



**Acceptance of LGBTQ+ Related Advertisements and the Role
of Christianity and Norm Salience**

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Abstract

Acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community has been increasing over the past decades; however, there still is continuous backlash towards LGBTQ+ related art, media-representation, and other forms of LGBTQ+ displays, such as public advertisements. This can cause negative consequences for members of this community. Therefore, it is important to reduce backlash and increase acceptance. In this experiment (N = 235) we tried to make salient one's belonging to the groups they identified with and the norms of that group. In this research the group consisted of heterosexual Christians. We examined if norm salience in the form of 'golden rule priming' would alter one's attitude towards LGBTQ+ advertisements positively, and we also varied the type of advertisement (e.g., provocative, non-provocative) to see whether this manipulation would lead to the acceptance of each advertisement differently. We found no significant results for the experimental condition. However, a significant result has been found for differences in advertisement. We recommend ideas for future research.

Key words: Norm salience, group-identification, attitudes, LGBTQ+, golden rule

Acceptance of LGBTQ+ Related Advertisements and the Role of Christianity and Norm Salience

At the beginning of 2017 a company called Suit-Supply launched a public advertisement that would later on cause worldwide backlash. Suit-Supply is a company that specializes in the making of suits and is located worldwide, in countries such as France, The United States, Australia, Italy, The Netherlands, and many more. While the company first started out as an Amsterdam based establishment, the company quickly grew to be much bigger. In early 2018, the company decided to launch a daring campaign. This campaign involved a poster being displayed on for example bus stops or in metro stations. This campaign portrayed two men embracing and even seemingly kissing each other on the lips. This campaign launched in over twenty-two countries and was faced with a great amount of backlash around the world. It caused so much backlash that the company eventually lost well over 12,000 Instagram followers because of this advertisement. This advertisement caused more than the usual amount of backlash towards heterosexual advertisements (NRC-Handelsblad, 2018).

Suit-Supply has not been the first company to try and incorporate social political statements into their advertisements or campaigns. Magnum for example, the ice cream company that has been in existence for well over thirty years. Magnum launched a commercial in 2017 that featured a wedding between two women. This commercial was also met with a lot of backlash, especially in Australia. Some Australian conservatives even said the following: “Glorification of homosexuality while the whole family is watching”. Remarkably this statement came 2 years after the Australian government issued a law that would legalise same sex marriage. A year after this commercial, the law was finally installed and same-sex couples are now allowed to marry in Australia. Ikea for example also has been launching LGBTQ+ related campaigns from 1994 onwards (Pisa, 2011), which also are not always welcomed with open arms. This shows

that multiple substantial companies around the world are busy with, but simultaneously struggling with the portrayal of non-heterosexual couples in their advertisements.

When looking at a country like The Netherlands, where Suit-Supply originated, research has shown that 29% of Dutch inhabitants dislike or disapprove of people from the LGBTQ+ community holding hands or kissing. While this percentage is much lower for heterosexual couples and their public display of affection, it comes down to only 11% of Dutch inhabitants disliking this form of affection (Kuyper, 2018). For members of the LGBTQ+ community, this can cause many negative consequences. Knowing people do not approve of one's way of living or even lack of representation in media can cause serious harm to one's wellbeing. It can cause feelings of invisibility and even feelings of having to fit one's depicted stereotype shown in the media (McInroy & Craig, 2017). In this research the aim is to understand and find the possible factors contributing to such a difference in acceptance/backlash in heterosexual displays of public advertisements or public advertisements related to LGBTQ+ representation. In this research the focus will lie with two possible influential variables, namely (in-group) norms and attitudes.

Social Norms

Social norms are seen as rules that guide one's behaviour. This can also cause groups to regulate themselves, according to these rules. Social norms are linked to expectations about the behaviour of others, especially in groups (Kelly & Davis, 2018). According to Bicchieri's (2017) social expectation theory, one aspect of these expectations is called *normative expectations*. This is the belief of individuals about how other people think one should act in certain situations. Another indication of social norms is conditional conformity. According to this perspective, in order to correctly explain a group-level regularity as a social norm, people involved in the group must adhere to the law only if they are confident that those others will and that those others think it is appropriate for them to do so. Only when patterns of

behaviour are a result of both motivations that depend on other people and beliefs about other people can they be considered social norms. People like to adhere to social norms, but only if everyone else in the group is doing the same and believes that doing so is the proper thing to do.

