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Research Report
Victoria Milan

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Abstract

Throughout time, technology and the use of the internet for different purposes have evolved in a rapid speed. This Communication research report, conducted at Roskilde University, is centered around a case study about a dating website called Victoria Milan which has existed since 2010. It is a portal that promotes infidelity in order for people to relive a passion that may have been lost in their relationships. Victoria Milan is a meeting point for people to meet others who wish to have an affair without having a guilty conscience. Victoria Milan has caused a lot of controversy because of their bold statements. In this research paper, empirical data is conducted from a focus group interview and a survey, where in both cases the participants had the chance to freely utter their opinions about this concept. By applying methods and theories from the Communication Studies, the data is analyzed and the results are concluded.

Keywords: Victoria Milan, cyber dating, cyber space, affairs, Ashley Madison, infidelity, relationships, communication research, Gunter, Liamputtong, Kvale & Brinkmann

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Introduction

Cyber dating is a modern phenomena that has existed for decades and has become a common way to meet people. Over time, an increasing amount of websites are launched for different purposes and different target groups. One of which is named Victoria Milan, which our case study is revolved around.

What motivated us to research something within cyber dating and choose Victoria Milan as our case study, stems back from our previous collaboration together. We have all previously worked and researched the field of cyber dating, however, then it was cyber dating in the broader sense and with no specific focus area. Already then we were discussing potential case studies to take our research a step further. In this research, we believe we are taking a step further and going in depth about a specific area within cyber dating. When doing the previous project on cyber love, the topic of adultery and infidelity via cyberspace was discussed and the title of Victoria Milan was mentioned. We were intrigued by the concept of this specific website and therefore decided to investigate this topic further. We find it controversial in the sense that although infidelity does occur, Victoria Milan actually promotes it and encourages people to pursue an affair without having a guilty conscience. Therefore, by using quantitative and qualitative methods, we intend to study how people perceive the concept that is presented by Victoria Milan.

Description of the case study

Victoria Milan was launched in 2010 in Norway by the Norwegian Sigurd Vedal. He later expanded his business in the Nordic countries such as Denmark and Sweden. As of 2015, Victoria Milan is available in more than 30 countries (see appendix A) across all the continents and now consists of 3.1 million members¹. In Denmark, there are 60.000 Danish based users, and about 30-35% of the members are in committed relationships². The creators behind Victoria Milan do not define it as an ordinary dating website. Vedal explains it as a “*mean of finding*

¹ <http://dk.victoria-milan.org>, accessed on 20.5.2015

² <http://www.onlinepersonalswatch.com/news/victoriamilan/>, accessed on 20.5.2015

discrete affairs for people who find themselves in a relationship”.³ Although Victoria Milan advertises that itself to be free of charge, there are certain membership costs. However, this only applies to the male users; it is free of charge for female users.⁴

Victoria Milan puts a lot of emphasis on the anonymity and security that they provide for their customers. For example, on Victoria Milan the users have the opportunity to blur their pictures and only make them visible if they trust someone. They also provides their users with a ‘panic button’ that they describe as such: “*Avoid your spouse surprising you in the middle of an online flirt. Press the Panic Button and you will quickly exit and load another neutral website.*” After a period of inactivity, Victoria Milan logs out their users automatically, directing the website to another website.⁵

Victoria Milan is not the only website that promotes adultery; an American based website called Ashley Madison, promotes the exact same service as Victoria Milan does. Ashley Madison, which was created from two popular female names, was launched in 2001.⁶ We sent a personal email to the headquarters of Victoria Milan which is situated in Malta, asking about the idea behind the name of Victoria Milan, but unfortunately we did not get any responses. There has been a few disputes between Ashley Madison and Victoria Milan, some of which were taken into the court of law. The disputes were mostly over the concept behind Victoria Milan; the slogan and some of the pictorial designs available on the website.⁷

Much like the concept behind Victoria Milan that focuses on sexual affairs, the design of their website is also erotic with sexual content. The Danish version, which we also provided a screenshot of in our survey questionnaire, portrays a young attractive woman who is wearing white lingerie and is lying down making eye contact with the audience. Before being allowed to

³ <http://dk.victoria-milan.org/wiki-victoria-milan-interview.htm>, accessed on 20.5.2015

⁴ <http://dk.victoria-milan.org/erfaringen-victoria-milan-pris-gratis.htm>, accessed on 20.5.2015

⁵ <http://www.victoriamilan.com>, accessed on 20.5.2015

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashley_Madison, accessed on 20.5.2015

⁷ www.onlinepersonalswatch.com/news/2014/04/ashley-madison-settles-lawsuit-against-victoria-milan.html, accessed on 20.5.2015

do anything further on the website, the audience are met with a ‘pop-up’⁸ that portrays another young and attractive woman in black undergarment, with a copy next to it saying “*179.800 married Danish people are looking for an affair tonight*”⁹. By informing the users about this, they are appealing to the audience’s pathos and ethos; that they should not feel ashamed or bad and that they are not alone when seeking an affair online, because 179.800 others are doing the same. The website contains both pictures of females with undergarments and of couples embracing in the sunset. This supports Victoria Milan’s concept of how an affair can make your relationship or marriage stronger. Under the ‘About Us’ section and their personal blog (see appendix B), Victoria Milan argues that while people cheat online, many do not tell the truth about their true intentions, and this is how Victoria Milan differentiates itself from the other dating websites. By this, they are appealing to the audience’s logos; Victoria Milan presents reasons for why an affair is necessary and even healthy if one finds him/herself in a boring relationship or marriage. And that being in a marriage/committed relationship and an affair is not mutually exclusive.

Problem formulation

What is the perception of the concept of Victoria Milan by people residing in Denmark?

Delimitations

In order to keep the structure and frame within the field of interest, we delimited ourselves in some ways by setting certain boundaries. One of the first decisions we made was to focus on one specific dating website, when we were discussing potential case studies. We decided to choose Victoria Milan because we were familiar with it due to the controversy that it has created. Also,

⁸ “Pop-up ads or pop-ups are often forms of online advertising on the World Wide Web intended to attract web traffic or capture email addresses.^[1] Pop-ups are generally new web browser windows to display advertisements.”, accessed on 30.5.2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pop-up_ad

⁹ <http://www.victoriamilan.dk/>, accessed on 20.5.2015

Victoria Milan, compared to other dating websites, is more accessible to people living in the Denmark.

When planning the focus group interview, initially we wanted to interview married as well as single individuals about Victoria Milan. We believed that perhaps there would be a difference in their views, when one is married and when one is not. However, after further discussions and the realization of the sensitivity surrounding the topic, we decided to let those - married or single - who are interested participate in the research. We narrowed down the amount of participants to four, as we believed four participants would be the ideal sample. Had we chosen to have a bigger sample, there would be a risk that not all participants would feel comfortable talking about this topic and thus lowering the quality of the expected data. This is also the reason why we only included five questions in the survey as we were aware that when faced with many questions, the answers will be shallow with not much explanation or argumentation.

Planning and entering the field

We are three researchers working on this project:

- Tamana Saidi, female, 25, Bachelor student in Communication and Business Studies at Roskilde University.
- Rondek Sindi, female, 26, Bachelor student in Communication and Arbejds Livstudier at Roskilde University.
- Karolina Curova, female, 21, Bachelor student in Communication and Cultural Encounters at Roskilde University.

Before conducting the interviews or collecting the data, we did not have a unanimous expectations on what the collected data would tell us. We did however expect to find the majority of the participants disagreeing with the idea behind Victoria Milan. This is mainly

because of the fact that there has already been some discussions in the media regarding the website and whether it is ethical or not for it to exist.

