Original Paper

Toxic & Hegemonic Masculinity, Gender Stereotypes & Resonance: The Problematic Snickers' "Get Some Nuts" Ad Campaign

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Abstract

This paper discusses the ethical implications of the Snickers' ad campaign, "Get Some Nuts". Through priming, framing, race, gender and sexuality stereotypes, researchers explore cultural resonance and hegemonic ideologies within this ad. In this study, close to 200 students examined separate international ethical standards toward this 30-second commercial starring Mr. T. Student comments collected indicated that implicit racist, sexist and homophobic lenses resonated and caused ethical concerns.

Keywords

toxic, gender, sexuality, race, LGBTQ+ and advertisements

1. Introduction

On August 14, 2019, the *Advertising Standards Agency* (ASA) of the United Kingdom exercised a change; the same ethics board, which remained silent because it considered a 2008 Snickers ad with the tagline "Get some nuts" to be in good humor, removed two ads that perpetuated stereotypes. Both 2019 ads, one for Volkswagen and the other for Philadelphia cream cheese, stereotyped traditional gender roles—showing adventurous males, clueless dads and a caretaking woman. When banning the two ads, ASA stated, "We did not consider that the use of humour in the ad mitigated the effect of the harmful stereotype" (Picheta, 2019, para. 9).

Eleven years earlier, ASA held a different attitude toward gendered stereotypes. On July 13, 2008, Snickers aired a 30 second TV commercial starring Mr. T in his full Sergeant Bosco B. A. (short for bad attitude) Baracus mode; a character he famously played in the 1980s series the A-Team. This ad aired in the United Kingdom and germinated from the campaign tagline—"Get some nuts", derived from its usual, award-winning theme, "You're not you when you're hungry" (Elliot, 2013; Miller, 2016).

The Mr. T ad aired as follows: the scene opens with a male-presenting speed walker on the side of a neighborhood road. Suddenly Mr. T appears, on the back of a flatbed truck, armed with a Snickers-firing machine gun, drives through a suburb and starts to growl at him. Mr. T says, "Speed walking? I pity you fool! You [*sic*] a disgrace to the *man* race. It's time to run like a *real man*!" Mr. T starts to *shoot* Snickers' bars at the speed walker, "Take that speed walker! Do it again sucker and that's gonna [sic] be trouble with a capital Mr. T!" As the speed-walker starts to run like the implied way a *real man* should run, Mr. T looks at the camera and echoes the tagline, "Get some nuts" (Sweney, 2008a). This paper intentionally explores these older ads, as students may not be familiar with them, to examine students' feelings toward international advertising and ethics—examining cues understood in terms of gender and sexuality stereotyping.

The commercial with Mr. T and the speed walker was one of the three ads (Macleod, 2009) in the campaign that decreed upon its viewers, what *acting like a man* really means and the answer for those who don't, should *get some nuts*. A PR blitz followed the ad campaign—one in particular where Mr. T unveils his "Top 10 Must Do's" for becoming more of a man in that summer of 2008 (Sweney, 2008a).

Mars, Incorporated, the U.S. based confectionary giant, pulled off the ad fifteen days after its first airing, even though it did not air yet in the U.S. and it received almost no complaints or backlash in the U.K. (Sweney, 2008b). The *Advertising Standards Authority* in the U.K. said that during the campaign's run, they only received two complaints and hence, did not investigate the commercial for a breach of advertising code (Sweney, 2008b).

The US-based Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the largest LGBTQ+ advocacy group in the country, released a statement saying that the ad condones violence against LGBTQ+ community and those who don't conform to the idea of perceived masculinity (Sky News, 2008, p. 2). Bob Garfield, a columnist for *Advertising Age*, published an open letter to Omnicon president Jim Wren, asking immediate action against the ad (Garfield, 2008).

