Toms Kreicbergs

THE CONCEPT OF MASCULINITY IN BRAND PERSONALITY AND ITS IMPACT ON ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS

Summary of the Doctoral Thesis

RIGA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management

Institute of Business Engineering and Management

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Doctoral Student of the Study Programme "Management Science and Economics"

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RTU Press

Riga 2024

Kreicbergs, T. The Concept of Masculinity in Brand Personality and Its Impact on Advertising Effectiveness. Summary of the Doctoral Thesis. – Riga: RTU Press, 2024. – 52 p.

Published in accordance with the decision of the Promotion Council "RTU P-09" of 1st of March 2024, No. 04030-9.9.2-e/2.

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DOCTORAL THESIS PROPOSED TO RIGA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY FOR PROMOTION TO THE SCIENTIFIC DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF SCIENCE

To be granted a Ph. D. in Social Sciences, the present Doctoral Thesis has been submitted for defence at the open meeting of RTU Promotion Council on 26th of June, 2024, at The Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management of Riga Technical University, Kalnciema street 6, Room 209.

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DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I, Toms Kreicbergs, hereby declare that the Doctoral Thesis submitted for review to Riga Technical University for promotion to the Ph. D. in Social Sciences is my own. I confirm that this Doctoral Thesis has not been submitted to any other university for promotion to a scientific degree.

The Doctoral Thesis has been written in English. It consists of an Introduction, 4 chapters, Conclusions, 44 figures, 44 tables, and 43 appendices; the total number of pages is 194, not including appendices. The Bibliography contains 194 titles.

ABSTRACT

Consumers' changing perception of masculinity has created a problem for brand strategists and advertisers. Since masculinity is now branded, and men are increasingly marketed to and offered visions of masculinity for consumption, masculinity is now considered to be one of the most prominently used social resources within advertising. However, it is difficult to create a masculine brand personality and depict masculinity in a way that will resonate with the audience and not create an intense backlash from consumers and society. This issue is particularly pressing when a brand is communicating with younger audiences aged 15–24 years (Generation Z) and aged 25–35 (millennials) that have been influenced by popular culture besides more traditional upbringing.

The topicality of the Doctoral Thesis research is related to the challenges the brand strategists and advertisers face concerning the ever-changing consumer perceptions of masculinity. Given the importance of masculinity in advertising, this research is relevant in terms of both marketing and economic considerations.

To achieve the goal of the Thesis, masculinity as a concept, various types of it, and consumer perception influencing factors of it are analyzed. Brand personality theories are used to create a theoretical framework for assessing masculinity depiction in brand personality and advertising. The research answers what Latvian Generation Z and millennial consumers think about masculinity in advertising and which brand archetypes, brand personality dimensions, and types of masculinity are the most preferable in advertising. The developed methodology of creating a masculine brand personality was applied and approved in various companies such as Madara Cosmetics, advertising agency WKND and their client Virši-A, and communication and media agency Dentsu Latvia.

CONTENTS

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE THESIS

The interplay between masculinity in advertising and brand personality is an essential aspect of contemporary marketing that delves into the complex realms of brand positioning and consumer expectations. Branding and advertising both have a significant role in the prosperity of a company since they affect consumers' attitudes toward the brand and the products and services of that company. Advertising reflects core aspects of the brand, and it is the visible part of brand strategy that can be viewed and analyzed. After all, the primary role of advertising is to convey a brand's core message in support of an overall brand positioning. Advertising is also significant for any brand because it strongly influences brand perception. However, advertising is complicated because it is more than just creativity, humor, and entertainment; it is researching and understanding consumer behavior and effectively communicating brand identity to consumers. A significant part of that brand identity is brand personality, which is one of the main focuses of this Doctoral Thesis. Consumers communicate their personality through consumption, seeking to find brands that match their personality. Consumers view brand personality as an extension of their own, and advertising expresses that brand personality.

In the last two decades, marketers and researchers have understood that masculinity could also be crucial to brand personality building. Therefore, research analyzing masculinity's significant effect on branding and advertising has increased exponentially. Advertising has long been a powerful tool for shaping perceptions and influencing consumer behavior, and the portrayal of masculinity within this context plays a pivotal role in constructing brand personalities. Many researchers suggest that masculinity is now branded, and men are increasingly marketed to and offered visions of masculinity for consumption. Masculinity is now considered one of the most prominently used social resources within advertising. Masculinity in advertising helps the company connect with its audience and convince them that the advertised product is crucial to achieving such a version of masculinity as portrayed.

The problem is that consumer perception of masculinity is changing, so advertisers do not know how to speak to consumers' perceptions. The research suggests that when brands understand the audience's preferences, they can communicate more effectively and depict essential and sensitive topics in their advertising, such as masculinity, in a more favorable way. It is necessary because brands do not want to receive negative backlash but instead want their message to resonate with the audience. In other words, marketing communication will sync with what consumers think and appreciate. Furthermore, appropriate and contemporary depiction of masculinity in advertising also presents an opportunity since men now consume products that until recently were deemed as wrong to them because they were considered too

feminine. This trend is evident in the grooming product industry and younger generations, where men spend much more money on these products and services than ever before, mainly because of the increase in promotion in mass media. For instance, in the US, 39 % of the Gen Z demographic (18–25) purchase makeup products (21 % with high regularity), and 35 % of men aged 26–40 shop for makeup at least once a month. The men's beauty and personal care (BPC) segment is one of the fastest and most stable growing segments in the cosmetics industry. According to industry experts, the market for men's personal care in Europe is expected to grow by 9–10 % from 2022 to 2030. Furthermore, companies like Madara Cosmetics have tripled their male audience from 2019 to 2020, proving this trend of increasing male interest in beauty and personal care products, as well as locally in Latvia. However, research on masculinity in brand personality and advertising is relatively limited, and there is a significant lack of academic literature on this topic, which further emphasizes the importance of Thesis research within the field of branding and advertising.

The focus on masculinity in branding and advertising presents some complicated decisions regarding how to portray men. For instance, should the man be depicted as an assertive and decisive breadwinner who takes care of the whole family, or should the man be portrayed as someone who is confident and charming and seduces all the women he encounters, or perhaps as someone who is a caring father and expresses emotion, sense of equality and shows sensitivity? This research is conducted not only to understand which type of masculinity the consumers appreciate more, therefore, on which masculinity type the marketers should focus on in their branding but also to understand which masculinity archetypes, brand archetypes, and brand personality dimensions consumers appreciate more, thus suggesting the relevance for the advertisers.

The **topicality** of this research is centered on the challenges of ever-changing consumer perceptions of masculinity that brand strategists and advertisers face today. Given the importance of masculinity in advertising, this research is relevant in terms of marketing and economic considerations.

The **research aim** is to ascertain the most appropriate ways to create a masculine brand personality that can be effectively communicated through advertising to the respective audience of a particular brand.

To reach **the goal of the Doctoral Thesis**, the following objectives are set:

➢ To analyze the theoretical background of the masculinity concept, including masculinity definitions, various types of masculinity, influencing factors of consumers' perceptions, and archetypes of masculinity.

➢ Examine the theoretical background of brand personality, including brand personality dimensions, brand archetypes, and their convergence with masculinity.

➢ To analyze how masculinity is used in creating a brand personality and communicating it to the consumers through advertising.

➢ To explore Latvian consumers' (Gen Z's and millennials') perception and reaction of how masculinity is currently presented in advertising.

➢ Based on Doctoral Thesis research, to develop a methodology for marketing professionals to create a new masculine brand personality that can be effectively communicated to consumers.

To better understand the research topic, the author raised research questions from the study but also put forward a hypothesis to test the theoretical issues drawn from the literature review.

The **research questions** are:

RQ1. What is the concept of masculinity, and how significant is it in the context of brand personality and advertising?

RQ2. How is masculinity currently depicted in brand personality and advertising, and which brand personality dimensions and brand archetypes are used to display various types of masculinity?

RQ3. What type of masculinity, brand archetypes, and brand personality dimensions do Latvian Generation Z and millennial consumers prefer the most in advertisements emphasizing masculinity?

The **object** of this Doctoral Thesis is masculinity in brand personality.

The **subject** of this Doctoral Thesis is the impact of masculinity in brand personality on advertising effectiveness.

The following **hypotheses** are put forward:

H1. Masculinity as a concept has significant importance in creating a brand personality and expressing it to consumers through advertising.

H2. Branding and advertising professionals mainly focus on traditional masculine stereotypes when creating brand personalities and depicting men in their advertising.

H3. Generation Z and millennial consumers in Latvia prefer brand personalities centered around more modern and inclusive versions of masculinity and more modern portrayals of masculinity in advertising.

The Doctoral Thesis employs generally accepted theoretical **research methods**. This research's theoretical and methodological base is scientific studies and research conducted outside Latvia described in scientific journal publications, conference proceedings found in Scopus and Web of Science databases, and the author's empirical research analysis.

The methods for this Doctoral Thesis include scientifically approved quantitative and qualitative research methods for data analysis. The scientific research analyzing consumer perceptions and opinions of masculinity in advertising included the survey, A/B test, and focus group interviews. Furthermore, qualitative content analysis, sentiment analysis, discourse analysis, statistical analysis, comparative, analytical, and graphic methods were applied in the research.

The programs used for data processing were SPSS 23, Nvivo 11, Trint, and Microsoft Excel.

Theoretical and methodological basis of the Doctoral Thesis:

Aaker (1997), Mark & Pearson (2001), Birch et al. (2017), Smith (2012), Bordo (2011), Månsdotter et al. (2009), Kimmel (1996), Zayer et al. (2020), Rogers (2019), Connell (2014), Ging (2013), Oswald (2007), Ging (2019), Eisen et al. (2019), Scheibling & Lafrance (2019), Salzman et al. (2005), Kimmel (2006), Branchik et al. (2012), Alexander (2003), Montemurro et al. (2019, p. 873), Moore & Gillette (1990), Jung (1954, Valaei et al. (2016), Ourahmoune (2016), Bechter et al. (2016), Xara-Brasil et al. (2018), De Meulenaer et al. (2018), Quesenberry (2018), Graves (2010), Fairclough (2013), Artun, Levin (2015), Hsieh & Shannon (2005).

Research limitations consist of several aspects. This research is limited to masculinity and its impact on brand personality in advertising. The research focuses solely on brand personality regarding branding, which plays a vital role in the science of marketing. This research is limited to advertising to express the brand personality to the audience. The research does not focus on direct marketing, public relations, product placement, or other means to represent the brand.

Regarding advertising effectiveness, the research mainly focuses on consumer perceptions of the advertisements; therefore, it primarily uses qualitative data, not quantitative. The research makes general assumptions about advertisers' goals since each company might have different goals for their specific advertising campaign, which would be unknown to a researcher. Nevertheless, there are general goals that all advertisers would want to accomplish, such as

getting positive feedback from consumers, reaching a high consumer engagement rate, and increasing brand awareness, to name a few. Finally, the research does not look into sales numbers, which would be the primary goal of any company when it comes to branding and advertising, because sales numbers could increase or decrease for a variety of reasons, such as new product features, price changes, geopolitical reasons, competitor activities, and other factors.

The scientific novelty of the Doctoral Thesis research:

1. For the first time, a classification of masculinity types based on their characteristics is presented, which could be applied to identifying these types of masculinity in advertising and other forms of marketing communication and applied in different scientific areas, not only marketing.

2. Defining masculinity as a concept is used in marketing research with brand personality and archetypes to understand brand personality and its possible connection with the audience.

3. A new interdisciplinary approach using the convergence of masculinity type classification with elements from several theories, such as brand archetypes, brand personality dimensions, and masculinity archetypes, has been made in the Thesis research.

4. The developed approach of grouping brands of an entire industry according to the masculinity types displayed in their marketing communication is revealed.

5. A new approach is presented to analyze the advertising effectiveness of the new masculine brand personality to understand consumer perceptions of masculinity in advertising.