Research by Hornsey and colleagues (2003) has shown that people with a weak moral basis for their opinions or attitudes conform to the group norm on private behaviours, but people with a strong moral basis for their attitude did not conform to the norm on private behaviours and even showed counter-conformity on public behaviours. Masser and Philips (2003) decided to research this in their own study about prejudice and social norms against gay men. The goal of this study was to see how an injunctive norm from a significant group with whom the participants associated had an impact on the participants' behaviour. An injunctive norm is seen as one's belief about what others in a certain situation should do, not what people typically do. Attitudes about the gay men also have been reported. Furthermore, there was a second goal to see if this influence of norms existed and if that might vary depending on the individuals' self-reported views on homosexuality. The findings revealed that those with a higher prejudice score towards homosexuals were more likely to be prejudiced. It appeared that making use of the norms in these situations, could make a difference in eventual attitudes or level of prejudice and the subsequent behaviours. These findings imply that the social situation can be influential. The social situation and the salient norms in that situation can cause people to show more in-group conformation than when the norms would not have been as salient.

Two studies conducted by Christensen and colleagues (2004), also showed that greater identification with a group led to more positive emotions for members of the group who conformed to the social norms, than for members who did not conform to the social norms.

This research also showed that this effect was greater for injunctive norms, than for descriptive norms. Descriptive norms are beliefs about what people in a group or as individuals typically do. As for social norms, injunctive norms seem to be important in regards to research on the conformity of certain groups and the subsequent behaviour of individuals in that group.

Attitudes

Research shows that changes in attitudes, self-efficacy and norms can cause changes in behaviour and intention (Sheeran et al. 2016). Since the aim of this research is to find out what predict one's behaviour in groups and how that can be influenced, attitudes are important to take into account. According to the self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), people's perceptions of who is like them and how they differ from them are influenced by self-categorization. People define themselves on personal attributes or on the basis of the attributes of the group they identify with. This can make the differences between people in other groups more salient, but also make salient the similarity between you and others in your group. In turn, this can lead to self-stereotyping (Hogg & Turner, 1987). Meaning that members of a group look at the prototypical group member and infer their own attributes from that, this also includes attitudes. So, members of a group look at their respective group and the prototypical members of that group to guide their own attitudes and therefore their subsequent behaviours are also influenced by what they think prototypical group members should do. Being a member of a group affects the attitudes held by an individual. Attitude change over time is predicted by group identification (Siegel & Siegel, 1957).

Christianity and LGBTQ+ Attitudes

According to Chadee and colleagues (2013) religion has historically been portrayed as a unifying force that encourages acceptance, including those who are viewed as "sinners",

such as homosexuals. It has appeared, however, that religion has changed over the years. Once being seen as a structure that provides safety and comfort to all, to nowadays seeming like an exclusive group with little tolerance towards groups such as members of the LGBTQ+ community. One's inability to see the difference between the individual and the apparent non-approved behaviour seems to withhold these groups from completely tolerating each other. The difference lies in whether religious beliefs encourage the condemnation of sinful persons or only immoral behaviour. This difficulty in seeing the difference between the person as a wrongdoer or only their behaviour tends to convert itself into negative views towards homosexuals.

Anderson and colleagues (2009) found that religion can contribute to homophobia, because people consider religion and homosexuality as two concepts that do not go together. Research by Chadee and colleagues also (2013) showed that even in a part of the world where there are multiple religions present, it seemed that people who identified most with their religion had more negative views towards homosexuals. This was the result for Christians who had an intrinsic religious orientation, and not an extrinsic orientation. Intrinsic religious orientation meaning people have this view of Christianity which gives them purpose and meaning in this world, a way to understand life and enhance the relationship with God. Extrinsic religious orientation is more of an instrumental approach to religion. Herek (1987) also found that people in the United States who endorsed a more intrinsically religious orientation were more prejudiced towards homosexual people. He found that behaviours that do not match religious teaching and the views of the mainstream religious groups were met with less tolerance.

