purchase decisions.

Thirdly, *the Third-Person Effect* hypothesis (*TPE*) is described. The theory suggests that people, in general, believe that others are more affected by advertisements than themselves. This belief in turn makes people change their own behavior. The theory is

crucial to investigate, since people are more or less likely to change their behavior depending on who else is present when they are presented with a mass message.

Together, these three theoretical frameworks are described and used to generate hypotheses to achieve the purpose of the thesis.

2.1 SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION

"[...] relationships with objects are never two-way (person-thing), but always three-way (person-thing-person)." (Belk 1988, p. 147)

The theoretical framework of symbolic consumption was first described by Levy in 1959 (article reprinted by Levy in 1999). He suggested that consumers utilize the symbolic meaning of products to communicate information about some aspect of themselves. Grubb and Grathwohl (1967) discussed how the research of consumption has gone from studying the relationships between personality characteristics of the consumers and their purchasing behavior to studying the relationships between personality characteristics and product image. The product becomes a symbol of the customer's personality. The relationships between personality and product image are further strengthened when a person is highly involved (Grubb & Grathwohl 1967).

Belk (1988) increased the interest for the field by suggesting that the way people consume helps define their sense of who they are. He claimed that the relationship between possessions and the sense of self is important in order to understand consumer behavior. Belk (1988) defined the core self as a person's body, internal processes, ideas and experiences and the extended self as the persons, places and things to which the person feels attached, see Figure 1. The author meant that products and group identity is a part of the self. The possession as a part of the self is exemplified by the reactions if the possession is stolen or lost, the author claims. Another example that Belk (1988) referred to is the process where prisoners lose their belongings and through this their personal uniqueness. A new type of sense of belonging is slowly created within the group of interns through homogenous haircuts and clothes.

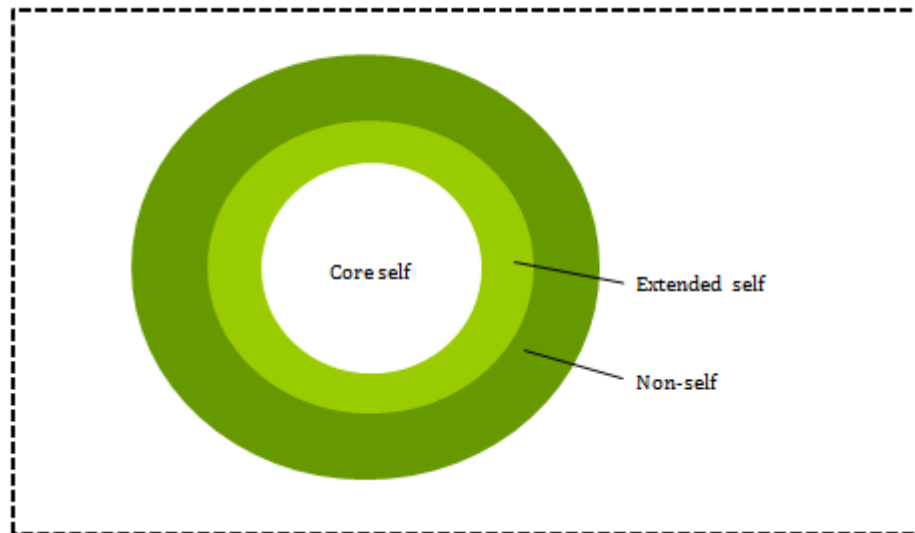


FIGURE 1: THE IDENTITY (AHUVIA 2005, P. 180)

In Figure 1, a gradual scale of the identity is shown. Where an item is positioned on the scale is very subjective and varies between people and levels of attachment (Ahuvia 2005). Belk's findings, that identity is central to consumption and that possessions are part of the identity, was confirmed in the study by Ahuvia (2005).

Belk (1988) described four stages of the functions of possessions in human development. The third stage is described as an adult who uses possessions to manage his/her identity. The author also discussed the multiple levels of the self, where social contexts are introduced, such as the family and the city being seen as a part of who we are.

Possessions can be used to extend the self, both symbolically and factually. Factually, when they are used for doing things that cannot be done without them. An example of that is a weapon, with which a person gets capacities that he/she would not have without it. Symbolically, when used to convince others of the properties of a person, such as a trophy. The author claimed that possessions can help people manipulate their possibilities to present themselves in another way (Belk 1988).

"The current study found that loved items were connected to the self both by expressing the self [...] and by transforming the self into some new desired form." (Ahuvia 2005, p. 180)

Dolich (1969) showed that the properties of favored brands are consistent with people's self-image. The author also said that there is a larger need of consistency between the brands and the self for publicly consumed products compared to privately consumed products. The author exemplified it with the greater reference group influence on beer choices compared to the choices of bar soap.

The word love is often used when describing consumption-related emotion (Ahuvia 2005). Loved people and possessions have a strong influence on who a person is (Ahuvia 2005). The fact that some products represent the self, both to one-self and to others, is claimed to be a primary driving force of consumption (Ahuvia 2005).

2.1.1 SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

"If a symbol is to convey meaning it must be identified by a group with which the individual is associated [...]" (Grubb & Grathwohl 1967, p. 24)

Grubb and Grathwohl (1967) claimed that consumers adapt their behavior to gain positive reactions from significant references in their surroundings. The author said that goods can be seen as symbols used as a form of communication between a person and his/her significant references.

The arrow (a), in Figure 2, is the intrinsic value of a purchase, where the consumer experiences that the product's image is consistent with his/her own image. When the consumer shows the product to his/her significant references, the extrinsic value is created, expressed by arrows (b) and (c). The reactions by the significant references, symbolized by arrow (d), hopefully express the consistency between the product and the customer and through that, enhance the self-concept of the consumer (Grubb & Grathwohl 1967).

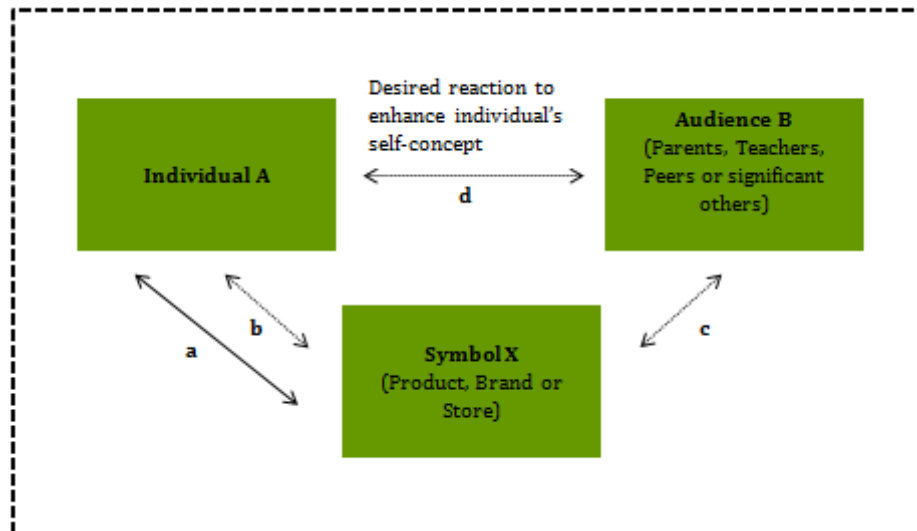


FIGURE 2: THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CONSUMPTION OF GOODS AS SYMBOLS TO THE SELF-CONCEPT
(GRUBB & GRATHWOHL 1967, P. 25)

"The extended self operates not only on an individual level, but also on a collective level involving family, group, subcultural, and national identities." (Belk 1988, p. 160)

Possessions can both distinguish one-self from others and indicate group identity and belongingness to a group. Informal "uniforms" exist for social groups such as yuppies and preppies (Belk 1988).

"[...] all of these constructs share a focus on the way people use consumption to maintain their sense of identity through time and define themselves in relationship to other people" (Ahuvia 2005, p. 171)

Symbolic consumption may be used to define group affiliation. However, non-consumption in order to not be associated with certain groups is another implication of symbolic products, this phenomenon is described further in section 2.2.1.

2.2 REFERENCE GROUPS

The term reference group was introduced in the 1940s by the sociologist Herbert H. Hyman and has since then been developed in a number of research fields such as sociology, psychology and marketing (Hyman 1942, Hyman 1960, Newcomb 1948, Kelley 1952). According to Hyman, a reference group is any group to which a person relates his/her attitudes.

Newcomb (1948) made the distinction between membership groups and more aspirational reference groups. The membership group is a group which a person perceives himself to be a member of, and the aspirational group is a group a person use as a role model, and tries to adapt and adjust to. Reference groups can also be different based on the way they are perceived. Positive reference groups are groups people want to be seen as members of and negative reference groups are groups people do not want to be seen as members of (Newcomb 1948, Kelley 1952).

Reference groups have two main functions, a normative function and a comparison function (Kelley 1952). The two functions are interconnected since one group's attitude can be used as a comparison point *since* the group has a normative function (Kelley 1952).

The normative function becomes evident when people align their own attitude and behavior in relation to what they believe is the general attitude of the reference group. This is done in order to gain acceptance or distinguish oneself from the group (Newcomb 1948, Kelley 1952).

The comparison function becomes evident when people use reference groups as reference points when evaluating both themselves and others (Hyman 1942, Kelley 1952). People's perceptions are therefore highly dependent on their reference groups. Models, who evaluate their own beauty by comparing themselves to other models, are likely to perceive themselves differently compared to if they would have evaluated their beauty by comparing themselves to non-models (Kelley 1952).

2.2.1 NEGATIVE REFERENCE GROUPS

The role of a group as a negative point of reference was introduced by Newcomb in 1948. The field of research concerning negative reference groups has developed into two schools of thought. The first school of thought regards the concept of the *undesired-self*, which was introduced by Ogilvie (1987). In his research, Ogilvie (1987) discusses people's perceptions of themselves in different settings; for example as a sister or a mother, an ideal and an undesired self. The undesired self is defined as a person's least desired identity. In Carver et al. (1999) the concept is referred to as the *feared self*.

The second school of thought regards *avoidance* or *dissociative groups*. People will actively try to avoid being associated with such groups by not purchasing, owning or using products or activities that are perceived to be related to them (Englis & Solomon 1995). Even though researchers from the two schools of thought analyze the concepts from different perspectives, their research has many similarities. When Englis and Solomon (1995) introduced their concept of avoidance groups, they discuss Ogilvie's (1987) work regarding undesired self as interchangeable to their own expression. Banister and Hogg (2004) refer to both the concept of undesired self and avoidance group in her work in the field of negative symbolic consumption.

Before Ogilvie (1987) introduced the concept of undesired-self, the researchers emphasized the relationship between the real self and the ideal self, when trying to explain people's actions. Ogilvie et al. (1987) tested whether the ideal self or the undesired self was of greater importance when determining people's life satisfaction. The author concluded that the distance between the undesired- and real-self had a greater impact on life satisfaction than the distance between the ideal- and the real-self.

More recent research is in line with Ogilvie's (1987) findings and confirms the important role of the undesired self in evaluating life satisfaction. Carver et al. 1999 compared the predictive power of the concepts he called feared self and ideal self to the *real self*. He found correlations for both the relation between feared self and real self and between ideal self and real self. Carver concluded that feared self was the strongest predictor when the feared

self was nearby. Similar results based on the undesired self concept were reported by Heppen and Ogilvie (2003).

"[...] consumers are more likely to diverge from majorities, or members of other social groups, in product domains that are seen as symbolic of identity (e.g., music or hairstyles, rather than backpacks or stereos)" (Berger & Heath 2007, p. 121)

The relationship between the real self and the desired self has thoroughly been investigated in the field of symbolic consumption, while the relationship between the ought self and the undesired self is still relatively unexplored. The impact of negative symbolic consumption on consumer behavior can therefore not yet be fully understood (Hogg & Banister 2001). In their article from 2001 Hogg and Banister argued that people avoid certain products in order to avoid being associated with undesired people. People can, by developing a distaste of products that are associated with undesired groups, define themselves (Hogg & Banister 2001).

In their study from 2008 Bosnjak and Brand show that the unwillingness to be associated with undesired stereotypical images, contributes much more to the explanation of consumption-related attitudes, compared to other measurements used in the symbolic consumption field. The authors concluded that avoiding negative stereotypical images is of great importance in the early stages of the decision making process.

Englis and Solomon (1995) argued that avoidance groups have a highly significant influence on consumption-related decisions. The negative view of the avoidance group could lead to consumers avoiding purchases, owning and using products or activities, because of a reluctance to be identified with an avoidance group (Englis & Solomon 1995).

