

**Does gender targeting meet the needs of modern advertising? If not, can user experience solve the problem?**

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Critical Paper

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This critical paper firstly defines the basic terms discussed further on – gender, gender stereotyping, User Experience and targeting, then researches and critically analyses examples of gender targeted advertising and demonstrates how the shift in attitudes towards gender identification and stereotyping in the world in general is changing how targeting adverts by gender should be amended. This paper will also look at how, by implementing User Experience, agencies could introduce these amendments to advertising.

Gender targeting in advertising in the UK and in comparison, the general gender situation in Japan will be explored as how the society perceives gender and gender stereotypes.

Extensive changes in the society are reflected in advertising. As written by Smith (2015), what is happening in a broader scale in the university is clearly mirrored in the fast development in advertising. This paper will be looking at how the general changes have been reflected in the masculine internet technology, feminine beauty and gender targeted clothing industry advertising. Also, how gender stereotyping in the media has changed the way younger generations perceive themselves.

This topic is common in media today, but it is a relatively fresh issue, or has been brought to the wider knowledge rather recently.

## **WHY IS TARGETING IMPORTANT?**

It is well known that the internet is a vast network of information enabling unimaginable contacts between people and businesses all around the world. But every piece of information that's available, is for free because somebody else is paying for it. More specifically, money from advertising is putting the content at disposal of everyone. "Advertisers subsidise the medium to get our attention, however fleeting or ungovernable it may be, in order to pitch their products to us" (Smith, 2015, p. 3).

With the rapid development of technology and digital, there are many implications showing that digital advertising is taking a bigger role in the overall advertising sector. As cited in Smith (2015, p. 4), Price Waterhouse Coopers has predicted in 2013 that the digital advertising market will reach \$185 billion worldwide in 2017. According to the Mintel Digital Advertising Report (2017), the annual growth of UK's digital advertising market is growing in double numbers in the last five years, hitting £10 billion in 2016, "the market will surpass the £11 billion mark in 2017 with a 9.7% year-on-year increase".

In order to define digital advertising, it can be explained as an include of any advertising and sponsored links a person can encounter when using search engines or social media platforms (Smith, 2015).

The audience for digital content is vast but at the same time extremely fragmented. "Today, if a wealthy shopper somewhere on the Internet is in the market for an expensive luxury car right

now, targeting that one shopper at that moment may be more valuable than advertising to millions of unmotivated consumers..." (Smith, 2015, p. 5).

Smith (2015, p. 5) explains, that browsing the Internet nowadays, is a much more independent activity than consuming any media in the past. The consumer can leave the website where an unlikeable ad appears any time they wish with unprecedented ease and lack of loyalty. By clicking on links, they can go anywhere at any time.

But at the same time, the audience can be very responsive to the advertiser's message as every individual in this audience is traceable and addressable. Feedback, that was unavailable to traditional mass media years ago, has now become an essential part of advertising. It is accessible, in real-time, "who is watching and engaging with the ad, where they live, what their household income is, if and how they share their experiences by means of social media, as well as other commercially useful data (Smith, 2015, p. 6)".

## **GENDER SPECIFIC TARGETING**

There is a demand for some brands to very specifically target female individuals purely for their physical needs, due the fact that they encounter a menstrual cycle and at a stage of their lives, may be baring a child. For those, who feel that there is a need for understanding, how big of a challenge and full of taboos a woman's life is, may find comfort in female empowerment. In 2015, Femvertising Awards were launched in USA in to honour brands who are challenging

gender norms by sending out messages, showing images that are stereotype-busting and pro-female (Femvertising Awards, no date).

For example, as can be seen in the globally run advertisement, "Blood normal" by feminine care brands 'Bodyform and Libresse (2017), they have a bold approach in showing the reality of having periods by abandoning the usually shown blue liquid in favour of a real depiction of menstrual blood and by doing so, they are aiming to break the taboos. This campaign in itself isn't just advertising the product but at the same time fighting against the social norms where women feel ashamed about their periods and men think it's something out of this world.