Not much survey research has been done on Christian's view of LGBTQ+ members, but a few recent survey results can give a clearer view. Kuyper (2018) stated that 53% of

churchgoers in The Netherlands have a negative attitude towards being homosexual. This is compared to 91% of the general population being fine with homosexuals in the Netherlands in 2014 (Kuyper, 2016). Another research, situated in the Netherlands, done by Saskia Keuzenkamp (2011) of the Netherlands institute for social research, the general view of Dutch Christians on homosexuality was mixed. Even though the majority of people in the survey agreed that homosexuals should be able to get married (74%), live their lives as they wish (87%), and should be able to adopt children (60%), when questions on public display were asked, opinions were seemingly more negative. When asked what people thought about seeing two men kissing, 41% of respondents found two men kissing offensive. For two women kissing this percentage was lower, namely 28%, for a heterosexual couple only 13% of respondents found that offensive.

This survey data clearly shows that when asked about the general rights of homosexuals the majority of Dutch Christians are more or less willing to tolerate everything, except when it comes to public displays of non-heteronormative love, even for a country that many people view as tolerant. Often this also has to do with the psychological phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance. Pluralistic ignorance is the generally false believe that people are acting in accordance with their in-group (or what they think their in-group believes), regardless of what their own thoughts are on the matter. (Fields & Schuman, 1976; Miller & McFarland, 1987). Research by Eisner, Spini and Sommet (2019), showed that perceived support for same-sex marriage was actually lower than the level of actual support reported by the community. This shows that because of the false beliefs people can have about other's view on their group, people can infer their attitudes based on these false beliefs.

Golden Rule of Christianity

To make one's group membership and the injunctive intergroup group norms salient, the 'golden rule priming' is a relatively little researched technique. The golden rule (Wattles, 1996) is a moral principle that is present in many religions. The golden rule emphasizes the importance in treating others equally. Research has found that even though multiple religions live by the golden rule, it is not preached in the same way between different religions but also not within religions (Detenber et al. 2007). A reason for this could be that the Bible contains some messages that condemn homosexual acts (Lev.18:22) and others that emphasize tolerance. Vilaythong (2010) and colleagues researched the effect of golden rule priming on Christians' and Buddhist attitudes towards homosexuality. They found that golden rule messages from the respective groups own religious leaders had no effect. When the message came from an outgroup religious leader the golden rule priming had a negative effect, meaning in this case Christians having more negative attitudes towards homosexuals than before the golden rule priming. Since the evidence is mixed, in this study we wanted to test the potential effect of golden rule priming in relation to acceptance of LGBTQ+ advertisements.

Present Study

In the present study, the aim is to find out how one's attitudes are being influenced with regards to LGBTQ+ advertisements. For this research, the focus will lie with Christians' view on LGBTQ+ related advertisements. By providing participants with the golden rule priming and stating the norms for their group, we seek for an answer to the research question: Can we increase acceptance towards LGBTQ+ related advertisements by making group norms salient? We have one experimental study with two conditions: one control condition and one experimental condition. In the experimental condition, the participants are confronted

with the 'golden rule'. There are two types of advertisements, differing in provocativeness.

For this research there are three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: People who are primed by the 'golden rule' will have more positive attitudes towards the advertisements.

Hypothesis 2: People who are not primed by the 'golden rule' will have less positive attitudes and opinions towards the advertisements

Hypothesis 3: People will have more negative attitudes and opinions towards the more provocative advertisement (Suit-Supply), independent of their condition.

Methods

Participants

The participants were recruited via Prolific. A paid platform where researchers can find their preferred research participants in a pool of participants, in this case heterosexual Christians. The participants were recruited in The United States. The study was advertised as a study on people's perceptions of public advertisements. Through Prolific the participants were directed towards a Qualtrics survey. The current sample initially included 294 participants. Though, 235 participants remained in the end. Out of the 294 participants, 31 did not identify as heterosexual (10.5%), 14 were not Christians (4.8%) and 14 participants did not complete the survey (4.8%). We only kept heterosexual Christians in the data.