Hegemonic Construction of Masculinity

The homogenized notions of masculinity arise from hegemonic constructions of masculinity. Marxist thinker and writer, Antonio Gramsci (1995) was the first to develop the concept of hegemony. On cultural hegemony, Gramsci proposed that members of a ruling class or group in an attempt to exercise their power will suppress ideas and norms that go against the established norms.

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Gramsci's concept of hegemony is the basis for hegemonic masculinity, which enforces restrictions in behavior based on gender roles which favor the dominance of the masculine culture practiced by the majority of men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Courtenay, 2000; Parent, Gobble, & Rochlen, 2018). Resonance of formulated myths of masculinity are deeply imbued in cultural framework, where gender binary and its related actions are a part of the cultural resonance. Cultural resonance and myths are "interpretative toolkits that media and individuals use to narrate stories while explaining reality, promoting the values perceived as important to society, and reinforcing negative images of a group" (LaPoe, B. R., LaPoe, V. L., Berkowitz, & Bemker, 2018, p. 117).

Scholars first began discussing the concept of hegemonic masculinity, masculinity and its definition and the experience of men's bodies through their field studies of gender inequality in Australian High Schools (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kessler et al., 1982). Deriving their concept of hegemony from Gramsci, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) says, "hegemony did not mean violence, although it could be supported by force; it meant ascendency achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion" (p. 832). Hence, hegemonic masculinity defines a particular construct of being an honorable man and forces or persuades all other men to follow that construct ignoring the complexities and fluidities that lies in the core of male identity (Gutmann, 1996).

Fluidity in Masculine Identity

Several critics of hegemonic masculinity have argued that this singular, holistic approach to male identity is flawed as it cardinally imposes a construct of the character of men and determines a false sense of unity, when reality is fluid and contradictory (Petersen, 2003). The concept of masculinity is primarily defined on the biological dichotomy of sex; however, the resonance must also occur through the cultural defined aspects and fluidity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kimmel, 2004). Commenting on the whole construct of "boys-will-be-boys", Messner (2004) observes that not only gender and male identity, but race also plays an important role in defining hegemonic masculinity, that which is perpetuated and accepted. "Hegemonic masculinity is a malleable symbolic strategy for wielding power" (Messner, 2007, p. 478) and hence, like any form of bigotry, works only in favor of the conventionally defined straight-white-males (Messner, 2004, 2007).

Creating a Mental Construct: Priming Effects of Media

When transformed to the platform of media, priming affects people's cognition and subsequent behavior or judgements related to media content. Hence, priming is an "effect of some preceding stimulus or event on how we react…to subsequent stimulus" (Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R., Roskos-Ewoldsen, B., & Carpentier, 2002, p. 97). Media, in this sense acts as a prime, or an agent activating stimulus event that affects a pre-activated knowledge structure/s (Bargh, 1989; Pechmann, 2001).

Mass media coverage and presentations has the potential to activate particular cognitions, a mental construct, that promotes evaluation of other social elements, concepts and ideas (Domke, Shah, & Wackman, 1998). Schema theory, hence, suggests that the information processing or the evaluation that goes behind the reinterpretation of the mental construct that builds their cognitive knowledge structure, is connected to perception of the environment. The activation of the mental construct allows schema to act as a raw material (or provide a cue) to facilitate the shaping and processing of the information gathered, and its evaluation. This helps the individual to understand their surrounding social environment (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Graber, 1988).

Cognitive structures are temporally bound, which means that their activation depends on contextual cues and they remain accessible for a certain period of time; however, there is a positive relationship between the frequency of the contextual cues and the time period of accessibility (Wyer & Srull, 2014). Higher the frequency of the cues, higher the time period of the structures to stay in the cognition. Rather than forming a judgement based on their whole memory of knowledge, people tend to rely on these particular cognitive structures as they are easily accessible when activated by a contextual, familiar cue (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

Spreading Activation and Mental Models

Information and knowledge forms cognitive structures that are stored in memory in the form of nodes. These nodes are interrelated and helps to construct a concept. An activation threshold is connected to these nodes and when the activation level exceeds the threshold it triggers other connected concepts accordingly. Psychology describes this phenomenon as spreading activation in network models of memory (Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R., Roskos-Ewoldsen, B., & Carpentier, 2002). For example, if the node that stores the brand name *Chevrolet* is activated, there is a high probability that the node related to *car* will also be activated. Spreading activation works to minimize the activation threshold for other related nodes—closer the relation, lower is the activation threshold.

