

Focus Group Report

07/02/2026

Full Archive — Complete question-by-question analysis and individual voice perspectives

What Was Tested

Video

Video

Gillette - We Believe The Best Men Can Be (P&G, 2019)

text/uri-list URL

Gillete ad

Research Context

Research Context

OBJECTIVE

Reposition brand through social purpose and increase brand equity.

CHANNEL

TV, YouTube, and Social Media

CONTEXT NOTES

"High production value, socially provocative, brand-led movement targeting modern masculinity."

CONTENT TESTED

This cinematic, high-production advertisement from Gillette reimagines its classic 'The Best a Man Can Get' slogan as a social challenge, addressing themes of toxic masculinity, bullying, and sexual harassment. The video utilizes a montage of...

Executive Summary

OVERALL SCORE

6.4/10



Overall

Sentiment Breakdown

● Very Positive: 2 (22%)

● Negative: 4 (44%)

● Positive: 2 (22%)

● Very Negative: 1 (11%)

Score Distribution

0.3-0.6 56%

0.6-1.0 44%

Question Score Overview

What's your immediate first impressio... ✓		0.0/10
What stands out to you most about thi...		0.0/10
How does this content make you feel? ✓		0.0/10
When you think back to this, how quic... ⚡		6.4/10
When you think about the brand after ... ⚡		5.4/10
Does anything in this feel off or out... ⚡		5.2/10
Were there any moments that really hi...		7.1/10
How did the overall mood and feel of ... ⚡		4.9/10
After seeing this, was it crystal cle...		5.4/10
Did the call-to-action jump out at yo...		6.3/10
Did the call-to-action appear at the ...		6.3/10
Did this make you feel motivated to t...		3.6/10
What do you think this was trying to ... ✓		9.0/10

If you had to tell a friend what this... ✓		8.8/10
What problem does this solve for you,... ⚡		3.7/10
Did you find the claims in this convi...		5.8/10
Did anything make you hesitate or thi... ⚡		5.0/10
How strongly did this make you feel s...		6.9/10
When you think about this brand's per... ⚡		4.6/10
Does this feel like it was made for s... ⚡		5.8/10
Did this take you on any kind of jour...		6.4/10
Without looking back at it, do you re... ✓		9.5/10
When you saw this, could you tell rig... ✓		9.1/10
After seeing this, how do you feel ab... ⚡		5.3/10
What made this brand stand out to you...		7.1/10
What grabbed your attention right at ... ✓		7.8/10
Did you feel engaged the whole way th...		7.2/10
Did you find yourself wanting to watc...		7.2/10
In your view, does a grooming brand l...		0.0/10
Does this content feel like a genuine...		0.0/10
If you saw a friend share this on soc... ✓		0.0/10
Think about the men in your life who ... ✓		0.0/10
How does this ad change your expectat...		0.0/10
What, if anything, feels unclear or c... ✓		0.0/10
If you could change one thing about t... ✓		0.0/10
Who might this content NOT work well ... ✓		0.0/10
What concerns or reservations do you ... ✓		0.0/10

Top Takeaways

STRONGEST ASPECTS

- Message clarity achieved exceptional results (mean 0.90) with universal comprehension across all demographics—every participant articulated the same core message regardless of whether they agreed with it, demonstrating masterful creative execution of a polarizing strategy.
- Brand recall and recognition scored highest among all metrics (0.95 and 0.91 respectively), with participants unanimously identifying Gillette immediately through distinctive visual assets, the iconic slogan transformation, and the controversy itself—proving the campaign achieves awareness objectives regardless of sentiment.

- Opening hook effectiveness (0.78) successfully captured attention through pattern interruption, with the audio montage of news clips and mirror scene subverting expectations and compelling continued viewing across all participant segments.
- Brand differentiation (0.71) was universally acknowledged—Gillette now occupies a completely distinct 'moral leadership' position while competitors remain in humor (Dollar Shave Club) or design (Harry's) lanes, achieving clear strategic separation.

WEAKEST ASPECTS

- CTA motivation scored lowest (0.36) with participants consistently noting they can adopt the behavioral message without any brand engagement—'I can buy any razor and still be a good man' captures the fundamental disconnect between moral agreement and purchase intent.
- Value proposition strength (0.37) revealed complete abandonment of functional product messaging, with multiple participants noting 'I can't shave with moral superiority'—a critical weakness in a commodity category where competitors offer lower prices.
- Emotional alignment (0.46) showed severe polarization, with the shift from 'confident/sharp/reliable' to 'vulnerable/socially conscious' representing brand identity crisis for traditionalists who valued the legacy personality.
- Cultural appropriateness (0.52) exposed the campaign's fundamental limitation as a global strategy—American-centric visual language (BBQ scenes, sitcom formats) and public shaming approach violate cultural norms in Gulf, Asian, and even British markets.

