

## Introduction

In 2018, Nike celebrated its 30th anniversary for its iconic 'Just Do It' marketing campaign by launching a campaign called 'Dream Crazier'. The ad features a compilation of moments by some of the greatest American athletes like Serena Williams who narrates the ad. The first part of the ad shows how females struggle in sport due to the female stereotypes and expectations to women, whereas the second part of the ad highlights female athletes who are pushing and breaking boundaries, achieving results nobody ever dreamed of women being able to achieve. [6] The 'Dream Crazier' campaign video went viral, getting millions of views and engagements. [3]



## Problem & Relevance

In the context of corporate social responsibility, gender equality becomes an increasingly important topic for brands. More and more global companies take social responsibility to position themselves in a competitive environment and because CSR has a positive impact on consumers' brand perception. To achieve more credible positions, large companies promote values and standards that most consumers agree with, like gender equality. An emotional touch is crucial in a brand message with a social mission because the more deeply the consumers are affected, the greater their identification will be. [7, 9] Nonetheless, two questions remain: Does a single advertising change consumers perception? And does it have an impact on the perception of the brand specifically?

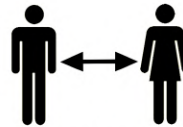
## Research Question

How does Nike's "Dream Crazier" ad change female consumers' perception towards the gender equality and social responsibility of the brand Nike?

**Hypothesis:** The "Dream Crazier" ad has a significant positive effect on the association of the brand Nike with equality, empowerment and inspiration.

## Theory

Most brands use existing values in their advertising, especially regarding gender instead of breaking them and introducing new principles. Especially women are more likely to be presented within certain stereotypes, e.g. portrayed as family-oriented and modest. [4, 8] Stereotypes are an oversimplification, which is more relatable to people and increases consumption. The problem is that they hinder self-realization of individuals because people feel limited and judged based on the stereotype, rather than their own individual features. Since stereotyped portrayals have been suggested to generate social effects that limit consumers' well-being, non-stereotyped portrayals could be expected to enhance well-being. [1] To reach gender equality in society, such stereotypes need to be fought. [5] This pays off for brands because ads showing women realistically and unbiased lead to more awareness and increase purchase intentions. [2]



The gender gap is a problem in society according to 85% of the participants.



The video ad was seen as very good, emotional, modern, socially engaging and suitable for Nike.

All of the selected positive aspects were clearly associated with Nike. Comparing the pre- and post-video implicit association tests (IAT), it is visible that the associations with the items increased in all cases. The ad makes all facets of gender equality increasingly present: People are aware of both, good aspects like empowerment and bad aspects like boundaries, after seeing the ad video. The bad items are associated strongly too because the first part of the ad only talks about restrictions for women in sports. From the association with "being restricted" being the only significant change from pre to post, one can derive that the hypothesis was falsified and that a single advertising exposure is not enough to change female consumers' brand associations significantly although changes were clearly visible. Still, people liked the ad very much in general and found it suitable for Nike. To conclude, one can say that Nike should rather focus on conveying positive aspects like empowerment and show less negative connotations in the ad to help building a strong brand and expose consumers to the campaign several times.

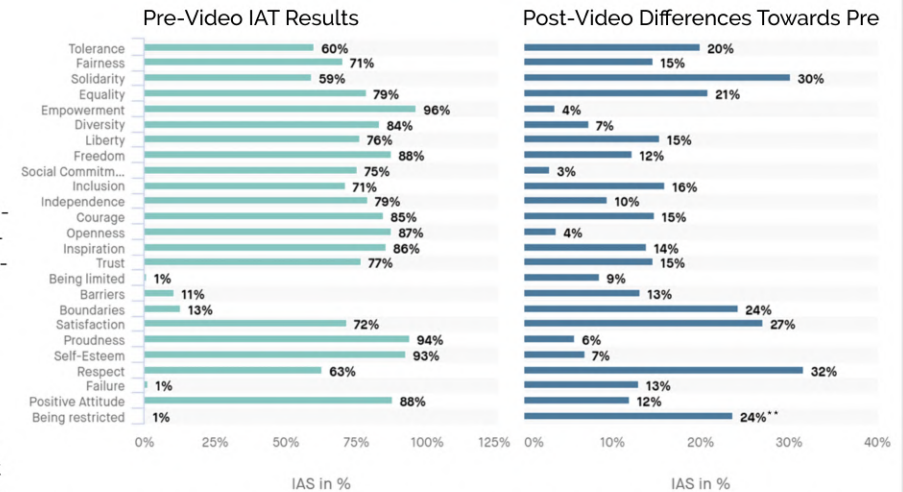
[1] Akestat, Nina (2017): Understanding Advertising Stereotypes. Stockholm School of Economics. Pp. 15-19. [https://www.hhs.se/contentassets/78c0641f99645ac31d4e66ca6ef637/sse-phd-diss-2017-nina-akestat\\_finalarticles\\_lowres.pdf](https://www.hhs.se/contentassets/78c0641f99645ac31d4e66ca6ef637/sse-phd-diss-2017-nina-akestat_finalarticles_lowres.pdf) [Accessed on 29th July 2020]

[2] ANA (2017): Reality Check. New Equality Measure Targets Gender Bias in Ads and Media. [online] Last updated 20th March 2017. Available at: <https://www.ana.net/content/show/id/43814> [Accessed on 4th June 2020]

[3] Brouwer, B. (2019): Nike's "Dream Crazier" Ad Wins the Show at the Oscars. [online] Available at: Tubular Insights: <https://tubularinsights.com/nike-dream-crazier-ad/> [Accessed on 14th December 2019]

[4] Eisend, M. (2010): A Meta-Analysis of Gender Roles in Advertising. In: Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Vol. 38, pp. 418-440.

## Results



[5] European Parliament (2008): Report on How Marketing and Advertising Affect Equality Between Women and Men. [online] Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A6-2008-0198&language=EN&mode=XML#title2> [Accessed on 4th June 2020]

[6] The Drum (2019): Nike: Dream crazier by Wieden + Kennedy Portland. [online] Available at: <https://www.thedrum.com/creative-works/project/wieden-kennedy-portland-nike-dream-crazier> [Accessed on 14th December 2019]

[7] Trendexplorer. Ethical Brands. [online] Available at: [https://branduniversity.trendexplorer.com/en/macrotrend/ethical\\_brands](https://branduniversity.trendexplorer.com/en/macrotrend/ethical_brands) [Accessed on 16th July 2020]

[8] Uray, N., Burnaz, S. (2003): An Analysis of the Portrayal of Gender Roles in Turkish Television Advertisements. In: Sex Roles, Vol. 48 (1/2), pp. 77-87.

[9] Wan, L., Poon, P., Yu, C. (2016): Consumer reactions to corporate social responsibility brands: the role of face concern. In: Journal of Consumer Marketing, Vol. 33(1), pp. 52-60.