Another recent, non-profit example, of this is from children's charity Plan International UK whose "Plaster Pads" campaign (2017) is tackling the "social stigma around menstrual hygiene faced by girls around the world". The charity distributed boxes of Plaster Pads to celebrities and influencers and encouraged them to use these pads as plasters. By doing so, they are influencing younger generations to see that periods are nothing to be ashamed of. See Figure 1.



Figure 1 - Plan International UK "Plaster Pads" advertisement, Campaign, 2017

Raising awareness about key issues that affect girls and young women is a big plus of ads that empower women. It is important because girls can start to see how they are being manipulated in subtle ways and discriminated against from already a young age, so that they can make conscious decisions about whether to stand up for themselves or not (Wallace, 2014).

## **TALKING ABOUT GENDER**

How are 'sex' and 'gender' defined? The two terms have been used as synonyms in the past, but in the modern society, they should be distinguished from one another.

In general terms, 'sex' refers to the biological differences between males and females, such as the genitalia and genetic differences. 'Gender' is more difficult to define but can refer to the role of a male or female in society (gender role), or an individual's concept of themselves (gender identity). Sometimes, a person's genetically assigned sex does not line up with their gender identity. These individuals might refer to themselves as transgender, non-binary or gender-nonconforming. (Newman, 2016).

To support this definition, gender, in a traditional and grammatical meaning, can be described through social psychology, which refers to an examination of the ways social interaction shapes gender, male and female. Correll, Thébaud, and Benard, (2007), specify: "this includes the cognitive processes through which gender influences the way we perceive, interpret, and respond to our social world". The perception of gender has changed as it is not simply a characteristic of individuals, "it is also an organizing principle of all social systems, including families, work, schools, economic and legal systems, and everyday interactions" (Correll, Thébaud, and Benard, 2007).

The above described definition is disclosing implications that the perception of gender is changing or has already done so. There are no longer two sexes to identify one's sexuality – male and female, according to Jones (2017), there are 12 different gender identities which can be combined with one another forming even more sub-categories, for example *Agender*: “describes a person who does not identify as having a gender identity that can be categorized as man or woman or who identifies as not having a gender identity” or *Genderqueer*: “Someone whose gender identity is neither man nor woman, is between or beyond genders, or is combination of genders” (Jones, 2017).

Another important angle of this is to understand who makes the majority of purchases in the households and how the traditional meaning of a family has been shaped by changes in the society in general.

According to Krupp (2017), women manage an estimation of 85 per cent of all purchasing choices, at the same time; over 91 per cent of them feel that they are not understood by marketers. “Furthermore, female entrepreneurs were found to be 19 per cent more likely to be running billion-dollar companies than men, and due to their executive positions, women are leading in the job-creation stakes” (Krupp, 2017).

According to the Families and Households report (2017) by Office for National Statistics, there were 27.2 million households in 2017 in the UK, “resulting in an average household size of 2.4”.

And by exploring more, it is to be found that “there were 3.9 million people living alone aged 16 to 64 years; a larger proportion were male (58.5%); similarly there were 3.8 million people living

alone aged 65 and over but a larger proportion (66.5%) were female”. Therefore, large proportions of households consist of a single man and are quite often overlooked when targeting everyday products to only women. As cited in Carter (2010), “women mainly do the shopping, but more and more men are living alone, having the need to think for both of them – the male and the female”.

In this light, in order to progress, commitment to gender diversity and advancement of women in workforce must not be overlooked. In advertising, we must keep on empowering women, to let them speak up and help take control of their lives. The advertising industry is exemplifying this by demanding transformation (Krupp, 2017).

## **HOW WOMEN HAVE CHANGED THE ADVERTISING WORLD**

The importance of women in advertising, seeing that in order to successfully target them, they should be included in the process of making the advertisements, became evident in 1908, when Helen Resor joined J. Walter Thompson as a copywriter. The campaign, she introduced for Woodbury’s soap, increased their sales by 1 000 per cent in eight years. “Its tagline ‘A skin you love to touch’ showed a flair for advertising that resonated with women”. But despite their success, women still suffered discrimination just as in every profession (Veksner, 2015, p. 62).