In our sample of 235 participants, there were 89 (37.9%) male participants and 146 (62.1%) women. The ages of the 235 participants ranged between 19 and 93 years ($M = 46.74$, $SD = 14.35$). In terms of education, the majority of participants finished their bachelor's degree at a university (35.3%) or at least finished high school (32.3%). Regarding participants work life's, the majority of participants, namely 120 (51.1%) indicated that they had a full-time job, 23 (9.8%) participants were retired and there were only eight (3.4%)

students who completed the research. The overwhelming majority of our sample indicated that they were white/Caucasian, namely 197 participants (83.8%). Regarding sexuality and religion, every single one of the 235 participants indicated that they identified as a heterosexual Christian. The study received ethics approval from Ethics Committee of Psychology at University of Groningen. We had a pragmatic approach for sample size. Since this was a hard-to-reach sample, we aimed to collect data from at least 100 participants for each between-groups condition.

Design and Procedure

This current study has an experimental design. After reading and giving the informed consent, participants were asked to answer some general demographic questions about their age, gender, sexuality, religion, current job status and educational level. To continue the survey the participants must have chosen heterosexual as their sexuality and Christianity as their religion, otherwise the survey would have ended. Thereafter the participants were randomly allocated to either one of two experimental conditions. The participants could have either been in the control condition or the experimental condition.

In the experimental condition participants were confronted with ‘the golden rule’ (Vilaythong, Lindner & Nosek, 2010). This ‘golden rule’ informed our Christian participants of the words stated in the bible. We used a passage from the bible depicting the importance in equality and respect between people. We stated that 80% of interviewed Christians agreed with that passage from the bible, this info was fabricated for the purposes of this study. We also asked participants to reflect on this (see Appendix A). This was meant to make salient their belonging to their respective religious groups, and also make salient the opinions of other Christians. In the control condition no additional text was shown, only the two pictures of the different advertisements. In both conditions two advertisements were shown, one Coca-Cola advertisement and one suit-supply advertisement. The Coca-Cola advertisement showing

two men embracing and the suit supply advertisement showing two men actually kissing, thus being more provocative to a certain extent. This was a within subject factor and all participants saw both of the advertisements presented in a randomized order. Participants had to give their opinions on each advertisement afterwards. Participants rated their opinions and attitudes towards the advertisement, their acceptance towards homosexuality and their identification with their religion. The last two variables were included as control variables and were not used in this paper. Afterwards participants were debriefed about the aims of the study and they were thanked for participating.

Materials

Opinion on the advertisement ($\alpha = 0.84$).

We measured participants' opinion on the advertisement with six self-made items. The items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). This was both done for the Coca-Cola advertisement and for the Suit-Supply advertisement. The items consisted of questions about the advertisement in question, such as: "I think these type of advertisements should be on public display" or "I would rather see a more fitting advertisement for this product". Two of the six items needed to be recoded (item three and six). See appendix B for the scale.

Attitude towards the advertisement ($\alpha = 0.93$).

Attitude towards the advertisement was measured with an existing scale from Bhat, Daniel & Leigh (1998). The original scale consisted of 24 items that all indicated certain emotions people could have towards the advertisement. The items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). In the current study all 24 items were used. Of the 24 items eleven items needed to be recoded to make a 'positive attitude scale'. This was done for both the Coca-Cola advertisement and the Suit-Supply advertisement. Participants were asked to rate the items according to how the advertisement

made them feel. The items included emotions such as: Happy, disgusted and informed. See appendix C for the scale.

Attitude towards homosexuality ($\alpha = 0.97$).

Also measured in this research was participants' attitude towards homosexuality. This was measured with a pre-existing scale from Anderson, Koc, & Falomir-Pichastor (2018), who translated this scale to English. The scale consisted of sixteen items. The items were all measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Out of the sixteen items there were six items that needed to be recoded. The scale consisted of items such as: "Gay people disgust me" and "Gay couples should have the right to marry". See appendix D for the scale.

Identification with religion ($\alpha = 0.94$).

Identification with religion was also measured with a pre-existing scale by Koç (2018). Consisting of 3 sub-scales. The scale had twelve items in total. Each sub-scale consisting of four items. Each item was measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). Out of the twelve items, six of them needed to be recoded. Originally this identification with religion scale was made for any social identity and for this research we changed the religion to Christians, so this is an adapted scale. The scale consisted of items such as: "I feel committed to Christianity" and "The fact that I am Christian is an important part of my identity". See appendix E for the scale.