White and Dahl's (2007) research focuses on what they call the *dissociative reference group*. That is an out-group that individuals both are unable to identify themselves with and wish not to be associated with. The authors show that it is necessary to treat dissociative reference groups differently from general out-groups. General out-groups are only perceived as different while dissociative out-groups are perceived both different and negative. People will actively try to avoid being associated with dissociative out-groups,

something that they do not necessarily do with general out-groups. White and Dahl's (2007) study presents that consumers show a greater tendency to avoid products associated with dissociative reference groups than with general out-groups. They also showed that brands of strong symbolic nature are more negatively evaluated if the brand is associated with a dissociative reference group compared to brands of weak symbolic nature. The self-brand connection is also more easily affected for more symbolic than less symbolic brands. White & Dahl's (2007) findings imply that people are both more easily influenced and more affected by dissociative groups when in contact with symbolic brands. (White & Dahl 2007) suggests that their findings implicate that dissociative reference groups can be used in marketing communications. A computer company can for example benefit by comparing their product to a brand producing an old and outdated alternative.

As described in the introduction of this thesis, the involvement of a dissociative person in advertising has been proven to affect the sales of the product being advertised. Coca-Cola's sales drop in China when they launched a national television commercial featuring a famous pop singer with androgynous features is an example of this (DU et al. 2009). Their finding implies that a company, by associating a person to a brand, can make the target group stop consuming that product because they want to dissociate themselves from that person.

As there are no clear distinctions between the concepts of undesired self/feared self and avoidance groups/dissociative groups, the term dissociative group will from now on be used to describe the phenomena in this thesis. The related terms membership group and aspirational group will also be used.

2.3 GROUPS IN MASS COMMUNICATION - THE THIRD-PERSON EFFECT

The third-person effect (TPE) was introduced in 1983 by sociologist W. Phillips Davison. The effect occurs when people exposed to mass communication believe that the communicated message will have greater impact on others than on themselves. As a result of this assumption, they take action themselves. The TPE is the effect that occurs when people change their reactions to a mass communicated message based on how they perceive others will react to the communication. The term also refers to the third-person

from the communicator's or advertiser's point of view; the ones who take action based on what they think others will do. The communicator can use this knowledge and manipulate the third-person's actions by communicating a message that seems to be aimed at someone else (Davison 1983).

Early research assumed that the TPE was universal and occurred with equal strength every time individuals were asked about media effects on others and themselves. More recent research has shown that the strength of the TPE is dependent on several factors, such as the message communicated and traits related to both the sender and receiver (Perloff 2002).

Researchers have investigated whether the TPE occurs because people tend to overestimate media's effect on others or because they underestimate media's effect on themselves (Johansson 2000). Some studies have shown that TPE occurs as an effect of people overestimating media's effect on others (Cohen et al. 1988, Gunther & Storey 2003, Price & Li-Ning Huang 1997) and other studies have shown that the TPE is an effect of people underestimating media's effect on themselves (Cohen et al. 1988, Gunther & Thorson 1992). According to Price and Li-Ning Huang (1997), the reason why the effect occurs is dependent on situation.

2.3.1 THE SENDER

Perloff (1993) argued that the TPE occurs because from an early age, people have learned that the media is powerful and therefore they perceive it to have a great influence on others (Perloff 1993, Brosius & Engel 1996).

The credibility of the sender of the message has also been used as an explanatory factor for TPE. A study conducted by Cohen et al. (1988) showed that TPE was more likely to occur if the sender was non-credible than credible. The level of personal engagement in a topic is another factor that has significant importance for the rise of TPE (Price & Li-Ning Huang 1997, Driscoll & Salwen 1997).

2.3.2 THE RECEIVER

Demographic factors, like gender or age, have not been proven to have an effect on the TPE (Salwen & Dupagne 1999). Nonetheless, there are some properties linked to the receiver that influence the TPE. The influence of the level of education is much debated since researchers have found evidence both for and against an effect on the TPE (Perloff 2002). Self-perceived knowledge and expertise have however been proven to have an impact on the TPE (Driscoll & Salwen 1997, Peiser & Peter 2000). According to Perloff (2002) this implies that subjective opinions have a greater explanatory power than exogenous factors, such as level of education, on TPE. Self-perceived knowledge is connected to self-enhancement, which could indicate that self-enhancement is one of the underlying reasons for TPE (Perloff 2002).

2.4 HYPOTHESES GENERATION

2.4.1 GROUP INFLUENCE

Both the social presence (Ratner & Kahn 2002, Ariely & Levav 2000, Argo et al. 2005) and normative reference groups (Argo et al. 2005, Burnkrant & Cousineau 1975, Englis & Solomon 1995, Hogg & Banister 2001, Bearden & Etzel 1982, Murali et al. 2005, Dholakia & Talukdar 2004, Spangenberg & Sprott 2006, Newcomb 1948, Kelley 1952) have been shown to affect purchase behavior. Englis & Solomon (1995) also show that persons will neither own nor use products related to dissociative groups. Reference groups have also been proven to affect brand preferences (Stafford 1966) and perceptions of product quality (Pincus, Waters 1977).

For products and brands of a symbolic nature, the reference groups' influence is even stronger (Escalas & Bettman 2005, Berger & Heath 2007, White & Dahl 2007). The self-brand connection are more easily affected for symbolic than less symbolic brands (White & Dahl 2007).

Bosnjak & Brand (2008) showed that the unwillingness to be associated with undesired stereotypical images has greater influence on consumption-related attitudes compared to other measurements used in the symbolic consumption field. The presence of another person has also been proven to affect advertising memory (Puntoni, Tavassoli 2007).

Carver et al. (1999) and Heppen & Ogilvie (2003) have found that the feared self has strongest predictive power when it is perceived as nearby.

2.4.2 GROUP INFLUENCE IN ADVERTISEMENTS

Some properties of the third-person influence the TPE. The social distance between the investigated group and the third-person is a factor that has been proven to have an effect on TPE in several studies. The greater the social distance, the larger the TPE (Cohen et al. 1988, Severin & Tankard 2000). The reason for why social distance increases the TPE is explained to be that distant others often are perceived to be part of a negatively valued peer group, (Eveland et al. 1999, Perloff 1999). All of the above indicates that the presence of a dissociative reference group can affect advertising effectiveness. Because of this, that area is investigated to find proper measures that can capture the effects.

2.4.3 ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS

Advertising can be seen as expenditures made in order to increase a company's profit, either by increasing sales or by strengthening the brand image (Beard 2004). The trend towards greater accountability has increased the need for marketing metrics as the marketing managers must be able to justify their marketing expenditures (Van Heerde et al. 2013, Verhoef & Leeflang 2009). The effectiveness of an advertisement can be measured both in terms of the contribution to the company's profit and on what effects are created in the mind-set of the consumers (Srinivasan et al. 2010).

2.4.3.1 The AIDA model

In this thesis, the advertising effectiveness is measured in terms of mind-set effects. This method was chosen since the study was conducted as an experiment and thus had no connection to the investigated companies' profit. The AIDA-model was chosen as a tool for measuring the effects that the advertisements had on the respondents' mind-sets. This since the AIDA-model is one of the classic Hierarchy-of-effects models, according to (Strong 1925) first described by St Elmo Lewis in 1898. The model is useful for its purpose in this thesis since it captures both attitudinal (attention, desire) and non-attitudinal (interest, action tendencies) consequences of advertising (Cramphorn 2006, Machieit et al. 1993).

2.4.3.1.1 Attention

The attention dimension of the AIDA model can be defined as the enjoyment of the ad, the ad feelings (Cramphorn 2006). This dimension is important to capture as the perceptions of the ad affect the third-person effect (Gunther & Thorson 1992, Hoorens & Ruiter 1996, White 1997, Duck & Terry 1995). It is also proven that, when consumers are asked about their attitudes, the consumers' reference groups affect their responses (Crede et al. 2010).

H1: *The attention towards the advertisements is affected by the social context*

a) *The attention towards the advertisements is more negative if a dissociative group is present.*

b) *The attention towards the advertisements is more positive if a membership group is present.*

2.4.3.1.2 Interest

In mature brand advertising, brand interest is an important measure of advertising effectiveness. This because customers may get bored by the brand, and through stimulating the interest, a purchase is more likely to happen (Machieit et al. 1993).

H2: *The brand interest is affected by the social context*

a) *The brand interest is lower if a dissociative group is present.*

b) *The brand interest is higher if a membership group is present.*

2.4.3.1.3 Desire

The desire dimension of the AIDA model can be defined as the brand feelings, that a customer can imagine him-/herself using the brand, that it is relevant and that he/she wants to try it (Cramphorn 2006). The measure is proven to have a strong relation to purchase intention (Cramphorn 2006). Brands used by in-groups are proven to build stronger connections to the self than brands used by out-groups (Escalas & Bettman 2005).

H3: *The desire is affected by the social context*

a) *The desire is lower if a dissociative group is present.*

b) *The desire is higher if a membership group is present.*

2.4.3.1.4 Action

As actual action cannot be measured in a one-time experiment, action intentions are used to capture the action aspect of the AIDA model. Action intentions are not a guarantee of behavior, but the two are positively correlated (Söderlund & Öhman 2003).

As stated in the previous sections, the reference group influence on actions is very strong. This together with the fact that the attitude towards an object and attitudes towards an act do not necessarily have to be correlated, make it important to capture not only the attitudes towards the brands and the advertisements but also the action intentions (Söderlund 2005).

H4: *The action intention is affected by the social context*

a) *The action intention is lower if a dissociative group is present.*

b) *The action intention is higher if a membership group is present.*

2.4.4 REFERENCE GROUPS AND ADVERTISING

2.4.4.1 The advertisement and symbolic products

Ziems (2004) described the motives of buying a symbolic product as something else than just utility, there are deeper, psychological motives. Thus, advertisements with different purposes could have different effects. An advertisement with a selling objective that enhances the utilities of the product may be less effective compared to an image building advertisement that enhances the motives of the self-image. Mehta (1999) claimed that the consistency between self-image and perceived brand image is an important exploratory variable for purchase intention. Since the brands chosen are perceived positively by the

respondents, the advertisement enhancing the brand and thus the self-image should be more effective.

2.4.4.2 The advertisement and the groups

The TPE is affected by the content of an advertisement. For example, the desirability of the content of an advertisement is said to affect the TPE in two ways. If the message communicated is believed to reflect negatively on the self, the perceived effect on others is large (Perloff 1999). If the message on the other hand is regarded as socially desirable, Hoorens and Ruiters (1996) argue that people will believe that they are more affected by the message than others. If the message communicated has a positive emotional content (Gunther & Thorson 1992), is communicated with strong arguments (White 1997) or if the ad itself is of high quality (Duck & Terry 1995) people also believe that they will be more affected than others. This phenomenon is called the *Reversed Third-Person Effect* and was introduced by Perloff (1993).

The properties of the products used in the study, as well as the change in TPE depending on the perceptions of the advertisement, motivate another factor of the study. To introduce advertisements with different purposes may reinforce or dilute the effects of the properties of the social context.

H5: *The attention is affected by an interaction between the social context and the purpose of the advertisement.*

H6: *The brand interest is affected by an interaction between the social context and the purpose of the advertisement.*

H7: *The desire is affected by an interaction between the social context and the purpose of the advertisement.*

H8: *The action intention is affected by an interaction between the social context and the purpose of the advertisement.*

3 METHOD

This chapter will contain a description of the research methods used in this thesis. The design of the research and scientific approach together with a description of the method of the study including pre-studies will be given. Furthermore, a motivation of the selection of variables and measures is included. The chapter ends with a discussion of the validity and reliability of the thesis.

3.1 SCIENTIFIC APPROACH AND OVERALL RESEARCH DESIGN

The experiment conducted was based on the theoretical frameworks and previous research presented in section 2. The theory was used to generate the hypotheses which, in turn, were used to evaluate the theory empirically. This deductive approach influenced the choice of a quantitative method (Bryman & Bell 2007).

An experimental design was chosen, since that approach tends to bring strong internal validity. The treatments of the respondents were similar except for the manipulated factors. This type of procedure minimizes the differences and thus makes the results comparable between the groups (Söderlund 2010). The study was a laboratory experiment which was conducted in an auditorium setting (Bryman & Bell 2007, Söderlund 2010). The respondents were presented with different scenarios and thereafter asked to answer questions. As their reactions were measured just after the exposure, the results have a high probability to be causal (Bryman & Bell 2007, Söderlund 2010).

The experiment was designed as a paper-and-pencil survey, the predominant way of measuring psychological reactions (Söderlund 2010). Since not only an actual but also an imagined social presence has been proven to have an effect on people's feelings (Dahl et al. 2001), the method chosen was suitable for the investigated topic.

The experiment was designed with a post-test-only method and the respondents were randomly assigned to either one of eight treatment groups or to one of four control groups, to get as homogenous groups as possible. The control groups were used to secure that the treatments were responsible for creating the observed effects and thus strengthen the causality (Bryman & Bell 2007).

