Gay Consumers and Brand Usage: The Gender-Flexing Role of Gay Identity

Gillian Oakenfull
Miami University

ABSTRACT

Prior research suggests that gender identity congruity between an individual and product brand will yield positive responses in terms of consumer behavior, However, gender atypicality has been observed among gay males and lesbians, which may confound previous research conducted under a heteronormative gaze. Drawing on research in psychology that considers gay identity as a cognitive construct and a component of self-concept, the findings of this study indicate that an individual's strength of gay identity and involvement in the gay community appear to invert effects of "typical" gender schema congruity on brand usage for both gay males and lesbians. © 2012 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) consumer marketing is currently estimated to have an overall buying power of over $835 billion (Witeck & Combs, 2011). Ragusa (2005) suggests that between 1980 and 2000, Corporate America changed from stigmatizing and avoiding homosexuals to establishing a gay market niche. In doing so, it moved through three distinct phases in its treatment of the LGBT population: (i) corporate shunning in the 1980s, (ii) corporate curiosity and fear in the 1990s, and (iii) corporate pursuit in the 2000s.

Over the past decade, corporate recognition of the attractiveness of LGBT consumer spending patterns has led to quite a dramatic increase in LGBT-oriented promotional activities. In 2004, 36% of Fortune 100 companies advertised directly to LGBT consumers, and U.S. corporations now spend about $212 million annually in LGBT print media, according to the Gay Press Report from Rivendell Marketing and Prime Access, which tracks 284 U.S. LGBT press publications. Much more has been spent in sponsorships and online advertising, which the survey does not track. Another $12 million was spent in online LGBT media, and over $7 million more spent annually on sponsorships in the LGBT community, totaling over $231 million in annual corporate spending in the LGBT community (Wilke, 2007).

Given this growing corporate interest in the gay consumer market, academic researchers have begun to focus on the LGBT population as consumers. However, to date, academic interest in the gay and lesbian market has primarily narrowly focused on gays as consumers of advertising (cf. Branchik, 2007; Kates, 1999, 2002; Oakenfull, 2007; Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2005; Oakenfull, McCarthy, & Greenlee, 2008) with little attention paid to gays and lesbians as consumers of

brands and products. Kates (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) offers some interesting qualitative examinations of gay consumers and their brands. A common thread in much of his published work is his observation of gay males engaging in gender-atypical consumption practices within the gay community. Similarly, and conversely, in the communication's literature, Sender (2004) discusses lesbian feminists' rejection of conventional femininity through their consumption behavior. These observations of consumer behavior within the gay community tend to contrast with findings from previous research on gender identity congruity and consumer behavior. Previous research indicates the positive influence of congruency between an individuals' sex and the perceived gender of a product or brand on choice (Fry, 1971; Gentry & Doering, 1977; Vitz & Johnson, 1965) and perceptions (Allison, Golden, Mullet, & Coogan, 1979; Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Gentry & Haley, 1984; Golden, Allison, & Clee, 1977.)

However, while prior research suggests that gender identity congruity between an individual consumer and product brand will yield positive responses in terms of consumer behavior, the consumer's gender has tended to be viewed as fixed based on biological sex, that is, male consumers will be masculine and thus prefer a masculine brand or product, while female consumers will seek congruity between their feminine self-concept and their preferred brands and products. Research in the social sciences would argue that, rather than strictly reflecting an individual's biological sex, which the World Health Organizations defines as "the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women," the term "gender" should refer to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and

attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women (World Health Organization, 2011.) Additionally, an argument could be made that this research was based on an implicit assumption of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity is a term to describe any of a set of lifestyle norms that hold that people fall into distinct and complementary genders (man and woman) with natural roles in life. Consequently, a "heteronormative" view is one that involves alignment of biological sex, sexuality, gender identity, and gender roles (Lovaas & Jenkins, 2006). In this context, the term "gender identity" refers to a person's sense of identification with either the male or female sex, as manifested in appearance, behavior, and other aspects of a person's life (Encyclopedia of Children's Health, 2012.) As such, previous research examining the effect of gender congruity on consumer behavior has failed to incorporate the role that sexuality may play in the alignment of biological sex and gendered consumer behavior.

As mentioned earlier, while academic interest in the gay and lesbian market to date has primarily narrowly focused on gays as consumers of advertising (cf. Branchik, 2007; Kates, 1999, 2002; Oakenfull, 2007; Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2005; Oakenfull, McCarthy, & Greenlee, 2008), with little attention paid to gays as consumers of brands and products, the research focused on individual factors affecting gay consumers' response to advertising variables may provide some useful theoretical direction for the study of gay consumers and brand behavior. Most notably for the current research study, when examining gay males' and lesbians' responses to gay-oriented advertising, Oakenfull (2007) suggests that, while a gay consumer's biological sex plays an important role in determining his or her response to various types of gay-oriented advertising messages, the effect is moderated by the consumer's level of gay identity.

This research draws on psychological research focused on the link between gender and sexual orientation, and Oakenfull's (2007) later work, examining the role of gender and strength of gay identity in an advertising context, to consider the potential "gender-flexing" role of gay identity in gay consumers' evaluations of gendered brands. Specifically, this research will examine the effect that gender and degree of gay identify have on gay consumers' affect for both "masculine" and "feminine" brands. As such, this research provides an empirical investigation of gay consumer behavior relating to products and draws upon theories from the social sciences that have yet to be applied in the marketing literature. As a point of clarity, throughout this paper, the term "gay" will refer to both gay males and lesbians.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender Image Congruity

Several studies have investigated the extent to which various types of products possess gender images (Allison et al., 1979; Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Golden, Allison, & Clee, 1977) and examined the affect of gender congruity on consumer attitudes and behavior. Iyer and Debevec (1986a, 1986b, 1989) were among the first to study whether products themselves have gender and what influences the formation of these perceptions. Drawing from sex-role research in psychology (Bem, 1974), they asked individuals whether products were sex-typed as masculine or feminine, simultaneously masculine and feminine (androgynous) or lacking a gender identity completely (undifferentiated). They found that most products are perceived to have gender, and that most products have sex-typed identities as masculine or feminine, but not as androgynous or undifferentiated.

In an attempt to understand individuals' evaluations of and reactions to products and promotions, researchers have found that biological sex is at least as important as an individual's sex-role self-concept in affecting perceptions of products (Allison et al., 1979; Golden, Allison, & Clee, 1977) and more important in predicting attitudes and behavior (Gentry & Doering, 1977; Gentry, Doering, & O'Brien, 1978). Gentry and Doering (1977) investigated the use of and attitudes toward a variety of leisure activities, products and brands and found that sex was more strongly associated with consumer attitudes and choice than sex-role self-concept. Gentry et al. (1978) also report weak support for congruence between masculinity–femininity (M–F) and consumer behavior variables, but stronger support for the association between product use, product perceptions and sex of respondent. Golden et al. (1979) found that sex of respondent and product use is at least as important in influencing sex typing of products as sex-role self-concept. Thus, the effect of an individual's sex and gender orientation on their perceptions and attitudes is inconclusive and warrants further attention.