6. Based on the Thesis research, the methodology of creating a new masculine brand personality is developed and validated within Latvian companies, which includes strengthening their brand personality and increasing the chance of resonating with their audience. Furthermore, the research design and methodology could be adapted to help researchers and marketing professionals research and analyze femininity in branding and advertising.

The practical contribution of the Doctoral Thesis research to the advertising industry:

1. The methodology of creating a new masculine brand personality enables brand strategists and advertisers to assess and implement masculinity in their brand's personality to form a stronger connection with their audience. Furthermore, the research

design and methodology could be adapted to help marketing professionals with femininity in branding and advertising.

2. The research results allow marketing practitioners to understand better and pay attention to the significance of brand personality, the role of masculinity in it, and consumers' ever-changing perceptions of it.

3. The methodology of creating a new masculine brand personality also enables brand strategists and advertisers to find appropriate influencers who could resonate with the audience and express the brand personality.

4. The developed methodology was assessed and integrated into companies to strengthen their brand's growth and appeal. References from each company confirming the practical contribution to the industry are included in Appendices 41–43 of the Thesis.

5. The research results have been approved and included in study materials of study programs and courses devoted to marketing in higher educational institutions.

Defense arguments:

➢ Masculinity is a complex concept for brand personality that requires a deep understanding of consumers' perceptions. By understanding masculinity, it is possible to better reach the audience with advertising and brand personality regarding the message resonating with them.

➢ Consumer preferences for masculinity characteristics, masculinity and brand archetypes, and brand personality dimensions differ from branding and advertising practitioners' perceptions.

➢ Branding and advertising professionals could benefit from the methodology of masculinity used in the brand personality creation process to increase the effectiveness of their advertising efforts.

Structure and volume of the Doctoral Thesis. The Doctoral Thesis comprises an introduction, four main chapters, conclusions, and recommendations. The volume of the Thesis is 194 pages, excluding appendices. Forty-four figures and 44 tables illustrate the content of the Thesis. The Thesis has 43 appendices. The bibliography contains 190 reference sources.

Chapter 1 of the Thesis defines the research area and examines masculinity. From analyses of masculinity definitions, it was established that it is a socially constructed concept; therefore, social construction theory was applied to deepen the understanding. The literature review uncovered three major masculinity types: traditional, hybrid, and modern. These types of masculinity are used throughout the research. There is also the identification of factors that

impact consumer perceptions of masculinity and analysis of masculinity archetypes. The research question (RQ1) is partially answered.

Chapter 2 of the Thesis further defines the research area and examines brand personality and advertising as a way to communicate brand personality. The chapter also describes masculinity's significant role in brand personality and advertising. The author focuses on the two major theoretical frameworks of brand personality, such as brand personality dimensions (Aaker, 1997) and brand archetypes (Mark, Pearson, 2001). There is also a literature review analysis of traditional, hybrid, and modern masculinity in advertising. As a result of these analyses, the research topicality, aim, and research questions were formulated. The research question (RQ1) is fully answered, and the research question (RQ2) is partially answered. Hypothesis 1 is confirmed.

Chapter 3 of the Thesis explains quantitative and qualitative research methods and methodology. The mixed method analysis provided inconclusive results; therefore, additional studies were conducted, such as surveys, A/B testing, and focus group consumer interviews. The data analysis of quantitative and qualitative studies and results are provided, along with the explored and confirmed research questions and hypotheses. The research question (RQ2) is fully answered. Qualitative video content analysis showed that advertisers and brand strategists use traditional masculinity more frequently in advertising (confirming H2). At the same time, A/B testing and focus groups proved that Latvian Generation Z and millennial consumers find modern masculinity depictions more appealing and preferable (confirming H3). The research question (RQ3) was answered.

Chapter 4 of the Thesis presents the methodology of creating a new masculine brand personality. It describes the Thesis research findings and proposed methodology approbation within Madara Cosmetics, the advertising agency WKND and their client Virši-A, and the media and communication agency Denstu Latvia.

The research was conducted from 2019 to 2023, and data approbation was made by presenting the progress and results of the research at **sixteen** international academic conferences, in **eleven** internationally recognized scientific publications indexed in the SCOPUS database, and in conference proceedings and anonymously peer-reviewed scientific articles published in international journals and available in other databases.

Topics of the Doctoral Thesis presented at **scientific conferences**

1. The 27th World Multi-Conference on Systemics, Cybernetics, and Informatics (WMSCI 2023), academic report "Consumer Perceptions of Masculinity in Advertising: The Viewpoint of Generation Z and Millennials", September 12–15, 2023, Orlando, Florida, USA.

2. Society of Open Innovation & Department of Economics, Management, Institutions of the University of Frederico II of Naples 2023 Conference "New Way of Open Innovation and Open Business Model after Pandemic for the Recovery of World Economy," academic report "Brand and masculinity archetypes as an innovative research approach for analyzing consumer preferences on masculinity in advertising", July 12–15, 2023, Naples, Italy.

3. The 14th International Conference on Society and Information Technologies: ICSIT 2023, academic report "Mixed Method Research on Consumer Perception of Traditional and Modern Masculinity in Advertising", March 28–31, 2023, Orlando, Florida, USA.

4. Scientific conference on Economics and entrepreneurship" SCEE 2022, academic report "A Quantitative research study of Gen Z's and Millennials Opinions on Masculinity in Advertising", October 13, 2022, Riga, Latvia.

5. 4th International Conference on Advanced Research Methods and Analytics (CARMA 2022), academic report "What are Gen Z's and Millennials' Opinions on Masculinity in Advertising: a Qualitative Research Study", June 30– July 1, 2022, Valencia, Spain.

6. 12th International Scientific Conference "Business and Management 2022" academic report "The Analysis of Masculinity in Advertising: A Qualitative Study Based on Consumer Engagement in Digital Environment", May 12–13, 2022, Vilnius, Lithuania.

7. 13th International Multi-Conference on Complexity, Informatics, and Cybernetics: IMCIC 2022, academic report "The Phenomenon of Traditional Masculinity and Its Impact on Advertising: a Qualitative Study Based on Consumer Engagement in Digital Environment", March 8–11, 2022, Orlando, Florida, USA.

8. Riga Technical University 62nd International Scientific Online Conference "Scientific Conference on Economics and Entrepreneurship", academic report "Qualitative Research Study of Traditional Masculinity in Advertising: Analysis of Consumer Perceptions", October 14, 2021, Riga, Latvia.

9. 18th International Scientific Conference hosted by the Faculty of Business and Management, Brno University of Technology, academic report "The Use of Traditional Masculinity to Enhance Advertising Effectiveness: a Qualitative Study of Consumer Engagement in Digital Environment", September 16–17, 2021, Brno, Czech Republic.

10. 2021 IEEE ICTE Leading Digital Transformation in Business and Society Kaunas Technical University, academic report "Consumers' Behavioral Psychology Research Using Big Data Analysis: Case Study of Masculinity Perceptions in Advertising and Popular Culture Channels", August 24–27, 2021, Kaunas, Lithuania.

11. SOI & Riga Technical University (2021). Conference: Open Innovation and Business Model after Pandemic of Covid-19, academic report "The Effectiveness of Depicting Traditional Masculinity in Advertising", July 12–15, 2021, South Korea.

12. 11th International Conference on Applied Economics: Contemporary issues in the economy, academic report "How Can Traditional Masculinity Affect Advertising Efficiency?" June 17–18, 2021, Poland.

13. 61st Riga Technical University International Scientific Online Conference: "Scientific Conference on Economics and Entrepreneurship" SCEE'2020, academic report "The Use of Various Types of Masculinity in Company's Marketing Message", October 16, 2020, Riga, Latvia.

14. The 11th International Multi-Conference on Complexity, Informatics, and Cybernetics: IMCIC 2020, academic report "Discourse Analysis of Modern Masculinity in Advertising", March 10–13, 2020, Orlando, Florida, USA.

15. 60th International Scientific Conference "Scientific Conference of Economics and Entrepreneurship", academic report "Discourse Analysis of Modern Masculinity in Advertising", October 14, 2019, Riga, Latvia.

16. International Camp- Conference "Smithy of Ideas 2019", academic report "Gender Discourse Analysis of Modern Masculinity in Marketing Communication," October 10–12, 2019, Kelme, Lithuania.

Approbation of the Thesis research results in publications
Scientific articles indexed in the Web of Science and/or Scopus and/or ERIH database:

1. Kreicbergs, T., Ščeulovs, D. (2023). "Generation Z's and Millennials' Perception of Masculinity in Advertising: A Challenge for Advertisers" Trends in Economics and Management, Vol. 17, No. 41, pp. 21–39. http://dx.doi.org/10.13164/trends.2023.41.21

2. Kreicbergs, T., Ščeulovs, D. (2022). "The Use of Brand and Masculinity Archetypes in Assessing Consumer Engagement in Advertising" Trends in Economics and Management, Vol. 16, No. 40, pp. 21–38. http://dx.doi.org/10.13164/trends.2022.40.21

3. Kreicbergs, T., Ščeulovs, D. (2024). "A Qualitative Study of Consumer Perceptions About Masculinity in Advertising: Content, Sentiment, and Discourse Analysis". *International*

Journal of Learning and Change. Vol. 16, No. 2/3 (Accepted for publication and scheduled to be published in April 2024). http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJLC.2023.10060129

4. Kreicbergs, T., Ščeulovs, D., Bernovskis, A. (2024). Brand and masculinity archetypes as an innovative research approach for analyzing consumer preferences on masculinity in advertising. Journal of Open Innovation, Vol. 10, Issue 1. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joitmc.2023.100184

Publication (anonymously reviewed) in journals with an international editorial board indexed in other databases:

5. Kreicbergs, T. (2023). "The Analysis of Masculinity in Advertising: A Qualitative Study Based on Consumer Perceptions". *Economics and Business.* Vol. 36, No. 1. pp. 135–151. https://doi.org/10.2478/eb-2023-0009

6. Kreicbergs, T., Ščeulovs, D. (2023). "Consumer Perceptions of Masculinity in Advertising: The Viewpoint of Generation Z and Millennials". Journal Systemics, Cybernetics, and Informatics. Vol. 21, No. 2. pp. 47–54. https://doi.org/10.54808/JSCI.21.02.47

Publications in conference proceedings indexed in Web of Science and/or SCOPUS:

7. Kreicbergs, T., Ščeulovs, D. (2023). Consumer perceptions of masculinity in advertising: The viewpoint of Generation Z and Millennials. Proceedings of the 27th World Multi-Conference on Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics (WMSCI 2023) https://doi.org/10.54808/WMSCI2023.01.299

8. Kreicbergs, T., Ščeulovs, D. (2023). Mixed Method Research on Consumer Perception of Traditional and Modern Masculinity in Advertising. Proceedings of the 14th International Conference on Society and Information Technologies (ICSIT 2023) https://doi.org/10.54808/ICSIT2023.01.129

9. Kreicbergs, T., Ščeulovs, D., Andersone, I. (2022). The Phenomenon of Traditional Masculinity and Its Impact on Advertising: A Qualitative Study Based on Consumer Engagement in Digital Environment. IMCIC 2022 – 13th International Multi-Conference on Complexity, Informatics and Cybernetics, Proceedings 2, pp. 65–70. https://doi.org/10.54808/IMCIC2022.02.65

10. Kreicbergs, T., Ščeulovs, D. (2022) "The Analysis of Masculinity in Advertising: A Qualitative Study Based on Consumer Engagement in Digital Environment", 12th International Scientific Conference Business and Management 2022. pp. 774–782. https://doi.org/10.3846/bm.2022.786

11. Kreicbergs, T., Ščeulovs, D. (2020). Discourse analysis of modern masculinity in advertising. IMCIC 2020 – 11th International Multi-Conference on Complexity, Informatics and Cybernetics, Proceedings 2, pp. 105–110. ISBN: 978-195049232-9