3.2 PREPARATORY WORK

Four pre-studies were conducted to control the manipulations that were later used in the main study (Söderlund 2010). The manipulations had to be perceived as intended; otherwise it would not be possible to analyze their potential effects. The respondents should feel as a part of their membership group and wish to be associated with it (Newcomb 1948). They should also perceive their dissociative out-group negatively, and wish not to be associated with it (Englis & Solomon 1997). The products shown in the experiment must have symbolic functions to the respondents and their brands must give the desirable associations (Belk 1988). Finally, the two types of commercials must be perceived as clearly different in terms of their purpose (Okazaki et al. 2010). With this in mind, a significance level of five percent was chosen for the pre-tests. A relatively low significance level reduces the risk of making both type 1 and type 2 errors (Newbold et al. 2007).

3.2.1 PRE-STUDY 1: REFERENCE GROUPS

The purpose of the first pre-study was to define the reference groups. Since Hyman (1942) describes the reference groups as subjective, constructed by the person rather than by outside beholders, the perceptions of the respondents had to be understood in order to find the reference groups.

Two different procedures were discussed and evaluated regarding how to choose the respondents for the quantitative study. The respondents could either come from a large but homogenous group with similar perceptions both about themselves and about others. Based on their attitudes, they can be given the same questionnaire. The other option evaluated was to choose respondents randomly from a heterogeneous group. Because their beliefs and attitudes cannot be assumed to be alike, all respondents must with that procedure be given a tailor-made questionnaire.

The results generated from the first procedure are hard to generalize for people outside the investigated group. On the other hand, the results are comparatively easy to analyze. The results generated from the second procedure are generalizable. The second procedure is however both harder to execute and to correctly analyze, since all respondents must be

analyzed one by one. In this thesis, the risk of interpreting the results wrongly was considered the largest and the respondents were therefore chosen from a homogenous group. This decision regarding the selection of respondents was taken in accordance with Dr. Sara Rosengren, senior research fellow and John Karsberg, Ph.D. student, both at Center for Consumer Marketing at Stockholm School of Economics

The respondents in the pre-study were all bachelor students enrolled at the same university, which both internally and externally can be seen as a group. This selection was made since a student's university belonging is proven to be an important part of his or her self-image (LeBoeuf et al. 2010) and since several previous studies in the field of TPE research have used university belonging to represent the respondents in-group (Cohen et al. 1988).

The pre-study controlled for the students' perception of their own university and for a number of other different universities. (White & Dahl 2007) have shown that all out-groups are not perceived alike and thus affect people differently. This made it important to not only test how much the students affiliate themselves with other universities but also to test their perceptions of the universities.

Universities in the same city as the respondents own university was selected. Because of the relatively short distance between the universities, the physical distance itself was not likely to influence the respondents' perceptions of the universities. Universities with ≥ 500 students, found in (Larsson 2012) report, were included in the pre-study. The pre-study came to include eleven universities, with different orientations.

The questionnaire was designed to measure sense of affiliation with the universities and the perceptions of them. Statements based on reference group theory, like White et. al 2012, was used to define membership groups, out groups and dissociative groups.

Five reference group statements were measured on a seven-point scale (Söderlund 2005), see Appendix 1.1. An odd number scale was chosen to allow for neutral answers. In order to assume normal distribution and thereby perform parametrical tests, the sample investigated contained thirty respondents (Malhotra 2010).

Three of the statements in the survey regarded perceived similarities and differences between the respondents and the students at other universities and two of the statements regarded the respondents' perceptions of students at other universities.

3.2.1.1 Membership group

The statements "Students at the following universities resemble me" and "I feel I resemble students at the following universities" were used to make sure that the student's own university was perceived as a membership group by its students, they were measured on a seven point scale ranging from "Not at all" to "Very much". The membership university scored the highest on both statements compared to the other universities, mean values of 5.97 and 6.00 respectively, all results can be seen Table 14 in Appendix 1. There was a significant difference between the mean values for the membership university and the university with the second highest mean values when compared in an independent samples t-test ($p = 0.00$). This implies that the students on average perceive themselves as members of their own university.

3.2.1.2 Dissociative group

White and Dahl's (2007) argumentation was followed to find the most dissociative university; people do not mind being associated with general out-groups while they perceive it as very negative to be associated with dissociative groups. Thus, the statement "If an external person would think that I was a student at one of the following university I would perceive it as" was used to find the most dissociative university, it was measured on a seven point scale ranging from "Negative" to "Positive". The choice of measurement was verified by professor Magnus Söderlund at Center for Consumer Marketing at Stockholm School of Economics.

The university scoring the lowest mean value of 2.29 had a significantly lower mean value than the university scoring the second lowest ($p = 0.00$) when it was compared in an independent samples t-test, all results can be seen in Table 14 in Appendix 1. The relatively low variance indicates that this perception is commonly spread among the students at the membership university.

The university chosen to represent a dissociative group offers the same kind of education as the membership university, while several of the other universities in the questionnaire offers education very different to the membership university. The dissociative group is not the university most unlike the membership group but the one perceived as most negative to be associated with.

3.2.1.3 Comparison between the groups

To test that the university chosen as a membership group was significantly different compared to the university chosen as dissociative group, their mean values were compared in an independent samples t-test.

The similarities of the five statements used to measure the respondents' attitudes and perceptions of the universities were analyzed in a reliability analysis. The internal consistency between the statements in this pre-study was high enough to create one index for each university regarding the respondents' perceptions. The Cronbach's Alpha for the statements regarding the membership group was 0.888 and the Cronbach's Alpha value for the dissociative group was 0.949. The mean values for the two indices were compared and were significantly different ($p = 0.00$). As the respondent's answers regarding the two universities were very different throughout the pre study, the two universities can be used to symbolize a membership group and a dissociative group. The manipulations can be seen in Appendix 2.

3.2.2 PRE-STUDY 2: SYMBOLIC PRODUCTS, CATEGORIES AND BRANDS

In the main study, two products with a symbolic function to the membership group were used (Berger & Heath 2007). Grubb and Grathwohl (1967) argued that a product or a brand can only be regarded as a symbol if it is acknowledged by significant references. Ahuvia (2005) emphasizes that a product's symbolic function and what it symbolizes is subjective. Because of the characteristics of symbolic products, a pre-study had to be performed to find products that both have a clear and desirable symbolic function to the membership group.

As clothes in several studies have been proven to have a symbolic function (Banister & Hogg 2004, Swartz 1983, Lessig & Park 1978, Chan et al. 2012), this product category was

chosen. Nine categories of clothing and accessories were ranked by 30 bachelor students, enrolled at the membership university, based on the question “Which of the following product categories is most representative of what a person is like?”, see Appendix 1.2. The clothing ranked one was the most representative, with the strongest symbolic value, and product ranked nine was the least representative, see Table 1. The questions were derived from Escalas and Bettman (2005).

| | Shoes | Handbag / Bag | Outdoor jacket | Watch | Jewelry | Glasses / Sunglasses | Scarf | Socks | Belt |
|----------|-------|---------------|----------------|-------|---------|----------------------|-------|-------|------|
| Mean | 3.2 | 3.5 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 4.1 | 4.6 | 7.0 | 7.4 | 8.0 |
| Variance | 2.42 | 3.22 | 6.18 | 4.49 | 4.06 | 4.05 | 3.96 | 2.38 | 1.41 |

TABLE 1: RESULTS OF PRE-STUDY 2

There was no significant difference between the mean values of the products ranked 1 to 5 ($p > 0.05$). The products ranked 6-9 had significantly lower mean values compared to the highest ranked product ($p < 0.05$). As the variances in rankings were relatively smaller for the products ranked 1 and 2 compared to the products ranked 3 to 5, the symbolic value of them is perceived more alike by all respondents. Therefore, as shoes and handbags/bags both have the lowest mean values and variances they were chosen as symbolic products for the advertisements.

The choice was made to include a brand name into the advertisements, as brands signal group identity (Chan et al. 2012). Therefore, the respondents were asked to name three brands for each of the three product categories they ranked as 1-3. For shoes the brand Tod's were mentioned most times and for handbags/bags the brand Mulberry was mentioned most times. The two brands are premium priced and as expensive products tend to have a more symbolic function than cheap products, they were suitable for the study (Leigh & Gabel 1992).

The reason for using two different products with different brands in the main study instead of one was to increase the reliability. This decision was taken in accordance with Dr. Sara Rosengren, senior research fellow and John Karsberg, Ph.D. student, both at Center for

Consumer Marketing at Stockholm School of Economics. The products were chosen to represent generic symbolic products and not shoes or bags/handbags in particular.

3.2.3 PRE-STUDY 3: ADVERTISEMENTS

3.2.3.1 The purpose of the advertisement

The respondents will be presented with different kinds of advertisements in the main study to test how the advertisement itself affects their perception of the products. The advertisement will be presented on outdoor billboards, as that format is regarded as neutral. This since it is used for both promotional messages and advertisements (Bhargava & Donthu 1999). There is no risk of unwanted links, i.e. another context, between the advertisement and the medium itself, as it is with TV, Internet and Magazines, which is positive since an experiment seeks to control the variables influencing the responses. The channel was chosen in a discussion with the tutors Dr. Sara Rosengren, senior research fellow and John Karsberg, Ph.D. student, both at Center for Consumer Marketing at Stockholm School of Economics. Mr. Karsberg uses the billboard format in his research, that has similarities with the subject investigated in this thesis.

The potential misfit between the symbolic luxury products and a billboard channel was also discussed with the tutors. Through the discussion it was decided to include a control variable in the pre-test to ensure that the respondents believed that the advertisement could have been shown on an outdoor billboard.

Advertisements can be classified based on different aspects. In this thesis, advertisements are categorized as either image building or selling. In a meeting with the assistant professor Dr. Erik Modig, at the Center for Consumer Marketing at Stockholm School of Economics, the image building advertisement was defined as a soft-selling advertisement and the selling advertisement as a hard-selling advertisement. This since, by definition, hard-sell advertisements have a more direct approach to selling with focus on encouraging a quick purchase, while soft-sell advertisements focus on building brand image. According to Beard (2004), the concepts of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising have been discussed in the American advertising literature since 1911.

Mueller (1986) defined the soft-sell type of advertising as that where the atmosphere is communicated through a scene or by an emotional story or verse. The focus is on emotions rather than clear-cut product-related appeals. Hard-sell advertisements are those with a focus on sales, brand name is specified and product recommendations are included. Competitive products can be mentioned, sometimes by name, and the product advantage should be discussed in terms of performance.

Although the concepts of hard and soft-sell were defined already in 1987, no standardized method for categorizing them was developed until 2010 (Okazaki et al. 2010). Based on previous research in the area, the authors suggested that the categorization of ads should be based on whether they are aimed at affecting feeling or thinking, whether the message is implicit or explicit and whether the focus is on image or fact, see Figure 3.

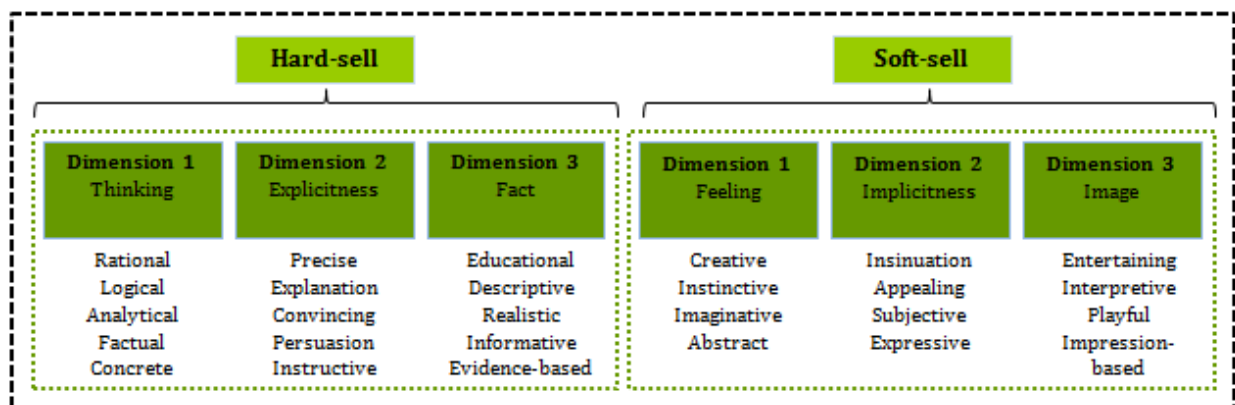


FIGURE 3: HARD-SELL AND SOFT-SELL (OKAZAKI ET AL. 2010, P. 14-15)

The third pre-study was conducted in order to decide which four advertisements to use in the main study. Based on Okazaki et al.'s (2010) findings of which features are typical for hard-sell respectively soft-sell advertisements, eight advertisements were first created. Two advertisements for each product and type of advertising were created.