The methods that we intend to use are focus group interview and a survey questionnaire. By using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, we hope to provide the readers as well as ourselves with a broader insight. The theoretical considerations for Methods will be Kvale and Brinkmann, Pranee Liamputtong and Barrie Gunter.

When initiating the process of finding people to attend the focus group interview, we posted a brief description of our research area on social media platforms such as Facebook, while asking for people to participate in a focus group interview. The request was posted one week before the date set for the interview. Initially we strived to reach the number of four people to participate, preferably two males and two females, in order to create an open discussion between them and their perspectives. Eventually the number of participants ended up with three people, 1 female and 2 males, within the age-range of 20-26. The participants were students from Roskilde University, and they had all responded to our post on Facebook.

We held the interview on May 7th 2015 in the afternoon at Roskilde University. We booked a room and provided the interviewees with hot beverages and cake. We find the setting in which the interview is conducted very important; a nice and calm atmosphere is essential, so people can feel comfortable to open up, especially when the topic is sensitive. One of the participants arrived forty minutes late, which delayed the whole process. We planned for the focus group interview to last for about an hour, but due to the late arrival of one of the participants and the other participants' schedule, the interview was not longer than 30 minutes. We were aware of the possibility of situations like this happening, but we were also aware that there are certain factors that is out of our control.

During the interview, one of us observed the interviewees; writing down their reaction and body language; if they seemed agitated, tired, distracted etc and the general atmosphere. Out of the

two remaining, one presented them with the website and started the interview/conversation and the other kept track of time and the interview.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggested that when doing an interview, one should start with easy questions, so the participants do not feel overwhelmed or under pressure. We started the focus group interview by welcoming the participants and offered them snacks and beverages. We asked them about their age and their relationship status, because Victoria Milan is an infidelity website and we presumed that there may be different point of views when one is romantically involved. Furthermore, we asked them about their general knowledge about cyber dating; if they have experience with it or know about it. Then we presented them with Victoria Milan by showing the website's layout and reading their "About Us" (see appendix B) section, we asked them their opinion.

The next step in the process was to listen to the recording of the interview, although it provided us with in-depth perspectives concerning the concept of our case study, we wished to obtain more empirical data perhaps covering a broader range of people. Therefore, we decided to make a questionnaire in order to get a broader insight into the reception people have of the website. For the questionnaire, we used a website called SurveyMonkey to design our survey. We provided the participants with six questions that are available in the appendix E.

We published the link to the survey on Facebook and through group-email. We asked people to participate in our study by taking 3-5 minutes of their time to answer the five questions. The survey was accessible for three days and the amount of responses we got was 250 which exceeded our expectations.

Methodology

It is important to state the methods we used to collect the empirical data about the research topic. Methods are different tools that are offered to us in order to efficiently collect data from our participants, when wanting to explore their reception. By combining the two methods, one from qualitative and one from quantitative research method, we wanted to explore a broader view of the reception.

The qualitative approach

In this part we will be referring to Professor Pranee Liamputtong¹⁰ and the first chapter “Focus group methodology: Introduction and History”¹¹ According to David Morgan (2002) there are two types of focus group interviews (Liamputtong 2011:2)

A. Structured; used mostly in marketing research

B. Semi-structured; used more in social science researches

The main difference between the two types is the position of the moderators and the space for the expressions of participants (Liamputtong 2011:3). As this is a research based on opinions and personal statements about a concept, we will focus more on the semi-structured focus group method. When it comes to semi-structured focus group interviews, adopted in social science, the moderator is not as engaged, and the discussion between the participants is more vivid and welcomed as “*participants are encouraged talk to each other instead of answering the moderator’s questions*” (Liamputtong 2011:3), the role of the moderator is just to facilitate the discussion, not direct it (Liamputtong 2011:3).

As we conducted the focus group interview, we followed the structure of the semi-structured method, there was room for an open discussion and engagement of the participants. As the

¹⁰ Pranee Liamputtong is a professor at La Trobe university, Melbourne; medical anthropologist; holds a Personal Chair in Public Health at the School of Public Health

¹¹ Found on sagepub.com, chapter 1 of Liamputtong’s book “Focus group Methodology. Principle and Practice”

researchers, each of us played a different role during the interview – one observed, another was the main moderator and the third worked as a supporting moderator and was responsible for handing the computer and showing the material. When discussing the plan for the focus group interview, we agreed to not direct the participants into a particular direction or answer that we wished to hear, but rather to let them discuss the presented question freely.

We found conducting a focus group interview relevant because this method “*can generate complex information at low cost and with the minimum amount of time. It also can be used with a wide range of people and groups in different settings*” (Liamputtong 2011:2). The concept of a focus group interview is simply described as non-formal discussion between pre-selected people in the range from 6-8 with similar social and cultural background and similar experiences, about a particular research topic (Liamputtong 2011:3).

We considered focus group interview relevant for us, because it “*encourage a range of responses which provide a greater understanding of the attitudes, behaviour, opinions or perceptions of participants on the research issue*” (Liamputtong 2011:3). We did not strive for only individual responses; but wished to create “*negotiations of meanings through intra- and inter-personal debates*” (Liamputtong 2011:4). We believed that the discussion amongst the participants of the focus interview could give us an indepth insight into different views of people, adding important points to the analysis of how people react to the concept of the website. As stated by Liamputtong (2011:4) focus group holds some characteristic features:

- Enables in-depth discussion involving more, yet small amount of people
- Aims for the specific area of interest – discussion is more detailed
- Interaction is crucial and unique feature of focus group interview
- Moderator – often researcher – introduces the topic, assists, encourage and guide through the discussion
- Participants usually share similar cultural and social background (age, social class, ethnicity, religion) and share similar experience or concerns (divorce, marriage etc.)

There are few very strong advantages about focus groups; one of those are the fact that the participants are not alone when discussing the topic. Some individuals may find the one-to-one interviews to be uncomfortable or even intimidating, therefore focus group interviews can be the ‘safe’ option for them. Liamputtong also argues that when you do not know the participants, focus group is useful and this applies also for our case, when we did not have in-depth knowledge about the participants. (Liamputtong 2011: 6) The core of the focus group interview method is that it is *“useful in exploring and examining what people think, how they think, and why they think the way they do about the issue of importance, to them without pressuring them into making decisions or reaching a consensus”*. (Liamputtong 2011:5)

Having explained the relevance of the method, there are also some points that are important to be critical towards, for example, if the topic is too sensitive for the participant, he or she could not be expressing him/herself freely, because of the sensitivity. Secondly, if the participants have very different personalities and there is one who is either introvert or less opinionated, group conformity can occur. Group conformity is a term that explains how, if a majority of the participants share the same opinion, one who perhaps does not, might suppress his/hers opinion, just to fit in. Strong opinionated participants can also start an argument within the focus group. Furthermore, the construction of the questions for the interview is important, they should revolve around the topic and question yet not be leading in a specific direction but rather ignite a discussion.

The quantitative approach

We created a survey that we shared on multiple online platforms in order to reach a bigger and broader range of people, and therefore our empirical data will provide us with different responses and reflections. When collecting data based on a survey, we were aware of restrictions and possibilities. The method to collect data via a survey is by asking specific questions and hereafter

gathering the replies that are based on people's knowledge, beliefs, views and values concerning the topic in question.

Generally the aim of conducting a survey is to get an overall view on a specific topic, and in order to get this, a sample technique is used (Gunter¹² 2012: 242). The essential idea behind this is that the sample of 259 people that replied the survey, should provide us with a wide range of individuals with an opinion about our case study. Their thoughts and perspectives can thereby be viewed as representatives of a wider and general view concerning the case in focus. We are aware of certain complications in terms of sampling in a survey, since we cannot expect that each individual will be representative of the whole nation. With a large amount of people taking a stand about the questions in focus, it thereby becomes more insightful to compare the data and possibly come up with conclusions. In the survey we presented, people could also reflect upon their personal views and share them. Although there are certain expectations based on the methodological approach to creating empirical data, there is also room for different opinions which can differ from individual to individual, making the analysis possibly more insightful.