ACCOUNT OF CONTENTS OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

In order to provide a clear layout of the results achieved in the Doctoral Thesis, the author offers a logical scheme portraying the parts of the Thesis, as well as the primary study activities and elaborations (Fig. 1).
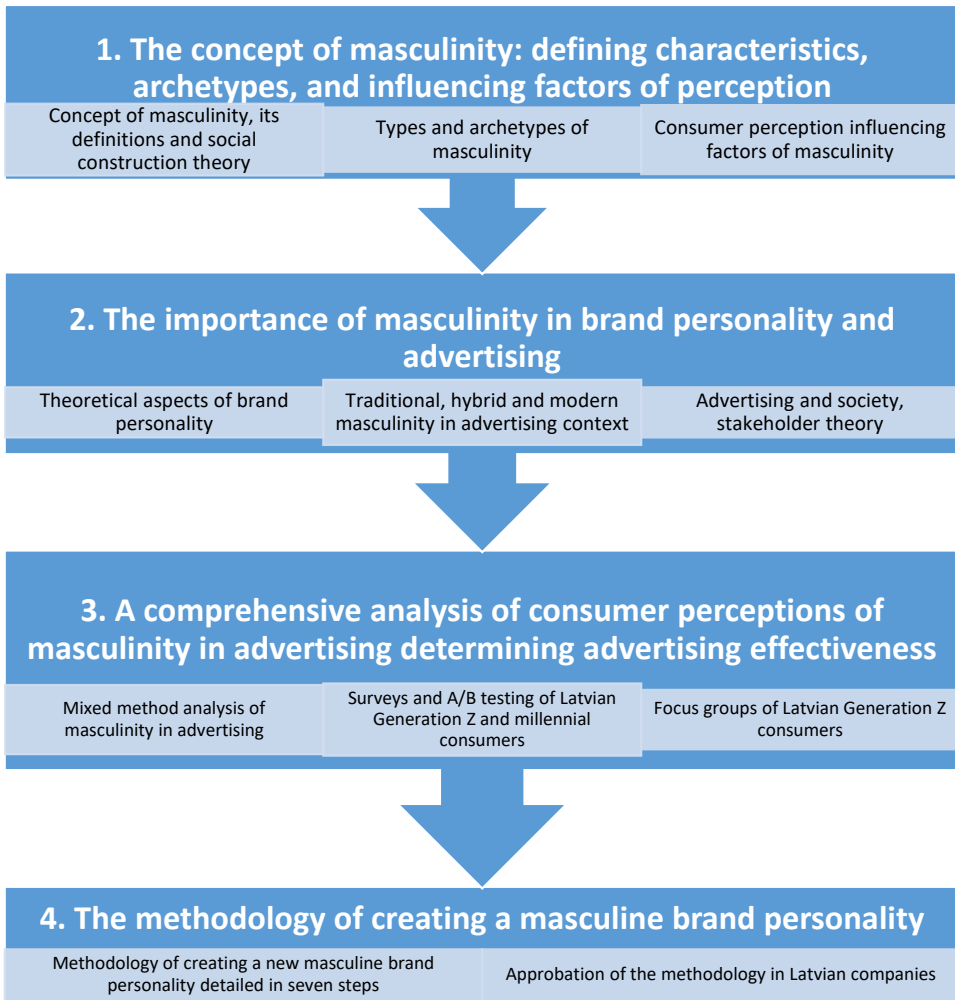
1. The concept of masculinity: defining characteristics, archetypes, and influencing factors of perception

| Concept of masculinity, its definitions and social construction theory | Types and archetypes of masculinity | Consumer perception influencing factors of masculinity |

2. The importance of masculinity in brand personality and advertising

| Theoretical aspects of brand personality | Traditional, hybrid and modern masculinity in advertising context | Advertising and society, stakeholder theory |

3. A comprehensive analysis of consumer perceptions of masculinity in advertising determining advertising effectiveness

| Mixed method analysis of masculinity in advertising | Surveys and A/B testing of Latvian Generation Z and millennial consumers | Focus groups of Latvian Generation Z consumers |

4. The methodology of creating a masculine brand personality

| Methodology of creating a new masculine brand personality detailed in seven steps | Approbation of the methodology in Latvian companies |

Fig. 1. Logical scheme of the Doctoral Thesis (created by the author).

Chapter 1 of the Doctoral Thesis includes an in-depth analysis of masculinity as a concept. The author focuses on masculinity definitions, masculinity archetypes, and consumer perceptions influencing masculinity factors. The chapter deals with theoretical aspects of social construction theory since masculinity, as concluded, is a social construct.

Based on the literature review, the author found and analyzed the definitions of masculinity, which was necessary to understand how masculinity can be defined. The author calls masculinity a concept because a concept is an abstract idea. As is noticeable from the masculinity definitions, scholars prefer to leave a certain amount of ambiguity when defining masculinity. There is some repetition and overlap within the definitions of masculinity, meaning that some words are evident in several definitions. The most frequently used terms in masculinity definitions are social, culture, society, and behavior (Fig. 2).
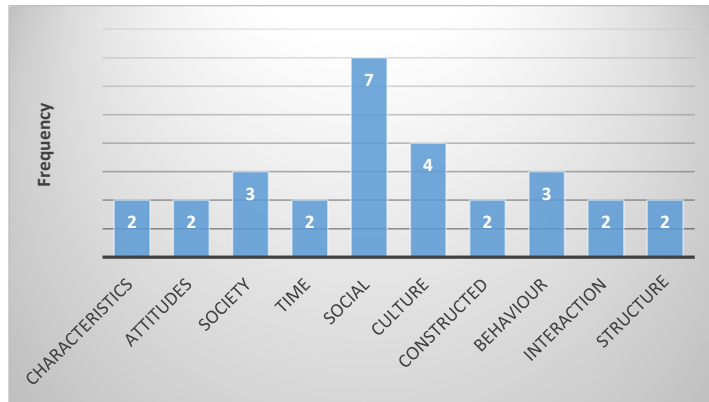

Fig. 2. The frequency of the used words in masculinity definitions (created by the author).

Based on masculinity definitions and the literature review analyzing masculinity as a concept from 88 scientific research articles, it became clear that masculinity's most critical aspect is the socially constructed concept. It means that the idea of masculinity is not created individually but rather collectively by society as a culturally and socially constructed concept. That gives a significant relevance to social construction theory. The theory argues that reality is constructed by social interaction and not by the thoughts of individuals. The idea of social construction theory is that many aspects of our world are considered objective facts of life when, in fact, these aspects derive from patterns of social interaction that have become institutionalized.

The author also concluded that researchers mainly distinguish three types of masculinity: traditional, hybrid, and modern or inclusive (Table 1 and Fig. 3). The masculinity characteristics were confirmed during the focus groups with the Latvian audience (men's, women's, and mixed focus groups in Chapter 3.3.2 in the Thesis).

Table 1

Grouping of Types of Masculinity and Their Characteristics (created by the author, the novelty of this research)

Type of masculinity	Characteristics	Authors
Traditional masculinity (including hegemonic masculinity, and toxic masculinity)	Competitiveness, having physical strength, virility, machoism, striving to be a hero, having financial success, emotionally strong, independent, rejecting displays of femininity or fear, ambition and self-reliance, being a breadwinner, athletic, decisive and taking risks, having sense of entitlement, dominant, patriotic, powerful, wealthy, having privilege, aggressive, brave.	Franz-Balsen (2014), Walters et al. (2019), Birch et al. (2017), Smith (2012), Bordo (2011), Månsdotter et al. (2009), Kimmel (1996), Jaffe (1990), Stern (1992), Zayer et al. (2020), Rogers (2019), Connell (2014), Montemurro et al. (2019), Pollack (2017), Ging (2013), Oswald (2007)
Hybrid masculinity (including flexible masculinity and complicit masculinity)	Having privilege, being strategic, sensitive, caring, open-minded, emphatic, with an interest in maintaining male dominance, having a less rigid view of gender norms, being able to adapt, and being emotionally available.	Montemurro et al. (2019), Connell (2014), Ging (2019), Eisen et al. (2019), Scheibling, Lafrance (2019), Gee (2014), Zayer et al. (2020), Hirschman (2003)
Modern masculinity (including inclusive masculinity and new masculinity)	Having a sense of equality, rejecting gender conformity, having feminine characteristics, emasculating, metrosexuality, choice-based rhetoric, being forward-thinking, progressive, having an interest in culture, emotionally expressive, sensitive and compassionate, narcissistic, immature, open-minded, having an interest in fashion, being brave enough to be whoever the man wants to be.	Rogers (2019), Coad (2008), Salzman et al. (2005), Lalancette & Cormack (2018), Cheng (1999), Kimmel (1996, 2006), Branchik et al. (2012), Oswald (2007), Coad (2008), Ging (2013, 2019)

The characteristics of these masculinity types are later tested and confirmed during empirical research analyzing advertisements, which involves conducting qualitative video content analysis, A/B testing, and focus groups, making it a triangulation method approach.
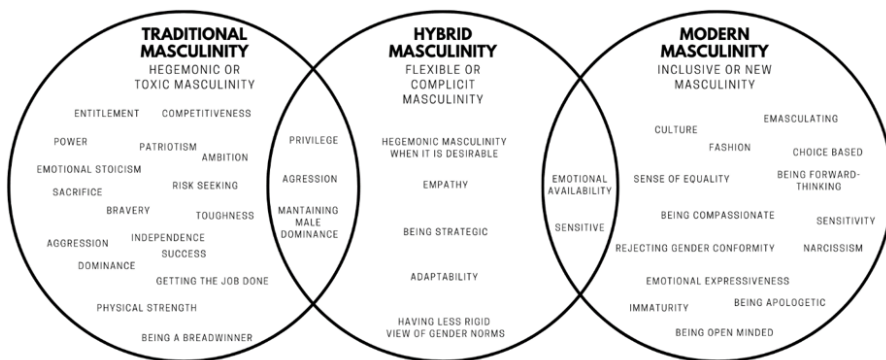
Fig. 3. Types of masculinity and their key characteristics, behaviors and rhetoric (created by the author, the novelty of this research).

During the literature review process of analyzing masculinity and various types of it, the author identified factors that influence how people perceive masculinity. The factors were identified based on the frequency mentioned in the scientific literature. Throughout the literature review, many factors were discovered as potential factors that influence how masculinity is perceived by society or the audience from the advertiser's perspective. The factors were confirmed during the focus groups with the Latvian audience (men's, women's, and mixed focus groups in Chapter 3.3.2 in the Thesis). The influencing factors of consumers' perception of masculinity are family and upbringing, school and government policies, culture, social norms, equality and feminism, traditional and social media, advertising, popular culture, and other factors, proving that environmental and behavioral factors influence people's perceptions.

During the literature search on masculinity, the author discovered that scholars have created archetypes of masculinity that derive from the significant contribution to the science of psychology that was made by Carl Jung, who initially established archetypes. The archetype is a concept relating to behavior, or more specifically, a pattern of behavior, as a part of a larger theoretical model. According to Carl Gustav Jung's theory, archetypes are components of the "collective unconscious, deeply embedded personality patterns that resonate within us and serve to organize and give direction to human thought and action" (Jung, 1954, p. 77). The author found that Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette took Carl Jung's archetype theory and created four masculinity archetypes (King, Magician, Lover, and Warrior) as critical concepts in masculinity. Today, many world-renowned psychologists consider these four archetypes to be the building blocks of masculinity (Fig. 4). It is worth noting that archetypes are also used in branding and advertising (Chapter 2.1.2 in the Thesis).

King

Tyrant   Weakling

Lover

The addicted lover   The impotent lover

Magician

The detached manipulator   The denying indecent one
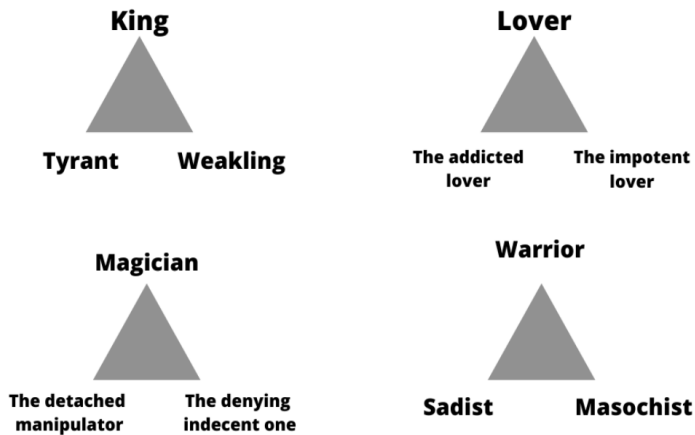
Warrior

Sadist   Masochist

Fig. 4. Masculinity archetype theory (Moore & Gillette, 1990).