Framing and Priming

How the media disseminates its information; how it's framed and presented has a significant influence over human consciousness (Entman, 1993; Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1995). Entman defines framing as selection "of some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" of the intended information (1993, p. 52). This presentation leads to the creation of individual frames, which mentally stored as clusters of ideas that helps individuals process information (Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999). Framing of media content acts a prime to activate some preceding stimulus and process the information based on that stimulus. A relation between the two exists as priming helps to create a mental construct and framing helps to create the prime (Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R., Roskos-Ewoldsen, B., & Carpentier, 2002; Entman, 1993).

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A number of socio-structural or organizational variables influence the framing of information, news or event at a mass media level (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). However, at individual level an ideological variable may contribute towards framing of information (Tuchman, 1978). In the fourth stage of media effects, mass media have a strong impact in constructing social reality by "framing images of reality…in a predictable and patterned way" (McQuail, 1994, p. 331). This property of social constructivism that comes with media framing has the potential to reinforce and resonate stereotypes.

Cultural Resonance and Priming Stereotypes

Social constructivism caused by media framing and influence, depends mainly on media's transmission of certain ideologies related to familiar cultural themes that resonate with audience's existing perception of the environment. Mass media select and construct cultural themes to give coherent meaning (Ettema, 2005; Shomaker & Reese, 1996). This external construct of meaning, at media level, works the same way as mental construct of meaning at an individual level (Domke, Shah, & Wackman, 1998). When both these levels match or become similar, the message resonates to produce socio-cultural and traditional symbols (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Schudson (1989) hence, identifies resonance as a dimension of aphoristic cultural power where it (resonance) "is not a private relation between cultural object and individual, not even a social relation between cultural object and audience, but a public and cultural relation among object, tradition and audience" (p. 170).

Salient social constructs in memory, can also give rise to an individual's information processing, where that person scans everything he/she/they sees through the constructs that already exists in knowledge. Stereotyping rises from these constructs as media constructs tend to affect "Knowledge structures linking a social group to a set of traits or behavioral characteristics" (Hamilton & Sherman, 1994, p. 3). From this, Pechmann's (2001) "Stereotyping Priming Model" emerges. The model indicates that people who are exposed to related primes are far more likely to judge targets on stereotypic traits, as perceived on some other media construct earlier; and they will treat those targets accordingly. Scholars have conducted a number of studies on the effect of priming on reinforcing stereotypes: priming men to sexist videos to activate their sexist attitude towards women (Rudman & Bordiga, 1995); effects of consumer-rich television programs on adult students and their construction of social reality through them (O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997); and effects of antisocial rock music videos on subsequent antisocial behavior in youths (Hansen & Hansen, 1990).

Studies have also found that a celebrity endorser will produce more positive responses from consumers, create more resonance, than a non-celebrity endorser would (Atkin & Block, 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1983). Celebrities tend to transfer meaning to the products or brands (McCracken, 1989) by reflecting their own personalities to that product or the brand (Kaikati, 1987). The commercial, hence, attracts attention, remains memorable and the product becomes credible and desirable (Spielman, 1981). The prominent culture in which celebrities gain their status provides symbolic meanings and values to their

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stature (McCracken, 1989). Hence, in a way, choice of a particular celebrity endorser for a commercial is a strategic move to bring in the symbolic meanings attached to him/her/them that ultimately "mirrors the fundamental cultural orientations and values of that society" (Choi, Lee, & Kim, 2005, p. 86). Cultural orientations and values are apparent in advertising strategies. Studies have shown advertising messages that conform dominant cultural norms, tend to be more persuasive than those that go against the relative cultural values or norms (Cho et al., 1999; Han & Shavitt, 1994; Taylor, Miracle, & Wilson, 1997). It is, thus, easier to conform to existing biases, stereotypes and hegemony than to contradict them.