Different forms of surveys serve different forms of purposes, the one presented in relation to this case study firstly goes under the term '*descriptive survey*' (Gunter 2012: 242) since the results are providing us with public opinions and attitudes towards our research. Furthermore the survey also functions as an analytical survey (Gunter 2012: 243) since we in this research paper analyze and compare the results in order to test a hypothesis, which in our case is our research area and the thoughts presented in the problem formulation.

¹² Barrie Gunter is professor of Mass Communication at University of Leicester; his research area is media violence, the impact of broadcast news, effects of television on public opinion, the effects of advertising on young people, the use and impact of new interactive media. Information found on:
<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/media/people/barrie-gunter> 25.5.2015

Analysis of the focus group interview

While we conducted the focus group interview, we asked specific questions which led the discussion between the participants to certain topics. Through the narratives derived from this interview we got the opportunity to acquire in-depth perspectives and opinions surrounding our case study. We chose to divide the topics discussed into different themes. As the theme of the interview includes some sensitive subjects such as infidelity, information about personal relationships and views on different matters, we have chosen pseudo names for each of the participants in order to keep the anonymity intact. The participants of the interviews are:

- ❑ Joan: a 20 year old female, is single
- ❑ Kofi: a 23 years old male, in a committed relationship
- ❑ Oliver: a 26 years old male, is seeing someone

The view on cyber-dating in general

All the participants were aware of the phenomena of cyber-dating. Oliver explained in his own words: *“Totally pro cyber dating, but it can be complicated as well, but it worked out well for my sister for example.”* Joan and Kofi, on the other hand, do not believe that it is an option that would work for them. They found it difficult to see it as a serious way to find a partner. However they did agree that it can be a necessary tool for others. Joan explained how she felt that cyber dating is indeed a good way to get in contact with a potential partner, but she believes it is appropriate for especially older people, or people who do not socialize in the offline world. Kofi agreed to this statement yet explained that he preferred to meet new people in the offline world as well.

The view of Victoria Milan in general

After having started the interview with a general question about cyber dating, we moved on the focus to our case study. We introduced the name of the website and read parts of the ‘About Us’ (see appendix B) out loud. While presenting them with this section, we observed that all three of

the participants were in awe. Their body language revealed that they were taken aback because they leaned forward, sighing and giggling, and their facial expression reflecting a state of disbelief. Kofi expressed his opinion: *“They make it sound very fairytale-like. It’s like, if you already had doubts, then oh okay, it’s targeted to people like us. So you know you automatically don’t feel alone, it’s like oh I can do it as well.”* Joan agreed and pointed out how they simplify the whole message: *“They make it sound a lot simpler than it can turn out to be, you know. That’s a very smart way of doing it, because it is a very complicated affair they are gonna encounter with. Because it is gonna be complicated for their, like, personal psyche and life.”* Oliver also agreed with the other participants, but he did have a more relaxed attitude towards the concept, presenting us with arguments such as: *“If people want an affair they will just anyway go to a bar or if they are travelers [...]”* This statement is quite interesting since it addresses a viewer's perception of the concept being an easier way for those who seek affairs to find them. It is important to note that affairs are not a new phenomenon, but the fact that the creators of Victoria Milan directly encourage affairs, is where morals and ethics behind the thoughts Joan expressed, come out.

Target group and layout considerations

The next step in the interview was to guide the discussion to how they perceive the website and who they believe Victoria Milan is targeting. Oliver: *“It is written by old people for old people.”* Joan continued: *“Yeah like, 40, 50, 60 [...] I mean if you are twenty years old and you are trapped in a relationship like that you can probably still get out, you know.”* Again, it is clear that the participants agree that the target group of Victoria Milan is people who are seeking the last solution and perhaps are too far in a relationship to end it. Also given that they see the frontpage of the website which has a picture of a woman in lingerie on it, (see appendix C1) makes them believe that the target group is mainly men. Oliver even stated: *“It’s like porno, come on, porn.com”* Here we see that although none of the interviewees according to themselves, would fall for the marketing tricks or the layout of the page, they still can see how specific tools are used and could work. It is quite thought provoking that Oliver compares the website to a porn

site, it shows us and confirms that the designers of the page obviously know how to lure their customers. They talk to the instinct in human beings, the lust and desires one might have within, but that may have disappeared while being in a long-term relationship. All the while doing this, Victoria Milan ensures their customers that they are not doing anything wrong - because by having an affair you can improve your marriage.

Ethical considerations of Victoria Milan

In terms of morals and ethics connected to the concept of this Victoria Milan we asked the interviewees whether they could imagine themselves, hypothetically speaking, ever feeling any appeal towards it. Oliver again made it quite clear that he could just go to any dating website in search for an affair. Kofi was very much against infidelity and explained how it is better to end a relationship rather than being unfaithful. Joan again agreed with Kofi. She spoke about how most people in general probably do not wish to imagine themselves being unfaithful, also, given the fact that she does not view herself as part of the target audience for Victoria Milan, as she simply views herself as too young to be appealed to the concept, she still stated: *"It's difficult to say, you know, as a twenty-year-old"* Oliver interrupted her by saying: *"I could do it for fun also"* which Joan seemed to be disturbed by as she in a wondering tone asked Oliver: *"So you don't have.. You don't feel any moral obligations to..."* Oliver again reflected quite a relaxed attitude concerning the concept and replied with: *"It depends, you know on the situation."* In this part of the interview we clearly see a clash in opinions and moral values. Kofi clearly agreed with Joan as he said: *"I feel like, if you cannot be in the relationship anymore talk to your and end it, don't go behind their back."* This particular discussion between the participants leads us to the conclusion that a product can be a source of outrage for some, while in the eyes of others, simply not being a big deal. Morals and ethics play a big role here since we see that Joan and Kofi reflect a lot on the consequences of having an affair as resulting in heartbreak and the ending of a partnership. Oliver on the other hand, perhaps has a different view on infidelity, he merely sees it as a casual encounter with another person. In his opinion a relationship would not necessarily develop into anything more than just a casual one-night-stand.

What we can derive from the focus group interview is that all the participants are well aware that affairs could happen regardless of the existence of the website Victoria Milan. Their outrage is more based upon how Victoria Milan presents arguments for their target group to feel comfortable while pursuing an affair, leaving them with barely any ethical considerations about what is right and wrong for their partnership. Something really important to note is that regardless of the concept and its idealization of infidelity the perception of the concept all boils down to the keyword: perspective. How do we as individuals view a certain concept? Here, many factors can play in, such as upbringing of the individual and their own personal stand in terms of something that is generally viewed as unethical. Oliver is an interesting example, although he is not pro infidelity, he does not see it as necessarily being a dealbreaker of a committed relationship: *“Yes I know people who do it, if they are traveling, if it’s just one night, they’ll never see them again.”* When presenting this argument in the discussion he showed that for him, infidelity often occurs under emotional de-attachement. It is quickly over and done with and no one has to know, is the attitude reflected by him. The circle in which people socialize in can also affect their views upon a website that promotes infidelity and affairs in general. If Oliver is surrounded by individuals who share the same view as him, it might well be that they affect each other, so if no one opposes of infidelity then it becomes socially accepted in the environment they find themselves in. This also applies to Joan and Kofi, who may on the other hand be surrounded by people who have other values and find infidelity unacceptable which thereby will reflect on their view on the topic as well. Generally speaking, most human beings have their definition of right and wrong incorporated in their consciousness, and although infidelity is indeed a sensitive subject that most people oppose of, it can occasionally occur that some might not categorize it as strictly forbidden.