The criticism of masculinity archetype theory is that some of the characteristics of one masculinity archetype overlap with another. For instance, being creative overlaps between the King and Magician, while self-sacrifice overlaps between the Warrior and the King, to name a few examples. However, according to Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette, most characteristics are exclusive to only one masculinity archetype (Table 1.4 in the Thesis).

Chapter 1 introduces the complexity of masculinity, its definitions, types, and influencing factors of consumer perception of it, as well as different archetypes of masculinity. The author concludes that researchers mainly distinguish traditional, hybrid, and modern masculinity types, with mainly traditional and modern having stark differences. The author also emphasizes that masculinity can mostly be characterized as a socially constructed concept or phenomenon that is relevant to social construction theory. The research question (RQ1) is partially answered; for instance, the author found answers to the RQ1 part about the concept of masculinity. However, the RQ1 part about the significance of masculinity in the context of brand personality and advertising is answered in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 of the Doctoral Thesis focuses on the central aspect of the research, which is analyzing various literature sources on masculinity in brand personality and advertising, or, in other words, how masculinity is relevant to companies' brand personality and advertising efforts.

The author argues that since branding and advertising significantly affect companies' prosperity, it is crucial to analyze relevant theoretical frameworks and conduct a thorough literature review of this matter. The author found that more research is focused on analyzing the links between changing masculine sociocultural norms and branding strategies.

Furthermore, several researchers and scholars argue that brands must update their personalities to match them with contemporary target consumers (Ellwood, 2002, p. 36). This statement highlights the importance of companies paying close attention to various social concepts, such as masculinity and the changes in consumer perceptions of it, to match their brand personality with the desired personality of consumers. This hypothesis is backed up by congruity theory, which presents the case that individuals appreciate when the content aligns with the individual's preconceived notions. For instance, consumers appreciate advertisements that depict masculinity in a form that fits the consumer's view of masculinity. Congruity theory (De Meulenaer et al., 2018) proposes that people value illustrations that align with their existing social model. In other words, congruity theory suggests that consumers seek to buy brands they perceive to be compatible with their self-concept. Thus, the brand personality has to match the desired personality of consumers.

Brand personality is a part of brand identity and refers to the human characteristics associated with a brand (Aaker, 1997). It is a personification of the brand. To signify the importance of brand personality as well as classify the main pillars of this theoretical concept, Jeniffer Aaker (1997) has created the Brand personality dimensions model (Fig. 2.2 in the Thesis), in which she defined brand personality as a series of personality characteristics relevant to brands. Jennifer Aaker considers brand personality the result of advertising associations that consumers attach to brands. She developed an instrument for measuring the scope and depth of brand personality. At the end of her research, she put forward five dimensions of brand personality: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Aaker's model has been widely used by researchers who tried to make sense of brand personalities and classify them. Brand personality dimensions are used in empirical research and approbation of the developed methodology (Chapters 3 and 4).

The second chapter also focuses on another essential theoretical aspect of brand personality: brand archetypes. Scholars see brand archetypes as the second most prominent brand personality theory (besides Aaker's personality dimensions). Archetypes, in general, are seen as myths and symbols because of their universal topics in fairy tales, films, and novels (McPeek, 2008; Faber & Mayer, 2009). Other researchers concur that consumers take brand archetype as the standard of cognition and then form an overall judgment of brands through the classification of brands (Lianxiong & Rui, 2012). When analyzing brand archetypes, researchers and authors use Mark and Pearson's (2001) brand archetype classification (Table 2.1 in the Thesis), which describes each of the 12 brand archetypes and their characteristics. Mark and Pearson (2001) used Carl Jung's archetypal model and proposed a business application. As mentioned, brand archetypes also correspond to brand personality dimensions from Jennifer Aaker. For example,

the archetype Caregiver could be seen as the symbol of a mother, neighbor, or service provider such as banks or insurance, making the corresponding brand personality dimension of Sincerity. In addition to this brand archetype classification, the brand archetypes are also classified into four main human drivers by Mark and Pearson (2001). These four main human drivers include: "belonging and enjoyment", ""independence and fulfilment", "stability and control", and "risk and mystery".

The author concluded that archetypes can come in blended forms; for example, being a Hero does not exclude being an Outlaw simultaneously. That is why simply using the brand archetypes model or brand personality dimensions might need to be more specific for an advertising agency when creating its brand personality. Combining both theoretical models (Table 4.1 in Chapter 4.1 in the Thesis) might help branding and advertising professionals create a more straightforward brand personality strategy; thus, the author has created a classification of the elements of both theory models together with masculinity archetypes and types of masculinity.

The author argues in the Thesis that since every nation has its archetypes that are derived from the nation's literature as symbols of deeper meaning that the particular nation recognizes and that can potentially resonate with the audience, it is vital to analyze what archetypes the particular audience have. Considering that this research is primarily focused on a Latvian audience (in empirical research), the author, with the help of an award-winning teacher of Latvian language and literature, Daiga Krišāne (from Jelgava Spīdola State Gymnasium), analyzed the masculine archetypes found in Latvian literature that the Latvian audience can recognize as symbols of a deeper meaning (Table 2).

Table 2

Latvian National Archetypes (created by the author's from and interview with Daiga Krišāne)

Latvian national archetype	Character in Latvian literature (example)	Description of the archetype and the characters
Innocent (in Latvian: nevainīgais/ labsirdīgais)	The Cat (LV: kaķītis) K. Skalbe's fairytale "Kaķīša dzirnavas"	Archetype: Kind-hearted, sweet, does not seek revenge, wants everybody to be happy and to be at peace. The character: Runs the windmill with joy. Gives his daughters everything. When answering the king's question of what to do with the evil in the world, the Cat responds: ".. I do not accept evil… there is enough pain in the world. Why increase pain? Let there be an increase of good."
Ruler (in Latvian: valdītājs/ valdnieks)	1) Indrānu father in R. Blaumanis' drama "Indrāni" 2) Stefans Dardeģis in A. Bels' novel "Cilvēki laivās".	Archetype: Stubborn, wants to control, a leader, powerful, influential. Character: 1) Created a farm and is leading it, wants to earn profit for control, wants to keep old traditions and is stubborn about change. Wants to do his way. 2) Controlling the ship factory in an imperious manner, exercising authority over everyone, wants to achieve the goal no matter the sacrifice.
Creator (in Latvian: radītājs)	1) Jāzeps in Rainis' tragedy "Jāzeps un viņa brāļi" 2) Ansis Vairogs in J. Poruks' tale "Pērļu zvejnieks"	Archetype: Creative, visionary, dreamer, artistic. Character: 1) a fragile dreamer who is ambitious and dreams about achieving his vision in the future. 2) Studying music, dreaming about achieving his plans, dreams about love and happiness. Wants to find pearls in the river to financially support his music studies.
Explorer (in Latvian: ceļotājs)	1) Sprīdītis in A. Brigadere's play "Sprīdītis" 2) Puisis in K. Skalbe's fairytale "Kā es braucu Ziemeļmeitas lūkoties"	Archetype: Brave, wants to go out into the world to find happiness, truth, adventures, freedom, and meaning in life. Character: 1) A boy who wants to find happiness into the world, takes a journey where he meets the world of conflict and difficulty. 2) A simple boy who is tired of living in his father's small shed and wants to go out in the world. He bravely follows the dream of meeting the woman – Ziemeļmeita – and receiving the magical crown.
Hero (in Latvian: varonis)	1) Lāčplēsis in A. Pumpurs' epic "Lāčplēsis" 2) Kurbads in the nation's fairytale "Kurbads" 3) Artūrs in A. Grīns' novel "Dvēseļu putenis"	Archetype: Strong, brave, heroic, fights for justice, wants to protect others. Character: 1) Bravely fights for the freedom of the nation against evil forces. 2) Very strong, fights the devil, and when he has liberated the world from the dark forces, he dies as a hero. 3) At a young age bravely goes to war to seek revenge for his mother's death.
Caregiver (In Latvian: rūpētājs)	Grīntāls in R. Blaumanis' novel "Nāves ēnā"	Archetype: Trustworthy, friendly, caring for others, helpful. Character: One of the 14 fishermen stuck in the sea on a block of ice. Cares for others and helps everyone to survive as long as possible to wait for the rescue boat.
Sage (in Latvian: viedais)	Kaspars Gaitiņš in brothers Kaudzītes' novel "Mērnieku laiki".	Archetype: Knowledgeable, intelligent, uses his knowledge to find the truth about the world. Character: Intelligent, thinks critically and calls for everyone to keep a calm and rational mind in the chaotic times.
Outlaw (in Latvian: dumpinieks)	A character in A. Čaks' poetry – a street boy	Archetype: Breaks the rules, wild, out of control. Character: Defiant, self-sufficient, rule-breaker and a rebel.
Lover (in Latvian mīlnieks)	Edgars in R. Blaumanis' novel "Purva bridējs"	Archetype: Passionate, romantic, enthusiastic and wants to be loved. Character: Loves Kristina but is also looking at other women, enjoys life, is passionate, wants to be loved, childish and impatient.

The author found several commonalities between Latvian national archetypes and brand archetypes that have been made universal in Western culture. For instance, the fearless Hero archetype that fights for justice and freedom, sacrificing himself for a more significant cause, or the pure and hopeful innocent, where the audience can quickly develop a sentimental attachment for the character, are just some of the many commonalities between Latvian national and brand archetypes. An archetype such as Explorer might be one of the most fundamental Latvian national archetypes (such as the character "Sprīdītis"), which coincided with the brand archetypes discussed previously in the Thesis as one of the most fundamental and applicable archetypes in any story to engage the audience fully. Nevertheless, all of these masculine archetypes as symbols of the characteristics that they represent can be used by brand strategists and advertising professionals when communicating to Latvian audiences.

The connection between advertising, brand personality, and masculinity

It is a common understanding that brand personality is communicated to consumers through various forms of marketing communication, such as advertising. Advertising is the marketing communication form that a researcher can analyze to assess all the brand personality dimensions and brand and masculinity archetypes because, in advertising, the main character is on full display with his characteristics, behaviors, and treatment of others around him. The link between branding and advertising is established quite clearly in the scientific literature. After all, the role of advertising in brand management is to help generate awareness of the brand proposition and express the brand personality to a target audience. The findings from the literature review show that a growing body of research suggests how essential and frequently used masculinity is in the context of advertising. Some research claims that masculinity is now branded (Scheibling & Lafrance, 2019, 226) because men are increasingly marketed to and offered visions of masculinity for consumption (Zayer et al., 2020, 240). There is a term for this phenomenon called branded masculinity, which was defined by Susan M. Alexander (2003). Branded masculinity is rooted in consumer capitalism, wherein corporate profit can be enhanced by generating insecurity about one's body and one's consumer choices and then offering a solution through a particular corporate brand. She argues that masculinity is constructed as a product available for consumption if one merely chooses the appropriate brand names.

Consumer perception of traditional and modern masculinity in advertising

The author analyzed the scientific literature on how traditional, hybrid and modern masculinity are portrayed in brand communications to be perceived positively by consumers.