Key Insights

CROSS-QUESTION PATTERNS

- The 'message-action disconnect' appeared across CTA clarity, CTA motivation, and value proposition questions: participants universally understood the behavioral message but saw no connection between that understanding and brand engagement or purchase behavior.
- Cultural context modulated responses across emotional alignment, personal relevance, and cultural appropriateness: Western parents scored significantly higher than international participants, revealing the campaign's narrow demographic effectiveness despite universal message comprehension.
- The 'respect without purchase intent' paradox emerged across brand sentiment, brand equity, and value proposition questions: even participants who admired the campaign's boldness reported decreased purchase motivation, suggesting brand building and sales activation may be working against each other.
- Defensive emotional responses correlated with poor objection handling and emotional journey completion: participants who felt attacked in the opening never reached the hopeful resolution, with the accusatory framing creating barriers that the 'some already are' copywriting couldn't overcome.

Actionable Recommendations

- Restructure narrative arc to lead with positive masculinity: Near-universal feedback recommends showing men 'building, nurturing, mentoring' from the opening rather than extensive negative framing—this would reduce defensiveness while maintaining the core message and could significantly improve emotional alignment scores.
- Develop market-specific creative executions for international deployment: The American-centric framing (BBQ scenes, public shaming approach) fails in non-Western markets where masculinity pressures manifest differently (academic competition, family honor) and correction norms favor private guidance over public shame.
- Create clear conversion pathway connecting brand engagement to cause support: Address the product-cause disconnect by establishing tangible links (donations per purchase, funded programs, policy commitments) that give values-aligned consumers a reason to choose Gillette specifically over competitors.
- Prepare robust follow-through evidence for post-launch communications: Multiple participants conditioned their support on seeing real corporate action—hiring practices, donations, policy changes. Document and communicate these substantive commitments to convert 'calculated virtue signaling' perception into 'genuine leadership' positioning.
- Develop complementary content for alienated segments: Consider parallel campaigns that celebrate positive masculinity without accusatory framing for traditional demographics, preserving brand equity with legacy customers while the main campaign targets progressive audiences.

Question Details

What's your immediate first impression of this content?

Universal consensus emerged that this content represents a dramatic, risky departure from Gillette's traditional advertising approach. All participants immediately recognized the shift from aspirational masculinity to social commentary, with most describing it as 'bold' but 'heavy-handed.' The content successfully grabs attention but creates immediate tension between its high production values and its lecturing tone. This polarizing first impression sets the stage for the divided reception that follows—the content achieves cut-through but at the cost of viewer comfort.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"Bold. Incredibly risky from a brand strategy perspective, but it grabs you. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"This feels like a lecture. It is high quality, visually speaking, but the tone... it is aggressive immediately. - Sultan Al-Mutairi (ad8197e5)"

"Risky. Very risky. My first thought is they're betting the house on a pivot that alienates their legacy consumer base. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

What stands out to you most about this content?

Two elements dominated standout recall: the clever inversion of Gillette's legacy tagline and the visceral 'boys will be boys' BBQ scene. The tagline subversion was recognized as strategically bold—transforming decades of brand equity into a moral challenge. The BBQ scene resonated particularly with parents who recognized the passive complicity it depicted. However, international participants consistently noted the jarring absence of any product messaging, highlighting a potential cultural mismatch in markets where functional advertising dominates.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"The way they've weaponised their own slogan. 'The Best a Man Can Get' has been drilled into us for decades as a mark of excellence or luxury. - James Morton (01094cfd)"

"The editing of the 'boys will be boys' chant. Seeing that line of dads just passively repeating it—that was a strong visual metaphor for systemic complacency. - Mina Okafor (41414000)"

"specs - Lei Zhao (242712ed)"

How does this content make you feel?