This study examines audience perception of stereotypical portrayals of (non) masculinity in a 30 second commercial of Snickers starring Mr. T. More formally, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: In what ways do college students view and process a historical advertisement in the present socio-cultural context, considering the ever-changing advertising landscape?

RQ2: What does the resonance of stereotypes imply about inter-gender, race and sexuality relations in society?

2. Method

This study begins with a qualitative conceptual analysis of the Snickers advertisement broadcasted in 2008 in the United Kingdom, starring Mr. T. The goal of this qualitative analysis is to understand how media primes the cognition of its audience through framing its content in a way that creates resonance and ultimately reaffirms stereotyping (Hansen & Hansen, 1990; O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997; Pechmann, 2001, Rudman & Bordiga, 1995). The themes that the researchers tackle in this study mainly includes hegemonic masculinity and reinforcing a singular idea of masculinity or manhood, discriminating against everyone else who exists beyond that stated gender norms. As Altheide (1996) once stated, the goal of qualitative research is to recognize the processes and characters of social life and to find a sort of meaning about it.

The researchers used Ettema's (2005) approach of analyzing and identifying figurative language used in the Snickers advertisement. Moreover, Berkowitz (2005) used a similar qualitative approach to his longitudinal study of symbols and motifs embedded in news content. He showed that frequent repetitions of certain narratives can lead to its adoption in general cognition.

This study also conducted a qualitative thematic analysis of student comments in a large Mid-Western university—examining the advertisement and its international ethical implications if the ad aired in 2018. Hence, in the Spring 2018, researchers separated students into two groups—one was to follow the American Advertising Federation Principles and Practices for Advertising Ethics (Institute for Advertising Ethics, 2011) and the other followed the British Code of Advertising Practice (The BCAP

Code, 2010). Students watched the ad, received a handout with the code of ethics, and responded on a sheet of paper if they would air the ad—and why—based on the code of ethics they were following. Following the exercise, students, who were not briefed on this ad, noted they were not aware of the public controversy surrounding this ad, which aired several years earlier. This research included 193 respondents, out of which 96 students (49.74%) replied for U.S. ethical standards and 97 students (50.26%) replied for U.K. ethical standards.

3. Results

Our first research question dealt with college students' processing of ethics in entertainment driven advertising. Majority of students, who participated in the survey (almost 61%), said that Mars should've discontinued the advertisement. The primary issue that the students had with the advertisement was that it was unethical in its portrayal of the speed walker as "less of a *man*" and the violence used in the commercial to convert him to a *real man*:

"...the way in which the commercial was filmed didn't serve high ethical standards". One respondent noted:

Ethical standards are put in place so that the media stays honest and neutral to serve the public. They should treat all consumers fairly. By seeing this commercial it is easy for people to identify that the commercial was unfair to a minority group.

The violence used to make a *real man* out of the speed walker has also been a cause for concern, according to these students:

"I would justify discontinuing the television commercial because of all the controversy going on pertaining to gay, lesbian, etc. Not to mention the violent presence in the commercial is very offensive here in the U.S. currently".

The commercial used violence against the speed walker to make him more *manly*-stereotyping the concept of manhood and masculinity, as one student said, "It advocates for violence against feminine men". Another one says that, "The ad does promote a sense of violence and discrimination against a type of group of people…"

Stereotyping of Men and/or "Real Men"

Students discussed concerns with the advertisement for it primes and fuel stereotypes, as many remarked, "...it offensively goes along with stereotypes and calls people out on being different..." and "it emphasizes negative masculine stereotypes. It also suggests that the man is 'a disgrace' due to his implied sexuality".