This in-depth discussion which presented relevant points from the different participants, all representing opinions that most likely are present amongst other individuals in the society as well, leads us to the next section of the report; the analysis of the survey conducted surrounding the website Victoria Milan.

Analysis of survey

Graphs

In this section, we provide the results of the empirical data that we have collected by doing a quantitative research, in form of a survey questionnaire. This data will be presented through graphs and general assumptions surrounding the results. Thereafter, we go in depth with what is the actual reception of the concept of Victoria Milan, by the bigger sample of respondents that participated in our survey.

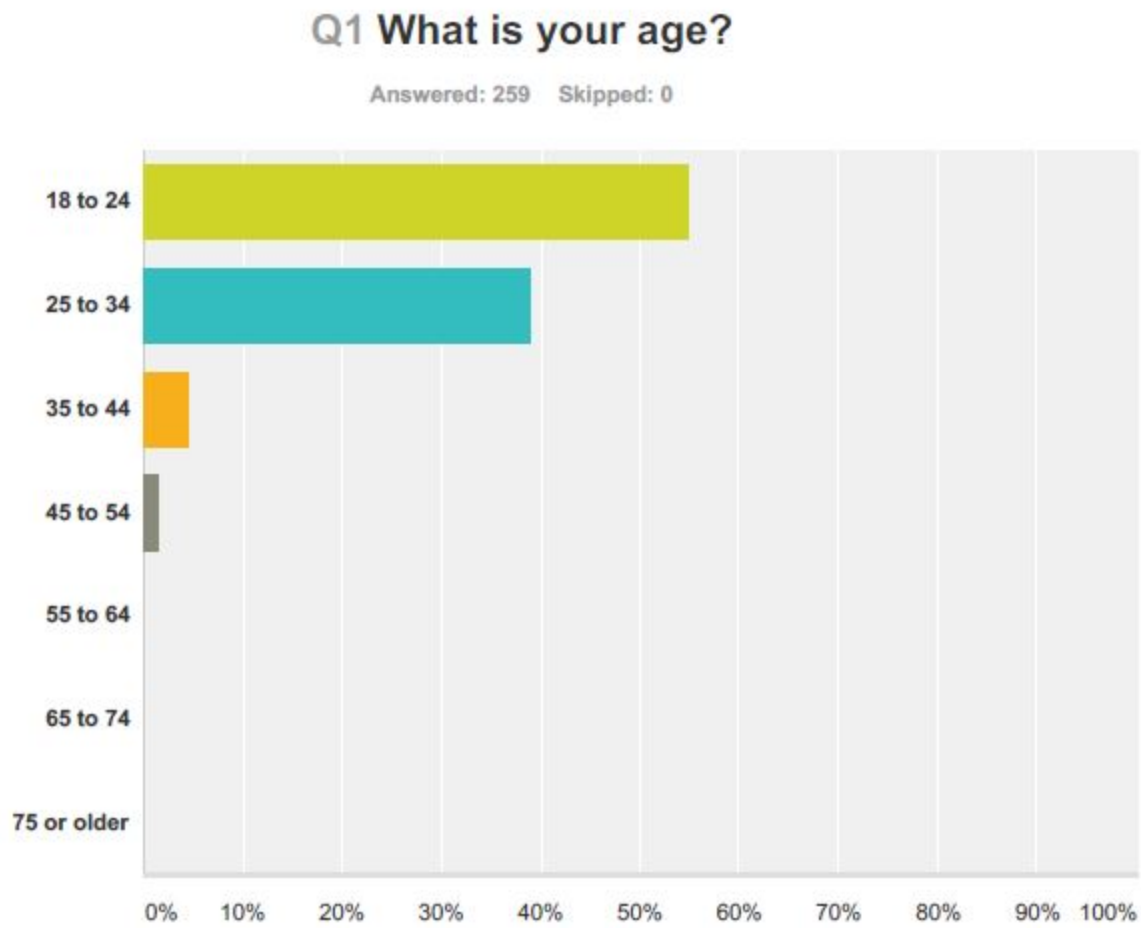
After doing a focus group interview, we have decided to make our way of collecting empirical data more complex, therefore, we have decided to combine them, by doing this, we wanted to show that we are aware of the fact that methods are offered to researcher as tools, tool with that researcher can use in order to get the reception of the product, case study. We are aware of the fact that becoming a master of methods takes time, but we wanted to prove ourselves as well as the readers of our project that using an appropriate method pays off.

When initiating the process of creating a survey we browsed the Internet, we found an online platform for making a survey called SurveyMonkey¹³, which offers a free service to create surveys. The basic version of the platform is for free, yet if the user wants to use more advanced features of the website, one has to upgrade to 'Pro' version and pay a fee of 189 DKK.

The main source of promotion of it was on the social media platform, Facebook. Each of the members of the group shared the link to the survey within friend circles, and in various Facebook groups consisting of students studying in Denmark. We also promoted our survey through university email – we sent the link of the survey to other study programs. After three days, we closed the survey as we got around 260 answers, which we considered a sufficient amount as a sample for the analysis. In the survey, we asked six questions in total – four of them were

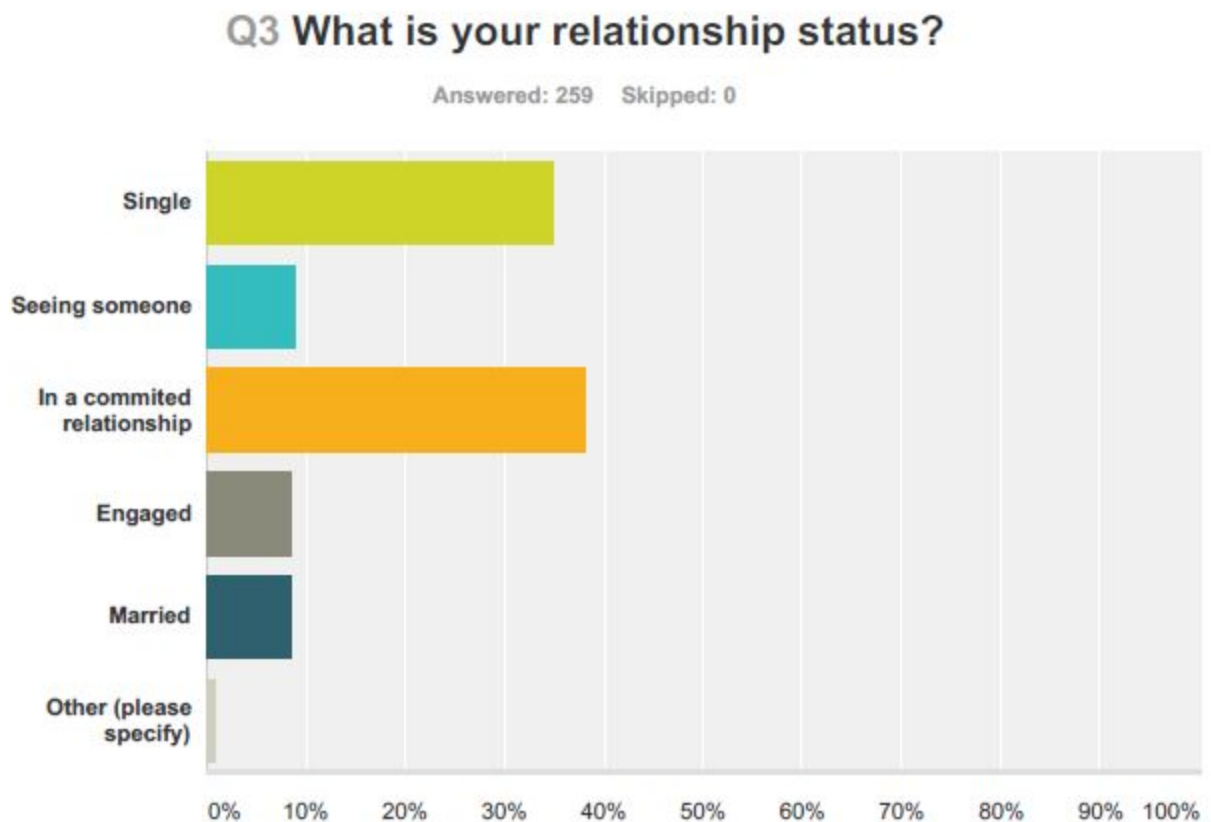
¹³ <http://surveymonkey.com/> accessed on 29.05.2015

questions of multiple-choice: questions about age, gender, relationship status and the questions about knowledge of Victoria Milan. The graphs below will demonstrate the results:



Graph n.1 - age

As you can see on the graph number 1, most of our participants were in the age range of 18 – 34. We assume that it is due to the fact that we shared the survey within the university students and our friends that share the same approximate age. When asking the participants about their gender, out of the 259 respondents, 175 were female and 84 were male. Question number 3 was about the participants' relationship status:



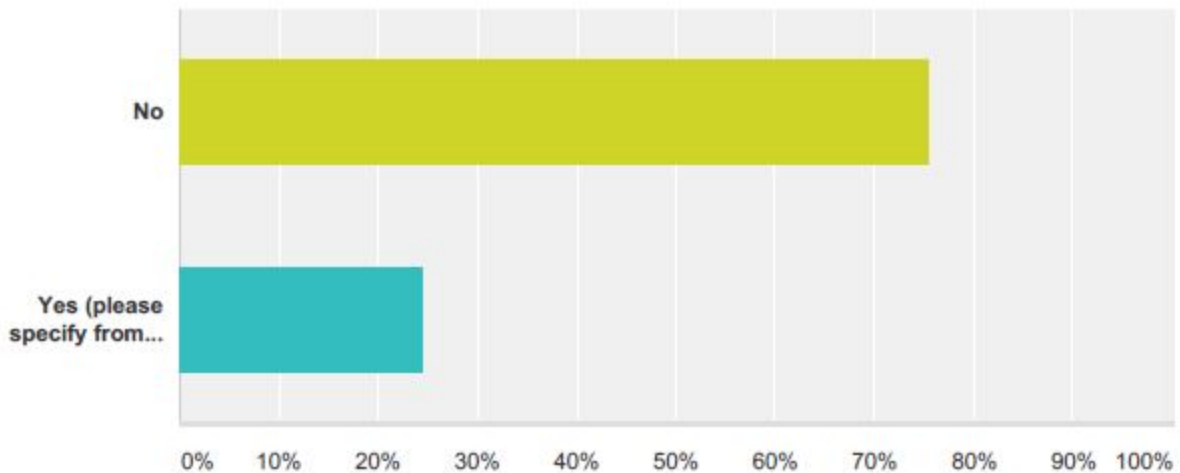
Graph n.3 – relationship status

This question was asked because our case study deals with the topic of marriage/relationship and affairs, we wanted to see the different involvement the participants were in. As we can see, our participants covered every kind of possible union, even in the option ‘*Other (please specify)*’ we got answers such as “*Separated*” and “*Just in a relationship*”. We did not want to reach for people from one specific union, as we as researchers were interested in the general perception from people in any kind of union. We did not collect the data based on the social typology, but based on humanistic base of studies, we wanted to see the variety of people and focus more on the answers they provide us.

Question number 4 revolved around the familiarity with the Victoria Milan, where and how they know they website from:

Q4 Are you familiar with the website Victoria Milan? (If yes, from which source)

Answered: 259 Skipped: 0



Graph n.4 – familiarity with Victoria Milan

Again the majority of our participants were not familiar the website and did not know about the concept of the Victoria Milan. Those who had heard about Victoria Milan specified their sources:

most of the participants answered that they heard about it on the radio – either debates or commercials in the radio. The next biggest source was newspaper and TV commercials. Basically, these sources belong to the mass media. This can be a result from the phenomena of globalization and the technological innovation of the media in this contemporary society. It is apparent that Victoria Milan uses mass media to advertise in order to reach as many people as possible. Promoting or advertising through mass media is a great tactic get a product marketed and accepted by the public sector.

The open ended questions

As we have included multiple-choice questions as well as open-ended questions, we will not be following a specific structure for the analysis of remaining data. However, we have divided the analysis into different sections: females and males. The reason why we have separated females from males is to have a clear overview of the analysis, and also because we presume that the participants' gender will play a role in their responses. This was recognized during our focus group interview when one of the male participants, Oliver shared visible indifference towards infidelity, whereas the female participant, Joan, strongly disagreed. However, one could argue that the difference in the two participants' opinion could have been a mere personality clash, and thus had nothing to do with one being female and one being male. Nevertheless, when we were reading the responses we received from the survey, it was evident that between the male and female participants, male participants were more inclined to be passive and show indifference towards the idea behind Victoria Milan than their female counterparts. Therefore, there will be a division of gender in the analysis. And instead of focusing on the numbers of females or males, we will look closer into the general tendencies in the data.

Target group - female participants

One of the questions in the survey was when looking at the front page of Victoria Milan, who do people believe the website is trying to target? Three/fifth of the female participants answered: men. Only two/fifth answered that the target group is both genders. The response to this question varied in terms of the phrasing and wording, however, it was clear that most of the female participants believed the website to be targeting men of all ages only. One can bring up multiple reasons for why that is, for example there are psychological reasons, socio and cultural reasons, and perhaps personal reasons. However, because we are looking at things from a communication angle, the answer is evident in the design of the website of Victoria Milan. As described in the earlier sections of this report, the front page (see appendix C1) of the website is designed in a way that would attract heterosexual men and perhaps homosexual women, as there is a picture of a rather attractive young woman in a white lingerie. One of the female participants answered as

such: *“They are trying to attract men especially by pretty woman in a bra.”* (Participant #13) Some mistook the website for being a beauty or clothing product, relating it to Victoria’s Secret because of resemblance of the name and picture of the woman in underwear.

Target group - male participants

When the male participants answered the same question, almost half of them believed the website to be targeting men, and approximately the same amount of the participants thought that it was aimed for both genders. The responses we received from the male participants were not very different from the female ones, due to the picture they were shown. For instance, one of the respondents answered as such: *“Men, because of the massive picture of the woman in her underwear”*. (Participants #76) We find this answer to be of relevance as it shows the importance of web-design. As mentioned earlier, the website’s frontpage is portraying a scantily clad woman, and because that picture is the first thing the audience sees, it shapes their immediate reaction. Some participants put an emphasis on the content of the website, underlining the sexual undertone which they believed to be present in the female model’s looks and pose, and thus describing the target group to be a specific group of men: *“Horny men”* (participant #109), *“Chronic masturbators”* (participant #82) or *“Guys looking for one night stand”* (participant #55).

When looking at other half of the answers, others believed the website to be for both genders. In this case, some of the participants argued that the potential reasons why people may visit this website: *“Aimed at people with low self-esteem”* (participant #6), *“Unhappy people in relationship”* (participant #248). One of the participants stated: *“Target group is obviously men.. that is not saying that women do not engage as well”* (participant #26). A few participants also brought up the topic of infidelity rates between the two genders, stating that *“Statistically, women are more likely to cheat in relationship.”* (participant #11) and *“... but since surveys show that women are more likely to be unfaithful and is more passionated it might be them as well”* (Participant #225). Here, we stumble upon the prejudgements people have regarding this topic. There is a blurry difference, as the target group can easily differ from the reality. By

asking this question, it was not our intention to ask which gender is cheating the most, but to find out the perception the audience has on the group Victoria Milan is targeting.