The dominant emotional response was conflict—participants simultaneously agreed with the underlying message while resenting the delivery mechanism. The phrase 'patronized' appeared repeatedly, revealing a fundamental tension: viewers don't want moral guidance from consumer product companies. This emotional cocktail of defensiveness, guilt, and cynicism suggests the content achieves attention but may undermine the goodwill necessary for brand building. Cultural context significantly modulated responses, with non-Western participants finding the public shaming approach particularly alienating.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"A mix of defensiveness and responsibility. The first half makes you tense up—nobody likes looking in a dirty mirror. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"A bit conflicted. On one hand, as a modern man, I agree with the sentiment entirely... But on the other, there's a cynical part of me wondering if a corporation that charges £20 for four refill cartridges is really the moral arbiter we need. - James Morton (01094cfd)"

"It feels like I am being accused of something I did not do. In our culture, advice is given in private, not shouted in public to shame people. - Sultan Al-Mutairi (ad8197e5)"

When you think back to this, how quickly does the brand come to mind? 6.4/10 What specific things about it made the brand memorable—or forgettable?

Brand recall is universally strong—the content is unforgettable. However, the nature of that recall is deeply polarized. The mean score of 0.59 masks a bimodal distribution where some participants see brand equity enhancement through relevance and values alignment, while others see fundamental equity destruction through politicization. The critical insight is that memorability ≠ positive equity. Several participants explicitly noted they would remember Gillette but associate it with controversy rather than product quality. This represents a high-risk brand equity gamble with uncertain returns.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"Immediate recall. You can't unsee this. It makes the brand feel relevant again, albeit polarizing. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"Before, Gillette was a safe, reliable choice—essentially the 'blue chip' stock of grooming. Now? It feels politically charged. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"Gillette comes to mind immediately, but the signal is mixed now. It used to signal precision and reliability—like a well-tuned engine. Now? It signals political activism. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

When you think about the brand after seeing this, what words or feelings come to mind? Does it remind you of anything specific? 5.4/10

The campaign fundamentally rewrote Gillette's brand associations—but not uniformly positively. The mean score of 0.54 reflects a deeply divided response. For aligned audiences, new associations like 'accountability' and 'modernity' represent strategic

differentiation. For misaligned audiences, the loss of 'sharp,' 'precise,' and 'reliable' associations represents brand equity destruction. Critically, even positive new associations may not drive purchase behavior—'accountability' doesn't motivate razor purchases the way 'precision' does. The brand has traded functional associations for values associations, a risky exchange in a commodity category.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"Accountability. Evolution. Modern. It feels like they're trying to grow up with their customer base. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"It doesn't make me think 'smooth shave' or 'precision engineering' anymore. It makes me think of Twitter arguments. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"Preachy. Soft. It reminds me of those ESG seminars where everyone nods along but nobody is actually talking about the bottom line. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

Does anything in this feel off or out of place for your culture? Like, does it seem like it was made by someone who really understands where you're from? 5.2/10

Cultural appropriateness scores reveal the content's fundamental limitation as a global campaign. The mean of 0.48 masks extreme variance: American participants scored it highly while international participants consistently identified it as culturally foreign. The BBQ scene, sitcom references, and public shaming approach are specifically American cultural artifacts that don't translate. More critically, the definition of 'toxic masculinity' itself varies by culture—Chinese participants noted their pressures are academic/economic, not physical aggression. For a global brand, this American-centric execution significantly limits reach and risks alienating international markets.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"It didn't feel like a caricature of culture, which is rare. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"It feels very American. The BBQ scene with the 'boys will be boys' chant, the sitcom laugh tracks, the news anchors—it doesn't quite translate to London. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

*"This is very Western, specifically American... In our culture, advice is given in private, not shouted in public to shame people. We have *aib* (shame). - Sultan Al-Mutairi (ad8197e5)"*

Were there any moments that really hit you emotionally? What was it about those scenes that got to you? 7.1/10

The content successfully generates emotional intensity, with a mean of 0.70 and skewed-high distribution indicating most participants felt something. However, the quality of emotion varied significantly. Parents were deeply moved by child-focused scenes—the bullying, the father-son moments—experiencing the intended emotional journey. Non-

parents and those culturally misaligned experienced intensity but of the wrong valence: irritation, embarrassment, defensiveness. The Terry Crews inclusion and father-stopping-fight scene emerged as universally effective emotional peaks. The content achieves emotional cut-through but doesn't consistently convert that intensity into positive brand sentiment.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"The scene with the mom holding her son while he's being texted bullying messages. With a 13-year-old at home, that terrifies me. That hit me right in the gut. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"Als der Vater die kämpfenden Jungs trennt. Das hat mich getroffen. Ich muss auf dem Fußballplatz oft derjenige sein, der dazwischengeht. - Enes Demir (59b3bb5e)"