Commenting on the advertisement's framing of speed walking as a feminine, non-masculine trait, one student noted that such message can "send out the idea that any man who show feminine quality is not as much of a *man* as [a] more *masculine* man [would be]. Therefore, I would discontinue the ad".

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Language used in the commercial also became a factor for the students as one stated that he would lobby to discontinue the ad "because of the offensive language used in the ad. 'Run like a real man'. This is insinuating the speed walker was not a 'real man', in the eyes of the society and he shouldn't be speed walking because it questions his masculinity". Arguing for the discontinuation of the advertisement, one student says something similar: "it implies that men who aren't super macho should be hurt; that is offensive to those who are not...This ad does not serve the public".

The commercial's judgement on how to *act* as a man—on how to be a *real man* raises the concern for ethical fairness in inclusivity and promoting healthy self-image. "This relates to when the guy in the truck tells the guy running, 'disgrace to man's race'. One cannot judge another by the way one runs", a student observes. Students vented about the advertisement, noting it violates the freedom of an individual to act freely and be themselves and employs violence to mold them to the hegemonic concept of masculinity:

It suggested that violence and hyper-masculinity was encouraged to force another human into acting "normal". Whether or not this ad resembled homosexuals or not, it violated their right to freedom or to act as they please. Forcing another to act a certain way or dress or run a certain way can suggest inferiority and conformity, which can lead to increased discrimination against minorities.

Students also perceived that "the ad essentially portrays men who have what society has determined as more feminine qualities as less of a man, and that is morally wrong". Besides the fact that the advertisement "portrays certain stereotypes in a negative light…it could possibly encourage someone to make bad or harmful choices that they typically wouldn't". Use of dominancy and violence to impose mainstream characteristics is the root to toxic and hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Toxic Masculinity in Implications

While promoting a conceived idea on how to act as a *real man*, the commercial inadvertently crossed the boundaries of toxic masculinity. Toxic masculinity mushrooms on the spectrum of real manliness (Messner, 2007). As a student wrote, "the ad caters to toxic masculinity". By questioning the masculinity of the speed walker, the ad's creators, through humor, perpetrates the notion that his action was not masculine—that he wasn't acting the way a man should act.

The problematic approach of the commercial, supplies a medium for social construction of masculinity—what to accept and what to reject. Society is already brimming with stereotypes like this, where people who don't conform to gender binary more often than not, faces discrimination and hatred. The advertisement adds more fuel to that conversation by priming gender binary norms and ultimately strengthening stereotypes (Pechmann, 2001). A resonance, is thus, created from these priming stereotypes, however, acceptance of these stereotypes and taking offense is a subjective matter. Subjectivity is "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of

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herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world" (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). The personal interests and values—being attached to one's own emotion and preferences—that guides subsequent action and evaluation (Bloom, 1996; Smith, 1993).

Continuation and Subjective Interpretation

Students present prudent argument on dealing with the ethics of the advertisement based on any report that it might receive. Students said that, "If enough people reported the commercial for its content or its effects on its viewers, the ad should be reviewed and if found offensive discontinued". One even felt that the ad was "harmless and humorous rather than offensive".

Some students also pointed out that U.S.-based Human Rights Campaign (HRC), in itself, perpetrated stereotype of the LGBTQ+ community by making out the speed walker to be gay. This is significant as the whole rationale about pulling the ad lies in HRC saying that it was offensive to the LGBTQ+ community. As one writes, "The ethical standards in the U.K. need[s] evidence to link speed walking and homosexuality, [otherwise] the commercial should keep running." While another student says, "There is nowhere in the commercial that says the man fast walking is gay in the first place".

Even though these students argue for the continuation, they also reflect on the framing of the language used in the commercial. General consensus agrees that it is better to cut down on the ethically offensive message in the advertisement. One student note, "I would take out the sentence about being a real man, because I think that's the main argument on why the ad is offensive". Another one says that he "would discontinue running the advertisement because there is violence towards the speed walker and is told to 'run like a real man', which can be offensive to homosexuals and/or women". Similarly, "There are other stipulations regarding the issue of sex and gender issues. Even though it isn't specifically implied that the man running is a product of discrimination, there is still the slogan that resonates 'Get some nuts'".