The soft-selling advertisements were based on real advertisements created by the company owning the brands, but were altered to increase the consistency. The advertisements included people of both gender, in about the same age as the respondents. The selection was made to increase the fit to the segment of the respondents.

A survey was handed out to a convenience sample of ten people, containing a picture of each advertisement followed by ten statements. The respondents were first asked to rate the commercials on a seven point scale where the three dimensions Okazaki found important were used as extreme values; (Think - Feel), (Explicitness - Implicitness) and (Fact - Image). The value 1 represented hard-sell and the value 7 represented soft-sell. The survey also controlled that the advertisements were perceived as real out-door billboard advertisements and also ensured that they were perceived as hard-sell respectively soft-sell, see Appendix 1.3.

In the first questionnaire, all soft-sell advertisements had mean values between 5.5 and 6.1 on a seven point scale when asked if the respondents would perceive it plausible to find them on out-door billboards. Also, all soft-sell advertisements were perceived as soft-sell as they had mean values between 5.5 and 5.8 on the three dimensions. One soft-sell advertisement could be chosen for each brand, see Figure 4.



FIGURE 4: SOFT-SELL ADVERTISEMENTS

Although the first questionnaire generated satisfactory results with regard to which soft-sell advertisements to use, the results for hard-sell were poor. The hard-sell advertisements were not perceived to be likely to be found on out-door billboards by the respondents as they had mean values between 1.9 and 3.2 on that statement. The advertisements with least text scored the highest and hence, the four hard-sell

advertisements were re-designed to contain less text. Thereafter they were tested again, and this time they scored between 4.6 and 5.0 on likeliness to be found on real billboards. The two advertisements perceived as most hard-sell, with mean values between 2.2 and 3.0 were thereafter chosen, see Figure 5.



FIGURE 5: HARD-SELL ADVERTISEMENTS

3.2.4 PRE-STUDY 4: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A final pre-study was made regarding the design of the questionnaire. Five people, from the same university as the respondents, were asked to answer the questionnaire in order to detect potential spelling errors and questions that were difficult to understand. They left comments about the questionnaire and some minor corrections were made before the questionnaire was distributed.

3.3 THE MAIN STUDY

The main study had a 3x2x2 factorial design and thus contained twelve different groups, with twelve different treatments. There were three different scenario treatments; there was either a membership group or a dissociative group present, as well as a control group where the respondents were alone. The two different purposes of the advertisement (hard-sell or soft-sell) and the brands (Mulberry or Tod's) were used. The design is described in Figure 6. Since the brands were a way of increasing reliability, that factor was not to be analyzed.

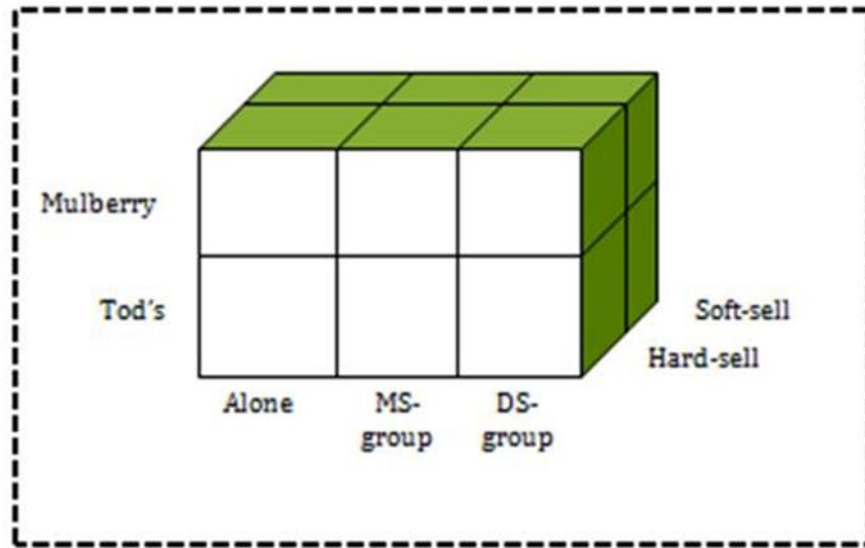


FIGURE 6: THE 3X2X2 FACTORIAL DESIGN

The experiment was carried out during two days, April 5 and April 8. Seminars for bachelor students were visited. The students' were asked to participate in a study as a part of a masters' thesis and that they would, except for getting the authors' gratitude, be able to win movie tickets.

3.3.1 QUANTITATIVE DATA SAMPLING

A sample of 201 business students on a bachelor level was used; to make sure that all groups contained 30 or more respondents, see Table 2. This sample size was used to allow for a normal distribution according to the central limit theorem (Newbold et al. 2007). As the two brands were to be analyzed together, the smallest group contained 30 respondents. One respondent was excluded, since he was assisted by a friend to complete the questionnaire.

| | DG treatment | MG treatment | Control |
|-----------|--------------|--------------|---------|
| Hard-sell | 15, 15 | 18, 18 | 18, 16 |
| Soft-sell | 17, 18 | 19, 15 | 17, 15 |

TABLE 2: SAMPLE SIZE (MULBERRY/TOD'S)

The sample was a convenience sample, a kind of non-probability sampling and one of the most common types of samples (Bryman & Bell 2007, Söderlund 2010). All respondents were university students from the same university, like a majority of all respondents in social psychological experiments (Söderlund 2010). The participants were randomly assigned to the different treatment groups, which made this study a true experiment (Söderlund 2010). Results from a convenience sample cannot be generalized (Bryman & Bell 2007), even though the sample used is representative for the population of bachelor students at the membership university.

The gender distribution of the sample was 44.8 percent women and 55.2 percent men, the age ranging between 18 and 30 years and the average age was 21.6 years. 25.9 percent of the respondents were in their first year, 49.2 percent were in their second year and 24.9 were in their third year of studies. The questionnaires were answered during supervision which reduced the number of missing questionnaires. 220 questionnaires were distributed in total which generated a response rate of 91 percent.

The incentive to complete the questionnaire was two movie tickets of 200 SEK each that were raffled out amongst the respondents stating their enrollment number when completing the questionnaire.

3.3.2 THE DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire contained a total of thirty statements with different purposes, see Appendix 2. Both measurements based on the AIDA model, control questions and demographic questions were included. Manipulation control was conducted both in pre-studies and in the main study to ensure that the manipulations worked as intended. The control questions were distributed throughout the questionnaire to avoid hypotheses guessing (Söderlund 2010). The statements belonging to the same multiple-item measure were also randomly distributed to not bore the respondents as this could decrease the response rate and increase the risk of response sets (Söderlund 2005).

To minimize misunderstandings, the survey was written in Swedish. The total number of statements was small to keep the respondents interested and to increase the response rate.

The wording was kept simple to make the survey understandable and to make the respondents feel comfortable (Söderlund 2005).

A majority of the statements were structured while one question was unstructured. A majority of the structured statements were measured on interval scale since they were to measure emotions and intentions and were believed to vary between two extremes (Söderlund 2005, Stevens 1946). As the questions were designed as statements, a majority of them were measured on a seven point Likert scale with equal distances. A scale with an odd number was chosen to allow for neutral answers and a relatively large number of alternatives should increase the reliability (Söderlund 2005). On the extremes of the scale, two opposite claims, such as "I fully agree" and "I do not agree at all" or "very much" and "not at all", were stated. The answers that represented the smaller magnitude such as "not at all" were placed to the left while the larger were placed to the right of the scale (Söderlund 2005).

The first questions were simple and interesting, to increase the response rate. They consisted of control questions, a filler question and the open-ended question used to capture the attention (Söderlund 2005). The demographic questions were placed at the end of the questionnaire, as recommended by Söderlund (2005).

To measure the effect of the advertisement, and capture possible differences created by the social context and the purpose of the advertisement, questions based on the AIDA model were used. A number of measures of advertising effectiveness were used in line with (Wind, Denny 1974). All measurements were based on previous research, to ensure that they were of high quality (Söderlund 2005).

3.3.3 MANIPULATIONS

To be certain that the respondents in the main-study perceived the independent variables as intended, control questions regarding them were included in the main questionnaire.

3.3.3.1 Purpose of the advertisement

Two types of advertisements were tested. To validate that the advertisements were perceived as intended by the respondents, soft-sell and hard-sell, one question controlling for this was included in the main study. It was the same question used in the pre-study.

3.3.3.2 Reference groups

The main questionnaire was distributed with three different scenarios; one with a dissociative group (DG) present, one with a membership group (MG) present and one control group where the respondents were alone when exposed to the advertisement, see Appendix 2.

To be able to compare the effect of the MG treatment and the DG treatment on the respondents' perception of the advertisement, it first had to be made certain that the two groups were perceived as intended, also by the respondents. The same statement as in the pre-study was used "If an external person would think that I was a student at the following university I would perceive it as". The respondents who were presented the MG treatment were asked about their membership university and the people presented with the DG treatment were asked about the dissociative university. The respondents in the control group were asked about their membership university.

3.3.3.3 The Third-person effect

To state if the TPE could influence the respondents' reactions to the advertisement, it first had to be made certain that there was a TPE. According to previous research, the respondents should perceive themselves to be less affected by the advertisement than the people in the group standing next to them (TPE) (Davison 1983) or more affected those people (reversed TPE). They should also perceive the DG treatment group to be more affected than the MG treatment group (Perloff 1999). The respondents were asked two questions related to TPE; one regarding how much they thought they were affected by the advertisement and one regarding how much they thought the people in the group standing next to them were affected. The control group was asked how much they thought that people in their membership groups were affected. The residual for the two variables was computed into a new variable describing the TPE. According to Perloff (1999), the standard of measuring TPE is through asking one group of people about their opinion regarding another group that is described but not present. The method for measuring TPE in this thesis is done in accordance to the norm in the research field.

3.3.3.4 Symbolic products

The products exposed in the advertisement were chosen because of their symbolic function. To validate that the products were perceived as symbolic by the respondents, one question controlling for this was included in the main study. The question was the same as in the pre-study.

3.3.4 HOW THE ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS WAS MEASURED

The advertising effectiveness was measured with the AIDA-model framework as a basis; attention, interest, desire and action. The questions used were inspired by questions used in previous research.

3.3.4.1 Attention

The attention paid to the advertisement and the feelings it induces were measured with a cognitive response measure technique (Cacioppo & Petty 1981). This measure was suggested by professor Magnus Söderlund at Center for Consumer Marketing at Stockholm School of Economics. The respondents were asked to write down the thoughts they got when they saw the advertisement. The respondents were asked to state if the thought was positive (+), negative (-) or neutral (-), to decrease interpretation errors and make it possible to analyze quantitatively (Malhotra 2010). The overall perception of the advertisements was calculated by first adding the number of positive thoughts and then subtracting the number of negative thoughts. The total number of thoughts was also calculated to represent the attention paid.

3.3.4.2 Interest

The brand interest was measured using three different scale measures. The questions “I am interested in [product] from [brand]”, “I see myself as a person owning a [product] from [brand]” and “I like the brand [brand]” were measured on a seven point Likert scale going from “I do not agree at all” to “I fully agree” (Mehta 1999, Lin & Huang 2006).

The internal consistency between the variables was tested through a reliability analysis. The Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.88 and as the internal consistency was higher than 0.7 the four variables could be measured together in an index.

3.3.4.3 Desire

The desire that the advertisement induces was measured using two different scale measures, as well as a measure of the willingness to pay. The question “I dream of owning a [product] from [brand]” was measured on a seven point Likert scale going from “I do not agree at all” to “I fully agree” (DeCarlo & Barone 2013, Lin & Huang 2006). The question “The probability that I would visit [brand]’s homepage after seeing the advertisement is” was measured on a seven point scale going from “very low” to “very high” (Söderlund 2005, Lin & Huang 2006).

The *willingness to pay* was captured using a four scale measure, where the market price was stated and questions were asked regarding the fairness of it. The four statements “The [product] is worth its price”, “I am willing to pay the price stated”, “The [product] has a correct price” and “The price of the [product] is fair” were measured on a seven point Likert scale going from “I do not agree at all” to “I fully agree” (Bearden et al. 2011). The internal consistency was measured with a reliability analysis. The Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.88 is higher than 0.7 and the internal consistency can be considered high.

The internal consistency between the desirability scales was measured with a reliability analysis. The Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.88 is higher than 0.7 and the four questions can therefore be turned into one index.

3.3.4.4 Action

The intended actions were defined as purchase intention and the word of mouth intention. The *purchase intention* was captured using three different scale measures; “I would like to buy a [product] from the brand [brand]” was measured on a seven point Likert scale going from “I do not agree at all” to “I fully agree” and “If I would like to buy a [product], the probability of me buying a [product] from [brand] is” and “The probability that I would consider buying a [product] from [brand] is” which were measured on a seven point Likert scale going from “very low” to “very high” (DeCarlo & Barone 2013). The internal consistency was measured through a reliability analysis. The Chronbach’s alpha value of 0.91 was higher than 0.7, the internal consistency is considered high.