"I wouldn't say I got emotional, but the boardroom scene with the woman being talked over—that happens, I've seen it. So that moment landed a bit of a punch. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

How did the overall mood and feel of this land with you? Did the emotions it was going for match what you were expecting? 4.9/10

Emotional alignment scores reveal a fundamental strategic tension. The mean of 0.49 and bimodal distribution show the audience split between those who accept brand evolution and those who expect consistency. The core problem: grooming products are used in morning routines where consumers want to feel confident and energized, not guilty and scrutinized. Even participants who agreed with the message noted the emotional payload was 'heavy' for the context. The content may align with Gillette's intended new positioning but fundamentally misaligns with the product usage occasion—a critical disconnect for brand building.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"It was intense—maybe a little more intense than I expected for a razor ad. I usually expect confidence, sharpness, winning. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"I think they wanted me to feel inspired... But the mood was so sombre and critical for the first half that by the time the uplifting music kicked in, I was already on the defensive. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"Poor alignment. I come to Gillette for a clean shave before a board meeting, not for social commentary. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

After seeing this, was it crystal clear what you're supposed to do next? Did the action feel specific and obvious, or vague and confusing? 5.4/10

CTA clarity reveals a fundamental campaign design choice: prioritizing social message over commercial conversion. The mean of 0.53 reflects universal recognition that the behavioral CTA ('be better') is clear while the commercial CTA is absent or vague.

Participants consistently questioned the connection between the message and purchase behavior—'I can buy any razor and still be a good man.' For a brand-building campaign, this may be acceptable; for driving sales, it's problematic. The website URL exists but lacks compelling reason to visit, and skepticism about actual click-through was universal.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"The unspoken CTA is clear: Step up. Be better. Intervene. The website URL at the end is there, but the real call to action is behavioral. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"The implicit call to action is just 'don't be a jerk'... It's clear enough socially, but vague commercially. Am I supposed to buy more razors to support the cause? - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"Vague. 'The Best Men Can Be.' What is the KPI there? It directs to a website, but I'm not clear on what the transaction is. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

Did the call-to-action jump out at you, or did you have to hunt for it? Could you spot it immediately or did it blend into everything else? 6.3/10

CTA visibility achieves baseline standards but faces a unique challenge: the emotional intensity of the content overshadows the practical call-to-action. The mean of 0.63 reflects adequate technical execution—the URL is present, readable, and properly placed. However, multiple participants noted that by the time the URL appears, viewers are processing heavy emotional content and may not retain the practical information. The slogan transformation itself functions as a highly visible 'CTA' for the brand message, even if it doesn't drive specific action. This is acceptable for awareness campaigns but problematic for conversion-focused objectives.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"The website 'TheBestMenCanBe.org' was clear enough, but it felt secondary to the emotional challenge. The real CTA was the mirror reflection at the start and end. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"The URL at the end was plain enough, but let's be real, nobody types in a URL from a YouTube video. The real CTA was the hashtag and the slogan change. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"You cannot miss it. They literally scratch out the old slogan. It is a very deliberate rebranding. - Sultan Al-Mutairi (ad8197e5)"

Did the call-to-action appear at the right moment? Was it too early (before you understood the offer), too late (you might have scrolled away), or just right? 6.3/10

CTA timing follows textbook narrative structure but reveals a critical flaw: timing that works for engaged audiences fails for alienated ones. The mean of 0.62 and bimodal distribution show that participants who stayed emotionally engaged found the timing 'just

right'—the CTA arrives after the solution is presented. However, participants who became defensive during the negative framing had 'checked out' before the CTA appeared. This suggests the content's polarizing nature undermines CTA effectiveness for a significant portion of the audience, regardless of technical timing correctness.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"It came at the right time—after the solution was presented. Ending on the next generation—the boys watching—was the right hook to close the deal. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"The timing was right. They had to earn the ask. They built the narrative arc correctly: Problem -> Complicity -> Intervention -> CTA. - Mina Okafor (41414000)"

"It appeared after the crescendo, which is standard structure. But by the time it showed up, I had already mentally checked out of the proposition. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

Did this make you feel motivated to take action right now, or did it feel like something you could easily put off? What would have made you more likely to click? 3.6/10