Race and Stereotypes

However, one underlying meaning that this advertisement primes is regarding race representation. The overarching theme of the commercial has been toxic and hegemonic masculinity, and using an African American man behind the machine gun, opens door for further evaluation.

Using a Black man to promote violence is sure to activate mental constructs that is already lined with social constructs of stigmatized African American men with acts of violence (Entman, 1994; Ramasubramanian, 2007). Students also discusses this kind of stereotypes:

"Mr. T is black and violent in the commercial which is a large stereotype of African Americans today so they may find this ad offensive. Also, he is bullying the speed walker which is a frowned upon act today".

This kind of stereotyping creates social constructs, which transforms to mental constructs and stored in our memory as nodes. These nodes require small effect of media priming and framing to get activated.

Once activated they reinforces existing stereotypes and creates resonance. The positioning of a Black man behind the machine gun, which is an already stigmatized racial group, could have greater cognitive repercussion compared to a white man in the same position (Messner, 2007).

4. Discussion

Our qualitative analysis suggests that when reviewing, students found the commercial offensive, but still relied on the number of complaints made to the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) in 2008. The main issue appeared to be: the commercial poked fun at those who do not conform to the norms of traditional masculinity. Also, the advertisement condones the use of violence to convert men to *real men*. What is more concerning is that the advertisement when it aired in United Kingdom in 2008, only received two complaints (Sweney, 2008b), while a month prior to this AMV BBDO, the same ad agency that made the Snickers commercial, created an ad for Heinz Deli Mayo which showed two dads kissing received 213 complaints. The Heinz Deli Mayo ad was consequently pulled off the air because of the number of complaints it received (Advertising Educational Foundation, 2018). Within this study, the researchers believe this discrepancy may be rooted in the concepts of confirmation bias and cognitive dissonance. The Snickers ad starring Mr. T received only two complaints possibly because the ad confirms the audience's preconceived notions and ideas about masculinity (Nickerson, 1998)—feeding into their existing biases. Whereas, the Heinz Deli Mayo ad goes against generally accepted societal norms that is rich in hegemonic masculinity, which censures all other forms of men and masculinity, creating cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957).

This kind of negative portrayal of LGBTQ+ people has been widely accepted by the general consensus. LGBTQ+ community now, not only includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, but has extended to include and embrace one and all, especially those who do not conform to the gender binaries (Nowakowski, 2017); however, violence against this community has been in a steady rise. According to FBI reports of 2017, the percentage of attacks has remained the same, even after ten years. Moreover, 60% of these attacks targeted gay men, the highest in the category by 35 percentage points (Fitzsimons, 2018). Similarly, in a survey conducted in 2013 among a population of 1,197 LGBTQ+ adults, 58% of the respondent said that they are a constant target of slurs and jokes due to their sexuality (Pew Research Center, 2013).

These statistics are important to report as this study sought to answer how stereotypes regarding toxic masculinity builds and propagates. The majority of students (61%) said that they would discontinue the advertisement. These students appeared to understand the unethical message of the commercial and condemned the whole idea of the use of violence to convert a man to a *real man*. However, 39% of the students still said that they would continue the ad if it were to be broadcasted today. Given that a majority of the students said that they would discontinue, we can realize how the landscape of

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perception has changed. Recently, as we stated earlier, ASA received 125 complaints from viewers in United Kingdom regarding a Philadelphia cream cheese advertisement showing two hapless dads and a Volkswagen advertisement depicting men as overachievers and women in stereotypical caregiving roles (Picheta, 2019). The number of complaints is overwhelming and it shows that the landscape of media representation and its perception and acceptance has changed. A necessary step towards social recognition.