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

As mentioned earlier, an argument can be made that the previously described research on sex typing of products and its effects on consumers' behavior and attitudes was based on an implicit assumption of *heteronormativity*. An extensive body of research supports the notion that individuals who identify as gay may possess a gender-identity schema that differs from those of heterosexuals; additionally, research in psychology would suggest that greater gender-identity variance exists within biological sex for gay individuals than for heterosexuals. Pillard (1991) identifies 31 studies between 1936 and 1981 in which homosexual and heterosexual individuals were compared on psychological measures of characteristics presumed to be sex-dimorphic. While Pillard (1991) found support for the "inversion" effect of homosexuality on gender identity, he also noted that gay individuals did not appear to simply replace gender-typical traits and tendencies with those that were gender atypical—they tended to hold as

many gender-typical traits as their heterosexual counterparts but also held more gender-atypical traits. As such, it would appear that gayness results, not in gender *inversion*, but in gender *flexibility*.

The late 1980s provided a new approach to measuring M–F, termed *gender diagnosticity* (GD), which is based on gender-related interests (Lippa & Connelly, 1990). Drawing on the gender inversion hypothesis, research has found that heterosexual men and women tend to have interests typical of their gender, whereas homosexual men and women tend to have interests that are relatively more typical of the other gender (Bailey, Finkel, Blackwelder, & Bailey, 1996; Lippa, 2000, 2005; Lippa & Arad, 1997; Lippa & Tan, 2001). Additionally, gay men and lesbians tend to emphasize gender-related interests relatively more strongly than do heterosexual men and women when self-rating on masculinity and femininity (Lippa, 2003; Lippa & Harshberger, 1999).

However, consistent with the conclusions drawn by Pillard (1991), Lippa (2005) also found empirical evidence for the existence of variability in gender traits within the sexes. He found that a considerable variance existed in Self-M–F and GD scores for gay men and that these scores were consistently more variable on GD than heterosexual men. Similarly, lesbians tended to be more variable on GD and on Self-M–F than were heterosexual women. The added flexibility in Self-M–F and GD scores for both gay males and lesbians and the increased variability within each cohort suggests that, within gay individuals, their sexual identity and gender identity may interact to affect their consumer behavior. As such, a deeper understanding of gay identity as a self-construct may shed some light on its effect on gendered consumption for gay individuals.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Gay Identity and Gender-flexed Consumption

The formation of a gay identity has typically been viewed as a staged developmental process (Brady & Busse, 1994; Cass, 1979, 1984, 1990; Coleman, 1982; Meyer & Schwitzer, 1999; Troiden, 1988). Although various models of gay identity development differ in the number of stages, their defining characteristics, and transitional mechanisms, they all propose that an individual progresses through a series of developmental stages and the process generally begins with an initial awareness of same-sex attraction, followed by same-sex sexual experience, self-labeling, self-disclosure, and eventually, the adoption of a positive gay identity (which acknowledges the value of both heterosexuality and homosexuality). Progression through these stages is driven by the desire to establish congruence between the individual's self-perception and the environment (Cass, 1979), and with this progression, the

nature of the interactions between an individual and the gay community evolves similarly (Hsieh & Wu, 2011.) Additionally, gay individuals can experience the identity development process differently (Kates, 2002) and present variation in terms of desires, behaviors and self-identification (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994). As a result, the homosexual population includes a large variety of individuals manifesting different rates of belonging and attachment to the gay community and various levels of social visibility of their sexual orientation (Visconti, 2008).

Research by Vanable, McKirnan, and Stokes, 1994) provides an interesting distinction between gayness as something one feels and gayness as something one does. In a study of gay men, it was found that, while homosexually active men are often considered to be part of the same homogeneous group, there are substantial individual differences in the degree to which they self-identify as gay and the extent to which these men perceive themselves to be part of the larger gay community (Stokes, McKirnan, & Burzette, 1993; Vanable, McKirnan, & Stokes, 1994). Vanable, McKirnan, and Stokes (1994) found that gay men with stronger involvement and identification with the gay community tended to rate themselves as more gay in orientation based on Kinsey's 7-point scale of sexual orientation. The authors concluded that individuals who are heavily involved in the gay subculture are likely to be more strongly identified with all aspects of the gay world or subculture and feel a strong sense of belonging to and with other members of the subculture (Vanable, McKirnan, & Stokes, 1994). These individuals tend to be more likely to attend gay organizational activities, frequent gay bars, and read gay media (Vanable, McKirnan, & Stokes, 1994). From this, one may conclude that the manifestation of gay identity and the experience of being gay will differ greatly between those who are heavily involved in the gay subculture and those who are not.

Drawing on the theoretical suggestion that gay consumers can differ greatly in the degree to which they identify with the gay community, Oakenfull (2007) introduced the construct of gay identity in the marketing literature as an important influence on gender-congruent responses to advertising content. That research examined how a gay individual's level of gay identity interacted with his or her biological sex to influence responses to advertising that varied on two dimensions: (i) the manner in which gayness was depicted, either with a same-sex couple (explicit) or with gay symbolism (implicit), and (ii) the sex of the same-sex couple used in the advertising.

This variance in gay identity may also explain the observed variability in the gender traits of gay males and lesbians relative to their heterosexual counterparts (Lippa, 2005). As incorporated in the models of gay identity development, gay males and lesbian individuals experience conflicting social pressures throughout

their lives. Like men in general, gay men are socialized throughout much of their lives to be masculine, and like women in general, lesbian women are socialized throughout much of their lives to be feminine. However, biological predispositions, atypical sex-role identities, and countervailing social pressures from gay male and lesbian communities may sometimes draw away gay men from normative masculinity and lesbians away from normative femininity.

Following social role theory, an individual who is not strongly identified as gay may seek to avoid social prejudice and stigma associated with homosexuality by adhering to gender-normative interests and behaviors or "passing." Visconti (2008) introduces the idea of identity "faking" where gay individuals adopt behaviors to the point of faking sexual identity. This imitation of heterosexual behavior patterns results from a history of personal and social fragility, of oppression and fear fostered by heterosexual control and punishment (Visconti, 2008). Additionally, an individual that spends little time in the gay community is less likely to experience the influence of social pressure to "gender bend" or exhibit inverted gender traits and is, therefore, more likely to exhibit gender-normative traits based on the more predominant social influence of "mainstream" society. Conversely, individuals that hold a strong gay identity will tend to be more centrally connected to the gay community, less susceptible to the influence of social prejudice in mainstream society, and, hence, more likely to possess gender-inverted traits (Lippa, 2005). Hsieh and Wu (2011) discuss the evolution of gay identity as it relates to changes of an individuals' interaction with and contribution to gay subculture. They suggest that individuals focused on identity construction and identity maintenance have high levels of interaction with the gay community and are thus more likely to conform to the gay subcultural ethos and to reconstruct the meaning of gay identity-enabling consumption practices.