The *word of mouth intention* was captured using the two scale measures “If a friend or a family member was about to buy a [product], the probability that I would recommend a [product] from [brand] is” and “The probability that I would discuss the brand [brand] with a friend or family” which were measured on a seven point Likert scale going from “very low” to “very high” (Brown 2005, Lin & Huang 2006). The measures showed a significant positive correlation (0.63) and thus showed a high internal consistency.

The internal consistency between the measures was tested through a reliability analysis. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.90 is higher than 0.7 and the measures can therefore be turned into one index.

3.4 ANALYTICAL TOOLS

The questionnaire was handed out manually and then transcribed to Microsoft Excel. While transcribing the data, it was checked for errors and response sets. No such items were found. The data were thereafter imported to the statistical program IBM SPSS Statistics.

Multiple-item measures were used for all dimensions, but one, analyzed, by using correlations and tests of Chronbach's alpha, the internal consistency was examined. All measures could be grouped into indices, which increased the validity.

The manipulation consisted of different groups of people being present when the respondents were exposed to an advertisement. Since the manipulations were made only in the questionnaire and were not very strong and the brands used were well-known and the perceptions towards them not probable to change to any greater extent, it was decided to use a 10 percent significance level in the statistical analysis of the main study. This choice was verified by Dr. Sara Rosengren, senior research fellow at Center for Consumer Marketing at Stockholm School of Economics.

The experiment contained two groups or more and the questions analyzed were measured on an interval or ratio scale. Because of this, different t-tests, one-way ANOVA and two-way ANOVA were used for analyzing the results (Söderlund 2010).

All assumptions were fulfilled for the focal test, the two-way ANOVA. All dependent variables were measured on interval or ratio scales, the groups were independent, the observations were

independent, no significant outliers were detected, since $n > 30$ for all variables they were approximately normally distributed and Levene's test showed homogenous variances for the responses (Malhotra 2010).

3.5 DATA QUALITY

3.5.1 RELIABILITY

The reliability indicates how much the values differ from the "real" values, due to random errors (Söderlund 2005). The effect has to be captured several times or evaluated by several experts, in order to determine the reliability. One of the most frequently used methods is to use multi-item scales, which makes it possible to estimate the reliability in one questionnaire. The reliability is measured using Chronbach's alpha, which is common practice for experiments (Söderlund 2005). All measures score either higher than 0.7 for Chronbach's alpha or show a significant positive correlation, which indicate that the internal consistency is sufficient (Malhotra 2010, Bryman & Bell 2007). The relatively large scales of the questions, seven points, increase the reliability (Söderlund 2005).

A pre-test is used to secure that the questionnaire is easy to understand, to eliminate errors caused by the design. The manipulations are created through pre-tests and are tested in the main study. The manipulation tests show that the differences can be derived from the manipulations (see 3.3.3 Manipulation control).

The random assignment of the treatment groups decrease the strength of the correlation since that is proven to increase the variance (Söderlund 2005). That is however a move to increase the validity.

3.5.2 VALIDITY

The validity indicates if the measures of the study measure what they are said to measure and to what extent the study is affected by both systematic and random errors (Söderlund 2005).

All measures have been developed using reliable literature, either from peer reviewed articles or books recommended by the faculty at Stockholm School of Economics. This increases the validity of the study.

3.5.2.2 Internal validity

As the study is designed as a true experiment, the internal validity is high (Bryman & Bell 2007). Everything except the manipulations were kept constant, to ensure that the variations were an effect of the manipulations. The manipulations were also tested in pre-tests, which showed that they induced the desired effect.

3.5.2.3 External validity

The experiment was conducted using a convenience sample, which decreases the external validity. The fact that an artificial environment was used implies that the results cannot be directly generalized to the real world (Malhotra 2010). Since the respondents were sitting close to each other, the anonymity may have been questioned by them. This could lead to social desirability responding, which would affect the results (Söderlund 2005). The random assignment to the treatment groups does, however, increase the validity (Söderlund 2005).

The generalization can also be discussed regarding the similarity of behavior between groups. The homogenous membership group in this study may not behave in the same way as other groups do. That decreases the generalizability of the results. What increases the possibility to generalize the results is the fact that two different brands were used, to decrease the systematic error that one brand could cause.

As several measures are used to show the differences between the treatments, that will secure a high concurrent validity.

4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the results and analysis of the hypotheses testing will be presented. First, the results for the manipulation and variable control will be reported. Thereafter, the impact of the social context and the interaction between social context and advertising will be presented for the different dimensions of the AIDA-model.

4.1 MANIPULATION CONTROL

4.1.1 THE BRANDS

Two brands were used to increase the reliability of the study and were chosen to be analyzed together. A test had, however, to be made in order to ensure that they actually were similar enough. The brands were compared in a two-way ANOVA analysis, see Table 3.

| | Attention | | Interest | | Desire | | Action | |
|---|-----------|------|----------|------|--------|------|--------|------|
| | F | p | F | p | F | p | F | p |
| Brand | 2.90 | 0.09 | 0.15 | 0.70 | 0.77 | 0.38 | 0.83 | 0.36 |
| Interaction effect (Brand*Scenario) | 1.06 | 0.35 | 0.35 | 0.70 | 0.28 | 0.76 | 0.31 | 0.73 |
| Interaction effect (Brand*Advertisement) | 7.83 | 0.01 | 1.08 | 0.30 | 0.87 | 0.35 | 0.32 | 0.58 |
| Interaction effect (Brand*Scenario*Advertisement) | 0.54 | 0.58 | 0.34 | 0.71 | 0.67 | 0.51 | 0.81 | 0.45 |

TABLE 3: TWO WAY ANOVA FOR THE TWO BRANDS

There was a significant difference between the means of the brands for the attention measure. The brand had a significant main effect on the ad attitude and there was an interaction effect between brand and purpose of advertisement. On the three subsequent stages in the AIDA-model, there are however no significant effect caused by the brand variable. Since there are no hypotheses regarding the effect of the purpose of the

advertisement itself, and since the differences between the brands do not interact with the scenarios, the brands are chosen to be analyzed as one.

4.1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The questionnaire was designed to test advertisements with two different purposes; image-building and selling. To conclude that the respondents perceived the advertisements in the intended way, a manipulation control was conducted.

A two-way ANOVA was used for the analysis of the variable. It showed a significant main effect of the advertisement ($F = 69.47, p = 0.00$), which indicates a successful manipulation. No effect of the scenario ($F = 1.97, p = 0.14$) and no interaction effects could be found ($F = 0.46, p = 0.63$).

| | Mean | Standard deviation | n |
|-----------|------|--------------------|-----|
| Soft-sell | 5.38 | 1.25 | 100 |
| Hard-sell | 3.59 | 1.74 | 95 |

TABLE 4: DESCRIPTIVES (PURPOSE OF THE ADVERTISEMENT)

The main effects of the advertisement were explored, using an independent samples t-test to test whether the advertisements were perceived as intended. The t-test shows that the means are significantly different ($p = 0.00$). As the mean value for the soft-selling advertisements was higher than the scale average ($5.38 > 4$) and the mean for the hard-selling advertisements was lower than the scale average ($3.59 < 4$), the two advertisements were perceived as image building and selling, respectively, see Table 4.

4.2 VARIABLE CONTROL

To be certain that the respondents in the main-study perceived the independent variables as intended, control questions regarding those variables were included in the main questionnaire.

4.2.1 REFERENCE GROUPS

The mean values for the three groups were compared in a two-way ANOVA. The results show that the scenario affects the outcome ($F = 79.25$, $p = 0.00$), but that the advertising type does not ($F = 0.11$, $p = 0.74$). There was no interaction effect between the two independent variables ($F = 0.24$, $p = 0.79$).

| | Mean | Standard deviation | n |
|--------------|------|--------------------|----|
| DG treatment | 2.43 | 1.29 | 63 |
| MG treatment | 4.95 | 1.37 | 66 |
| Control | 5.08 | 1.33 | 66 |

TABLE 5: DESCRIPTIVES (REFERENCE GROUPS)

As the groups were of unequal sizes, the Scheffe test was used for the post hoc test of the scenario variable. The control group and the MG treatment group are given the same question, regarding the university to which they are enrolled. The mean values were not significantly different ($p = 0.87$). This finding implies that whether or not a group of people from a respondent's membership group is present does not affect that respondent's willingness to be associated with them.

The respondents who were asked about the dissociative university had a significantly lower mean value compared to the two other groups ($p = 0.00$), see Table 5. The significant difference between the respondents' perceptions of the membership group and dissociative group indicates that they perceive it as positive to be associated with their membership university and negative to be associated with the dissociative university, as intended.

4.2.2 THE THIRD-PERSON EFFECT

To control if a TPE had occurred, the residual between how much the respondents were affected by the advertisement and how much they believed that the other group watching the advertisement was affected was calculated. For the entire sample, the residual was 1.16 on a seven point scale. The residuals for the entire sample were compared in a paired-

samples t-test and they were significantly different ($p = 0.00$). The significant difference implies that a TPE has occurred for the sample.

The residual of the means was compared using a two-way ANOVA, to explore the effects of the independent variables. The results show a significant interaction effect between the two independent variables ($F = 6.52$, $p = 0.00$). There were however no significant main effects either the scenario ($F = 1.06$, $p = 0.35$) or the purpose of the advertisement ($F = 2.10$, $p = 0.15$).

| Scenario | Advertisement | Mean (Residual) | Standard deviation | n |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----|
| DG treatment | Soft-sell | 0.35 | 1.54 | 31 |
| | Hard-sell | 1.50 | 1.43 | 30 |
| | Total | 0.92 | 1.58 | 61 |
| MG treatment | Soft-sell | 0.97 | 1.61 | 33 |
| | Hard-sell | 1.55 | 1.96 | 31 |
| | Total | 1.25 | 1.80 | 64 |
| Control | Soft-sell | 1.67 | 1.24 | 33 |
| | Hard-sell | 0.91 | 1.28 | 32 |
| | Total | 1.29 | 1.31 | 65 |
| TOTAL | | 1.16 | 1.58 | 190 |

TABLE 6: DESCRIPTIVES (TPE)

Table 6 shows that the TPE is higher for the hard-selling advertisement for the two treatment groups than for the control group, while the TPE is higher for the soft-selling advertisement for the control group compared to the treatment groups.

Through conducting a one-way ANOVA with a post hoc Scheffe test, it was noticed that for the soft-selling advertisement, the means of the control group and the DG treatment group

were significantly different ($p = 0.003$). The TPE is significantly higher for the control group than for the DG treatment group when the advertisement was soft-selling. The interactions are also described in Figure 9 in Appendix 3.2.

Through conducting independent samples t-test, it can be noticed that for the DG treatment group, the TPE is significantly higher for the hard-selling advertisement than the soft-selling advertisement ($p = 0.004$).

Through conducting independent samples t-test, it can be noticed that for the control group, the TPE is significantly higher for the soft-selling advertisement than for the hard-selling advertisement ($p = 0.018$).

4.2.3 SYMBOLIC PRODUCTS

The products were chosen based on their symbolic nature. To make sure that the products were of a symbolic nature to the respondents, a control question was included. As the mean was higher than the scale average ($4.5 > 4$) the products are perceived as symbolic, see Table 7.

| Scenario | Advertisement | Mean | Standard deviation | n |
|--------------|---------------|------|--------------------|-----|
| DG treatment | Soft-sell | 4.88 | 1.39 | 32 |
| | Hard-sell | 4.13 | 1.61 | 31 |
| | Total | 4.51 | 1.53 | 63 |
| MG treatment | Soft-sell | 4.15 | 1.40 | 34 |
| | Hard-sell | 4.72 | 1.53 | 32 |
| | Total | 4.42 | 1.48 | 66 |
| Control | Soft-sell | 4.68 | 1.34 | 34 |
| | Hard-sell | 4.47 | 1.50 | 32 |
| | Total | 4.58 | 1.41 | 66 |
| TOTAL | | 4.50 | 1.47 | 195 |

TABLE 7: DESCRIPTIVES (SYMBOLIC PRODUCT)

Through a two way ANOVA, it was found that there were no main effects of either the scenario ($F = 0.15$, $p = 0.86$) or the purpose of the advertisement ($F = 0.37$, $p = 0.54$). There was, however, a significant interaction effect between the independent variables ($F = 3.33$, $p = 0.04$). The interaction was explored through independent samples t-tests; they are also described in Figure 10 in Appendix 3.2. They showed that for the DG treatment group, the respondents exposed to the soft-selling advertisement perceived the products as significantly more symbolic compared to the ones exposed to the hard-selling advertisement ($p = 0.05$).