In 1932, the first ‘soap opera’, a whole show targeting women, was made in order to provide sponsorship deals for example detergent producers (Veksner, 2015, p. 67).



## **A FEMINIST POINT OF VIEW**

The general gender fluidity doesn't necessarily mean that the rest of the world is accepting it, for example the feminist movement is communicating a strong message that this change has nothing to do with women.

As described by Jeffreys (2008): "the term 'gender' was adopted in the 1990s by many feminist scholars to describe what were previously called 'sex roles'". It has now started to replace the meaning of the term 'sex'.

On the other hand, radical feminism has criticised the rise of 'gender' since the 1970s.

It is frequently used in a way which has no connection with women at all, and applies specifically to the ways in which the practices of femininity and masculinity are 'performed' by those for whom they would be considered inappropriate according to the traditional sex/gender system (Jeffreys, 2008, p. 340).

In a subtler meaning, for example, when applying for a place in a University in the UK, there is a requirement to choose a 'gender' definition instead of ticking a plain 'male' or 'female' box, which can be confusing for people who are satisfied with the sex they were given by birth.

## **DEFINING GENDER STEREOTYPES**

In the following section, gender stereotypes will be defined and analysed. The current social situation will be investigated subsequently.

According to Collins (1994), as cited in Bakir, A., Blodgett, J. G., Rose, G. M. (2008), the use of stereotypes is universal throughout the society. A stereotype is defined as a general belief that is fixed, it is a characteristic many people accept as a representative of a particular type of a person or a thing. "Stereotypes embody (sometimes accurately, sometimes inaccurately) one group's perceptions of the personality traits, predispositions, attitudes, and behaviours of another group of people (Bakir, A., Blodgett, J. G., Rose, G. M., 2008)".

The issue lies within, how in popular culture, stereotypes revolve around the diverse selection of roles and traits that differentiate men from women. As cited in Bakir, A., Blodgett, J. G., Rose, G. M. (2008) by Meyers-Levy (1988): "In general, females have been described as weak, nurturing, dependent, indecisive, and emotional; whereas males have been characterized as strong, independent, competent, and stubborn".

This kind of stereotyping is not widely recognised but has been preserved within the popular culture, for example movies, television and commercials (Lovdal, 1989, cited in Bakir, A., Blodgett, J. G., Rose, G. M., 2008).

Parker (2017) clarifies: "Some ads can contribute to real world harms in the way they portray gender roles and characteristics". They suggest through their content and context that a mother is the sole cleaner in the family or some activities and careers are not suitable for girls. Boys are not decent boys if they don't appear strong and stoical, or men are hopeless in conducting parental or household tasks because they're men. But they cannot be divorced from reality.

Advertising is a small contributor to the global gender stereotyping, “and there’s ever greater recognition of the real harms that can result from gender stereotyping (Parker, 2017)”.

Overall, gender stereotypes can lead to having us narrow down our self-image which affects individuals (no matter the gender), the economy and the society as a whole (Parker, 2017).

So why is it still difficult for advertisers to move away from stereotypes? According to Klein (2017), “girls as young as seven already feel pressured to conform to the gender stereotypes that bombard them every day via social channels, TV and other forms of media”. Technology makes us only increasingly connected to the world around us and that helps to prevail the effects of gender stereotyping even more. “From photos of models with unattainable body types, to women being depicted as housewives in aprons, pressuring women to conform to a certain look or role can harm their confidence and self-esteem (Klein, 2017)”.

Traditional advertising agency models are focused on narrow disciplines lacking in talent, experience and perspective diversity. Only 31% senior positions were taken by women according to a survey conducted in 2016. This masculine approach surely can’t produce creative content which reflects the world around us (Klein, 2017).

As cited in Klein (2017),” according to Engine’s 21st Century Woman report, 76 per cent of women think brands do not represent the modern women, and 86 per cent believe brands present a very stereotypical view of life”.

It is not a surprise that in this light, young girls don't always wish to identify themselves as women and boys may wish to move away from the stereotypical strong male figure that is forced upon them from a very young age.