Gender, Sexual Identity, and Consumption

Consistent with the principle of cognitive consistency, individuals value harmony among their thoughts, feelings and behavior and are willing to maintain consistency between these elements through their consumption behavior (Solomon, 1992). Kates (2003) suggests that the gay subcultural meaning of gender flexibility (Connell, 1995) is expressed as opposition to a presumably unsympathetic, orthodox mainstream culture. As such, according to Kates (2003), consumption practices among gay males and lesbians serve as ways to resolve a tension between "seemingly intractable, traditional gender conventions and the pro-expressive norms they experience in the gay community." Both Kates (2003) and Puntoni, Vanhamme, and Visscher (2011) report that many of their gay male informants express the belief that they are safe to engage in putative gender-inappropriate behaviors within the gay community.

Additionally, Kates (2004) discussed the symbolic meaning of consumption within the gay community and asserts that gay individuals use certain products and brands to communicate their identity to others. Consistent with Levy (1959), Kates (1998) suggests that products possess symbolic properties, which are somehow congruent with an individual's self-concept. Consumer objects, activities, ads, places, and situations may be considered signifiers, which are arbitrarily and historically associated with underlying ideologies, ideas, emotions, and thoughts, and with other objects. The literature on subcultural consumption interprets the presence of marker goods as symbolic boundaries differentiating the social status between subcultural and mainstream culture (e.g., Brake, 1985; Hebdige, 1979). To varying degrees, recent studies on subcultures of consumption (e.g. Belk & Costa, 1998; Celsi, Rose, & Leigh, 1993; Kozinets, 2001; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995) emphasize the reflexive, oppositional characteristics of subcultures, the ways members use marker goods to demonstrate acceptable behaviors and those who belong, and the ways these meanings are expressed in consumption practices. As such, gendered products and brands can be considered marker goods consumed to communicate subcultural belonging and identity within the gay community. Consistent with cognitive labeling and self-identity theories, an individual that identifies more strongly with the gay community may seek to be flexible in his or her gender-related consumption behaviors to communicate the strength of their gay identity to others. In this realm, Kennedy and Davis (1993) discuss lesbians devoting a great deal of time, money, and effort to the men's clothing they wore as signifiers of their butch identity within the lesbian community. Similarly, McDonald (2008) discusses the actions of a group called "Lesbians for Liberty" who protested the WNBA's New York Liberty's reluctance to publicly acknowledge lesbians as players within the WNBA and as heavy consumers as spectators of the sport of basketball.

In sum, past research has shown that increasing the amount of gender congruency between an individual and a product or brand will lead to more positive brand affect (Feiereisen, Broderick, & Douglas, 2009; Hong & Zinkhan, 1995). However, in the case of gay individuals, it is suggested here that the perceived congruity between an individual's gender and a product or brand's gender is moderated by the degree to which he or she identifies as gay and experiences that identity within the gay community. Given the influence of identity with the gay community or subculture in the formation of gender-flexed traits, this identity can be expected to moderate the previously found effect of gender congruity on the consumption of products and brands.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Specifically, gay males and lesbians with strong identity with the gay community may assess congruity with

gendered products or brands differently from those with weak gay identities. The possession of flexed (normative) gender-related interests positively (negatively) relates to an individual's strength of gay identity, such that gay individuals that are more heavily involved in the gay community will be more likely to engage in gender-atypical consumption than those that are less involved in the gay community (Connell, 1995; Kates, 2002; Lippa, 2005.) As such, individuals that are strongly identified with the gay community will be more likely to consume brands with brand images that are consistent with their gender-flexed self-image. Conversely, individuals that have a weak gay identity will tend to consume brands that fit with a heteronormative male/masculine, female/feminine gender schema, and avoid brands that are not congruent with that schema.

Hence, it is hypothesized as follows.

H1: Strongly identified gay males (lesbians) are more likely to use a feminine (masculine) brand than are weakly identified gay males (lesbians).

H2: Weakly identified gay males (lesbians) are more likely to use a masculine (feminine) brand than are strongly identified gay males (lesbians).

Hence, as was suggested in Hypotheses 1 and 2, gay identity will cause an "inversion" of gender-congruent consumption behavior among consumers of the same sex. However, as previously mentioned, recent extensions of knowledge on the link between sexual orientation and gender that suggests that lesbians are no less feminine than heterosexual females and that gay males are no less masculine than heterosexual males (Pillard, 1991). As such, it is suggested here that gay identity leads to *gender flexing* rather than *gender inversion* in consumption behavior. Accordingly, at similar levels of gay identity, consumption behavior will follow similar gender-typical behavior as has been observed in previous research (Fry, 1971; Gentry & Doering, 1977; Vitz & Johnson, 1965.)

Hence, it is hypothesized as follows.

H3: Strongly identified gay males (lesbians) are more likely to use a feminine (masculine) brand than are strongly identified lesbians (gay males).

H4: Weakly identified gay males (lesbians) are more likely to use a masculine (feminine) brand than are weakly identified lesbians (gay males).

METHOD

Product and Brand Selection

The list of products found to have masculine images in earlier research include beer, a pocket knife, tool kit, shaving cream, cuff links, and a briefcase, to name a few (Allison et al., 1979; Iyer & Debevec, 1986a) Products with feminine images include coffee, a scarf, baby oil, hand lotion, bedroom slippers, gloves, and sandals. Clearly, many of these products are unidimensional in terms of gender. A pocket knife, for example, would be considered masculine with little likelihood of being considered feminine. Similarly, baby oil would be considered strongly feminine with a weak masculine dimension, if any. Additionally, Kates (2003) suggests that subtle and diverse consumption practices involving many ordinary products are cultivated in the gay subculture. As such, products that are infused with subcultural meaning within the gay community, beyond that attached to their gender, were not considered so as to avoid potential confounding effects.

For this research, a pretest was conducted to select two products, one masculine and one feminine, from those categorized in previous research (i) that were clearly perceived to be of one gender relative to the other, but (ii) whose gender was not unidimensional, that is, the masculine product should be perceived as possessing some femininity and conversely for the feminine product. Similarly to previous research on the topic, students rated the perceived masculinity and femininity of a series of products, based both on previous research on gendered products and on gay consumption of products, on two separate 9-point scales, one to measure masculinity and one to measure femininity.