4.3 HYPOTHESES TESTING

Since the brands are treated as one, the experiment had a 2x3 factorial design. However, there was an indication that there was no clear difference between the MG treatment and the control group. This was investigated through a two-way ANOVA; the results are presented in Table 15 in Appendix 3.2. The test showed that there was no significant difference between the mean values for the MG treatment group and control group, and they did not interact with the other independent variable. This implies that the respondents were not affected differently depending on whether the membership group was present or not. As a result, the groups were merged and the mean value comparison was only made for the DG treatment group compared to the merged control group. This does also imply that hypotheses H1b, H2b, H3b and H4b are rejected.

H1 b) The attention is higher if a membership group is present.

Rejected

H2 b) The brand interest is higher if a membership group is present.

Rejected

H3 b) The desire is higher if a membership group is present.

Rejected

H4 b) The action intention is higher if a membership group is present.

Rejected

4.3.1 ATTENTION

The attention was explored by analyzing the respondents overall attitude and the number of opinions. The mean values were compared in two two-way ANOVA analyzes. There was a significant main effect of the purpose of the advertisement both for ad attitude ($F = 0.47$, $p = 0.00$) and number of opinions ($F = 2.96$, $p = 0.87$), while there were no main effects caused by the scenario either on ad attitude ($F = 0.47$, $p = 0.49$) or ad opinion ($F = 0.31$, $p = 0.58$). There were no interactions between the two independent variables for ad attitude ($F = 1.38$, $p = 0.24$) or ad opinion ($F = 1.98$, $p\text{-value} = 0.24$)

| | Mean | Standard deviation | n |
|-----------|-------|--------------------|----|
| Soft-sell | 0.80 | 1.77 | 95 |
| Hard-sell | -0.38 | 1.59 | 95 |

TABLE 8: DESCRIPTIVES (ATTENTION: AD ATTITUDE)

Two independent samples t-test were performed to describe the effects of the advertisements. The main effect of the purpose of the advertisement on ad attitude was significant such that the soft-selling advertisements received more positive thoughts compared to the hard-selling advertisements, see Table 8. The main effect on ad opinion was significant such that the soft-selling advertisements received more thoughts compared to the hard selling advertisements, see Table 9.

| | Mean | Standard deviation | n |
|-----------|------|--------------------|----|
| Soft-sell | 2.58 | 1.24 | 95 |
| Hard-sell | 2.18 | 1.13 | 95 |

TABLE 9: DESCRIPTIVES (ATTENTION: OPINION)

The respondents' thoughts were also analyzed one by one, to look for potential trends regarding similar thoughts. The hard-sell advertisements received critique from several of the respondents as many of them did not perceive the advertisement to be in line with their perception of the brands. Some respondents wrote negative thoughts concerning the

advertisements and positive thoughts regarding the products. The responses are compiled in the word clouds shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8.



FIGURE 7: RESPONSES FOR HARD-SELL ADVERTISEMENTS

Many of the respondents who expressed positive thoughts regarding the products and advertisements linked them to their university belonging. This phenomenon was particularly common for the soft-sell advertisements. The respondents wrote that the people in the advertisements could be enrolled students at their university and that the products were popular in their sphere. None of the respondents in the DS treatment group made a connection between the dissociative university and the advertisement.

H1: *The attention is affected by the social context*

a) *The attention is lower if a dissociative group is present.*

Rejected

H6: *The attention is affected by an interaction between the social context and the purpose of the advertisement.*

Rejected

4.3.2 INTEREST

The effect on the interest was explored through a two-way ANOVA. The test showed that there was a significant interaction effect between the scenario and the purpose of the advertisement ($F = 3.88$, $p = 0.05$) and also a main effect of the scenario (4.83 , $p = 0.03$). There were no main effects of the purpose of the advertisement ($F = 0.00$, $p = 0.96$).

The main effects for the brand interest index were explored using an independent samples t-test. The interest of the brand was significantly smaller for the DG treatment group compared to the merged control group ($p = 0.035$).

| Scenario | Advertisement | Mean | Standard deviation | n |
|----------------|---------------|------|--------------------|-----|
| DG treatment | Soft-sell | 3.29 | 1.48 | 32 |
| | Hard-sell | 2.81 | 1.48 | 31 |
| | Total | 3.05 | 1.49 | 63 |
| Control merged | Soft-sell | 3.34 | 1.49 | 64 |
| | Hard-sell | 3.80 | 1.60 | 59 |
| | Total | 3.56 | 1.55 | 123 |
| TOTAL | | 3.39 | 1.55 | 186 |

TABLE 10: DESCRIPTIVES (INTEREST)

The interaction effects were explored using an independent samples t-test; they are also described in Figure 11 in Appendix 3.2. The test showed that, for hard-selling advertisements, the brand interest was significantly smaller for the DG treatment group compared to the merged control group ($p = 0.01$), see Table 10.

There was a significant effect of the scenario; the interest was lower when a dissociative group was present. There was also a significant interaction effect between the scenario and the purpose of the advertisement; the interest was further decreased for respondents being exposed to a hard-sell advertisement together with a dissociative group. Hence, both H2a and H7 are supported.

H2: *The brand interest is affected by the social context*

a) *The brand interest is lower if a dissociative group is present.*

Supported

H7: *The brand interest is affected by an interaction between the social context and the purpose of the advertisement*

Supported

4.3.3 DESIRE

The effect on the desire was explored through a two-way ANOVA. The test showed that there was a significant interaction effect between the scenario and the purpose of the advertisement ($F = 5.38$, $p = 0.02$) and also a main effect of the scenario ($F = 4.07$, $p = 0.05$). There were no main effects of the purpose of the advertisement ($F = 0.02$, $p = 0.88$).

| Scenario | Advertisement | Mean | Standard deviation | n |
|----------------|---------------|------|--------------------|-----|
| DG treatment | Soft-sell | 2.28 | 1.02 | 32 |
| | Hard-sell | 1.83 | 0.91 | 31 |
| | Total | 2.06 | 0.99 | 63 |
| Control merged | Soft-sell | 2.23 | 1.24 | 68 |
| | Hard-sell | 2.63 | 1.37 | 64 |
| | Total | 2.42 | 1.32 | 132 |
| TOTAL | | 2.30 | 1.23 | 195 |

TABLE 11: DESCRIPTIVES (DESIRE)

An independent samples t-test showed that the main effects of the scenario was significant such that the desire for the brand was significantly lower for the DG treatment group compared to the merged control group ($p = 0.05$), see Table 11.

The interaction effects were explored using an independent samples t-test; they are also described in Figure 12 in Appendix 3.2. For the hard-selling advertisements, the brand attitude was significantly lower for the DG treatment group compared to the merged control group ($p = 0.00$), see Table 11.

Independent samples t-tests also show that the DG treatment group has a significantly higher brand attitude, when exposed to a soft-selling advertisement compared to a hard-selling advertisement ($p = 0.07$). For the merged control group, the opposite tendency is shown and the brand attitude is significantly higher when exposed to a hard-selling advertisement compared to a soft-selling advertisement ($p = 0.08$), see Table 11.

There was a significant effect of the scenario; the desire was lower when a dissociative group was present. There was also a significant interaction effect between the scenario and the purpose of the advertisement; the desire was further decreased for respondents being

exposed to a hard-sell advertisement together with a dissociative group. Hence, both H3a and H8 are supported.

H3: *The desire is affected by the social context*

a) *The desire is lower if a dissociative group is present.*

Supported

H8: *The desire is affected by an interaction between the social context and the purpose of the advertisement.*

Supported

4.3.4 ACTION

The action intention index was explored through a two-way ANOVA. The test showed a significant interaction effect between the scenario and the purpose of the advertisement ($F = 6.18, p = 0.01$). It also showed a significant main effect of the scenario ($F = 3.16, p = 0.08$), but no effect of the purpose of the advertisement alone ($F = 0.04, p = 0.85$).

| Scenario | Advertisement | Mean | Standard deviation | n |
|----------------|---------------|------|--------------------|-----|
| DG treatment | Soft-sell | 2.93 | 1.52 | 32 |
| | Hard-sell | 2.40 | 1.40 | 31 |
| | Total | 2.67 | 1.47 | 63 |
| Control merged | Soft-sell | 2.77 | 1.47 | 68 |
| | Hard-sell | 3.39 | 1.60 | 64 |
| | Total | 3.07 | 1.56 | 132 |
| TOTAL | | 2.94 | 1.54 | 195 |

TABLE 12: DESCRIPTIVES (ACTION INTENTION)

The main effect of the scenario was such as the DG treatment group had a significantly lower action intention than the merged control group.

The interaction effects were investigated in independent samples t-tests; they are also described in Figure 13 in Appendix 3.2. The tests showed that, for hard-selling advertisements, the DG treatment group had a significantly lower action intention compared to the merged control group ($p = 0.00$), see Table 12.

The tests also showed that the merged control group had a significantly higher action intention when exposed to the hard-selling advertisements compared to the soft-selling advertisements ($p = 0.02$), see Table 12.

There was a significant effect of the scenario; the action intention was lower when a dissociative group was present. There was also a significant interaction effect between the scenario and the purpose of the advertisement; the action intention was further decreased for respondents being exposed to a hard-sell advertisement together with a dissociative group. Hence, both H3a and H8 are supported.

H5: *The action intention is affected by the social context*

a) *The action intention is lower if a dissociative group is present.*

Supported

H9: *The action intention is affected by an interaction between the social context and the purpose of the advertisement.*

Supported

4.4 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

| | Scenario | Interaction |
|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Attention | <i>Rejected</i> | <i>Rejected</i> |
| Interest | <i>Supported</i> | <i>Supported</i> |
| Desire | <i>Supported</i> | <i>Supported</i> |
| Action | <i>Supported</i> | <i>Supported</i> |

TABLE 13: SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES TESTING

5 DISCUSSION

This chapter will mainly discuss the results obtained in the hypotheses testing. Thereafter, the results will be concluded and the research questions will be answered. Criticism towards the study and managerial implications will be presented along with potential opportunities for future research, as a conclusion of the thesis.

5.1 THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL CONTEXT ON ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS

5.1.1 THE PERCEIVED AD-BRAND FIT

When the attention was measured, the advertisements developed to induce sales, so called hard-selling advertisements, were significantly less liked than the advertisements with an image building purpose, so called soft-selling advertisements. The soft-selling advertisement also generated significantly more thoughts than the hard-selling advertisements.

The products being advertised have a symbolic function to the respondents and thus, an image building advertising would be best suited (Beard 2004). A misfit between the advertisement and the product being advertised tends to be less effective (Okazaki et al. 2010). This was evident when the respondents' thoughts were analyzed one by one. The hard-sell advertisements received critique from several of the respondents for not being suitable for the product. Some of the respondents did also write negative thoughts concerning the advertisements and positive thoughts regarding the products.

The social context did not have any effect on the attitude towards the advertisement. This was a bit unexpected, since previous research in the field of reference group theory suggests that people tend to dissociate themselves from objects that are related to dissociative groups (Englis & Solomon 1995, Hogg & Banister 2001).

A possible explanation for why the social context did not affect the respondents' perception of the advertisement could be that the products are so closely tied to their own identity. A sign of this is that the respondents who had positive thoughts regarding the products and advertisements and who linked them to their university belonging by writing that people in the advertisements could be enrolled students at their university and that the products

were popular in their sphere. This phenomenon was not found for the respondents in the DS treatment group.

Even though the respondents do not link the dissociative group to the advertisement and to the products being advertised, they are significantly affected by them in all the subsequent stages in the AIDA-model. This may be explained by the connection person-object-person discussed by (Belk 1988). The respondents may be positive towards an advertisement of a product, even though there is a dissociative group present. The ties between the membership group and the advertisement are too strong and the manipulation is not effective enough.

The respondents may also not think of buying the product in that stage of the questionnaire, thus not connecting the product to the self. When they are asked questions that link the product to the self, the effect of the social context becomes significant.

So, when the respondents believe that there is a risk of being linked to the dissociative group through the person-object-person relationship, they will be negatively affected by their presence. Since the advertisement was not linked to the self, the respondents evaluated it based on the fit between the advertisement and the product being advertised. In the subsequent stages when they in different ways linked themselves to the products, the social context became significantly influential.

5.1.2 THE EFFECT ON THE BRAND INTEREST, DESIRE & ACTION

The advertising effectiveness was affected by the social context. When the dissociative group was present, the respondents showed a significantly lower brand interest, desire and action intention compared to the merged control group.