Despite the popular belief, Victoria Milan is actually targeting both genders; in the early stages of doing this report, we created a joined account in order to explore ‘behind the walls’ of Victoria Milan. Additionally, when we read the ‘About Us’ section, it is stated that the website is for all people in relationships. As we can read above, the answers from both genders resembled each other, both in the way they phrase themselves as well as argumentation.

Female participants on Victoria Milan

When the participants were given an excerpt of the ‘About Us’ (see appendix B) section from Victoria Milan and asked what their thoughts are surrounding the concept, there were four words that were used repeatedly in many of the responses: disgusted, sad, immoral and unethical. *“I think it is as unethical and immoral as it can get”* (Participant #23), *“It is immoral and disgusting”* (Participant #68) *“Fucking disgusting! Don’t promote affairs who are these people behind this website? They have no moral and seems like people without any ethics”* (Participant #212). Clearly, the female participants were relating infidelity to morality and ethics.

Almost all of the female respondents reacted negatively to the existence of Victoria Milan, stating that a website that encourages infidelity will not only harm the partners, but also the rest of the family and friends, and that a couple should seek couple’s guidance/therapy instead: *“I’m very provoked by this. Who made them the authorities on solving marital problems with sex. Why tempt the weak hearted to getting into problems with themselves, their partner, their children, friends and strangers.”* (Participant #38), *“That perhaps if people truly feel like this they should seek couples therapy or end it with their partner rather than having an affair. Or at least be honest to their partner and suggest polygamous relationship if that is what they wish. I don’t see how secrets and lies can be constructive either for the relationship or for the individual own development.”* (Participant #42)

Something that was evident in nearly all of the responses, was the fact that the participants were not only disapproving of such a concept, but they were also shocked and horrified to see and read about the existence of Victoria Milan: *“It is disgusting and I’m shocked. That’s all.”* (Participant #153). Another interesting discovery that we made when reading the responses was the mentioning of sexual affairs; many tied infidelity with sex. This could be related to the way Victoria Milan has designed their website that makes the audience think of sex. While their slogan that reads *‘Relive the passion, have an affair’* does not directly suggest/promote sexual affairs, the word *passion* and the pictorial usage of semi naked women does indicate sexual affairs.

Male participants on Victoria Milan

We noticed that male participants shared the same values as female participants, and they even used the same phrases describing their thoughts surrounding Victoria Milan’s concept: *“Against it. Marriage and relationship should be monotonous.”* (Participant #24), *“Trying to corrupt marriages, serving wrong solutions to people...”* (Participant #10), *“I dislike the idea of encouraging unfaithfulness and even making money from it.”* (Participant #160), *“Disgusting, evil.”* (Participant #186).

However, there were also some who believed Victoria Milan to be ‘understandable’ and even creative: *“To me it sounds legit... If I would be in the situation in which I would look such thing, I would have no problem in using this website.”* (Participant #19), *“I do not believe in conventional monogamic relationship structure... In itself, I see nothing wrong with casual sex...”* (Participant #231), *“Best concept ever.”* (Participant #127), *“I think it’s fine...there is a very strong taboo surrounding promiscuity”* (Participant #26).

This is a very interesting discovery that we made; because although a very few of the female participants showed indifference towards Victoria Milan, none of them actually stated that they

would be willing or picture themselves using such a website. Rather, they made the conclusion that if people want to cheat, they will always find a way and do it: *“I can see why some people can find it attractive, and since I have never found myself in difficult situation like this... I am in no position to judge people who choose this... but I disagree with the concept.”* (Participant #237), *“I think it’s ok to be in an open relationship. But this website encourages people to keep secrets from their partners deliberately. No a fan.”* (Participant #238), *“I believe in live and let live - but I don’t like the fact that somebody is making money by making it easier to cheat!”* (Participant #18).

The only noticeable difference we found in the responses by the two genders was only that; while some male participants were fine with the existence of such a website that promotes casual sex and passion, the female participants on the other hand - even when neutral - never claim they are accepting of it. Both genders bring up the financial aspect of the website and comment on it *“There seems to be a market”* (Participant #122), *“Let’s see how many marriages we can break up... people do anything for money”* (Participant #250), *“It is like making money on people on people in a bad marriage”* (Participant #78) and *“My first thought was that they will definitely charge me right after signing up”* (Participant #50). Had we informed the participants about the membership fees, which are 399,- DKK for male members and free for female users, their perception would have changed.

Critical discussion

Based on our case study Victoria Milan and having analyzed our empirical data, we discovered that the outcome of the two different methodological approaches to the same topic reflected patterns of the same opinions among people. In relation to the focus group interview, the participants had the chance to discuss among each other, which gave us in-depth insights to their viewpoints whereas the survey covered a larger quantity of people, giving us the opportunity to observe general tendencies. Based on the empirical data derived from using both qualitative and quantitative methods we can see that there is tendency of people who clearly are against the concept, some who are neutral and a few who approve and even could see themselves using the website at one point.

In regards to the results of the survey there are certain factors that could possibly affect the answers of the respondents. One of these factors could be that Victoria Milan is a relatively new concept, and therefore it can be argued that the society is not yet ready for a website that provides adultery. When a product, no matter how controversial, is in the market for a long time, people tend to be less shocked by it. We even see evidence supporting this argument in the focus group interview, where the participants discuss the fact that having an affair is not a new phenomena, however this website which actually promotes infidelity, is what could outrage people. For instance, people do not find the idea of having an affair shocking, but they do find a website that provides affairs to be shocking. If the same research would be conducted in years from now, the results could alter due to the fact that it would no longer be a new concept. The personal opinions people expressed in the survey and the interview could be the same in the future, however they will most likely be more accustomed to it and thereby possibly less shocked.

In regards to the focus group interview one of the advantages are that the participants have time to reflect and open up face to face. However, a disadvantage is that although we guaranteed anonymity for all participants in the focus group, there is still a chance that the participants

withhold information in fear of being judged by their opinions. So there may be limitations to what the participants express as both the interviewers and interviewees are physically present. In this setting the participants discuss the topic based on their personal views, however there is a risk of group conformity occurring which can result in the participants affecting each other's opinions and statements.

However, anonymity in the survey can be both a negative and positive factor; when replying to a survey the person behind the screen has the security of being in his or her comfort zone which may result in more blunt and bold statements. Because the use of technology and browsing the internet has become a natural part of our everyday lives, people are exposed to surveys on a regular basis which can create irritation or even unwillingness to answer the questions. If and when a person actually decides to do the survey, there is the risk of them replying in a superficial manner. When reflecting on our survey and the results, we were aware of this consequence and found that some of the answers we got were either very short or superficial.

Part of a research report is to also be self critical and when we reflect back on the quality of the questionnaire, we realize that there could have been possible improvements. In the survey, question number four consists of two questions that were both points we were interested of knowing the response to. Unfortunately, most of the respondents have answered the second part of the question as people tend to remember the last thing they have read. Ergo, we did not receive too many responses to the first part of the question. However, we do not believe the responses would have differed much, had we divided the question into two.

Conclusion

We are taking point of departure in the research question we presented early in the report which was the reception of Victoria Milan by adult people residing in Denmark. In the contemporary society, the stigma on cyber dating is being lifted and it is becoming a phenomena that is accepted by many. The market for different cyber-dating websites is expanding; more and more dating websites for specific target groups are being launched, one of which is Victoria Milan. The working hypothesis presented in the early stages of our research was based upon our personal presumptions revolving Victoria Milan.