Results

In the current research, to test the hypotheses, we used SPSS (Version 26) with a general linear model. We conducted 2x2 mixed ANOVA's. The mixed ANOVA is a combination of a repeated measures ANOVA and a between-subjects ANOVA. The first independent variable was the experimental manipulation and it was a between-subjects factor with two levels: the golden rule condition and the control condition. The within-subjects

factor was the type of advertisement, the Coca-Cola advertisement, or the Suit-Supply advertisement. The two dependent variables in this case were ‘opinion on the advertisement’ and ‘attitude towards the advertisement’.

Assumption check

Before conducting the main analysis, an assumption check had to be done. The homogeneity of variance assumption has been met for opinion on the Coca-Cola advertisement: $F(1,233) = .58, p = .45$, and also for the Suit-Supply advertisement: $F(1,233) = .77, p = .38$. For the attitudes towards the advertisement the assumption for both Coca-Cola and Suit-supply also have been met. The data also appeared to have a normal distribution.

Initial Steps: Factor Analysis

For the variable ‘attitude towards the advertisement’ we used the scale from Daniel & Leigh (1998). In the first instance all of the 24 items of the original scale were planned to be used. However, we first ran exploratory factor analysis to see whether this scale could be used in our context. For this, we conducted a factor analysis in SPSS. There were a number of issues. First a total of two items, namely item 11 (surprised) and 17 (envious) did not load onto any factors together with the other items in that scale. Second, the analysis produced a two-factor solution and all negatively worded and positively worded items were clustered under two different factors separately. Since this could be a function of statistical artefact (and also based on the scree plot), we decided to force one factor. When loading all items onto one factor, item 11 (surprised) did not load onto this factor and item 17 (envious) had a small negative loading ($b = -.309$). These analyses were done with attitudes towards one advertisement, and the identical results were found for the analysis done for the other advertisement. Accordingly, we removed both these items from the subsequent analysis. The analysis was done without item 11 and 17 from the ‘attitude towards the advertisement’

scales. The scree plot and the item loadings can be found in the appendix (See Appendix F) for the final factor solution.

Main analysis

To test our hypotheses, we conducted two mixed ANOVA with experimental manipulation as the between subjects factor and the type of advertisement as the within subject factor on ‘attitude towards the advertisement’ and ‘opinion on the advertisement’.

The ANOVA revealed no significant effects nor interaction effects for both of the dependent variables and the experimental manipulation. For the first dependent variable, the ‘attitude towards the advertisement’, the main effect of experimental manipulation was not significant, $F(1,233) = 2.57, p = .11$. The interaction effect was also not significant, $F(1,233) = .95, p = .33$. This shows that there were no differences on attitudes towards the advertisement after reading the golden rule priming. However, the main effect of advertisement type was significant, $F(1,233) = 186.81, p = <0.001$. This shows that participants had more positive attitudes towards the less provocative advertisement (i.e., Coca-Cola; $M = 4.1, SD = 1.22$) as compared to the more provocative advertisement (i.e., Suit Supply; $M = 3.44, SD = 1.15$). This finding supports Hypothesis 3.

For the second dependent variable ‘opinion on the advertisement’ the main effect of experimental manipulation was not significant, $F(1,232) = .23, p = .63$. The interaction effect was also not significant, $F(1,232) = <0.001, p = 0.985$. This shows that there were no differences on opinions on the advertisement after reading the golden rule priming. However, The main effect of advertisement type was significant, $F(1,232) = 412.8, p = <0.001$. This shows that participants had more positive opinions on the less provocative advertisement (i.e., Coca-Cola; $M = 4.31, SD = 1.36$) as compared to the more provocative advertisement (i.e., Suit Supply; $M = 3.08, SD = 1.34$). This finding also supports Hypothesis 3. We also ran

analysis with attitudes towards homosexuality and Christian identification separately as potential moderators, but the results did not change. For brevity, we do not report them here.