Broader changes in identifying sex, gender and family are showing clear signals for adjustments in the society as a whole and in advertising in particular. Should gender targeted advertising welcome these amendments? Could User Experience Design be useful in this matter?

## **USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN & ADVERTISING**

Firstly, the term User Experience should be defined. Lim (2017) suggests: "UX Design, or User-Experience Design, is the process of improving a user's access of and interaction with a product, namely by empathizing with the user and placing their context at the centre of the work".

Traditionally, UX has been in practice in technical fields like HCI (Human-Computer Interaction), "it is at its core an industry-agnostic approach that's proving more relevant to creative advertising than ever before" (Lim, 2017).

UX is a relatively new discipline, but since 2011, with the development of web from a largely static one-way communication platform to an interactive, immersive and mobile network, UX has become more significant to the creation and optimisation of digital properties. It has proven to be a useful practice both in creative and visual, product design and architecture (Kingsnorth, 2016).

“Effectively, UX designers do the ‘why’, creative designers do the ‘what’ and developers do the ‘how’ (Kingsnorth, 2016, p. 166)”.

According to user experience and usability specialist Krug (2016, p. 11), the most important thing about making sure a web site is easy to use, is that it shouldn’t make people think, that it should be self-explanatory.

The above described rule should apply to advertising too.

The union of advertising and UX seems a bit far-fetched but it is useful and even necessary for both making it a symbiosis. The evolution is emerged into the possibility of the user to have more control over what kind of adverts they see as now they can watch movies ad free on Netflix, block ads with specific programs and skip them on YouTube with a click of a button (McGowan, 2017). McGowan (2017) addresses ways how to enhance the customer experience: “when UX and advertising are leveraged together, the result can be an ad that the user actually makes a connection with. This symbiotic relationship between designer and marketer is a relatively new phenomenon, but their collaboration is not a mere trend”.

McGowan (2017) presents an example for this in his article. Facebook and Google have already endorsed the liaison between advertising and UX. Both of their advertising algorithms favour websites of brands that deliver a high-quality user experience. “Google even emphasizes this in its cryptic search ranking algorithm – sites with ads that employ better UX, rank higher than those without (McGowan, 2017)”.

The underlying nature of UX design and advertising is quite the same, when creating either one, largely the same set of questions must be answered: who is this for? What do they value (McGowan, 2017)? McGowan (2017) continues: “These are questions of empathy, of emotional insight into the user. Both ad creatives and UX designers must consider these when crafting a new campaign or platform”.

### **EXAMPLES OF GENDER TARGETING**

Stereotypically, certain types of jobs are for men and other types of jobs are for women. How has this changed in technology advertising in recent history?

Baekdal (2016) describes that advertisements related to computer sciences in the early 1970s were in generally gender-neutral: “Computers were presented as a learning tool for both boys and girls, or as a new tool for the whole family. The result was that women were getting just as interested in becoming computer scientists as they were in other forms of science”. See example below.

**WE PROMISE YOU WON'T  
USE THE COMMODORE 64  
MORE THAN 24 HOURS  
A DAY.**

[www.commodore.ca](http://www.commodore.ca)

It's 6 a.m. Do you know where your husband is?  
It's 8 a.m. Do you know where your daughter is?  
It's 11 a.m. Do you know where you are?  
We do.  
We make the Commodore 64™ the computer that's in more homes, businesses and schools than any other computer.  
With its 64K memory, its high fidelity sound and its high resolution sprite graphics, it's one powerful computer. With its price—about one third that of the 64K IBM PC™ or the Apple IIe™—it's one affordable computer. (In fact, you can add a disk drive, a printer or a modem and get a powerful computing system for just about the price of those other computers alone.)  
And with all the Commodore software programs we make for it, it's one useful computer.  
What can you use it for? Just about anything you want to. For fun or profit, for homework or housework, for higher game scores or higher S.A.T. scores, for words or music. For all hours of the day. And night.  
So if you're looking for a computer, it pays to look into the Commodore 64.  
You'll definitely have enough money for it. Just make sure you have enough time for it.  
**COMMODORE 64**  
IT'S NOT HOW LITTLE IT COSTS,  
IT'S HOW MUCH YOU GET.  
[www.commodore.ca](http://www.commodore.ca)

Figure 2 - Commodore 64 Computer advertisement, Baekdal, 2016

During the 1980s, everything took a turn when the way computers were promoted and perceived, changed. Suddenly computers became toys suitable only for boys. Advertising transformed into a more male dominant means of communication focusing mainly in targeting men (Baekdal, 2016).