Conventional form of masculinity has implemented its roots in social cognition. The gender dichotomy fails to be inclusive and hence create discrimination against those who do not conform, in this widely diversifying world. Pew Research Center in 2017 (Parker, Horowitz, & Stepler, 2017a) reported that 53% of the American population said that they look up to men who are manly or masculine compared to only 7% who doesn't. Two-thirds of men (68%) and 60% of the population said that this idolization of masculinity is a good and positive thing (Parker, Horowitz, & Stepler, 2017a). The same data also revealed men observes personality traits like "emotional", "feeling", and "vulnerable" negatively. They do have a mixed view on "caring", where the scale is split 50-50 on that trait (Walker, Blallk, & van Kessel, 2018). About six-in-ten adults say that there is too little emphasis on encouraging boys to talk about their feelings (Parker, Horowitz, & Stepler, 2017b), whereas, more than eight-in-ten men say that they face pressure to be emotionally strong (Horowitz, 2019). While conceptualizing a masculine trait imbued with *care*, Elliot (2016, p. 252) says that "caring masculinities can be seen as masculine identities that exclude domination and embrace the affective, relational, emotional, and interdependent qualities of care identified by feminist theorists of care".

In a first-of-its-kind, American Psychological Association issued guidelines to help psychologists work with men and boys (Pappas, 2019). The guidelines indicated a number of fragmentations in male gender identity especially the existence of multiple masculinities. The development took the researchers 13 years, drawing from 40 years of research, to publish these guidelines. The guidelines said that a clinician's role should be "to encourage men to discard the harmful ideologies of traditional masculinity (violence, sexism) and find flexibility in the potential positive aspects (courage, leadership)" (Pappas, 2019, para. 33). APA asserts on the flexibility of manliness, the same tough demeanor that has the power to save a soldier's life in battlefield can destroy the domestic life with a romantic partner or a child (Pappas, 2019).

APA also said that the ideas and notions of traditional masculinity harms marginalized groups who don't conforms to those ideals and stereotypes. These men are bullied or attacked by other men and boys. Queer men, trans men and Asian men are stereotypically considered to be un-masculine to a point of societally-define feminine and this often leads to psychological distress (Berlatsky, 2019; Pappas, 2019).

Meanwhile, within the advertising industry, changes are occurring in terms of representation. In January 2019, Gillette, the grooming brand, published its new ad campaign with the tagline "Is this the best a man can get?" The one minute and 48 second advertisement addressed issues like toxic masculinity, sexual harassment and cat calling under the thick cloud of #metoo era (Kelly, 2019). Moreover, LGBTQ+ community and households are now considered an essential target audience for advertisers and TV show producers (Koblin, 2019). With the increase in the audience size, strategies are being developed and promoted for niche entrepreneurs to target and influence LGBTQ+ consumers (El Hazzouri, Main, & Sinclair, 2019; HRC, n.d.; Schneider & Auten, 2018).

Studies suggests that intergroup contact typically reduces intergroup prejudices (Patchen, 1999; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). This is the concept of Intergroup Contact Theory (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). In other words, the more there is an amalgamation of two groups who holds prejudiced view of the other, the more there is a chance that the prejudice will minimize (Ayoub & Garretson, 2017). Hence, it can be said that the more there is perceived *positive* representation of LGBTQ+ people as well as of men, who do not conform to the hegemonic norms of masculinity, the more it will become easier for society to accept them; or change their views and prejudices as well as become more prudent towards this whole issue.

This research also gives way to future studies based on gender representations in entertainment driven advertisement. Future studies could also include other advertisements and media content where stereotyping of men and masculinity has caused long drawn implications in the mind of the general conscious. This study tallied student feedback and notes that this is convenient and not generalizable data; however, we hope this study provides intuitive assistance for future explorations of media priming promoting masculine hegemonic, gender stereotyping and prejudice, along with ethical pressure of standards, by incorporating existing literature and thematic analysis of media content and student survey.

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