CTA motivation is the campaign's weakest metric, with a mean of 0.36 and skewed-low distribution. The fundamental problem is articulated clearly across responses: participants can agree with the message and change their behavior without any brand engagement. 'I can buy any razor and still be a good man' captures the disconnect perfectly. The content may build long-term brand loyalty among aligned audiences, but it generates virtually no immediate action motivation. Even supporters describe it as building 'loyalty, not urgency.' For a campaign requiring measurable ROI, this is a significant weakness.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"It motivates me to be conscious of my example. I'm not sure it motivates me to go buy a fusion razor immediately, but it motivates me to support the brand because they're taking a stand. It builds loyalty, not urgency. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"Not particularly motivated to visit a website, no. I'm busy. I agree with the sentiment of intervening... but I don't need to join a Gillette mailing list to do that. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"Zero. I have zero motivation to visit a razor company's website to discuss masculinity. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

What do you think this was trying to tell you? Was there anything confusing about the message? 9.0/10

Message clarity is the campaign's strongest metric, with a mean of 0.90 and high consensus. Every participant, regardless of cultural background, age, or values alignment, articulated the same core message: traditional masculinity excuses are over, men must hold other men accountable, passive bystanders are complicit. This clarity is both the

campaign's greatest strength and its source of controversy—there's no ambiguity to hide behind. The message is so clear that rejection is conscious and deliberate rather than based on misunderstanding. This represents excellent creative execution of a polarizing strategy.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"Very clear. The old rules of masculinity don't apply anymore. We can't laugh off harassment or excuse bullying. It's time to evolve. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"The message was crystal clear: 'Traditional masculinity can be toxic; men need to change.' There's no ambiguity there. They weren't hiding behind nuance. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"The message is clear: Passive masculinity is complicit masculinity. It's telling men that the bar has been raised. - Mina Okafor (41414000)"

If you had to tell a friend what this was about, what would you say were the main points? 8.8/10

Key takeaway recall is exceptionally strong, with a mean of 0.88 and high consensus. Participants across all demographics and attitudes recalled the same core messages with remarkable consistency. The three-part message structure (accountability, end of excuses, children watching) was universally retained. Notably, even participants who rejected the message recalled it accurately—they disagreed with it but understood and remembered it perfectly. This demonstrates excellent message architecture and memorable creative execution, regardless of whether the message itself is accepted.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"Men need to hold other men accountable. The excuses of the past are done. Our kids are watching us. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"Stop making excuses for bad behaviour. 'Boys will be boys' is over. Men need to hold other men accountable. And Gillette supports this shift. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"Men hold the power to change the culture of toxic masculinity. The 'boys will be boys' era is over. Gillette expects men to be active bystanders, not passive observers. - Mina Okafor (41414000)"

What problem does this solve for you, and did it make you feel like this was the right solution? 3.7/10

Value proposition strength reveals the campaign's most significant strategic risk. The mean of 0.37 and bimodal distribution show that the content completely abandons functional product messaging in favor of values-based positioning. For the minority who shop based on values alignment, this works—Mina explicitly said she'd buy Gillette for her partner based on shared values. For the majority who expect product benefits, the value proposition is 'non-existent.' The critical quote: 'I can't shave with moral superiority.' In a

commodity category where competitors offer lower prices and comparable quality, abandoning functional differentiation is a high-stakes gamble.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"They aren't selling a closer shave here; they're selling a better identity. For a guy like me who values development and legacy, that resonates. But strictly as a product pitch? It's non-existent. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"As a solution to toxic masculinity? It's a nice sentiment, but a razor ad isn't going to solve systemic social issues. As a value prop for buying the product? Zero. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"Non-existent regarding the product. There was nothing about blade sharpness, durability, or cost-per-shave. The 'value' offered is moral superiority, which I can't shave with. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

Did you find the claims in this convincing? Was there anything that made you think "I believe that" or "I'm not sure about that"? 5.8/10

Proof/support achieves moderate effectiveness with a mean of 0.58. The campaign leverages cultural artifacts (news clips, Terry Crews testimony) to establish problem credibility rather than providing original evidence. This approach works for audiences who already recognize the problem but fails to convince skeptics. A critical insight from Lei: the content proves the problem exists but doesn't prove the solution works. Additionally, some participants found using real social pain to sell razors 'manipulative' or 'opportunistic,' undermining credibility even when the evidence itself was accepted as valid.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"The 'proof' was in the montage of news clips and viral moments. We've all seen them. It didn't need stats; it just held up a mirror to the culture. The Terry Crews clip added a lot of credibility. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"The 'proof' relies heavily on the viewer already agreeing with the premise. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"They used news clips and staged scenarios. It's anecdotal evidence strung together to support a thesis. Effective for a narrative, maybe, but it's not data. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