Women were still used in adverts but for purposes to make them more appealing for men as they had become the main target audience. See example below.

**THIS IS A COMPUTER?**

**YOU BET YOUR SWEET TELEX OPERATOR IT IS!**

Beneath that Telex keyboard is a full-fledged 16-bit word-length digital computer with the most powerful I/O structure available today. It's the DATACOMP 404.

Hardware decimal arithmetic, including multiply and divide with automatic scaling, eliminates binary/decimal conversion. On I/O automatic formatting eliminates expensive editing software.

Word length operating modes that are built into the 404's hardware can be programmed for 16, 32, 48, or 64 bits, doing away with multi-precision routines.

Sixteen addressing modes, including double index and relative, hardware-streamline the most complicated routines and permit you to relocate object programs.

The 404 executive hardware time shares its own terminals while acting as the INTELLIGENT TERMINAL in a time-shared network.

If you're an OEM and you're thinking of force-feeding a binary bit-switcher to solve decimal problems, Telex us before you make a sad mistake. The 404 starts at \$6800.

**DE**  
DATACOMP  
SYSTEMS, INC.

404 Junipero Serra Drive, San Gabriel, California 91776  
Telephone: (213) 283-9485/Telex: 67-4604

CIRCLE 116 ON READER CARD

Figure 3 - Datacomp computer advertisement, Object, unknown



Also, when computer games were advertised, they seemed to be targeted to boys rather than girls as seen on Figure 4.



Figure 4 - AtariSoft, 1984, TechRepublic, 2017

As a result, the number of girls who wished to learn computer sciences, dramatically dropped: “Since young girls no longer wanted to learn how to use computers, the share of women with a computer science degree dropped. And today, only about 17% of all computer scientists are women”. Among many other social effects, this has resulted in a problem in the tech industries

where there are huge gender inequality issues. Not only, it is a challenge to get girls to code, there are issues with harassment too (Baekdal, 2016).

Women who want to pursue a career in a so-called 'masculine' industry, are taking control over their lives. One sign of this is the growing wish of industry professionals and women themselves, for example, to learn how to code. Started in 2012, Code First Girls is a not profit social enterprise that helps exclusively girls and women in Britain to develop coding skills. The bigger aim for this is to get more women involved in tech industries by promoting gender diversity. They mainly offer simple web and computer programming which then may lead to something more specific with the help of tutors or the bigger coding community (Code First Girls, no date).

As well as referring to the product that's been advertised, certain shapes and colours supposedly are more appealing to women and different ones to men.

As Carter (2010) refers, the choices people are making at the supermarket, are not really originating from their personal taste or preference as much as they might think. Colours and shapes affect the way customers think depending on their gender.

For example, chocolate is more widely known as a female product. British Galaxy has re-positioned itself on the market from 'a share of country goodness' to 'true chocolate indulgence', "playing on a perceived female need for 'me time' and a desire to 'self-reward'" (Carter, 2010).

In comparison, Nestlé's Yorkie has been targeting men ever since its inception. "Big and chunky enough to fulfil a man's appetite, it also capitalises on its 'It's not for girls' positioning" (Carter, 2010).

## **GENDERLESS BEAUTY**

In the fashion and beauty sector, the recent change is apparent. According to the Mintel Beauty Retailing Report (2017), "consumers are moving away from traditional gender stereotypes, in part driven by the increased visibility of gender diversity". Conventional gender boundaries are being continuously blurred. Cosmetics producer MAC, known for offering professional make-up for all ages, races and sexes, has extended its collaboration with transgender celebrity Caitlyn Jenner. It was also exposed that young men most likely agree "that they value the advice of beauty bloggers more than store staff (47% of male 16-24s)".