Discussion

Results

In this study, we expected that participants who are in the golden rule condition would have more positive attitudes and opinions towards the advertisement and therefore people who were not in the golden rule condition would have less positive attitudes and opinions towards the advertisement. We also expected participants to have more negative attitudes towards the more provocative advertisement, unrelated to their condition. Since the research yielded no significant results for the two dependent variables on the golden rule priming, the first two hypotheses were not supported by our data. This indicates that for this research the results yielded no significant differences for the different conditions. After people had read the golden rule priming, there appeared to be no significant direction. The golden rule manipulation in this research did not yield the expected results. However, our third hypothesis is supported by the data. Data analysis yielded significant differences for the different types of advertisements used. There appeared to be significant differences in the type of advertisement being used, meaning people did have significantly different attitudes and opinions towards a certain advertisement type, in this case a more positive attitude towards the less provocative advertisement (i.e. Coca-Cola).

Thus, even though there were no significant results for the experimental manipulation, our study shows some evidence that there is a difference in how one rates different kinds of advertisements, depending on how sexually provocative the advertisement seems to be. The data analysis for this research showed that the participants actually rated the less provocative Coca-Cola advertisement more positively, with higher means for that type of advertisement as opposed to the Suit-Supply advertisement.

Findings

The results in this study could not support the two hypotheses on the experimental manipulation (golden rule priming). This is not necessarily in line with previous research done on this topic. The research by Masser & Philips (2003) showed that the social situation or context and the salient norms in that situation can cause people to show more in-group conformation than when the norms would not have been as salient. They studied this with people who were already prejudiced towards homosexuals. We expected, that because of choosing a group that is historically seen as having negative attitudes towards homosexual people, this would have also been the case in our present research.

However, in the research from Masser & Philips (2003), they found that people high in prejudice towards homosexuals showed even higher prejudice in the pro-prejudice condition. We tried to replicate this study in the same way they made the groups norms salient; however, in our case, we worked with the golden-rule condition instead of a pro-prejudice condition. Hereby actually instead of influencing people in a pro-prejudice way, we tried to influence them in a pro-accepting way as an intervention to foster acceptance. This might be the reason for the difference in significant results between our research and their findings. They also found that the pro-prejudice attitude was higher for people with negative attitudes/already prejudiced towards homosexuals, while in our study one of the control variables was 'attitude towards homosexuality', which in the data analysis appeared to not have any effect whatsoever.

However, research by Hornsey and colleagues (2003), found that when working with social norms the effect actually depends on how strong or weak people's moral basis for their attitudes is. They found that people with a weak moral basis conform to the salient group norms, but people with a strong moral basis did not conform to the group norm, they even showed counter-conformity on public behaviours. In our research, the golden rule priming

could have made salient people's moral basis for their attitudes. This could have caused intrinsically religious oriented individuals, as presented in Herek's (1987) research to have a discrepancy between their own morals and the salient group norms, cancelling each other out, therefore, resulting in no significant effect. Since the research we did on golden rule priming (Vilaythong et al., 2010) is relatively novel compared to other research that has been done regarding group norms and group salience, it could be that the reason for the discrepancy between previous research and our research lies in the different manipulation. Even though part of the results in this research do not support the research question and hypotheses, we did pave a way for future research on the topic of golden rule priming and group norm salience.

Limitations

Since this research yielded no significant results for the experimental manipulation, it is important to mention the possible limitations in this study. Firstly, the study was originally meant to be conducted in the Netherlands, which is a different demographic than the United States, this could be a limitation. Secondly, the advertisements that were chosen for this research depicted two gay men either embracing each other (Coca-Cola) or romantically embracing and kissing each other (Suit-Supply), so the choice in advertisements could be a limitation. And thirdly, one of the limitations could have to do with the group we have decided to study in this research, namely Christians.