Coffee and beer were chosen as the focal products for this study. Based on paired sample t-tests, beer was considered significantly more masculine ($M_{\text{Masculine}} = 7.08$) than feminine ($M_{\text{Feminine}} = 3.64$, $t_{\text{df} = 35} = 10.228$; $p = 0.000$) while coffee was perceived to be significantly more feminine ($M_{\text{Feminine}} = 5.94$) than masculine ($M_{\text{Masculine}} = 4.61$, $t_{\text{df} = 35} = 3.568$; $p = 0.001$.) Additionally, beer ($M_{\text{Masculine}} = 7.08$) was considered to be significantly more masculine than coffee $C_{\text{Masculine}} = 4.61$, $t_{\text{df} = 35} = 6.350$; $p = 0.000$) and coffee ($M_{\text{Feminine}} = 5.94$) was found to be significantly more feminine than beer ($M_{\text{Feminine}} = 3.64$, $t_{\text{df} = 35} = 7.027$; $p = 0.000$).

Previous research finds that consumers often sex-type products based on their perception of the typical product user (Allison et al., 1979; Iyer & Debevec, 1986). As a final test of each product's gender classification, Mediamark product consumption data were collected to confirm the pretest findings. Mediamark is a database of U.S. consumer survey data that provide information on who consumes what, and connects that to the consumers' demographics and media usage. According to Mediamark product consumption data for 2010,

females index at 121 for coffee consumption in the last six months, while males index at 78 (GfK MKI Reporter, 2010a.) This means that females are 21% more likely than the general population to have drunk coffee over the past six months while males are 22% less likely than the general population. Using the same data source, conversely, males index at 129 for beer consumption, while females index at 73 (GfK MKI Reporter, 2010b.)

In a subsequent pretest, another group of students was asked to rate the masculinity and femininity of a set of coffee brands and a set of beer brands. The objective was to identify brands that were congruent with the product in terms of perceived gender. Starbucks was selected as a coffee brand that was perceived to be relatively more feminine than masculine, while still possessing some masculinity; Blue Moon was selected as a beer brand that was perceived to be relatively more masculine than feminine, while still possessing some femininity. The selection of both Starbucks and Blue Moon is consistent with previous research that links perceived sex traits with product user (Iyer & Debevec, 1989). Though many of Starbucks customers are men, women make up 60% of the clientele (Myers, 2006.) Additionally, while males dominate the beer industry with 75% of its consumption, Blue Moon has a stronger female consumer base than most other beers (SABMiller plc Annual Report, 2011).

Measures

Each participant was presented with a questionnaire for either Starbucks or Blue Moon. Brand usage was measured by asking subjects to indicate if they had consumed the brand in the past six months.

Level of gay identity was measured using a modification of Vanable, McKirnan, and Stokes' (1994) Identification and Involvement with the Gay Community scale. The original scale was designed to measure involvement with and perceived closeness to the gay community among individuals who self-identified as gay. The original scale consisted of eight self-report items. Participants indicated their degree of agreement with attitude statements regarding the importance of self-identifying as gay and associating with a gay community. However, in order to modify the scale so as to be applicable to both males and females, a scale item was added to capture lesbian attraction to women. All scale items were summed to create a compound measure of level of gay identity. There was no difference in the mean or median level of gay identity between genders. A median split of the data was performed to designate strong and weak levels of gay identity. The survey concluded with general demographic measures including sexual orientation, age, income, and sex.

Sampling

Estimates of homosexuality within the U.S. population run from 3% to 10% (Lukenbill, 1995). Thus, a randomized sampling procedure would be unlikely to yield a sizable sample of homosexual participants. A snowball sampling procedure was utilized where the author distributed surveys to self-identified gays and lesbians in the United States and Canada. Surveys were distributed to members of a university gay employee group, participants in gay online chat groups, members of two gay choral organizations, participants in an international gay choral festival, and attendees at a gay pride festival. Where appropriate, participants were asked to pass along the survey and self-addressed envelope to other self-identified gay males or lesbians.

Participants in the study consisted of 419 self-identified gay adults, including 217 females and 202 males from various geographic regions of the United States and Canada. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 78 years old with a mean age of 36 years old.

RESULTS

The reliability of the modified version of Vanable, McKirnan, and Stokes' (1994) Identification and Involvement with the Gay Community scale was found to be acceptable (Nunnally, 1978) with a Cronbach $\alpha = 0.755$. The data were analyzed using a test of pooled sample proportions using a z-test. The dependent measure was a measure of Brand Usage (usage/nonusage) with Gender (male/female), Gay Identity (weak/strong) and Product Gender (masculine/feminine) as between-subjects factors.

Calculating the Test Statistic

Since the null hypothesis states that there is no difference between the groups then H0 is P1 = P2, and a pooled sample proportion (p) is used to compute the standard error (SE) of the sampling distribution: $p = (p1 \times n1 + p2 \times n2)/(n1 + n2)$, where $p1$ is the sample proportion from population 1, $p2$ is the sample proportion from population 2, $n1$ is the size of sample 1, and $n2$ is the size of sample 2.

The SE of the sampling distribution is computed as the difference between two proportions: SE = sqrt$\{p \times (1 - p) \times [(n1) + (1n2)]\}$, where p is the pooled sample proportion, $n1$ is the size of sample 1, and $n2$ is the size of sample 2. The test statistic is a z-score (z) defined by the following equation: $z = (p1 - p2)/$SE. Given that each hypothesis predicts directionality within the condition, all tests were analyzed requiring a one-tailed z-score of 1.645 or greater to provide evidence of statistical significance.

Findings

Consistent with Hypothesis H1 and presented in Table 1 and Figure 1, a test of pooled sample proportions shows that strongly identified gay males have higher brand usage of the feminine brand (Starbucks;

Table 1. Effect of Degree of Gay Identity on Brand Usage within Sex.

Gender Brand	Gender Respondent	Strength of Gay Identity with Gay Community	N	p	Pooled Sample Proportion	SE	z
Masculine	Female	Weak	51	0.10	0.223	0.082	3.023*
		Strong	52	0.35			
	Male	Weak	38	0.34	0.247	0.094	1.827*
		Strong	47	0.17			
Feminine	Female	Weak	52	0.71	0.612	0.098	2.145*
		Strong	46	0.50			
	Male	Weak	43	0.54	0.647	0.102	2.166*
		Strong	45	0.76			

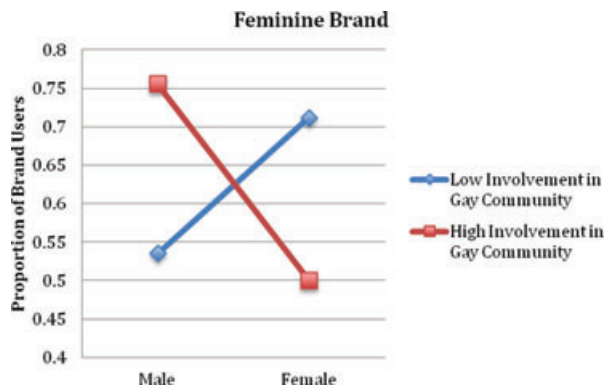*Significant at 0.05 level of statistical significance.