According to Dormon (2016), fashion industry is leading the war against gender stereotyping, the beauty sector following their suit not far behind. Fragrances designed for both sexes, for example, have been around since the beginning but in the 90s they became mainstream. Back then, Emporio Armani created two distinct fragrances that were united through design, "the smooth, cylindrical metal bottles are sculpted to fit together—a little bump for him and an indentation for her—subtly denoting the differences between the sexes (Dormon, 2016)". Calvin Klein brought the sexes even closer by unifying them in the iconic CK One unisex fragrance.

“Using sexually ambiguous models from all backgrounds and uniting them as one, gave meaning and integrity to their “One for all” philosophy (Dormon, 2016)”.

Once again, the mainstream brands are channelling their attention towards gender and identity. With the younger generations refusing to be put in the binary-gendered box, social borders are being redefined in order to broaden the approach, which allows them to hold and linger with a more comprehensive audience (Dormon, 2016).

For example, the male grooming brand Axe recently gave up their well-known “The Axe Effect” tagline, packaging and positioning, for a new one. “Find your magic” is hoping to encourage the modern men to feel more comfortable and confident in their own skin (Dormon, 2016).

As seeing male-oriented beauty brands move towards a more fluid approach, we are also seeing an increase of new smaller brands enter the market who are adopting a neutral aesthetic and stripping their packaging of anything that is gender stereotypical. For example, a Finnish personal grooming and household brand Basik, who created a new approach for razors as their design and buying process is based on functionality not the gender of the consumer (Dormon, 2016).

In addition, as written by Mc Lean and Dunne in Evening Standard (2015), one of the famous British people who doesn’t want to be identified as having a gender identity is the daughter of Sting, Eliot Sumner, who in 2015 said that she doesn’t believe in ‘gender labels’.

Genderless beauty products, packaging and previously mentioned examples about celebrities who are gender fluid or represented as endorsers for brands who value this, have a high impact on younger generations in identifying their gender.

Some additional examples of genderless advertising will be brought to the reader's attention.

Mattel with their ground-breaking "Moschino" special edition Barbie started breaking the gender stereotypes in November 2015 by showing a little blonde boy with a fake hawk hairstyle as the face of their brand. Insinuating that boys can play with girl's toys too, should put parents to ease with knowledge that they can buy a Barbie doll for their sons (Dua, 2016).

Other brands have been embracing ambiguity in their advertising too, for example, Spanish retail giant Zara has revealed a gender-neutral recently, Disney has removed labels referring to gender from its Halloween costumes previously, "and both Target and Toys 'R' Us have also done away with gender-based labelling in their stores on toys and décor" (Dua, 2016).

But it's happening in luxury fashion likewise as "brands from Rad Hourani to Gucci and Marc Jacobs to Hermès are blurring the divide between feminine and masculine style". (Dua, 2016).

One of the latest examples of gender fluid advertising was showcased by Louis Vuitton in the beginning of 2016 when Jaden Smith — the son of actors Will and Jada Pinkett Smith — modelled for Louis Vuitton's line for women in a black skirt and a mesh together with three other female models as seen on Figure 5 below.



Figure 5 - Louis Vuitton's Campaign with Jaiden Smith, The Vogue, 2016

In response to campaigners calling for an end to gender stereotyping, High Street retailer John Lewis recently brought to stores gender neutral clothing for children aged 0-14. By doing so, they were trying to remove pressure from the parents to purchase certain colours, patterns and styles for their children (Glenday, 2017). Explaining their bold move Caroline Bettis, head of children's wear at John Lewis, remarked: "We do not want to reinforce gender stereotypes within our John Lewis collections and instead want to provide greater choice and variety to our

customers, so that the parent or child can choose what they would like to wear" (Glenday, 2017).