Different Demographic

When designing this study, the original idea was to launch the study in The Netherlands, the country where the Suit-Supply advertisement originated from. Unfortunately, we were not able to run the study in The Netherlands due to lack of heterosexual Christian participants in sample pools. The study was based on research on the attitudes of Dutch Christians in The Netherlands. Even though the study is applicable to people of all descents and people from all over the world, it could be that the depiction of the advertisements was

different than what most people from the United States are used to. In The Netherlands a lot of advertisements are shown through posters on bus-stops or posters in other frames on the side of the street. In the United States however, the forms of advertisement could be very different. This could have had an effect on the American participants who participated in our survey, because they are not used to advertisements being advertised in that particular way. This could have influenced their attitudes and opinions on the advertisement in general and not only necessarily the content of the advertisement. Suit-Supply is a worldwide company; however, it could have been the case that Americans were not familiar with this brand so had very little opinions regarding the depiction of the brand and their clothes. One other difference in demographic can lie with the golden rule priming. Even though previous research (Herek, 1987) has been done on golden rule priming in the United States, it could possibly be that Americans do not value the golden rule priming as much as people from other places.

Advertisements

In this research, two advertisements of gay men were chosen to be used in the survey. One advertisement depicting two men embracing each other (Coca-Cola), and one advertisement showing two men embracing and kissing (Suit-Supply). Since the intention of the research was not necessarily to focus on gay men but also on other sexual orientations, it may have been the case that the choice of advertisement could have influenced the participants. Results may have been different, had we chosen to use two advertisements depicting two women embracing each other or kissing, if we had used one of both, one advertisement with two women kissing and one advertisement with two men kissing or if we had used one heterosexual advertisement and one non-heterosexual advertisements. The results may be more concrete then. We would expect in these cases that there would possibly be a significant effect. Because research by Anderson and Koç (2015) found that for example that attitudes towards lesbians are in general more positive than attitudes towards gay men.

Therefore, the choice for two advertisements depicting men could have had an influence on participants' attitudes and opinions on the advertisement. Additionally, we had not done a pilot study on the provocativeness of both the advertisements. However, we did find significant differences on the type of the advertisement – we assume this might be based on provocativeness.

Choice of Group

For this research the group that we chose to do research on was heterosexual Christians. This group has had generally historically negative attitudes towards members of the LGBTQ+ community. Therefore, this group was deemed as a group that would be interesting to try and manipulate on their group salience. However, having not looked in to the actual perpetrators of the hate and backlash on LGBTQ+ advertisements the group we decided to study might not have been the right group. Christians have historically had issues with people who do not identify as heterosexuals but are they also the ones that nowadays vandalize bus stops because of an LGBTQ+ advertisement? The choice of group for this research could have influenced the eventual outcome because in this case we might not have focused on the right target group for our research. For future research, it is important to first identify the perpetrator of such deeds, before conducting research on a group chosen mostly based on past literature. Additionally, it could also be that in the United States, Christians and members of the LGBTQ+ community could have 'attitude polarization'. This means their views on each other's groups could be more extreme the more they know. More research should have been conducted on the recent relationship and developments between American Christians and American members of the LGBTQ+ community to account for polarized attitudes.

Implications

This research, even with no significant results for the experimental manipulation, is important for the field of social identities and group identification. Since previous research has shown that people actually do conform to the norm (Masser & Philips, 2003), it is even more important to research this on the topic of social identities and acceptance thereof, especially focussing on norm salience. In this day and age people still get frowned upon for being different than the norm and for displaying different behaviours than what people might be used to. In the context of social identities, group identities, but most importantly developing an identity and being confident in that, it is so important to look at how to increase acceptance or decrease backlash and negative attitudes. This not only goes for LGBTQ+ identities but for all identities. Finding the precursors and the variables that play a role in certain behaviours can make a difference in actually tackling these current societal issues. McInroy & Craig (2017) have shown that negative media coverage, like advertisements, can cause serious mental health issues, like feelings of being invisible for people who are part of the LGBTQ+ community. When truly researching the effect of norm salience on negative attitudes towards LGBTQ+ members the causes for behaviour can be identified. Behaviour can be modified and restructured in a way that would make it less harmful for everyone involved. This can be useful for conflicts that arise between members of different groups (Christians and LGBTQ+ members) in different settings, like school or the workplace.

For the differences in advertisements more research can be done in the future on different kinds of advertisements and different kinds of PDA (public displays of affection). It could be that the yielded significant result is not due to the homosexuality part of the advertisement but rather the amount of PDA. Knowing the difference these types of advertisements can make in people's attitudes could be useful in designing and creating advertisements for the future.