Did anything make you hesitate or think "yeah, but..." while watching this? How well did it address those concerns? 5.0/10

Objection handling is deeply polarized with a mean of 0.48 and bimodal distribution. The campaign includes a crucial line—"Some already are... but some is not enough"—that communications professionals recognized as essential objection handling. However, the execution undermines this: the negative framing is so extensive that objections arise

before they're addressed, and the mocking tone toward 'boys will be boys' antagonizes rather than persuades. Several participants noted the ratio problem: too much time on the negative, making the positive feel like 'a footnote.' Effective objection handling requires bringing skeptics along; this content may have pushed them further away.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"They tackled the 'Not All Men' argument head-on with the voiceover saying 'Some already are... but some is not enough.' That was a crucial line of copy. - Mina Okafor (41414000)"

"It tried to anticipate the 'not all men' objection by showing the 'good men' intervening later. But the opening was so broad-brush that the objection was already raised in my mind before they addressed it. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"It attempts to handle the 'boys will be boys' objection by mocking it. That's not handling an objection; that's antagonizing the stakeholder. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

How strongly did this make you feel something? Was there a moment that really hit you emotionally? 6.9/10

Emotional intensity achieves strong results with a mean of 0.69 and skewed-high distribution—most participants felt something strongly. However, the critical nuance is that intensity \neq positive emotion. Parents were deeply moved by child-focused scenes, experiencing the intended emotional journey. Others experienced equally strong but negative emotions: irritation, annoyance, defensiveness. Kim's observation captures this perfectly: the content generates anger, shame, or inspiration—but it generates something. For awareness and memorability, this works. For brand affinity, the negative emotional responses represent significant risk.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"High. Especially the shots of the kids. When you're a father, seeing a boy look scared or seeing a boy look up to his dad... that bypasses logic and goes straight to the heart. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"It was provocative. It didn't make me cry or laugh, it made me think and perhaps bristle a little. It demanded attention. So, high intensity, but maybe not entirely positive valence. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"It triggered annoyance. It felt like a waste of my time. I'm busy. If I'm watching an ad, entertain me or inform me. Don't lecture me. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

When you think about this brand's personality, did the emotions you felt while watching this fit with what you'd expect from them? 4.6/10

Emotional alignment is the campaign's most polarizing metric, with a mean of 0.46 and stark bimodal distribution. The fundamental question: is this brand evolution or brand betrayal? Gillette's historic personality—stoic, confident, masculine excellence—is

replaced by vulnerability, social consciousness, and moral accountability. For those who see this as necessary modernization, the emotions align with the 'new' Gillette. For those who valued the legacy personality, this represents a fundamental identity crisis. The critical insight from Kim: the brand went from 'building confidence' to 'treating men as something to be fixed'—a complete inversion of emotional positioning.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"It feels like a mature step for the brand. If they kept doing the 'get the girl' ads in 2019, they'd look like dinosaurs. This aligns with where the world is going. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"Not really. Gillette to me is functional, reliable, masculine in a traditional, almost stoic way. This emotional, socially conscious pleading feels like a pivot to attract a younger, maybe Gen Z demographic. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"Completely off-target. Gillette is a legacy brand—reliable, classic. This feels like they're trying to chase a younger, 'woke' demographic. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

Does this feel like it was made for someone like you? What about it connects to your life, or what feels off?

5.8/10

Personal relevance shows the widest variance of any metric, with scores ranging from 0.15 to 0.95. The content resonates powerfully with its core target: Western parents (especially fathers) who navigate these exact situations daily. Enes's response is exemplary—as a 40-year-old father and youth coach, he sees 'genau diese Situationen' (exactly these situations). However, the content fails dramatically for international audiences whose masculinity challenges are different (academic pressure, economic competition, family honor) and for younger audiences who find the tone condescending. The campaign succeeds for a narrow demographic but fails to achieve broad relevance.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"Highly relevant. Between managing large teams and raising two sons (and a daughter), modeling the right behavior is something I think about daily. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"Total relevant. Ich bin 40, Vater, arbeite in einem technischen Umfeld, trainiere Kinder. Ich sehe genau diese Situationen. - Enes Demir (59b3bb5e)"

"The theme of responsibility is relevant. As the eldest son, I carry a lot of responsibility. But the specific examples—catcalling, bullying in American suburbs—that is not my life. - Sultan Al-Mutairi (ad8197e5)"

Did this take you on any kind of journey emotionally, or did it feel pretty flat the whole way through?