Taking the empirical data and analysis into account, we can conclude that our hypothesis was tested and proved to have valid points. We presumed that the majority of the participants will find the idea behind Victoria Milan controversial and unethical, and a large number of our participants believed it so too. Although it is common knowledge that affairs happen with or without dating websites, the idea of directly promoting infidelity claiming that it improves your relationship and making a profit from it, is where the participants feel the line is crossed. There was also a small number of people who did not show any signs of objection when being presented with the concept of Victoria Milan, and some even showed interest in using the website.

If we are provided with the opportunity of continuing this research, we would want to have in-depth interviews with married couples and preferably with individuals in a relationship who have tried Victoria Milan or something similar. As the data would be a reflection on their experiences, we would be able to research the same hypothesis with a different but specific target group.

Article

Victoria Milan to the Rescue!

Victoria Milan? “Oh, the sexy but impractical lingerie brand! No wait, that’s Victoria’s Secret. Then what is Victoria Milan?” Well... it’s actually more interesting than your first guess. Victoria Milan is a dating website. You might be wondering “What is so interesting about a dating website? Nowadays, there are everywhere!” And here, I will tell you that Victoria Milan is no ordinary dating website - because the target group is married people. Let that sink in.

Married people? Dating website? Yes and both. Victoria Milan - let’s by the way call it VicMil (sounds like victim, doesn’t it? Maybe because those who use it are victims of an illusion) So, VicMil is a website that promotes dating and affairs for married individuals who are looking for something to spice up their marriage, individually though. Let me describe a scenario for you: you find the love of your life, you date, you marry after a few years and then as the passion declines, you find yourself trapped in a boring marriage that resembles more of a daily routine than a relationship. And you are so bored that you can’t even have a marathon of *Friends* on Netflix. So what do you do? Do not worry, my friend! Because Victoria Milan is here to the rescue!

Well... you have to pay of course. And ladies, here’s the good news, because only the male members have to pay, and ladies won’t have to pay a dime. *Cough* gender-inequality *cough*! But who cares about that, right? If you can save your marriage with only 399,- kr. a month, it’s worth it, isn’t it?

The founder and CEO of Victoria Milan, the Norwegian Sigurd Vedal genuinely believes that Victoria Milan is the solution to all marital problems. Your wife has lost interest in sex? Victoria Milan to the rescue! Do you have any taboo sexual fantasies? Victoria Milan to the rescue! Are you and your spouse having problems with the inlaws? Victoria Milan to the rescue!

Okay, okay, so maybe not *all* marital problems, but definitely the ones that concern sex and... sex. Victoria Milan’s website comes with all sorts of cool aids. Pun not intended. For instance, you’re sitting and chatting up a hottie who most likely shares your midlife crisis, and out of nowhere your dear but irritating spouse shows up! The horror, the horror. Again, Victoria Milan to the rescue. Because they provide you with a ‘panic button’ - smart, huh?

So, dear readers, if you find yourself in a passionless marriage, or you fear that someday your marriage will be boring, no need to pay thousands of kroner to a couple’s therapist or go through an even more expensive divorce. Because while couple’s therapy may solve the problems from the core, it is for sissies. Instead, pay a visit to Victoria Milan, have your affair and you will live happily with your spouse. That is, until the next time you get bored.

*Written by Tamana Saidi,
Ronne Sindi, Karolina Curova*

Communication plan

The target group for this article is young people between the age of 20-33, primarily students who are studying at a university. The audience that the article is targeting should be able to detect the humor in the article in order to understand the point. The article is a one page, written in two columns. It is easy to read because it is divided into short paragraphs. There are a lot of slangs and urban phrases used to deliver the message to the reader, because the audience we are targeting would have the background knowledge to comprehend the article as a whole. The article is not supposed to be read in the morning at the breakfast table, but perhaps during a quick lunch break.

The sender of this message is a group of researchers from the Communication department at Roskilde University, who are researching the concept behind Victoria Milan. Adultery is a serious subject to most people and Victoria Milan has received many criticism, which is why the use of humor is important when discussing a delicate subject like this. The article's words are praising the concept of Victoria Milan while the tone is ridiculing it. The message therefore is the opposite of what the article is suggesting. While the aim is to inform the readers about Victoria Milan and the services they provide, our intention was also to make our viewpoint clear; we do not believe the solution to marital problems are infidelity and sexual affairs.

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Appendices

Appendix A

VÆLG DIT LAND ELLER SPROG

Afrika, Mellemøsten

 Sydafrika

Stillehavet

 Australien

 Hong Kong (EN)

 Hong Kong (CN)

 Japan (EN)

 Japan (JP)


 New Zealand

 Singapore (EN)

 Singapore (CN)

Europa

 International

 Østrig

 Belgien (FR)

 Belgien (NL)

 Tjekkiet

 Danmark

 Finland

 Frankrig

 Tyskland

 Grækenland

 Ungarn

 Irland

 Italien

 Holland

 Norge

 Polen

 Portugal

 Slovakiet

 Slovenien

 Spanien

Appendix B

ABOUT US

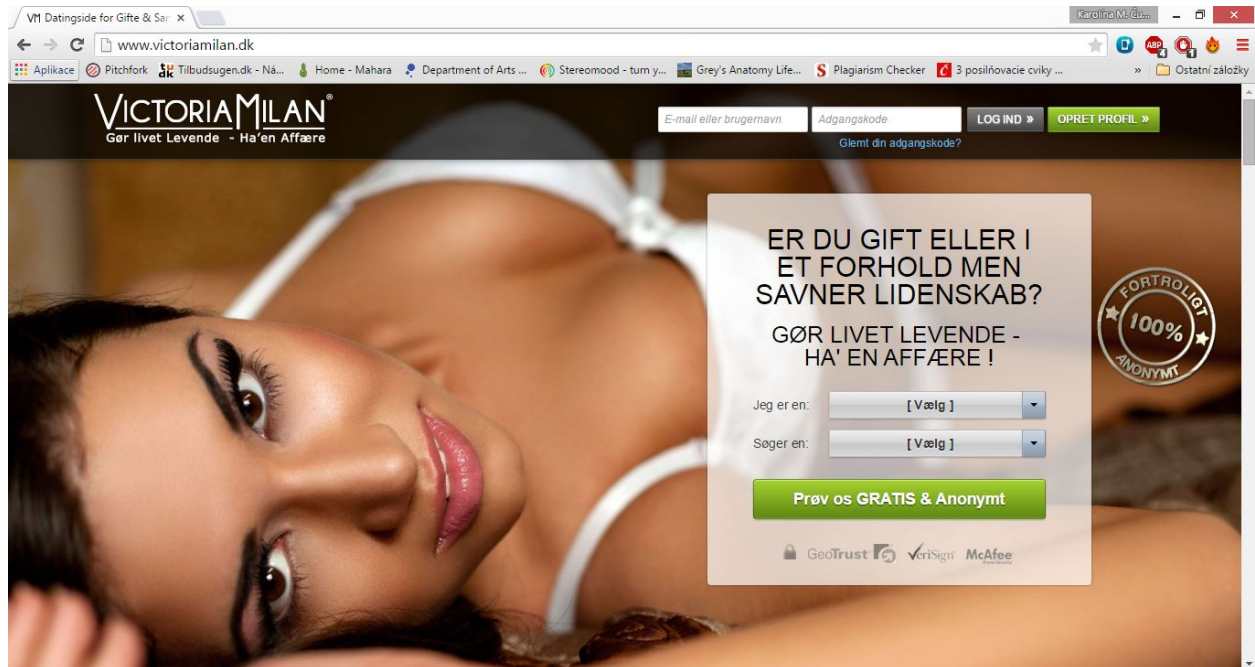
[TEST ME NOW!!](#)

Do you feel trapped in a monotonous and loveless marriage? Do you miss the magic of passion, excitement and intimacy? Victoria Milan can help!