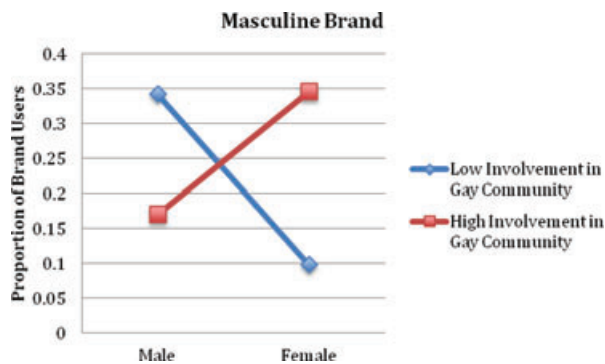**Figure 1.** Feminine brand: effect of strength of gay identity and sex on brand usage.

Figure 2. Masculine brand: effect of strength of gay identity and sex on brand usage.

$p = 0.756$) than do weakly identified gay males ($p = 0.535$; $z = 2.166$) and conversely, as shown in Figure 2, that strongly identified lesbians have higher brand usage of the masculine brand (Blue Moon; $p = 0.34$) than do weakly identified lesbians ($p = 0.09$; $z = 3.023$).

Consistent with Hypothesis H2 and presented in Table 1 and Figure 2, a test of pooled sample proportions shows that weakly identified gay males have higher brand usage of the masculine brand (Blue Moon; $p = 0.34$) than do strongly identified gay males ($p = 0.17$; $z = 1.827$), and, conversely, as shown in Figure 1, that weakly identified lesbians have higher brand usage of the feminine brand (Starbucks; $p = 0.712$) than do strongly identified lesbians ($p = 0.50$; $z = 2.145$).

Consistent with Hypothesis H3 and presented in Table 2 and Figure 1, a test of pooled sample proportions shows that strongly identified gay males have higher brand usage of the feminine brand (Starbucks; $p = 0.76$) than do strongly identified lesbians ($p = 0.50$; $z = 2.520$), and, conversely, as shown in Figure 2, that strongly identified lesbians have higher brand usage of the masculine brand (Blue Moon; $p = 0.34$) than do strongly identified gay males ($p = 0.17$; $z = 1.987$).

Consistent with Hypothesis H4 and presented in Table 2 and Figure 2, a test of pooled sample proportions shows that weakly identified gay males have higher brand usage of the masculine brand (Blue Moon; $p = 0.34$) than weakly identified lesbians ($p = 0.10$; $z = 2.835$) and, conversely, as shown in Figure 1, that weakly identified lesbians have higher brand usage of the feminine brand (Starbucks; $p = 0.71$) than weakly identified gay males ($p = 0.54$; $z = 1.777$).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In an attempt to understand individuals' evaluations of and reactions to products, researchers have tried to identify the influence of gender identity congruity on their perceptions (cf. Allison et al., 1979; Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Gentry, Doering, & O'Brien, 1977). Research has found that most products are perceived to have gender, and that most products have sex-typed identities as masculine or feminine (Allison et al., 1979; Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982; Golden, Allison, & Clee, 1977; Iyer & Debevec, 1986a, 1986b, 1989.) Later, research attempted to link gender identity congruity with consumer behavior and findings indicate the positive influence of congruency between an individuals' gender and the perceived gender of a product or brand on choice (Fry, 1971; Gentry & Doering, 1977; Vitz & Johnson, 1965).

However, while prior research suggests that gender identity congruity between an individual and product

Table 2. Effect of Gender on Brand Usage within the Same Levels of Gay Identity.

Gender of Brand	Strength of Gay Identity with Gay Community	Gender of Respondent	N	p	Pooled Sample Proportion	SE	z
Masculine	Weak	Female	51	0.10	0.202	0.086	2.835*
		Male	38	0.34			
	Strong	Female	52	0.35	0.262	0.089	1.986*
		Male	47	0.17			
Feminine	Weak	Female	52	0.71	0.631	0.099	1.777*
		Male	43	0.54			
	Strong	Female	46	0.50	0.626	0.101	2.520*
		Male	45	0.76			

Dependent Variable: Brand Usage

*Significant at 0.05 level of statistical significance.

brand will yield positive responses in terms of consumer behavior, this research has tended to view gender as fixed based on biological sex, that is, male consumers will be masculine and thus prefer a masculine brand or product, while female consumers will seek congruity between their feminine self-concept and their preferred brands and products. While this assumption of gender typicality generally holds for heterosexual populations (although the evolution of gender roles over the past two decades may call this assumption into question), sex researchers have observed more frequent instances of gender atypicality, in terms of assessed M–F and gender roles, among gay males and lesbians than among heterosexuals.

Early sex researchers, in concurrence with Freud's Inversion Theory (Freud, 1910), described gay men and lesbians as "sexual inverts"—implying that homosexuality was in some sense the reversal of "normal" sex roles (Terman & Miles, 1936). However, Pillard (1991) notes that Freud's Inversion Theory and the conclusions of Terman and Miles (1936) may have missed an important dimension of the relationship between gender and sexual orientation. Gay males and lesbians tend to hold no less of their own-sex traits that do heterosexuals. This means that, while gay men tend to be more feminine than heterosexual men, they are no less masculine than them; similarly, while lesbians tend to be more masculine than heterosexual women, they are no less feminine.

Additionally, recent research in psychology, relating Self-M–F to gender-related interests, suggests that a considerable variance exists in Self-M–F for gay and lesbians and that these scores were consistently more variable than for their heterosexual counterparts (Lippa, 2005). This observed flexibility in gender identity is consistent with the gender freedom and fluidity that has been articulated within the gay social movement since the 1960s as an explicit ideology (Altman, 1987; D'Emilio, 1983; Weeks, 1985). This fluidity has led to a large variety of consumption behaviors related to the protean nature of gay identity and its intersection with gender (Kates, 2002). In his ethnography of the

consumption behavior of gay males, Kates (2000) found that many of his gay male informants reported engaging in consumption practices within the gay community that are stereotypically associated with women: shopping for clothing, dyeing their hair, wearing jewelry, or using branded cosmetics. Similarly, Sender (2004) suggests that lesbian feminists' use their consumption behavior to reject conventional femininity.

Drawing on research in psychology that considers gay identity as a cognitive construct and a component of self-concept (Troiden, 1988), this variability in gender and related consumption behavior may be attributed to the gender flexing that results from an individual's identity with the gay community. The gay population includes a large variety of individuals manifesting different rates of belonging and attachment to the gay community and various levels of social visibility of their sexual orientation (Visconti, 2008). Given the role of gender-atypical consumption as either or both a marker of gay belonging within the gay community (Kates, 2002) and freedom from the gender confines of heteronormative consumption (Hsieh & Wei, 2011), it is suggested here that gender-atypical consumption behavior is moderated by an individual's identity and involvement with the gay community.