For starters, the results of these efforts have a wide range of success; for instance, Orth and Holancova (2003) have found that consumers tend to approve of more stereotypical role illustrations in advertising, which translates into a more positive ad and brand attitudes (De Meulenaer et al., 2018). Similarly, Putrevu (2004) concluded that men and women are likely to respond more positively to communication that is in tune with traditional gender stereotypes. In addition, several other researchers concur, saying that, for instance, competitiveness, a muscular physique, and other symbols of traditional masculinity can be effective in advertising (Brownbill et al., 2018, p. 358). On the other hand, other studies have come up with opposite conclusions, namely that gender stereotyping results in negative ad and brand attitudes (Bellizzi & Milner, 1991; Jaffe & Berger ,1994). This can be explained by the fact that counter-stereotypical appeals are more surprising and could, therefore, provoke more positive feelings (Orth & Holancova, 2003). In addition, researchers have found that effective advertising nowadays should promote a paradigm shift regarding gender roles (Magaraggia & Cherubini, 2017). Furthermore, it is noted that the use of stereotypes has come under increased scrutiny because gender roles in society are changing; thus, marketers are in danger of alienating people by using traditional gender stereotypes (Hupfer, 2002; De Meulenaer et al., 2018).

Traditional masculinity in the advertising context

Traditional masculinity display often includes specific roles that the man takes upon himself in advertisements, such as the Breadwinner, the Rebel, and the Man-of-action hero (Holt & Thompson, 2004). As discussed earlier, the Breadwinner's role is the man who is a provider for the family who puts food on the table, and the Rebel does not obey the rules. Figuratively speaking, the Rebel is not a sheep but rather a wolf, and a Man-of-action hero defends the weak and scared. All three roles of traditional masculinity portrayed in advertising are desirable, and one can understand the strong appeal of that to the consumers. Some other themes and concepts are typical of traditional masculinity depictions in advertising (Table 3).

One of the most frequently used traditional masculinity characteristics that is visible in advertising is the physicality of men. The content of advertising where masculinity is at the ad's core is often dominated by images of young men, particularly athletes, who are depicted as '"tough" through their physical features and sports participation (Brownbill et al., 2018, p. 357). This tactic is associated with the physical strength of men, while some commercials focus mainly on the mental strength of men by offering new body products that can help restore men's power and control.

Table 3

Themes and Concepts Depicted in Traditional Masculinity Advertising

(created by the author)

Themes/concepts	Description	Authors discussing the theme/concept
Crisis in masculinity	This theme creates conflict or drama. It represents a contemporary manifestation of long-standing anxieties about the nature of masculinity and the role and function of men. Researchers have created a similar theme called "Manning Up," which indicates ads that show that men have lost their sense of manliness and must reestablish themselves in a more "masculine" (traditional) way.	Gannon et al. (2004), Salzman et al. (2005), Green et al. (2013), Brooks (2018), Peterson (2018), Scheibling and Lafrance (2019)
Hegemonic masculinity	Displaying hierarchical power relations between both men and women by showing men being more superior and competent. The display of "hegemonic masculinity," is mostly organized around dominance.	Birch et al. (2017), Bach (2017), Rogers (2019), Scheibling and Lafrance (2019), Ging (2019)
Broken masculinity	Making men feel inadequate in their traditional masculine capabilities (a typical concept in, for example, Viagra pill advertising and other erectile dysfunction disorder medicine advertising. While the crisis in masculinity is more about men losing their power, broken masculinity is more about losing physical capabilities.	Moynihan (1998), Akpanudo et al. (2017), Simpson (2019)
Breadwinner	The man who is a provider for the family, who puts food on the table. The man who is primarily the earner in the family.	Kimmel (1996), Eagly et al. (2000), Salzman et al. (2005)
Rebel/Man of action	The Rebel and the Man of Action are themes that have similar expressions in traditional masculinity advertising. They both have a common strong physical appearance and rule-breaking (Rebel) to advance their own life or help others (Man of Action).	Holt and Thompson (2004), Crownover (2014), Gopaldas and Molander (2020)

Regarding traditional masculinity in advertising, some researchers argue that there is some harm in men continuing to conform to the traditional stereotypes of masculinity and perpetuating the same old-fashioned image of men in advertising. According to the scientific literature, the social pressure to conform to traditional ideologies of masculinity has been shown to affect men seeking help when it is needed adversely (Akpanudo et al., 2017). Thus, men's self-report measures may be biased. For instance, researchers say that men who present themselves as "highly masculine" underreport symptoms (Moynihan, 1998, p. 1072). A growing number of studies have also examined men's experiences during college, including academic underperformance, excessive drinking, sexual aggression towards women, and non-

academic violations of campus judicial policies. There is some evidence that engagement in these behaviors is related to men's attachment to masculine norms (Beutel et al., 2019). Another potentially harmful way to depict men in advertising in a traditionally stereotypical way is regarding the physical attributes of a man. Research suggests that a considerable number of men experience body dissatisfaction (O'Gorman et al., 2019), possibly because they cannot match the image that advertising is perpetuating, causing pressure on men.

An important finding from the literature review process that emerged was that advertisers' depiction of masculinity has great importance on the well-being of society. Furthermore, it was found that advertising considerably influences the way how society perceives masculinity. Therefore, another crucial theory that has been selected to discuss further is the stakeholder theory (Friedman, 2006). Stakeholder theory is of particular importance for this research since advertisers have a responsibility toward the public when considering their advertising message, which can have a profoundly positive or negative impact on society. For instance, gender stereotypes in advertising can continue to reinforce old-fashioned stereotypes that make men and women conform to narrower and narrower roles in society. As mentioned in the previous subchapter, several studies have found that the stereotypical illustrations of men and women in today's advertising are problematic for several reasons, such as creating or reinforcing unwanted prejudice and negatively affecting men's and women's self and body esteem (Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; De Meulenaer et al., 2018). Researchers have also found that advertisers create and perpetuate gender stereotypes, which may erode gender equality and harm society at large (MacKay & Covell, 1997; Oppliger, 2007). Therefore, advertisers must be cautious about the messages they send to the public, as society is a crucial stakeholder. For instance, as discussed previously, the depiction of men in an overly stereotypical traditional form might lead to violence against women and one another, prevention of seeking medical treatment or mental health treatment, and have an influence on the sense of equality or lack thereof in society.

The author argues that creating and implementing socially responsible initiatives is more than just what the brand should do for society and other key stakeholders. It is also what the brands should be doing for themselves since effective corporate social responsibility strategies that focus on gender equality can be effective and result in brand loyalty from customers. In addition, socially responsible brands get great publicity from the media and members of society through word of mouth, which is free advertising. The author, therefore, argues that when it comes to depictions of masculinity in advertising, there is another stakeholder group (besides customers) that needs to be considered: society. Researchers stress that more than ever, notions of gender are being contested in everyday life and across media and advertising (Zayer et al., 2020). Therefore, one could argue that advertising significantly influences the entire society,

and society naturally influences advertising since advertisers take cues from society, particularly about gender perceptions, considering that advertisers want the advertisement to resonate with the audience. Thus, the displays of masculinity in advertising are shaping society's social norms and culture while also being influenced by society's social norms and culture, creating a cycle of influence (Fig. 5).
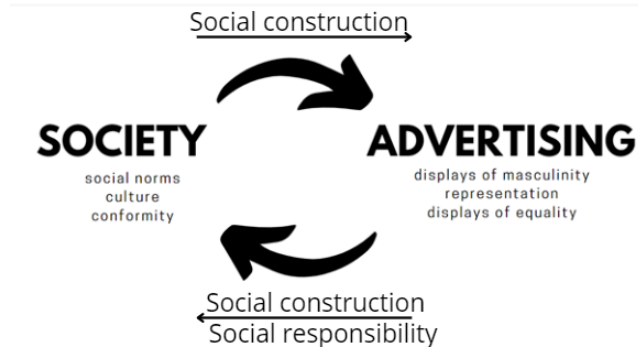

Fig. 5. A cycle of influence of society and advertising (created by the author based on social construction theory and stakeholder theory).

Consumers play a vital part in shaping what is legitimate or "desirable, proper or appropriate" regarding masculinity (Zayer et al., 2020, p. 239). Therefore, it is not only how masculinity is presented to consumers by institutions and advertising but also how consumers act. For instance, Butler (1999, p. 278) states that gender is "real only to the extent that it is performed." Individuals perform gender in light of their perceptions of gender role norms and the messages they hear from the marketplace within social interactions and socializing forces (Zayer et al., 2020, p. 240). Therefore, the author of this Thesis based on stakeholder theory argues that advertisers have a significant social responsibility when it comes to the messages that they put in their advertising because based on social construction theory shapes how consumers construct who they are as individuals and how they interact with the rest of society.

Modern masculinity in the advertising context

It has been found that there is a shift in the advertising landscape about gender, which can be seen in recent advertising campaigns (Zayer et al., 2020, p. 254). For instance, the ad campaign "Real Heroes"" by Dove Men Care features caring and affectionate fathers showing love and support for their children. Even Axe brand, known to illustrate men in a strictly one-dimensional manner, has also recently sought to be more "inclusive" and portray a more diverse sense of masculinity through their global campaign "Is it ok for guys...". Modern masculinity

in advertisers is depicted with various themes, such as Equality, Dadvertising, Metrosexuality, and Inclusiveness (Table 4).

Themes and Concepts Depicted in Modern Masculinity Advertising

(created by the author)

Themes/Concepts	Description	Authors discussing the theme/concept
Equality	Displaying changes in masculine values, such as men helping with the housework and chores (washing dishes, cleaning the house, doing laundry). Researchers argue that displaying equality is a beneficial way for brands to depict men to attract women.	Bach (2017), Reichert et al. (2019), Molander et al. (2019), Leader (2019), Zayer et al. (2020).
Dadvertising	Advertising that uses fathers to represent ideal masculinity centered on involved parenting and emotional vulnerability by also showing care and affection. Researchers argue that dadvertising largely contributes to a feminist era.	Leader (2019), Molander et al. (2019)
Metrosexuality	This concept involves the representation of the male body as an object. Metrosexuality has a new modern appeal, which emphasizes paying attention to how men look and dress. This trend is particularly visible in the grooming product industry, where men are spending much more money on these products and services than ever before.	Edwards (2006), Coad (2008), Pompper (2010), Ourahmoune (2016), Draper et al. (2018), Scheibling and Lafrance (2019),
Inclusiveness	Portraying men in a more diverse sense of masculinity by celebrating differences and opposing gender conformity, which is often emphasized in traditional masculinity advertising.	Kimmel (1996), Salzman et al. (2005), Draper et al. (2018), Jester (2019), Ging (2019)

Chapter 2 focuses on masculinity in the context of brand personality and advertising to see how marketers currently use traditional and modern masculinity to communicate to the audiences. The author also analyzed two key theoretical models, such as brand archetypes and brand personality dimensions, that are important for empirical research. The author concluded that masculinity plays a significant role in advertising and creating brand personality. The author also concluded that advertisers still mainly focus on traditional masculinity in advertising while modern masculinity is steadily gaining higher popularity among advertisers. The research question (RQ1) is answered, and Hypothesis 1 is confirmed. The next Chapter focuses on conducting empirical research on consumer perceptions of masculinity in advertising.

In Chapter 3 of the Doctoral Thesis, the author describes the study's methodological justification and research findings. The empirical research design included the first subchapter, where mixed method analysis methodological justification and its findings are clarified. The empirical research design also included the second subchapter, which focuses on the survey and A/B testing, and finally, the third subchapter, which describes the focus group process, results, and methodological justification (Fig. 6).