Researchers on symbolic consumption describe the products as a part of the self-identity, the extended self (Belk 1988, Ahuvia 2005). Berger and Heath (2007) have concluded that reference groups have the strongest influence on products with a symbolic function. These previous findings imply that since the respondents believed that the members of the dissociative group was affected by the advertisement, they were less willing to be

associated with the product and thus with the dissociative group. This proves that Belk's (1988) findings on person-object-person interactions are true in this experiment.

The presence of a membership group did not affect the respondents, since the results from the MG treatment group did not differ from the results from the control group. In this thesis, the membership university was not only perceived as an in-group but also as the most aspirational group of the universities. This can be concluded as the membership university had the highest mean values on all questions in the pre-study compared to the other universities, see Appendix 1.1. These findings are therefore in line with Ogilvie (1987) and Bosnjak and Brand (2008); the willingness to dissociate from a dissociative group is a much stronger driver than the willingness to associate with an aspirational group.

The purpose of the advertisement affected the effect of the social context. For hard-sell advertisements, all three measures were significantly smaller for the DG treatment group than the merged control group. The combination of a non-suitable advertisement and the presence of a dissociative group thus seem to reduce the advertising effectiveness even further.

The results show that the presence of a dissociative reference group has a negative impact on the advertising effectiveness regarding brand perceptions and purchase intentions. The effects of the dissociative group are increased if the advertisement has a bad fit with the brand advertised.

5.1.3 THE TPE'S POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION

Even though a TPE occurred, since respondents in all groups perceived others to be more affected than themselves, the main findings in this thesis contradict the previous research.

There was no significant difference between the MG treatment group and the DG treatment group. According to both Cohen et al. (1988) and Severin and Tankard (2000), the social distance shall have an impact on the TPE. Also, negatively valued peer groups should be perceived to be more affected than others, according to Eveland et al. (1999) and Perloff

(1999). Since this is not the case in this thesis, the TPE alone could not explain any difference between the groups.

The TPE is shown to be larger if the advertisement is of a low quality (Eveland et al. 1999, Duck & Terry 1995). This may explain the low mean values for the hard-selling advertisement, which was perceived as negative. Since the soft-selling advertisement is perceived more positively, the TPE is decreased and as a result, the mean values for the three AIDA-dimensions are increased. To decide whether it is the bad fit between the hard-sell advertisement and the symbolic product or the increased TPE for hard-sell advertisements that are responsible for the decreased mean values is difficult to say.

It is interesting to note the differences between the treatment groups and the control group. The trends showed that the TPE was higher for the soft-sell advertisements in the control group and higher for the treatment groups for the hard-sell advertisements. Some of the differences were significant, for example the TPE was significantly higher for the control group than the DG treatment group for the soft selling advertisements. The difference between the presence of the third-person and the imagined third-person is surprising and may be a base for further research.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The purpose of the thesis was to investigate if the social context has an impact on advertising effectiveness and thus is important to take into consideration in the advertising planning process.

The study shows that the social context does have an impact on advertisements' effectiveness on consumers and this effect is dependent on the purpose of the advertisements.

As previous researchers have concluded, the wish to dissociate from a dissociative group has a greater influence on people's behavior and perceptions than the wish to associate with a positively perceived group. In this thesis, the presence of a membership group did not create any effects while the presence of a dissociative group created negative effects in the three later stages of the AIDA-model.

The fit between the advertisement and the product being advertised is crucial for making people like the advertisement. However, the purpose of the advertisement does not on its own affect peoples' interest, desire or action intentions.

The combination of a dissociative group being present and an advertisement with a bad ad-brand fit affect people's perception of the product being advertised negatively.

5.3 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings generated in this thesis contribute with valuable insights that have practical implications for players in the field of symbolic products. The findings can be used as guidelines for marketing managers in their advertising planning process.

White & Dahl (2007) argue that there is a potential risk associated with having a differentiated marketing strategy, is strengthened by the findings of this thesis. When targeting several distinctly different market segments, one segment might have dissociative associations regarding another segment. As shown in this thesis, the passive presence of a dissociative group could have an impact on another segment. This implies that marketers using a differentiated strategy should be careful with regard to how to promote the brand so that it does not give rise to negative crossover effects. Potentially dissociative segments should only be targeted in places where other segments are unlikely to be. The use of tailor made targeting, facilitated for example through online channels, will therefore be important for marketing professionals. The possibilities to understand the potential customers' reference groups are increased through the use of big data collected online.

The importance of developing advertisements suitable for its purpose is increased when there is a risk for a dissociative group to be present. An advertisement with a bad fit did not alone affect the respondents in this thesis. Although, the combination of the presence of a dissociative group and an advertisement with bad fit may become disastrous.

In this thesis, it was shown that just the presence of a dissociative group causes negative effects. There are ethical concerns regarding how a brand is allowed to dissociate from groups that might be perceived as dissociative by its target group. A brand can never take

actions that negatively discriminates some groups of people. This knowledge should be used by marketing managers so that they develop campaigns in accordance with the symbolic function of the brands. Also, they should thoroughly consider in what contexts their advertising should be exposed.

5.4 CRITICISM OF THE STUDY

5.4.1 *THE QUESTIONNAIRE*

A majority of the questions in this thesis, both in pre-study and main-study were measured on a 7 point scale. The risk with this scale of measurement is that people tend to choose 4, the neutral step in the middle. As neutral and no opinion is not the same answer, both the respondents and the ones analyzing the questionnaire may draw the wrong conclusions (Söderlund 2005).

5.4.2 *THE METHOD*

The manipulations are controlled for in the main study, and this may affect the outcome since it may be the question regarding the manipulation that triggers reactions and not the manipulation itself (Feldman & Lynch 1988). The social context only consisted of people from either a membership group or a dissociative group. That social context is quite unlikely to find in reality as there often are less distinct groups present that are harder to categorize.

A general critique towards of the usage of surveys consists of several aspects. People often want to finish fast which makes their results not very well thought through (Jones & Sigall 1971). They also tend to answer in accordance with what opinions are socially desirable. In this thesis, this may have influenced people to make their answer nicer towards the dissociative group as the respondents did not want to be perceived badly. Furthermore, some people tend to guess what hypothesis are being tested and answer in accordance to them (Söderlund 2005).

There are delimitations within this thesis because of limited resources regarding time, money and people available. Some limitation is related to the area of social context itself. The area has previously been analyzed from various perspectives and for different reasons. It is not possible, or desirable, to include all theory and previous research in this thesis.

It is almost impossible, or at least very resource- and time-consuming, to simulate a real-life social context that is identical for all respondents. Therefore, the social context was only described in text. The same social context can also be perceived differently by different people. To avoid this, pre-studies were conducted for the variables used. However, it can never be certain that the context is perceived exactly as intended by all respondents.

It is important that the manipulations are perceived similarly by all respondents. Therefore, the investigated group must be homogenous and possess the same values and perceptions. Because of this, the results are harder to generalize than if the investigation was performed using a random sample.

5.4.3 THE AIDA-MODEL

The AIDA- model was used in this thesis as a measurement of advertising effectiveness. It has been regarded as a standard model of measuring advertising effectiveness for over 100 years and is still today one of the most referred to in the advertisement and personal selling literature (Barry 1987). Despite its popularity and widespread acceptance, the HOE-models have, according to (Barry 1987), been going through a period of "Challenge and Defense" since the mid 1970's. Several researchers have criticized the models and the underlying assumptions they are based on (Cramphorn 2004, Weilbacher 2001). The AIDA-model only focuses on the advertising part of marketing communication, is based on a discredited model of human thought processes and assumes that all advertisements have identical specific effects (Weilbacher 2001).

The AIDA-models assumes that people act as a result of their rational evaluations and that they have to go through several mental stages before being able to decide whether or not to buy a product (Strong 1925).

However, the researchers critical to the AIDA- models have not been able to present any other model that has gained general acceptance yet (Weilbacher 2001). In this thesis, the AIDA -model is used as a measurement for advertising effectiveness despite the critique. As there is no commonly accepted alternative model to use for the same purpose, it is regarded as a good enough tool. Preston and Thorson (1984) argues that despite the

critique, the HOE-models are still an excellent tool when developing and evaluating advertising plans. Percy (2008) also argues that even if individuals do not act in the stair-stage way that is assumed in the AIDA-model, advertisers still can use the stages of the model when evaluating the impact of advertisements on consumer buying behavior. This is supported by the work of Cramphorn (2006) who says that all of the steps have an influence on purchase intention. Although, the writers of this thesis are aware that the AIDA-model has its shortcomings and that the usage of another model might have affected the findings and the conclusions drawn.

5.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

There is much regarding social context that is not even touched upon in this thesis. In this thesis, the scenarios consist of passive groups of people. For future research, active people from different reference groups can be compared with passive people from different reference groups. Does the impact of different reference groups increase if the product is used or whether or not they discuss the product in a positive, negative or neutral sense?

Furthermore, there seems to be potential gaps in the field of TPE-research. Why did the respondents in this thesis not perceive the dissociative group to be more affected by the advertisement than their membership group? And why did the control group perceive the TPE to be larger for the soft-sell advertisements while the treatment groups perceived the TPE to be larger for the hard-sell advertisements?

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1 - PRE-STUDIES

APPENDIX 1.1 - PRE-STUDY 1

| | Q1 | | Q2 | | Q3 | | Q4 | | Q5 | |
|--------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|
| | Mean | Variance | Mean | Variance | Mean | Variance | Mean | Variance | Mean | Variance |
| Uni. C | 4.27 | 1.31 | 4.20 | 1.68 | 4.50 | 0.60 | 4.93 | 1.24 | 4.00 | 0.41 |
| Uni. D | 4.97 | 2.24 | 4.83 | 2.07 | 5.47 | 1.15 | 5.43 | 1.15 | 5.07 | 1.24 |
| Uni. B | 2.50 | 1.44 | 2.54 | 1.22 | 2.79 | 1.73 | 3.21 | 2.53 | 2.29 | 0.95 |
| Uni. E | 4.90 | 1.82 | 4.77 | 2.94 | 5.69 | 1.72 | 4.87 | 2.74 | 5.70 | 1.73 |
| Uni. A | 5.97 | 1.21 | 6.00 | 1.10 | 6.17 | 0.83 | 5.90 | 1.54 | 5.93 | 1.65 |
| Uni. F | 2.36 | 0.74 | 2.33 | 0.77 | 4.04 | 1.21 | 2.47 | 1.36 | 3.26 | 1.66 |
| Uni. G | 2.60 | 1.11 | 2.29 | 0.85 | 3.36 | 0.86 | 2.84 | 1.70 | 2.74 | 1.32 |
| Uni. H | 2.10 | 0.95 | 1.97 | 0.65 | 3.14 | 1.98 | 2.20 | 1.34 | 3.20 | 2.72 |
| Uni. I | 2.83 | 1.43 | 2.59 | 1.18 | 3.86 | 1.46 | 2.90 | 1.54 | 4.07 | 1.92 |
| Uni. J | 2.90 | 1.31 | 2.68 | 1.19 | 4.10 | 1.45 | 2.48 | 1.47 | 3.72 | 1.99 |
| Uni. K | 2.62 | 0.95 | 2.57 | 1.08 | 4.32 | 1.66 | 2.68 | 1.73 | 4.00 | 2.43 |

TABLE 14: RESULTS FROM PRE-STUDY 1

Q1: Students at the following universities resemble me: (Not at all – Very Much)

Q2: I feel I resemble students at the following universities: (Not at all – Very Much)

Q3: My perception of students from the following universities is: (Negative – Positive)

Q4: The probability that an external person perceives me as a student at one of the following universities is: (Low – High)

Q5: If an external person would think that I was a student at one of the following universities, I would perceive is as: (Negative – Positive)

*APPENDIX 1.2 PRE-STUDY 2***Questionnaire:**

Q1. Below there is a list of 9 different product categories. Which product says most about what a person is like? Rank the products from 1-9 where 1=Says most and 9= Says least.

Product categories:

- Shoes
- Watch
- Handbag /Bag
- Glasses/Sunglasses
- Outdoor jacket
- Jewelry
- Socks
- Scarf
- Belt

Q2. For the products you ranked 1-3, name three brands for each product that are of interest to you.

*APPENDIX 1.3 PRE-STUDY 3***Questionnaire:**

Q1. How likely is it to find this advertisement on an outdoor billboard? (Not likely- Very likely)

Q2. The advertisements purpose is to make me: (Think-Feel)

Q3. The advertisements message is: (Explicit-Implicit)

Q4. The advertisement is based on: (Fact-Image)

Q5. The advertisement is...

- Concrete (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)
- Convincing (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)
- Informative (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)
- Creative (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)
- Subjective (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)
- Based on feelings (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)

APPENDIX 2 - THE MAIN STUDY

APPENDIX 2.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Manipulations:

1. Du befinner dig i centrala Stockholm och väntar på en vän. Ni har bestämt möte vid en reklampelare. Medan du väntar ställer du dig och tittar på reklamen.