This research draws on sex research and theories of social identity from the field of psychology, stemming from the 1930s, to consider the potential "gender-flexing" role of gay identity and involvement on gay consumers' consumption of gendered products and brands. Specifically, this research examined the effect that biological sex and degree of gay identify with the gay community have on gay consumers' usage of both "masculine" and "feminine" brands. The results are consistent with the theoretical perspectives offered and advance prior research in several important directions. The findings of this study indicate that an individual's level of identity with the gay community moderate previously found effects of gender schema congruity on brand usage. Strength of gay identity with the gay community appears to invert effects of "typical" gender schema

congruity on brand affect for both gay males and lesbians.

DISCUSSION

This research attempts to provide a more expansive view of the market by providing a perspective on the impact of gender schema congruity that steps beyond the heteronormative gaze of previous research. This research builds upon the findings of Oakenfull (2007) who examined the effect of biological sex and gay identity on gay consumers evaluations of gay advertising content. It also draws upon the qualitative work of Kates (2000, 2002, 2004) that found that some gay males engage in gender-atypical consumption practices within the gay community.

However, while the findings of this research indicate a similar impact of gay identity on gender-flexed consumption across biological sexes, the marketplace appears to have dissimilar reactions to gender-atypical consumption within the gay population. While the feminine dimension of gay males has drawn the attention of marketers (they have expensive tastes, enjoy fashion, theater, home decorating, dance, music, art, design, gourmet goods), lesbians' gender flexibility toward masculinity has caused most mainstream marketers to stay away. The Bravo TV hit show "Queer Eye for the Straight Eye" was built on the premise that gay males' feminine sensibilities can help a heterosexual male be more attractive to females. The show's gay male "experts" provided advice on grooming, interior decorating, dress, and cooking to presumably more masculine heterosexual males. However, Showtime's the "L" word, avoided any notion of masculinity within lesbians and put a sexy, feminine gloss on lesbian life that drew more upon heterosexual male erotica (Whitley, 1988) than lesbian reality. Hence, the aforementioned paucity of published academic consumer research that is inclusive of lesbians mirrors their treatment in the marketplace. Marketers have, almost exclusively, targeted gay consumers using gay male imagery in advertising placed in gay print media (Baxter, 2010).

The findings of this research, however, indicate that, based on current brand usage patterns, companies may be missing an opportunity to target lesbians with products that provide congruity with their flexible gender identity. Given the greater observed variance in gender identity among lesbians than heterosexual females, lesbians may offer market opportunities across a broader range of products than do heterosexual females who may be more tied to traditional sex roles. Common stereotypes of lesbians label them as politically minded feminists who do not subscribe to consumerism and, as a result, do not like fashion, makeup, or shopping in general (Wilke, 2005)—as such, the lesbian feminists described in Sender's (2004) piece. These stereotypes have their roots in the rise of the lesbian movement as a complementary movement to Second Wave feminism in

the 1960s and have dubious applicability to the broader spectrum of modern day lesbian identity. The findings of recent gender research indicates that lesbians score similarly to heterosexual females on femininity (Pillard, 1991) and the results of this research show that this variability in gender identity among lesbians extrapolates to their gender-related consumption.

Additionally, the marketplace wrongly assumes that lesbian couples suffer twice as much as a heterosexual couple from the sex differential in incomes in the United States, making a lesbian household less attractive than both gay male and heterosexual households to marketers (Badgett, 1998.) In fact, an analysis of the 2010 U.S. Census also indicates that 57% of same-sex couples have both partners of a household working, compared to 48% of opposite-sex couples. Additionally, in a recent survey, 59% of lesbians lived with a partner compared with 37% of gay men (O'Connell & Feliz, 2011.) Hence, while lesbians are likely to earn less than all men, lesbian households are more likely to consist of two incomes than are either gay male or heterosexual households.

A deeper look at lesbian incomes and spending patterns reveals the need for a treatment of lesbians as an attractive consumer segment separate from both heterosexual women and gay males. Recent research has shown that the estimated 6–8 million lesbians in the United States are more likely to be college educated and earn more than heterosexual women. On average, lesbians earn 20–34% more than heterosexual women according to a 2005 Simmons Gay and Lesbian Consumer Study. According to the 2007 Lesbian Consumer Index by Community Marketing, 96% of lesbians hold at least one credit card, compared to 76% of U.S. households overall, and lesbian/bisexual women are 26% more likely than heterosexual women to buy on the spur of the moment (Experian Simmons, 2012). For lesbians, shopping is considered more a social activity than it is for their heterosexual counterparts. Lesbian females are 65% more likely than heterosexual females to say, "I prefer to shop with my friends" (Experian Simmons, 2012). Finally, given that only one-third of lesbian couples living together have children (a much higher percentage than for gay males, as stated earlier, but lower than for heterosexual females,) as a consumer group, they spend more dollars on leisure and travel than heterosexual women and are more likely to be online than their heterosexual counterparts (Forrester Research, 2003.)

Additionally, while often grouped with gay men within the gay social movement's fight for equal rights, lesbians may warrant a different treatment from gay males in the marketplace. Both their lifestyles and resulting behavior patterns tend to be distinct from that of gay men in a number of meaningful ways. Lesbians are more likely than gay men to be in a relationship (Hughes, 2007), live with a partner (Experian Simmons, 2012,) and have children (O'Connell & Feliz, 2011.) Conversely, they are less likely than gay

men to socialize at gay bars or events, being more oriented toward private social and entertainment behavior, and less likely to live in urban neighborhoods. In 2002, Ford Motor Co. learned lesbians and gay men had distinct preferences in the types of vehicles they drove and the features they preferred that were attributed to differences in their lifestyles and typical household composition.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Further research in the area could certainly consider how the tenets of gender congruity, inversion, and flexibility applied here can be stretched to provide a very interesting conceptual basis upon which to incorporate the identities of bisexual and transgendered individuals into marketing thought. Additionally, previous research has simply looked at the effect of a product's gender on consumer behavior. Future research is needed to unpack the antecedents and effects of brand and product gender rather than treating them as one dimension. For example, brands within a masculine category, such as beer, could themselves be identified along a gender spectrum, with Budweiser at the masculine end to Michelob Ultra at the feminine end. It is quite feasible to suggest that the respective gender of products and brands may interact to effect consumers' attitudes and behaviors.