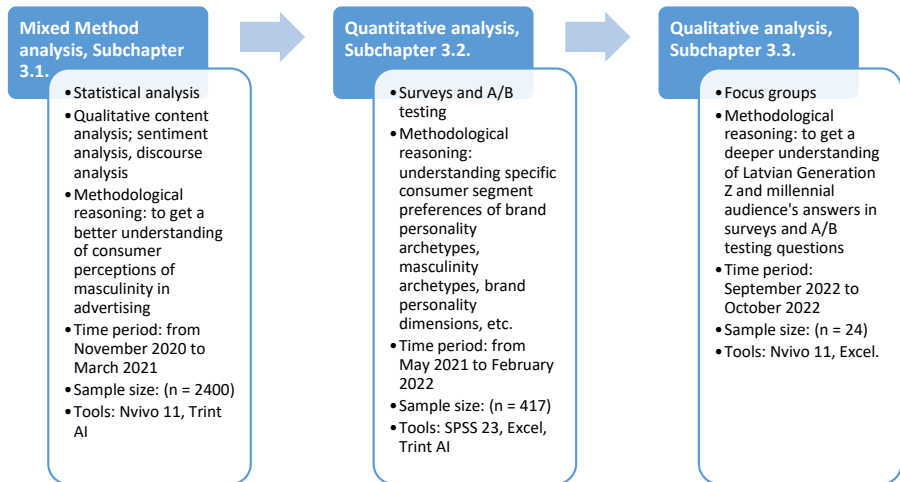| Mixed Method analysis, Subchapter 3.1.	Quantitative analysis, Subchapter 3.2.	Qualitative analysis, Subchapter 3.3.
• Statistical analysis • Qualitative content analysis; sentiment analysis, discourse analysis • Methodological reasoning: to get a better understanding of consumer perceptions of masculinity in advertising • Time period: from November 2020 to March 2021 • Sample size: (n = 2400) • Tools: Nvivo 11, Trint AI	• Surveys and A/B testing • Methodological reasoning: understanding specific consumer segment preferences of brand personality archetypes, masculinity archetypes, brand personality dimensions, etc. • Time period: from May 2021 to February 2022 • Sample size: (n = 417) • Tools: SPSS 23, Excel, Trint AI	• Focus groups • Methodological reasoning: to get a deeper understanding of Latvian Generation Z and millennial audience's answers in surveys and A/B testing questions • Time period: September 2022 to October 2022 • Sample size: (n = 24) • Tools: Nvivo 11, Excel.

Fig. 6. The conceptual framework and the methodological reasoning of the empirical research (created by the author).

The methods for empirical research were chosen according to the research questions and hypothesis. It was crucial to understand how masculinity is depicted in brand personality and advertising and what consumers' perceptions of it are. Additionally, the Chapter outlines how the data was collected and analyzed. Finally, the Chapter presents research findings from various studies conducted mainly to understand consumer perception of masculinity in advertising. The author analyzed advertising effectiveness factors and concluded that scholars and researchers mainly focus on specific criteria such as awareness generated, consumer engagement, and consumer feedback and sentiment. Based on these factors, the author of this Thesis determined the advertising effectiveness of the campaigns analyzed.

A qualitative video content analysis

As part of this research, the author extensively looked for advertisements on YouTube depicting masculinity to analyze which of the theoretical masculinity archetypes, brand archetypes, brand

personality dimensions, and masculinity types advertisers use to communicate their versions of masculinity to consumers (Fig. 3.2. in the Thesis). Most advertisements were Super Bowl ads from the previous decade (from 2010 to 2020). Super Bowl is an annual event in American football where some of the most expensive advertisements from the biggest brands are shown during halftime. In 2023, advertisers paid an average of seven million U.S. dollars to air a 30-second commercial during the Super Bowl broadcast. It is widely considered to be the most prestigious advertising event. Several advertisements from well-known brands in Europe and the United States were added to increase the sample size.

A qualitative video content analysis was conducted by viewing 288 advertisements (163 Super Bowl ads, 113 popular brand ads from brands such as Dove, Nespresso, and Gillette) and 12 ads discovered from the research articles. Regarding how frequently masculinity was the central theme in these advertisements, then out of the 288 advertisements viewed, 92 were categorized as "masculinity ads." It means that these advertisements strongly emphasized masculinity as a concept to help the brand resonate with the audience. Of the 92 "masculinity ads," the author selected 50 (25 traditional masculinity and 25 modern masculinity) of them for a closer examination, in other words, qualitative video content analysis (N = 50). The author wanted to select an equal amount of advertisements representing the two significant types of masculinity (Fig. 3.2 in the Thesis). Of the 92 advertisements, 58 were labeled traditional masculinity ads, and only 27 were labeled modern masculinity ads. The remaining seven advertisements were hybrid masculinity ads. Hybrid masculinity ads were not selected for further qualitative video analysis due to the difficulty of accurately identifying them and because hybrid masculinity is depicted in rare cases.

The author found that traditional masculinity ads mainly emphasized strong, powerful, stoic, and emotionless brand archetypes such as Ruler, Hero, and Outlaw; modern masculinity ads emphasized Caregiver, Everyman, Jester, and Innocent, which are brand archetypes associated with empathy, sensitivity, care, and sense of equality. Brand personality dimension analysis (Aaker, 1997) shows how different traditional and modern masculinity advertisements are (Fig. 3.5 in the Thesis). This is most evident in the fact that, while the most common brand personality dimension in traditional masculinity advertisements was Ruggedness, it was not evident in modern masculinity ads at all. The same result shows sincerity, the most common brand personality dimension in modern masculinity ads, but was not evident in traditional masculinity ads. The video content analysis shows how different traditional and modern masculinity ads are with the archetypes and personality dimensions.

The surveys

The total amount of respondents for the surveys and the A/B testing was 483. However, after excluding a few surveys filled out by older generations than the ones selected and people from other European countries outside Latvia (because the focus was shifted to only the Latvian population), the number came down to 420 respondents. Therefore, the analysis' final count of eligible surveys (Latvian youth, age 18–30, men and women) resulted in 417 (n = 417), with 142 being men and 275 being women.

The analysis was done using the SPSS 23 statistical software program. One of the main questions of the survey was: "Do you generally like the way masculinity is depicted in advertising?" Table 3.14 in the Thesis overviews how respondents answered this question. Of the respondents, 41 % (35 % men and 45 % women) do not like how advertisers show masculinity in their advertisements, which means that only 59 % (overall) like masculinity's depiction in advertising. Furthermore, only 2 % (overall) say they like how advertisers depict masculinity very much. The author argues that it is a deficient number, considering that it is the goal of advertisers to connect with the audiences, to be liked by them, and for the character of the advertisement to resonate with the consumers.

Interestingly, when this question is paired (SPSS's Cross tabulation feature) with another critical question of the survey – "Can depictions of masculinity in advertising affect your buying decisions?" (Appendix 3 in the Thesis) – then of the people who say that they do not like the way masculinity is depicted in advertising 49.7 % say that depictions of masculinity in advertising affect their buying decisions. In addition, of the respondents who strongly dislike how masculinity is depicted in advertising, 723 % say that depictions of masculinity in advertising affect their buying decisions. This points to a problem or, rather, a lost opportunity, meaning that if companies manage to depict masculinity more appealingly in their advertisements to the consumers, the consumers might respond favorably to these companies with their purchases.

The A/B testing

In the A/B test, there were eight questions, each containing two advertisements (from 30 seconds to approximately 2 minutes long), which respondents had to watch and then decide their favorite masculinity depiction and provide reasons for their choice. In some questions, respondents had to choose between two advertisements from the same brand (Dove, Axe, NFL, Gillette), one being traditional and the other modern masculinity depiction, and in other questions, between two different brands. Table 5 illustrates men's responses in percentage,

meaning how many men chose the traditional masculinity advertisement and how many chose modern.

Men's Choices in A/B test, % (created by the author)

Masculinity	Dove	Axe	NFL	Gillette	Dos Equis/ Bonobos	Tide/Old Spice	Doritos/ Nespresso	Barbasol/ Lego	Average
Traditional	18.31	28.87	62.68	36.62	43.66	61.27	67.61	39.44	**44.81**
Modern	81.69	71.13	37.32	63.38	56.34	38.73	32.39	60.56	**55.19**

As evidenced by Table 5, men chose, on average, advertisements depicting modern masculinity 55 % of the time, compared to 45 % of traditional masculinity. It seems a reasonably balanced result, especially compared to women's responses in the A/B test. On three occasions, men chose traditional masculinity ad over modern, and in five of the questions, modern masculinity was chosen as the favorite one. Interestingly, every question (except the Dos Equis/Bonobos question) had a significant disparity (over 20 %) between the results, especially Dove and Axe, which had margins of more than 40 % (Axe) and even 50 % (Dove). That indicates that there could be stark differences between consumers' attitudes to masculinity depictions. Perhaps the most exciting result is the Gillette question, where men chose modern masculinity advertisements over traditional ones. The same Gillette advertisement ("We believe: the best man can be") received overwhelmingly negative comments (78 %) on YouTube, where consumers were calling for a boycott of the Gillette brand because many thought that the ad was an attack on masculinity. In the A/B test, however, 63 % of men chose it where masculinity is depicted in a more favorable or resonating way.

In contrast to men, women chose modern masculinity over traditional masculinity advertisements in far more convincing numbers (Table 6). In some of the questions, the young Latvian women showed their preference for modern masculinity ads over traditional ones with an 80 % to 90 % margin (Dove, Axe, and Barbasol/Lego questions), with other modern masculinity ads being chosen with 50 % to 60 % margins (Gillette and Dos Equis/Bonobos questions). This result (including men's preferences) is somewhat counterintuitive because during the survey part, the respondents, both men and women, showed only a slightly higher preference for modern depictions of masculinity in advertising rather than traditional ones. In contrast, the A/B test results point to a significant preference. That shows that the consumers, perhaps, do not exactly know what they want until they see specific examples.

Furthermore, these results show a problem in advertising because the video content analysis showed that traditional masculinity depictions are used more frequently by advertisers. In contrast, the A/B test results indicate a strong preference for modern masculinity in advertising. Perhaps a more profound problem is that advertisers and brand strategists need to understand the audience (at least the younger audience) but keep focusing on ancient stereotypes about masculinity.

By looking at the average score, it is clear that Generation Z and millennial Latvian women prefer modern depictions of men in advertising over traditional and stereotypical ones. This finding supports the findings of other research studies that consumers prefer more modern gender role illustrations in advertising (Magaraggia & Cherubini, 2017; De Meulenaer et al., 2018). While men, as mentioned, chose modern masculinity ads on average 55 % of the time in the A/B test, women did that 74 % of the time. Gillette's "We Believe: The Best Man Can Be" advertisement, which was a fascinating subject, received very negative scores during the qualitative content and sentiment analysis but received a perfect score from the women (as well as men). 82 % of women surveyed preferred the mentioned Gillette's modern masculinity ad over Gillette's traditional one. Women chose modern masculinity over traditional in every question except Doritos/Nespresso. However, the margin in the responses to this question was tiny (51 % versus 49 %).

Table 6

Women's choices in A/B test, % (created by the author)

Masculinity	Dove	Axe	NFL	Gillette	Dos Equis/ Bonobos	Tide/Old Spice	Doritos/ Nespresso	Barbasol/ Lego	Average
Traditional	10.55	16,36	40.73	17.82	21.45	32.36	51.27	14.55	**25.64**
Modern	89.45	83.64	59.27	82.18	78.55	67.64	48.73	85.45	**74.36**

The differences between men's and women's responses to the A/B test questions show that the women reported significantly less preference for traditional masculinity than men. In some cases, the margin between men's and women's responses is 20 % and even nearly 30 % (NFL and Tide/Old Spice questions). The margins are pretty significant between men's and women's responses, showing that women and men view masculinity in advertising quite differently, with women preferring modern masculinity over traditional in much greater numbers than men do. For instance, in five of the eight A/B test questions, the margin between women's and men's responses exceeds 20 %. Regarding statistical significance, the p-value was calculated using the same seven-step process as in the previous chapter. The p-value of the empirical data determining the statistical significance of men's and women's responses was 0.0000000000000009987, which is almost zero (Appendix 28 in the Thesis). That means that

the p-value is substantially lower than 0.05, which means there are significant differences between men's and women's responses in their preferences for traditional or modern masculinity in advertising. The differences were statistically significant (p-value lower than 0.05) in every round of the A/B test, except in Dove. Only Dove showed that men's and women's responses do not differ significantly (Table 3.18 and Appendix 29 in the Thesis).

When analyzing the specific traditional masculine characteristics of men's answers (Table 3.19 in the Thesis), it became clear that men value competitiveness as the most desirable (42 %). It is followed by humorous exaggeration of masculinity as a close second (37 %), "the ability to do it all" (34 %) as the third most popular characteristic, and men being in control (26 %) as fourth.