Further Research

Since the present study has not managed to yield significant results for the experimental manipulation, it is important for future research to broaden the scope and keep on researching identities and group belonging. There are multiple suggestions for future research. The first suggestion would be to change the advertisements being shown. For example, choosing to depict two women instead of two men together, and then measure people's attitudes and opinions. Choosing advertisements and changing the design of the study to displaying both a picture of two men as well as two women could also be interesting. One can then look at the difference in attitudes towards advertisements of two women kissing vs. two men kissing. This can also be done with a heterosexual sexual advertisement and a non-heterosexual sexual public advertisement, to check for differences in PDA or in sexuality. This could be interesting for future research on the topic of attitudes towards advertisements.

Future research could also focus on identifying the perpetrators of vandalism towards LGBTQ+ related advertisements, and even broadening the scope of the research to LGBTQ+ related art or social media. When having identified the perpetrators, research can be done on their motivations and intentions or personality traits to then eventually tackling the issue. Recruiting even more participants or changing the demographic of the research could also be insightful and lead to new and different results on the matter. Since our research has shown evidence for a significance in the difference between the two advertisements it would be useful for future studies to have a deeper look into the differences in PDA and sexuality and how that exactly influences one's perception of an advertisement. It is important to focus research on increasing acceptance and reducing backlash and negative attitudes towards LGBTQ+ related advertisements, art, or other forms of LGBTQ+ representation, since this has been a minority group for so long it would be beneficial to finally have more clarity on people's motivation, identity, and identification with their group.

Conclusion

This study has shown that using ‘golden rule priming’ as an experimental manipulation to make people aware of their group belonging and the norms did not have a significant effect on the attitudes of Christians towards LGBTQ+ advertisements. Much research on group salience has been done and effects have been shown, in this study however, no significant results were found for the experimental manipulation. However, presenting two different kinds of advertisements to participants showed significant results, possibly due to difference in provocativeness of the advertisements. For future research one can have a different approach regarding advertisements and amount of PDA, use a different group or make norms salient in a different way. When the acceptance for LGBTQ+ advertisement would increase, less negative feelings would occur for members of that group.

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Appendix A

Manipulation Text

According to the bible (Matt. 7:12a) it states: 'Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.' And 'Treat others as you want them to treat you. This is what the Law and the Prophets are all about.' 80% of interviewed Christians agree with the words from the bible mentioned above. Can you briefly explain why it is important for you to live by these words from the bible?










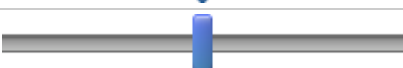














Appendix C

Scale for 'Attitude Towards the Advertisement'

Here you are presented a list of emotions that the advertisement could have caused.

Please indicate for each emotion how much you experienced that emotion when looking at the advertisement with a number between 1 (not at all) and 7 (very much). "The ad left me feeling....."

Not at all				Very much		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Astonished	
Skeptical	
Pleased	
Disgusted	
Contemptuous	
Angry	
Stimulated	
Interested	
Involved	
Distrustful	
Surprised	
Accepting	
Irritated	
Uneasy	
Happy	
Scornful	
Envious	
Curious	
Loving	
Excited	
Revolted	
Wishful	
Informed	
Worried	

Appendix D

Scale for 'attitudes towards homosexuality'

Here you will find some statements regarding your view of homosexuality. Please indicate for each statement how much you agree with this statement with a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree).

Appendix E

Scale for 'identification with religion'

Here you will find a few statements regarding your religion (Christianity). Please indicate with a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree) how much you agree with each statement.

Appendix F

Factor Loadings and Scree plot

Table 1F

Factor loadings on 'attitude towards the advertisement'

	Factor 1
Disgusted	.768
Accepting	-.750
Irritated	.732
Revolted	.722
Happy	-.707
Uneasy	.705
Interested	-.696
Angry	.684
Pleased	-.671
Loving	-.650
Scornful	.643
Excited	-.642
Distrustful	.641
Worried	.603
Contemptuous	.596
Curious	-.588
Stimulated	-.517
Involved	-.501
Sceptical	.458
Astonished	.373
Wishful	-.356
Informed	-.312
Envious	-.309
Surprised	-

Figure 1F

Scree plot of the factor analysis on 'attitudes towards the advertisement'