Previous research in the sex typing of products has assumed a heteronormative perspective. Further work is needed to examine whether sexual orientation plays a role in consumers' sex typing of products and brands. Given their own variations in self-categorized masculinity and femininity, would gay males and lesbians categorize products and brands in the same way as heterosexuals? Following the work of Bem (1974), is there a role for androgyny in the sex typing of products and brands? Additionally, previous research on the gendering of products has worked an aggregate level assuming all individuals categorize a product's gender in the same way. Given the variability known to exist in an individual's gender self-identity, to what extent do considerations of the gender of products and brands vary across individuals? Finally, if products and brands have been found to have a gender or sex-type, to what extent do products and brands have a sexual orientation?

REFERENCES

Allison, N., Golden, L., Mullet, G., & Coogan D. (1979). Sextyped product images: The effects of sex, sex-role self-concept and measurement implications. In J. Olson (Ed.), Advances in consumer research, Vol. 7 (pp. 604–609). Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.

Alreck, P., Settle, R., & Belch, M. (1982). Who responds to 'gendered' ads, and how? Journal of Advertising Research, 22, 25–31.

Altman, D. (1987). Aids in the mind of America. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

Badgett, L. (1998). Income inflation: The myth of affluence among gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans. Amherst, MA: The Institute for Gay and Lesbian Studies.

Bailey, J. M., Finkel, E., Blackwelder, K., & Bailey, T. (1996), Masculinity, femininity, and sexual orientation. Unpublished manuscript, Northwestern University.

Baxter, S. (2010). Evidence on the marketing approaches targeting gay and lesbian consumers. Global Journal of Business Research, 4, 2125–2139.

Belk, R., & Costa, J. (1998). The mountain man myth: A contemporary consuming fantasy. Journal of Consumer Research, 25(December), 218–240.

Bem, S. (1974). The measurement of psychological androgyny. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 42, 155–162.

Brady, S., & Busse, W. (1994). The gay identity questionnaire: A brief measure of homosexual identity formation. Journal of Homosexuality, 26, 1–22.

Brake, M. (1985). Comparative youth cultures: The sociology of youth culture and youth subcultures in America. London: Routledge.

Branchik, B. (2007). Pansies to parents: Gay male images in American print advertising. Journal of Macromarketing, 27(1), 38–50.

Cass, V. (1979). Homosexual identity formation: A theoretical model. Journal of Homosexuality, 4, 403–408.

Cass, V. (1984). Homosexual identity formation: Testing a theoretical model. Journal of Sex Research, 20, 143–167.

Cass, V. (1990). The implications of homosexual identity formation for the kinsey model and scale of sexual preference. In D. McWhirter, S. Sanders, & J. Reinisch (Eds.), Homosexuality/heterosexuality: Concepts of sexual orientation (pp. 239–266). New York: Oxford University Press.

Celsi, R., Rose, R., & Leigh, T. (1993). An examination of high-risk consumption through skydiving. Journal of Consumer Research, 20(June), 1–23.

Coleman, E. (1982). Developmental stages of the coming out process. American Behavioral Scientist, 25, 469–482.

Connell, R. (1995). Masculinities. London: Polity.

D' Emilio, J. (1983). Capitalism and gay identity. In S. Snitow & Thompson, S. (Eds.), Powers of desire: The politics of sexuality (pp. 100–113). New York: Monthly Review Press.

Encyclopedia of Children's Health. (2012). Retrieved June 26, 2012, http://www.healthofchildren.com/G-H/Gender-Identity.html#b#ixzz1z6wuuYC0.

Experian Simmons. (2012). The 2012 LGBT report: Demographic spotlight. New York, NY: Experian Simmons.

Feiereisen, S., Broderick, A. J., & Douglas, Susan P. (2009). The effect and moderation of gender identity congruity: Utilizing "real women" advertising images. Psychology & Marketing, 26, 813–843.

Forrester Research. (2003). Retrieved June 29, 2012, from http://directmag.com /ar/marketing_gays_hightech_straights/.

Freud, S. (1910). Three contributions to the sexual theory. In A. A. Brill (Transl.). New York: The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company.

Fry, J. (1971). Personality variables and cigarette brand choice. Journal of Marketing Research, 8, 298–304.

Gentry, J., & Doering, M. (1977). Masculinity-femininity related to consumer choice. In H. Hunt (Ed.), Advances in consumer research, Vol. 5 (pp. 423–437). Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.

Gentry, J., & Haley, D. (1984). Gender schema theory as a predictor of ad recall. In T. Kinnear (Ed.), Advances in consumer research, Vol. 11 (pp. 159–164). Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.

Gentry, J., Doering, M., & O'Brien, T. (1977). Masculinity and femininity factors in product perception and self-image. In H. Hunt (Ed.), Advances in consumer research, Vol. 5 (pp. 326–332). Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.

GfK MKI Reporter. (2010a). Report on coffee consumption. Mediamark.

GfK MKI Reporter. (2010b). Report on beer consumption. Mediamark.

Golden, L., Allison, N., & Clee, M. (1977). The role of sex role self-concept in masculine and feminine product perceptions. In H. Hunt (Ed.), Advances in consumer research, Vol. 5(pp. 599–605). Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.

Hebdige, R. (1979). Subculture: The meaning of style. London: Methuen.

Hong, J., & Zinkhan, G. (1995). Self-concept and advertising effectiveness: The influence of congruency, conspicuousness, and response mode. Psychology & Marketing, 12, 53–77.

Hsieh, M., & Wu, S. (2011). Gay men's identity attempt pathway and its implication on consumption. Psychology and Marketing, 28, 388–416.

Hughes, L. (2007). Lesbians as tourists: Poor relations to a poor relation. Tourism and Hospitality Research, 7, 17–26.

Iyer, E., & Debevec, K. (1986a). Gender stereotyping of products: Are products like people? In N. K. Maholtra & J. M. Hawes (Eds.), Developments in marketing science, Vol. IX (pp. 40–45). Atlanta, GA: Academy of Marketing Science.

Iyer, E., & Debevec, K. (1986b). Sex roles and consumer perceptions of promotions, products, and self: What do we know and where should we be headed? In R. J. Lutz (Ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 13 (pp. 210–14). Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.

Iyer, E., & Debevec, K. (1989). Bases for the formation of product gender images. In J. M. Hawes & J. Thanopoulos (Eds.), Developments in marketing science, Vol. XII. Akron, OH: Academy of Marketing Science. pp. 38–42.

Kates, S. (1998). Twenty million new customers—Understanding gay men's consumer behavior. Binghampton, NY: The Haworth Press, Inc.

Kates, S. (1999). Making the ad perfectly queer: Marketing "normality" to the gay men's community? Journal of Advertising, 28, 25–37.

Kates, S. (2000). Out of the closet and out on the street! Gay men and their brand relationships. Psychology & Marketing, 17, 493–513.

Kates, S. (2002). The protean quality of subcultural consumption: An ethnographic account of gay consumers. Journal of Consumer Research, 29, 383–399.

Kates, S. (2003). Producing and consuming gendered representations: An interpretation of the Sydney gay and lesbian Mardi Gras. Consumption Markets and Culture, 6, 5–22.