2. Du befinner dig i centrala Stockholm och väntar på en vän. Ni har bestämt möte vid en reklampelare. Några meter därifrån står en grupp människor. Du känner dem inte, men utifrån deras samtalsämnen förstår du att de går på [det dissociativa universitetet]. Efter ett tag slutar de prata och de börjar diskutera reklamen på reklampelaren. Du vänder dig om för att titta på den.

3. Du befinner dig i centrala Stockholm och väntar på en vän. Ni har bestämt möte vid en reklampelare. Några meter därifrån står en grupp människor. Du känner dem inte, men utifrån deras samtalsämnen förstår du att de går på [namnet på respondenternas eget universitet], precis som du. Efter ett tag slutar de prata och de börjar diskutera reklamen på reklampelaren. Du vänder dig om för att titta på den.

The advertisement on the billboard is from [brand]

(One of the four advertisements, see Figure 4 and 5, was displayed)

Questions:

I have seen the advertisement before: (yes/no)

Write down the thoughts you get when you see the advertisements. When you have written down your thoughts, write a (+), (-) or (0) after every thought depending on if you perceive the thought as positive = +, negative = - or neutral = 0.

I perceive the advertisement as: (selling - image building)

The advertisement affects me: (negatively-positively)

The advertisement affects me: (little- very much)

If an external person would think that I was a student at the following university [Dissociative university/Membership university], I would perceive it as: (negative - positive)

I would like to buy a [product] from the brand [brand]: (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)

I like the [brand]: (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)

The probability that I would visit [brand]'s homepage after seeing the advertisement is: (very low - very high)

The probability that I would discuss the brand [brand] with a friend or family member: (very low - very high)

The probability that I would consider buying a [product] from [brand] is: (very low - very high)

I think the advertisements affect students at [Dissociative university/Membership university]: (negatively - positively)

I think the advertisements affect students at [Dissociative university/Membership university]: (little - very much)

I am interested in [product] from [brand]: (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)

If a friend or a family member was about to buy a [product], the probability that I would recommend a [product] from [brand] is: (very low - very high)

I see myself as a person owning a [product] from [brand]: (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)

If I would like to buy a [product], the probability of me buying a [product] from [brand] is: (very low - very high)

I dream of owning a [product] from [brand]: (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)

The [product] costs [market price]

- The [product] is worth its price: (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)
- I am willing to pay the price stated: (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)
- The [product] has a correct price: (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)
- The price of the [product] is fair: (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)

A [product] says a lot about what a person is like: (I do not agree at all - I fully agree)

I am a (First year-Third year student)

I am: (Female/Male)

Age (-)

Write your number of enrollment to participate in a giveaway of two movie tickets à 200 SEK.

APPENDIX 3 - THE RESULTS

APPENDIX 3.1 MANIPULATION AND VARIABLE CONTROL

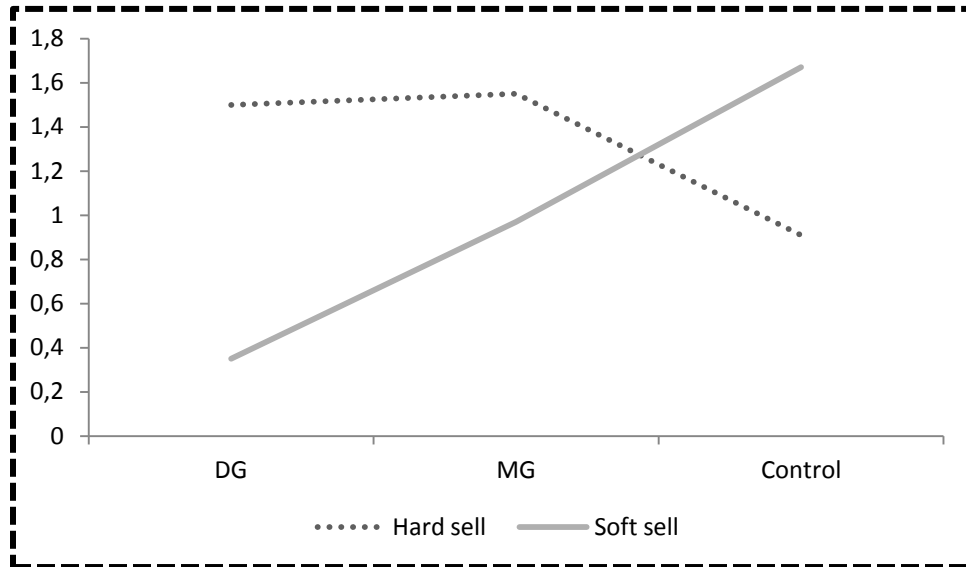


FIGURE 9: INTERACTION EFFECTS - TPE

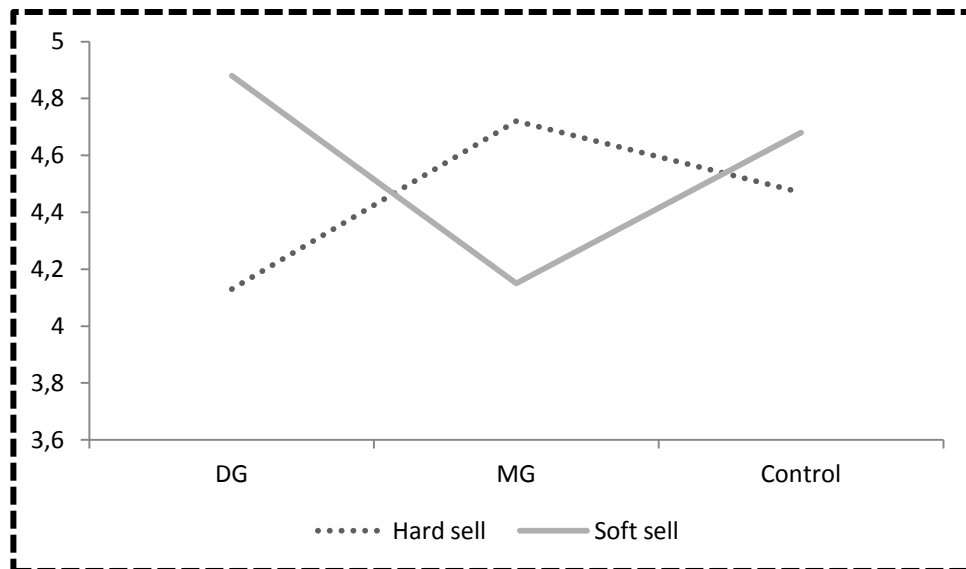


FIGURE 10: INTERACTION EFFECTS - SYMBOLIC PRODUCTS

APPENDIX 3.2 HYPOTHESES TESTING

| | Attention | | Interest | | Desire | | Action | |
|--|-----------|------|----------|------|--------|------|--------|------|
| | F | p | F | p | F | p | F | p |
| Scenario | 2.69 | 0.11 | 0.51 | 0.48 | 0.06 | 0.81 | 0.52 | 0.47 |
| Interaction effect (Scenario*Advertisement) | 0.80 | 0.37 | 0.00 | 0.99 | 0.00 | 0.98 | 0.28 | 0.60 |

TABLE 15: TWO WAY ANOVA FOR THE MG TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUP

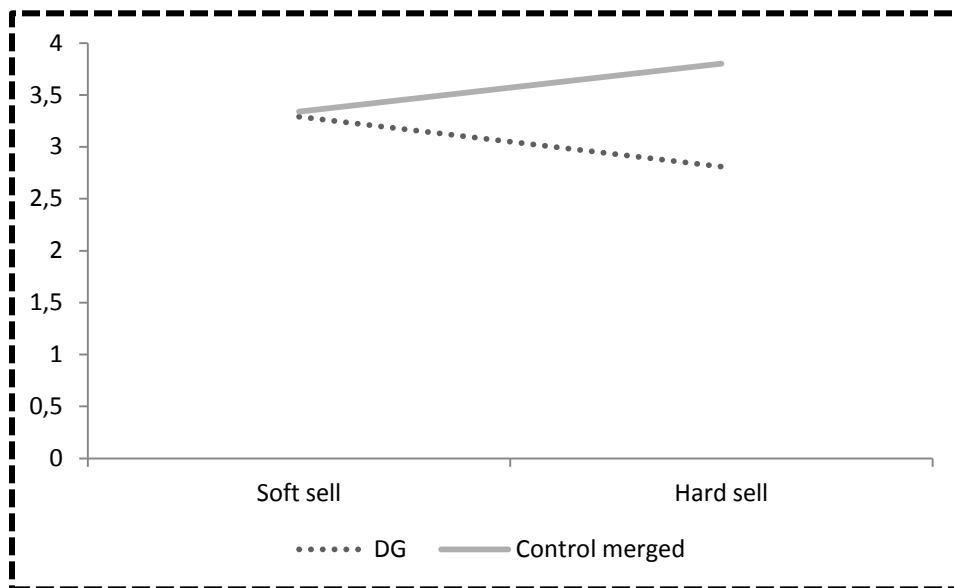


FIGURE 11: INTERACTION EFFECTS - INTEREST

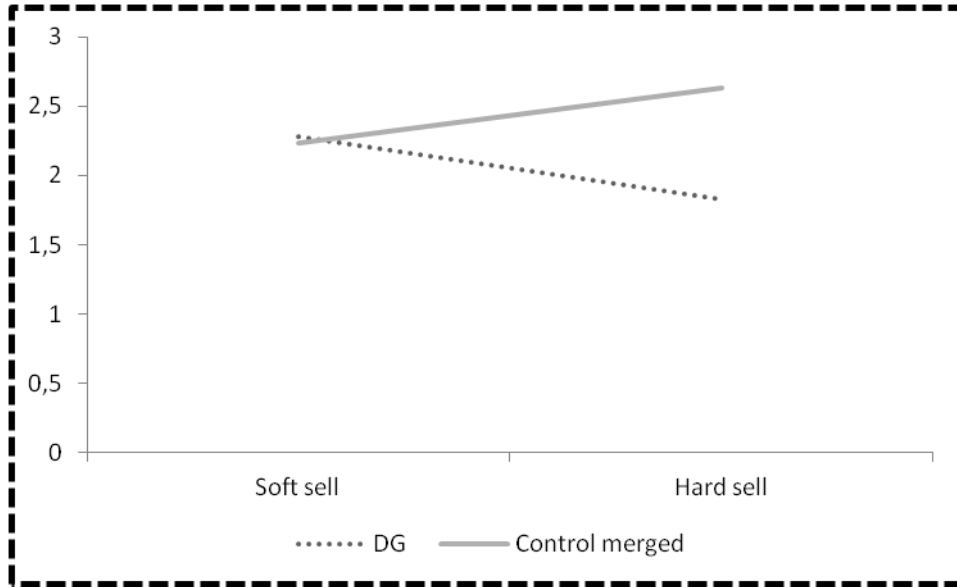


FIGURE 12: INTERACTION EFFECTS - DESIRE

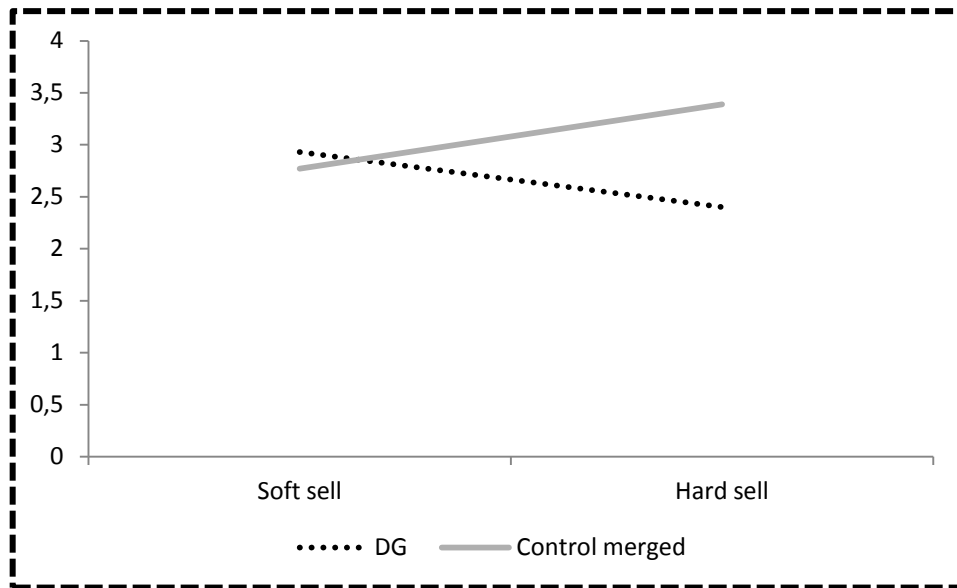


FIGURE 13: INTERACTION EFFECTS - ACTION INTENTION