

Blurring Gender Lines: Assessing the Effect of Androgynous Models in Advertising

Kristina Klein

University of Bremen

Pascal Bruno

International School of Management (ISM)

Cite as:

Klein Kristina, Bruno Pascal (2021), Blurring Gender Lines: Assessing the Effect of Androgynous Models in Advertising. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 50th, (92950)

Paper from the 50th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, May 25-28, 2021



Blurring Gender Lines: Assessing the Effect of Androgynous Models in Advertising

Abstract

Inclusivity, i.e., the equal and fair treatment of all types of different people, has become more crucial for consumers. Thus, it is not surprising that many companies today embrace this idea. For example, advertisers often feature androgynous models who exhibit gender expressions in between feminine and masculine. However, no research on the ad effects of androgyny exists. This paper investigates the impact of androgynous models on attitude towards advertising for non-gendered (unisex) products and uncovers the mechanisms underlying this effect. Our re-sults show a positive indirect effect on attitude towards an ad depicting androgynous models via increased surprise and a negative indirect effect via decreased fluency. These opposing mechanisms operate in parallel, resulting in a null effect on consumers' attitudes. For practi-tioners, these findings imply that advertisers of non-gendered products intending to feature androgynous models may do so without risking decreased ad attitudes.

Keywords: *advertising; androgyny; gender roles*

Track: Advertising & Marketing Communications