Kates, S. (2004). The dynamics of brand legitimacy: An interpretative study in the gay men's community. Journal of Consumer Research, 31(September), 455–464.

Kennedy, E.L., & Davis, M.D. (1993). Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community. New York: Routledge.

Kozinets, R. (2001). Utopian enterprise: Articulating the meanings of star trek's culture of consumption. Journal of Consumer Research, 28(June), 67–88.

Laumann, E., Gagnon, J., Michael, R., & Michaels, S. (1994). The social organization of sexuality. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Levy, S. J. (1959). Symbols for sale. Harvard Business Review, 37, 117–124.

Lippa, R. (2000). Gender-related traits in gay men, lesbian women, and heterosexual men and women: The virtual identity of homosexual–heterosexual diagnosticity. Journal of Personality, 68, 899–926.

Lippa, R. (2003). Handedness, sexual orientation, and gender-related personality traits in men and women. Archives of Sexual Behavior, 32, 103–114.

Lippa, R. (2005). How do lay people weight information about instrumentality, expressiveness, and gender-typed hobbies when judging masculinity–femininity in themselves, best friends, and strangers? Sex Roles, 53, 43–55.

Lippa, R., & Arad, S. (1997). The structure of sexual orientation and its relation to masculinity, femininity, and gender diagnosticity: Different for men and women. Sex Roles, 37, 187–208.

Lippa, R., & Connelly, S. (1990). Gender diagnosticity: A new bayesian approach to gender-related individual differences. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59, 1051–1065.

Lippa, R., & Hershberger, S. (1999). Genetic and environmental influences on individual differences in masculinity, femininity, and gender diagnosticity: Analyzing data from a classic twin study. Journal of Personality, 67, 127–155.

Lippa, R., & Tan F. (2001). Does culture moderate the relationship between sexual orientation and gender-related personality traits? Cross-Cultural Research, 35, 65–87.

Lovaas, K., & Jenkins, M. (2006). Charting a path through the 'Desert of Nothing'. In Sexualities and communication in everyday life: A reader. Sage Publications Inc.

Lukenbill, G. (1995). Untold millions. New York: Harper Business.

McDonald, M. (2008). Rethinking resistance: The queer play of the women's national basketball association, visibility politics and late capitalism. Leisure Studies, 27, 77–93.

Meyer, S., & Schwitzer, A. M. (1999). Stages of identity development among college students with minority sexual orientations. Journal of College Student Psychotherapy, 13, 41–65.

Myers, G. (2006). Innovative ways to attract female customers (part 1). MarketingProfs.com. Retrieved June 27, 2012, http://www.advisorylink-dfw.com/martic11.html.

Nunnally, J. (1978). Psychometric theory (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Oakenfull, G. (2007). Effects of gay identity, gender and explicitness of advertising imagery on gay responses to advertising. Journal of Homosexuality, 53, 49–69.

Oakenfull, G., & Greenlee, T. (2005). Queer eye for a gay guy: Using market-specific symbols in advertising to attract gays and lesbians without alienating the mainstream. Psychology & Marketing, 22(May), 421–439.

Oakenfull, G., McCarthy, M., & Greenlee, T. (2008). Targeting a minority without alienating the majority: Advertising to gays and lesbians in mainstream media. Journal of Advertising Research, 48(June), 191–198.

O' Connell, M., & Feliz, S. (2011). Same-sex couple household statistics from the 2010 census. Report. United States Census Bureau. Retrieved June 21, 2012, from http://www.census.gov/hhes/samesex/.

Pillard, R. (1991). Masculinity and femininity in homosexuality: "inversion" revisited. In J. C. Gonsiorek & J. D.

Weinrich (Eds.), Homosexuality: Research implications for public policy (pp. 32–43). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Puntoni, S., Vanhamme, J., & Visscher, R. (2011). Two birds and one stone: Purposeful polysemy in minority targeting and advertising evaluations. Journal of Advertising, 40, 25–41.

Ragusa, A. (2005). Social change and the corporate construction of gay markets in the New York Times advertising business news. Media, Culture and Society, 27, 653–676.

SABMiller plc Annual Report. (2011). Retrieved June 26, 2012, from http://www.sabmiller.com/files/reports/ar2011/2011_annual_report.pdf.

Schouten, J. W., & McAlexander, J. (1995). Subcultures of consumption: An ethnography of the new biker. Journal of Consumer Research, 22, 43–61.

Sender, K. (2004). Neither fish nor fowl: Feminism, desire, and the lesbian consumer market. The Communication Review, 7, 407–432.

Solomon, M. (1992). Driving passions: Vehicles and consumer culture. In J. Sherry, Jr. & B. Sternthal (Eds.), Advances in consumer research, Vol. 19 (pp. 166–168). Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.

Stokes, J., McKirnan, D., & Burzette, R. (1993). Sexual behavior, condom use, disclosure of sexuality, and stability of sexual orientation in bisexual men. Journal of Sex Research, 30(August), 203–213.

Terman, L., & Miles, C. (1936). Sex and personality: Studies in masculinity and femininity. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Troiden, R. (1988). Gay and lesbian identity: A sociological analysis. New York, NY: General Hall, Inc.

Vanable, P., McKirnan, D., & Stokes, J. (1994). Identification and involvement with the gay community. In C.M. Davis, W.M. Yarber, R. Bauserman, G. Schreer, & S.L. Davis (Eds.), Handbook of sexuality-related measures. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications pp. 407–407.

Visconti, L. M. (2008). Gays' market and social behaviors in (de)constructing symbolic boundaries. Consumption, Markets and Culture, 11, 113–135.

Vitz, P., & Johnson, D. (1965). Masculinity of smokers and the masculinity of cigarette images. Journal of Applied Psychology, 49, 155–159.

Weeks, J. (1985). Sexuality and its discontents: Meanings, myths and modern sexualities. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Whitley, B., Jr. (1988). Sex difference in heterosexuals' attitudes towards homosexuals: It depends upon what you ask. Journal of Sex Research, 24, 287–291.

Wilke, M. (2007). Gay Marketing Resources. Retrieved February 8, 2012, from http://www.commercialcloset.org/common/news/reports/detail.cfm?classification=report&qid=4784&clientid=11064&topicid=384&subsection=resources&subnav=resources.

Witeck and Combs. (2011). Retrieved June 1, 2012, http://www.witeckcombs.com/news/releases/20060214_buyingpower.pdf.

World Health Organization. (2011). What do we mean by "sex" and "gender"? Retrieved June 26, 2012, from http://www.who.int/gender/whatisgender/en/index.html.

Correspondence regarding this article should be sent to: Gillian Oakenfull, Associate Professor of Marketing, 3038 Farmer School of Business, Miami University, Mail: 3038, Oxford, OH 45056 (oakenfg@muohio.edu).