"The narrow view of what it means to be a girl is starting to expand — my hope is that the future won't be categorized by gender, but by interests, age and brands," commented Beau Lewis, the founder of GoldieBlox. "We are driving change from a mission-based perspective, while others are following the shifting economics of the marketplace. Both are ultimately good for the progress of gender equality" (Dua, 2016).

## **GENDERLESS JAPAN**

Interestingly, as written by Robertson (2017), in Japan, the gender norms have been played with already for generations. In the current days, "boutiques are filled with cosmetics and beauty products intended for both males and females, and it's often difficult to discern the gender of passers-by". The genderless look in Japan today has been treated as contemporary phenomenon but it is conveniently ignored that Japan has a long history of blurred sexualities and gender-bending practices. Aristocrats, in premodern Japan often pursued transcendent beauty for a lover rather than being obsessed by someone's sex. "Only after the formation of a modern army in the late-19th century were the sort of same-sex acts central to the samurai ethos discouraged (Robertson, 2017)". Sodomy among men was criminalised from 1872 to 1882. However, since then, no law is putting homosexual relations under censorship. In addition to that, sexual orientation has not been something political in Japan until recently. Same-sex

relations have long been thought of as a normal development phase in every person's life.

Genderless males in Japan today are trying to shatter existing norms. They want to wear skirts when girls are allowed to wear trousers. And lipstick and eye shadow too. In fact, they are not genderless, instead they claim both femininity and masculinity as an everyday style. So maybe there is a lesson for the rest of the world to be learned here.

### **HOW COULD IMPLEMENTING UX IN ADVERTISING SOLVE PROBLEMS**

As Dua (2016) refers, the way gender has been used in marketing, has been changing: "Gender used to be a way to simplify marketing," declared Jamie Gutfreund, the global CMO at Wunderman. "But now there are opportunities to think well beyond the old constructs".

As mentioned before, every modern advertising agency should have one or more UX designers working hand in hand with the creatives in delivering a compelling campaign for many. They should also have women working alongside with men.

In terms of UX, the advertisements the consumer comes across with in a digital or any other format, the content should be relevant to the topic, engaging and clear. Any links or other call-to-action buttons should lead to the relevant content on a website that should be in accordance with the UX usability and usefulness principles. And if the UX is in place, the website can be more easily found in search engines. And as cited in Timpson (2015), "by putting your user experience hat on, you'll find that you can create a far more effective social strategy and ultimately improve the results you are currently getting".



As seen from many examples above, rather than targeting the advertised content for someone's physical features, other social behaviours would give a better result perhaps.

In more general terms, though, the answer does not always lie in UX, some simple tips will help.

For example, rather than focusing on a clichéd and outdated ideal of family life, WCRS's recent ad campaign for Warburtons – "Pride and Breadjustice" featuring Peter Kay –

features chairman Jonathan Warburton, showing the real people behind the business and communicating heritage and brand purpose in a fun, culturally relevant way that resonates with modern audiences.

Brands should be positive and empowering too. ASOS decided to stop airbrushing models on its websites and was praised for its realistic portrayal of women's bodies and female beauty.

Brands who get these simple things right will be rewarded with loyalty. Women are more socially connected than men, far more vocal and increasingly not afraid to speak out.

The way that women are portrayed and treated in and by the media has got to change (Klein, 2017).

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper defined and analysed how gender has been perceived in history and how advertising in UK is until this day is still stereotypical. It explored, in comparison how in Japan, being gender fluid in is a normal part of an individual's development process. It has analysed how stereotyping should no longer be used in advertising.

Research has shown that 91 per cent of women feel that they are not understood by marketers, 76 per cent of women think brands do not represent the modern woman and 86 per cent believe brands present a very stereotypical view of life. This clearly shows that changes have to be made.

Ways on how to empower women through advertising, have been looked at through the Femvertising Award winners. For example, a real deception of period blood has been reflected in the Bodyform and Libresse advertising showing that it is something normal and not out of this world.

User Experience can be a useful tool and skillset to have when working as a creative as it can help in seeing things from the customer's perspective and hopefully lessen the amount of gender targeted advertising which then leads to less gender stereotyping and a healthier society in a general sense.

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