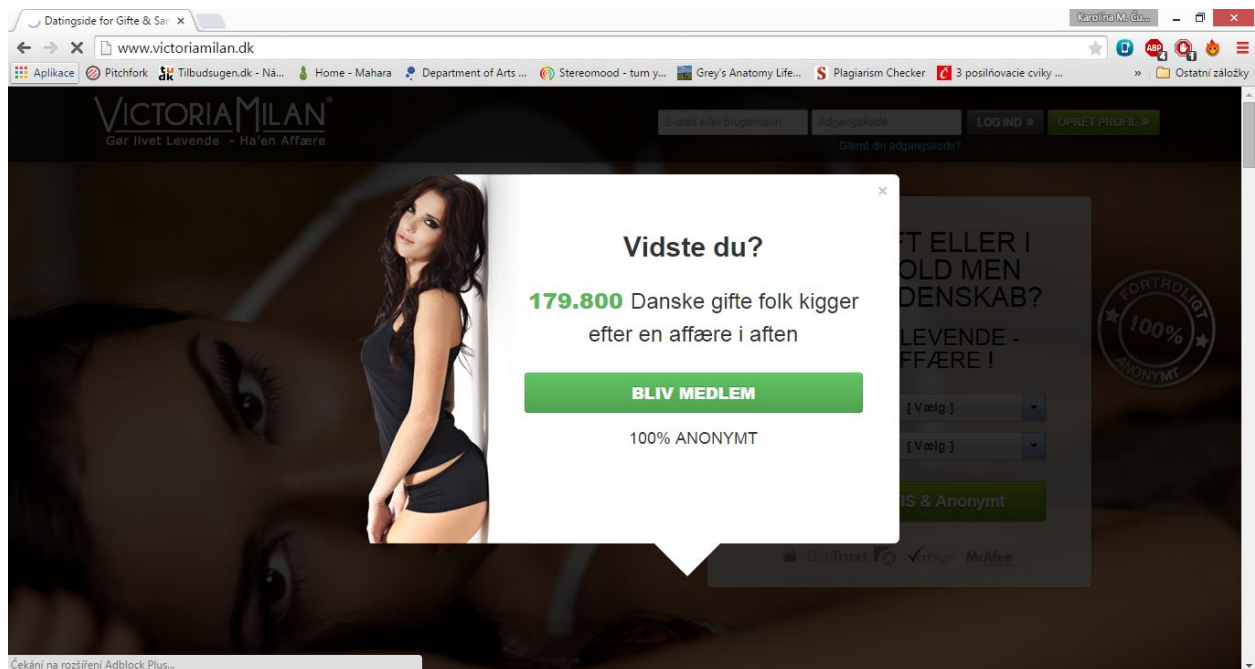
Victoria Milan is a new European dating site for married and attached people seeking confidential affairs. Whether you seek an innocent and friendly web flirt, a casual one-night stand, or a long term real life affair, Victoria Milan promises to provide you with a safe, anonymous and confidential online environment. Search and interact anonymously with thousands of married and attached members from all over Europe and Scandinavia. Our members are people just like you, seeking to relive that magical feeling once again.

Appendix C

Appendix C.1




Appendix C.2



Appendix D - Sample of the answers
Appendix D.1

Cyberdating - Victoria Milan

SurveyMonkey

#195



COMPLETE
Collector: Facebook Post 1 (Facebook Link)
Started: Tuesday, May 12, 2015 11:26:50 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, May 12, 2015 11:32:22 AM
Time Spent: 00:05:32
IP Address: 80.62.117.229

PAGE 1

Q1: What is your age?	25 to 34
Q2: What is your gender?	Male
Q3: What is your relationship status?	Engaged
Q4: Are you familiar with the website Victoria Milan? (If yes, from which source)	No
Q5: What is your initial reaction when looking at the front page of Victoria Milan? Do you think there is a specific target group for the website?	Rich married man.
Q6: What are your thoughts surrounding this concept?	It would be naive of me to say that I'm surprised, however, I don't think much of people that create these kind of sites + people joining them. It is probably some prostitution platform and could be even related to human trafficking, you never know!

Appendix D.2

#250



COMPLETE

Collector: Facebook Post 1 (Facebook Link)
Started: Wednesday, May 13, 2015 9:59:07 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, May 13, 2015 11:32:11 PM
Time Spent: 13:33:04
IP Address: 83.92.86.20

PAGE 1

Q1: What is your age?	25 to 34
Q2: What is your gender?	Male
Q3: What is your relationship status?	Single
Q4: Are you familiar with the website Victoria Milan? (If yes, from which source)	Yes (please specify from which source) radio
Q5: What is your initial reaction when looking at the front page of Victoria Milan? Do you think there is a specific target group for the website?	I don't think a leading question is any good in science... Is it the answer? - Yes it looks like the target group is men?
Q6: What are your thoughts surrounding this concept?	What a great concept. Let's see how many marriages we can break up.. People do anything for money... Where should one draw the line? On the other hand people who are in relationships and already have these thoughts.. I don't think the availability pushes more than a small percentile of people who wouldn't have done it without the site. Back to the concept. It has been created to make money to an owner who had an idea. Get real ideas that help the world, people! Don't lower the collective human IQ and EQ by creating stuff like this site. Find a way to make the world a better place and make money while you do it..

Appendix D.3

Cyberdating - Victoria Milan

SurveyMonkey

Q5 What is your initial reaction when looking at the front page of Victoria Milan? Do you think there is a specific target group for the website?

Answered: 259 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	That it's about sex. Target group: married ppl	5/18/2015 7:29 AM
2	30+	5/17/2015 11:21 AM
3	Yes.	5/16/2015 1:21 PM
4	Yes, I do.	5/16/2015 10:59 AM
5	It has a nice design. probably aimed at target group 20-39	5/15/2015 7:19 PM
6	It was normal reaction for me. Definitely there is a specific target group for the website. (18+..)	5/15/2015 4:22 PM
7	Sale of bras. Nice lips	5/15/2015 1:44 PM
8	im descusted. married or in a relationship?	5/15/2015 10:36 AM
9	I get aroused by looking at the woman on the picture but offended when seeing how the urge people to be adulterous. It's obvious that the target group is married men.	5/14/2015 10:17 PM
10	I don't think a leading question is any good in science... Is it the answer? - Yes it looks like the target group is men?	5/13/2015 11:32 PM
11	The target group is Male between 30- 45, looking for luxury sex.	5/13/2015 10:28 PM
12	Unhappy people in relationship	5/13/2015 3:15 PM
13	horny men	5/13/2015 1:53 PM
14	yes it is targeting people who are serching for lovers	5/13/2015 1:27 PM
15	front page is ok with a beautiful lady and seems to fit that we should 'be happy in every movement of life . and taking about the target group it seems to focus on the youth .	5/13/2015 11:54 AM
16	Its for young men wanting an affair	5/13/2015 10:58 AM
17	it has obvious sex context, it may be about flirting and for people who are looking for women. idk if it is for males or females but i guess it's the second option.	5/13/2015 9:49 AM
18	My first impression is that this page is with sexual content and it is dedicated to adult.	5/13/2015 7:41 AM

Appendix E

1. What is your age? (Multiple Choice question)
2. What is your gender? (Multiple Choice question)
3. What is your relationship status? (Multiple Choice question)
4. Are you familiar with the website Victoria Milan? (Multiple Choice question)
5. What is your initial reaction when looking at the front page of Victoria Milan? Do you think there is a specific target group for the website? (Open-end question)
6. What are your thoughts surrounding this concept? (Open-end question)