While men had four traditional masculinity characteristics popular enough to exceed the 20 % benchmark, the women surveyed only had one characteristic that received a significant preference (Table 3.20 in the Thesis). That characteristic was competitiveness, which received 24 % (compared to men's 41 %) approval among young Latvian women. This result also points to a noteworthy difference between men and women regarding their preference for masculinity in advertising.

When looking at the preferences of modern masculinity characteristics as the reasons for choosing it in the A/B test, it becomes clear once again that modern masculinity is preferred because the values for modern masculinity characteristics are significantly higher than those of traditional masculinity characteristics. For instance, while there were only four (for men) and one (for women) traditional masculinity characteristics that exceeded the 20 % benchmark, there were 7 (for men) and 8 (for women) that exceeded this benchmark for modern masculinity ads. Among the men surveyed, the most popular reason for choosing modern masculinity advertisement was "It tackles a serious problem about masculinity" (43 %). In addition, the men also appreciated advertisements that are less stereotypical of men (39 %), display love and affection (36 %), and depict men as carefree (31 %) (Table 3.21 in the Thesis). Women also selected similar reasons for choosing modern masculinity advertisements in the A/B test (Table 3.22 in the Thesis). For instance, "tackling a serious problem about masculinity" was also appreciated by women as the most popular reason (67 %). Similarly to men, "display of affection and love" (51 %) and depicting masculinity less stereotypically (49 %) were also the second and third most popular reasons for preferring modern masculinity in advertising for women as it was for men.

Brand archetypes, masculinity archetypes and dimensions of brand personality most preferred by consumers

Each advertisement in the A/B test was analyzed with video content analysis and assigned a brand archetype (Mark & Pearson, 2001), masculinity archetype (Moore & Gillette, 1990), and brand personality dimension (Aaker, 1997) based on analysis conducted in Chapters 1 and 2 of these theoretical frameworks; the author also analyzed preferability of these archetypes and brand personality dimensions. Of the twelve brand archetypes, the preferable brand archetypes in traditional masculinity advertisements were Ruler, Lover, Magician, and Outlaw (Fig. 7), which partially corresponds to the video content analysis conclusion that the most commonly used brand archetypes in traditional masculinity ads are Ruler, Lover, and Hero. Therefore, two of the three most common brand archetypes correspond with consumer preferences. The finding from a theoretical perspective indicates that consumers appreciate characters who are rebellious rule-breakers, who are influential and stubborn, but also visionary, who are seductive and playful.
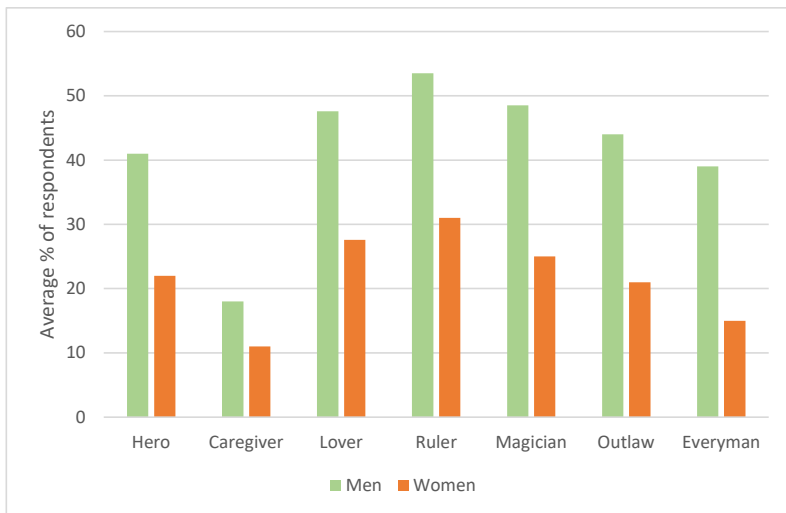

Fig. 7. Most preferable brand archetypes in traditional masculinity advertisements (created by the author).

Among the modern masculinity advertisements, the preferable brand archetypes were Hero, Caregiver, Everyman, Innocent, and Sage (Fig. 8). These results (Appendices 16–19 in the Thesis) indicate to advertisers which brand archetype the main character in an advertisement should be modeled after, which also partially corresponds to the findings from the video content analysis, the most common brand archetypes being Caregiver, Lover, and Everyman. It shows

that the male character of the brand or advertisement should be caring, compassionate, generous, romantic, warm, and intelligent, to name a few characteristics.
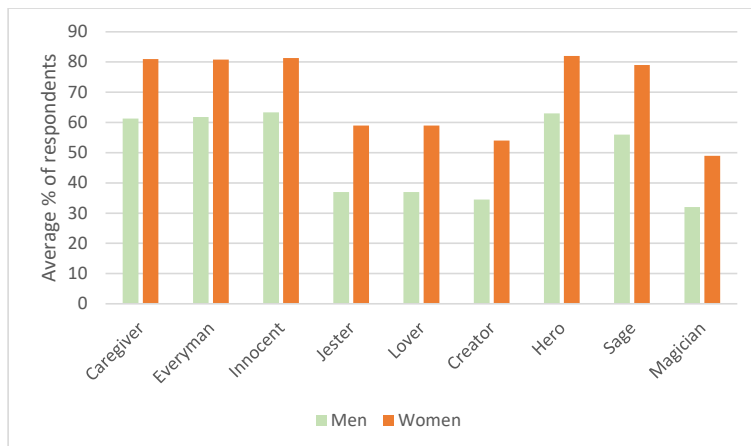

Fig. 8. Most preferable brand archetypes in modern masculinity advertisements (created by the author).

There was consistency regarding differences in results between men's and women's responses. Women reported higher preferences for modern masculinity archetypes than men, usually around 20 % consistently.

Analysis of the focus groups

To get a better understanding of the survey and A/B test findings and to get deeper insights into consumer preferences when it comes to masculinity in advertising, the author conducted three focus groups with the same demographic, Latvian Generation Z. Conducting a focus group is also one of the essential research methods that advertising agencies use to see consumer opinions and attitudes toward their advertising campaign before it is released to the public. After transcribing the focus group interviews, coding the process, and analyzing the data, it became clear that focus group participants consider using stereotypes as the absolute worst thing that advertisers can do when depicting masculinity in their marketing communication (Fig. 9). A close second to the use of stereotypes was exaggerated masculinity, which is closely linked to stereotypes. However, these suggestions were counted separately since focus group participants used different terminology to express themselves. Other popular answers were using muscular bodies to portray men and gender conformity, which, from the theoretical part of this research, was already established as a concept where media or marketers or society itself is trying to achieve that men conform to a single standard. In the case of masculinity, that would be one ideal type of man. Some of the answers within the threshold of answers were

"unrealistically depicting men in advertising"", "'only perfect-looking men'", and "'showing men as typical businessmen".
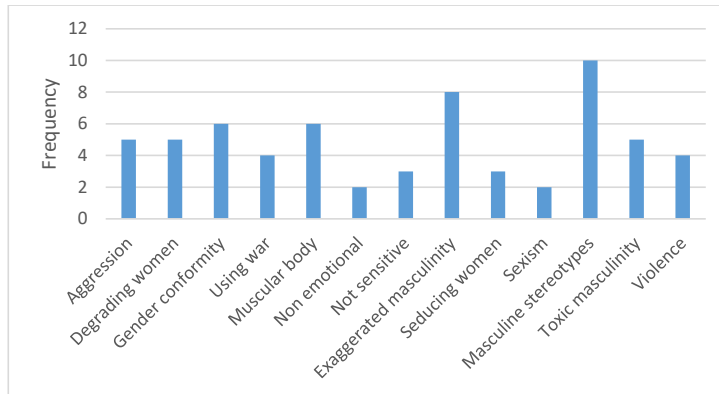

Fig. 9. Worst ways to depict masculinity in advertising according to focus group participants (created by the author).

The respondents expressed their approval of advertisers and brand strategists using modern masculinity in advertising to portray men. The most popular answers that the respondents provided were that masculinity and its issues are an essential topic for society, and the advertisement focusing on it is a positive aspect that the consumers approve (Fig. 10). A close second in popularity among the focus group participants was diversity, in other words, showing men in diverse ways. Other popular answers were self-acceptance, emotionality, and inclusivity as essential elements when depicting men in advertising.
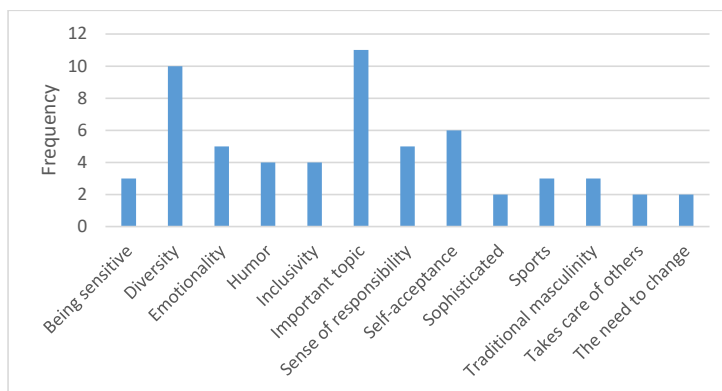

Fig. 10. Best ways to depict masculinity in advertising according to focus group participants (created by the author).

The reasons that respondents provided for their most popular answers concerning the importance of the topic of masculinity in advertising were that there is gender conformity going on in society, particularly concerning men. Focus group participants thought that men are instructed and even pressured to act a sure way to be masculine to be accepted by their peers.

Rihards K (spoken about Axe's "Is it ok for guys…" advertisement): "I think that a good advertisement is about an important topic in society. They ask if it is ok that men are not stereotypically masculine. They bring up issues that men are too scared to talk about openly."

Chapter 3 focuses on empirical research conducted to analyze consumer perceptions of masculinity in advertising and how masculinity is currently depicted in brand personality and advertising. The author concluded that advertisers still mainly focus on traditional masculinity in their advertising efforts, with the most frequent brand archetypes being Ruler, Hero, and Lover in traditional and Caregiver, Lover, and Everyman in modern masculinity advertisements. The most frequent brand personality dimensions are Ruggedness and Sophistication in traditional and Sincerity in modern masculinity advertisements. The author also concluded that Latvian Generation Z and millennial consumers mainly prefer modern masculinity in advertising with brand archetypes such as Hero, Caregiver, Everyman, Innocent, and Sage, which are brand archetypes associated with fairness, empathy, sensitivity, care, and sense of equality. Research questions (RQ2 and RQ3) are answered, and Hypotheses 1 and 2 are confirmed. Chapter 4 details the methodology for brands to create a new masculine brand personality.

In order to help the brand managers and advertisers create a new masculine brand personality, in the fourth chapter of the Doctoral Thesis, a methodology is created and approbated in three Latvian enterprises.

The methodology includes crucial activities that the brand strategists must make, such as analyzing the brand, audience, competition, etc. The methodology consists of seven steps (Fig. 11). Each step requires reviewing the previous steps, especially in Step 5, when the new masculine brand personality is created, and in Step 7, when the brand strategist analyzes the effectiveness and consumer perception of the new masculine brand personality.

Fig. 11. Methodology of creating masculine brand personality (created by the author, the novelty of this research).

In **Step 1** (Brand personality audit), the branding and advertising professionals should closely examine the current brand personality, because to set goals for the potential rebranding or creating a new brand entirely, the brand strategist must first understand where the brand is currently and with closer attention to the brand personality and the display of masculinity in it. Furthermore, brand strategists must examine not just brand personality but the entire brand and all of its elements, such as brand promise, brand values, brand drivers, brand identity (logo, slogan, colors being used, tone of voice, etc.), brand experience, brand role, brand communication (advertising, social media, direct marketing, public relations, product placement, communication channels, etc.), and more. In addition, there is also a need to examine the product, its quality, design, and functionality, as well as the packaging, since all of that has to be consistent with the brand elements.

In **Step 2** (Analyzing the current and potential audience), the brand strategist must analyze the brand image, which is how the current audience perceives the brand and how the potential audience perceives the brand. This is a crucial step because to be able to set goals and vision in Step 3, one must first understand what kind of masculinity is appreciated and preferred by the current and potential audience. Therefore, in Step 2, the brand strategist must conduct market segmentation. The author has modified the classical segmentation table to add relevant segmentation aspects regarding the topic of this Doctoral Thesis (Table 4.4 in the Thesis), which

includes analyzing perception and beliefs, lifestyle, evaluation of national archetypes, and others. National archetype evaluation is essential since consumers of specific nationalities might recognize patterns of archetype personalities very differently, and brand strategists must understand the most common national archetypes to ease the process of connecting the character of the advertisement with the respective audience.

In **Step 3** (Setting goals and vision for the masculine brand personality), the brand strategist uses the analysis from Step 1 and Step 2, and by having a clear understanding of where the company is at this moment, creates a more straightforward brand personality strategy starting with setting a goal and a vision. This step should be revisited every few months to ensure the clarity of the goal and, therefore, the effectiveness of the entire branding process. In setting goals, one must consider the pillars: product, customer, and brand (Fig. 4.2. in the Thesis).

In **Step 4** (Analyzing the competition), the brand strategists must analyze the competitor's brand personality (brand archetype and brand personality dimension) and display masculinity (masculinity archetype and type of masculinity) to differentiate themselves from their competitors and make effective marketing positioning. First, the brand strategist must analyze their competitors' communication (advertising, product placement, public relations activities, direct marketing, etc.) based on the previously mentioned criteria by assigning a number. Second, the brand strategist can use a brand positioning map, a helpful tool for analyzing the competition, which is a two-dimensional chart in brand positioning. It positions the major competing brands on the map according to critical attributes or criteria (Example in Fig. 4.5 in the Thesis).

In **Step 5** (Creating the new masculine brand personality), the brand strategist must summarize the results of all the previous four steps to create the most appropriate masculine brand personality (Fig. 4.3 in the Thesis). By following the previous steps, the brand strategist must have a clear understanding of how the new masculine brand personality should be created, based on the brand analysis in the first step, analysis of the audience in the second, goal setting in the third step, and analysis of the competition and their version of masculinity and brand personality display in the fourth step. One must create a masculine brand personality that will align with the brand promise and values, be different from the competition, and resonate with the audience, as argued previously in this Thesis by congruity theory, which states that people value illustrations that align with their existing social model.

Step 6 (Communicating the new masculine brand personality) is the planning and the process of communicating the new masculine brand personality to the audience. Marketing communication, such as advertising, expresses the brand and brand personality and positions it

in the minds of consumers. Marketing communication has many components, such as direct marketing, social media, public relations, product placement, sales promotion, advertising, etc.

In **Step 7** (Measuring the effectiveness), there is a need to measure the effectiveness and consumer perception of the new masculine brand personality. Effectiveness is about producing the desired result, which depends on the goal/objective. The effectiveness depends on the goal, which was set in step three.

The author has carried out approbation of the methodology by using examples of Latvian companies.

To evaluate the developed methodology, the findings and proposed methodology were presented, analyzed, and applied to three companies:

➢ Latvian cosmetics company Madara Cosmetics (Section 4.2.1);

➢ Virši-A gas station chain (Section 4.2.2);

➢ communication and media agency Dentsu Latvia (Section 4.2.3).

These companies were chosen for various reasons, as they are explained at the beginning of each subchapter, where the presentation of the research findings with each respected company is discussed. Additionally, the research findings, results, and application of this methodology were discussed with the advertising agency WKND, whose clients are Madara Cosmetics and Virši-A.

Madara Cosmetics is one of their largest clients, and they are currently making their first product line specifically for men. However, they need clarification about creating their masculine brand personality and communicating it effectively to the audience (men and women who would potentially purchase these products). That made Madara Cosmetics the perfect company to use the methodology created by the author. The references of each company can be read in Appendices 41–43 in the Thesis.

CONCLUSIONS

1. *Masculinity* is a socially constructed concept that refers to a set of characteristics and behaviors assigned to men. Three major masculinity types are traditional, hybrid, and modern. Traditional masculinity is associated with competitiveness, physical strength, striving to be a hero, emotional stoicism, being a breadwinner, dominance, and aggression. Hybrid masculinity shows displays of both types of masculinity, and modern masculinity is associated with a sense of equality, being emotionally expressive, rejecting gender conformity, being sensitive, metrosexuality, and progressive thinking. Considering the importance of these masculinity concepts, marketing practitioners must consider all three masculinity types.

2. Masculinity is not created individually but collectively by society as a culturally and socially constructed concept, as suggested by social construction theory, the work of many social studies researchers, and evidenced by the focus group analysis. Therefore, the social construct should be taken into account when analyzing masculinity.

3. Masculinity is essential in creating and expressing a brand personality to consumers through advertising, confirming the hypothesis (H1 accepted). Brand personality is critical in branding, and brand archetypes must be considered in building a successful brand. Advertisers can define their campaign objectives in another deeper dimension by aligning archetypes and brand personalities.

4. For consumers, it is valuable when the brand personality and depiction of masculinity align with individuals' preconceived notions of masculinity and their personality. Consumers seek to buy brands they perceive to be compatible with their self-concept; thus, the brand personality has to match the desired personality of consumers.

5. Traditional masculinity stereotypes in advertising can harm society due to the pressure it puts on men to conform to a narrow portrayal of who a man must be, suppression of emotions, and embedding the idea of always dominating and never being allowed to fail, leading to behavior known as toxic masculinity. By responsibly depicting masculinity in advertising, the brand can position itself as an ethical and socially responsible brand that consumers appreciate.

6. Notable brand advertisement examples discovered in the Thesis prove that emphasizing masculinity in advertising can start a significant conversation in traditional and social media with society about masculinity as a concept that can lead to free publicity for the brand. Multiple analyses support the hypothesis (H2 accepted) that traditional masculinity is still the most used type in advertising, as confirmed by qualitative video

content analysis, literature review, survey results, and focus group interview analysis. Despite traditional masculinity being the most frequently used type in advertising, more brands are shifting to modern masculinity, as confirmed by literature reviews and interviews with advertising industry experts.

7. Mixed method analysis confirmed that emphasis on masculinity in advertising gets many emotions from consumers, which drives consumer engagement and thus increases brand awareness and higher rankings on the Google search engine, YouTube, Facebook, and other social media sites. Emphasizing masculinity in advertising is essential for brands to gain awareness, which, according to advertising scholars, is one of the critical fundamentals of advertising effectiveness.

8. Latvian Generation Z and millennial audiences are well aware of the world's most popular advertisements concerning masculinity in advertising, proving that when it comes to younger generations, the geographical differences are not significant, and we live in a global information space. Furthermore, the Latvian Generation Z audience is aware of advertising characters made before birth, suggesting that advertising transcends time and geography.

9. In traditional masculinity advertisements, the preferred brand archetypes for Latvian Generation Z and millennial consumers were Ruler, Lover, Magician, and Outlaw, signaling a preference for dominant, assertive, rebellious, and seductive brand personality. Among the modern masculinity advertisements, the preferable brand archetypes were Hero, Caregiver, Everyman, Innocent, and Sage, indicating a preference for compassionate, knowledgeable, caring, protective, and courageous brand personalities.

10. Regarding brand personality dimensions, among traditional masculinity advertisements, the most preferable were Sophistication and Ruggedness, signaling a preference for a rugged and glamorous brand personality. In contrast, among modern masculinity advertisements, the preferred ones were Competence and Sincerity, indicating a preference for a hard-working, sincere, wholesome, friendly, and sentimental brand personality.

11. Latvian Generation Z and millennial consumers tend to approve of modern masculinity in advertising more than traditional ones, confirming the hypothesis (H3 accepted), with women approving of modern masculinity in far more convincing numbers than men. Consumers appreciate competitiveness as a traditional masculine characteristic while heavily preferring the display of affection and love and depicting masculinity less stereotypically in modern masculinity advertisements. There is a statistically significant

difference in men's and women's preferences when it comes to depictions of masculinity in advertising.

12. The approbation of the methodology confirms its practical utility and effectiveness, particularly in effectively creating a new masculine brand personality for branding.

13. The successful approbation of the methodology by Latvian company representatives demonstrates its applicability and effectiveness for creating a new masculine brand personality and its potential for use in various brand development contexts, which means the methodology was successfully approved.

14. The developed methodology for creating a new masculine brand personality is suitable for companies looking to launch a product line for men and, therefore, must communicate with male audiences. This methodology can help brands select their brand ambassador, choose an influencer, and develop brand personality, thus creating a consistent brand experience that could resonate with the customer's personality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For brand strategists and advertisers:

1. It is essential to recognize the significant changes in consumers' shifting perceptions of masculinity and understand that understanding consumer perceptions of masculinity is a complex task. To better comprehend audiences' preconceived notions of masculinity, advertisers need to apply a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods and approaches such as surveys, A/B testing, and focus groups, as well as qualitative content analysis, discourse analysis, and sentiment analysis of consumer comments to content that emphasizes masculinity.

2. Latvian Generation Z and millennial audiences do not appreciate depictions of traditional masculinity in advertising; therefore, advertisers should focus on more modern and inclusive portrayals of masculinity with displays of affection and love and depict masculinity less stereotypically. It is necessary to update the brand personality to match it with the target customers' preferred personality for the brand to resonate with the audience. Furthermore, brand strategists and advertisers should realize that masculinity could be a vital part of brand personality and pay close attention to various social concepts, such as masculinity and the changes in consumer perceptions.

3. When communicating to Latvian Generation Z and millennial consumers, there should be a greater focus on brand archetypes such as Hero, Caregiver, Everyman, and Innocent, which are brand archetypes associated with fairness, empathy, sensitivity, care, and a sense of equality. Furthermore, brand personality dimensions of Competence and Sincerity should also be considered effective ways to form a brand personality.

4. Masculinity as a concept in advertising presents an opportunity for advertisers to position themselves as a socially responsible and ethical brand. Since traditional masculinity stereotypes can have harmful consequences on society, brand strategists and advertisers have to restrain themselves from using stereotypes and consider other stakeholders, not just the target audience but also the government, non-profit organizations, and society at large, when depicting masculinity in advertising and other forms of marketing communication. This caution is particularly advised when advertising to younger generations who are still figuring out and establishing what it means to be a man.

5. A new masculine brand personality should be designed based on the author's proposed methodology. The methodology can help develop, create, and execute new masculine brand personality tactics to connect with the audience so that the brand personality

resonates with them. The methodology could also be adapted to help marketing professionals research and analyze femininity in branding and advertising.

For academics, researchers, and scholars in the marketing management field:

6. It is crucial to study the concept of masculinity itself and various types of masculinity, social construction theory, masculinity archetypes, and influencing factors of consumer perceptions about masculinity to understand masculinity in brand personality and advertising.

7. Due to versatile consumer perceptions about masculinity in brand personality and advertising, it is difficult for researchers to comprehend this complex subject using one method. Many methods, such as surveys, A/B testing, discourse analysis, and qualitative content analysis of consumer comments, should be applied when analyzing this subject.

For advertising policymakers:

8. Considering that no advertisement has been banned in Latvia due to stereotypes in advertising, Latvian advertising policymakers should pay closer attention to the European Parliament resolutions on gender equality in media, focusing on diversity, inclusion, and equality. The resolutions also outline the harm of gender stereotypes in advertising, with several Western European countries (for example, Sweden and Great Britain) already banning advertisements that excessively promote unhealthy gender stereotypes.

9. Considering that the Latvian Advertising Association's Board of Ethics can only advise the advertiser to discontinue the advertisement but has no right to ban it, the recommendation for advertising policymakers is to increase the legal capability of the Latvian Advertising Association or embolden the Latvian Consumer Protection Bureau to take action regarding harmful stereotypes in advertising.

10. Advertising policymakers are advised to promote a more inclusive, diverse society through informative campaigns focusing on equality, rejecting gender conformity, and breaking gender stereotypes. This action could make society more self-accepting and inclusive, ultimately signaling advertisers to focus on different portrayals of masculinity.

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