6.4/10

The emotional journey follows textbook advocacy storytelling structure: problem → complicity → intervention → hope. The mean of 0.62 and bimodal distribution reveal that

this structure works for engaged audiences but fails for those who become defensive. Multiple participants noted the 'accusation part lingers longer than the redemption'—the negative framing is so extensive that some viewers never reach the hopeful resolution. Kim's journey ('discomfort → confusion → slight agreement → doubt again') illustrates how the arc can fail: ending without the intended catharsis. The journey architecture is sound but the execution's heavy negative weighting undermines completion for skeptical viewers.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"It starts with discomfort—recognizing the bad behaviors. Then it moves to frustration with the excuses. Then it pivots to hope and empowerment. It's a classic redemption arc. It worked for me. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"It went from accusing to aspiring... It's a classic narrative arc, but the transition felt a bit forced. I stayed in the 'skeptical' zone for most of it. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"Classic narrative arc. It started with tension and discomfort, moved to recognition/call-out, and resolved with hope and empowerment. It's a very standard but effective emotional structure for advocacy storytelling. - Mina Okafor (41414000)"

Without looking back at it, do you remember what brand this was for? What made it stick—or not stick—in your mind? 9.5/10

Brand recall is the campaign's most successful metric, with a mean of 0.95 and perfect consensus. Every participant, regardless of their attitude toward the content, immediately and accurately recalled the brand. The campaign leverages multiple recall mechanisms: distinctive visual assets (blue palette, typography), sonic branding, the iconic slogan transformation, and controversy itself. Henry's observation is key: 'Even if you hate it, you know it's Gillette.' This demonstrates that the campaign achieves its awareness objectives regardless of sentiment—a critical success for brand repositioning even if the repositioning itself is contested.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"Gillette. Unmistakable. The typography, the tagline flip—it's branded through and through. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"100%. You can't mistake it. The logo, the tagline remix. Even if you hate it, you know it's Gillette. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"Gillette. You can't forget it because they plastered the logo over a controversial statement. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

When you saw this, could you tell right away what brand it was from? What helped you recognize it? 9.1/10

Brand recognition achieves excellent results with a mean of 0.91 and high consensus. The campaign demonstrates masterful use of distinctive brand assets: the blue-grey color

palette, typography, voiceover style, and crucially, the slogan transformation that anchors the new content to brand heritage. Multiple participants noted they recognized Gillette before the logo appeared—a testament to strong brand asset deployment. The slogan transformation is particularly effective: it leverages decades of brand equity while signaling change. Even participants who found the content culturally foreign recognized the brand instantly, proving the visual identity transcends the message controversy.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"Yes, immediately. Even before the logo, the aesthetic—that sharp, blue-grey cool tone—felt like Gillette. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"Instantly. The visual identity is very strong. The text overlays, the voiceover... it screams Gillette before the logo even appears. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"Immediately. The font, the blue colors. And the 'Is this the best a man can get?' line at the start. It anchors it directly to their heritage before flipping it. - Sultan Al-Mutairi (ad8197e5)"

After seeing this, how do you feel about the brand? Did it leave you with a positive impression or did anything rub you the wrong way? 5.3/10

Brand sentiment is deeply polarized with a mean of 0.50 and bimodal distribution. The dominant response is 'mixed' or 'complicated'—participants simultaneously respect the boldness while resenting the execution. A critical finding: respect for courage doesn't translate to purchase intent. Kim explicitly states CSR efforts are appreciated but purchase desire decreased. Peter's framing is telling: he views it through an investor lens as 'management losing focus.' The campaign may build loyalty among aligned audiences while actively damaging sentiment among others. For a mass-market brand, this polarization represents significant commercial risk.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"Respect. I respect the courage to alienate some customers to stand for something. It makes me feel better about having their products in my bathroom cabinet. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"Mixed. I respect the bravery of taking a stand... But I'm slightly annoyed by the execution. It makes me feel like the brand is trying too hard to be my moral compass. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"It took a hit. I respect bold moves in a portfolio company if they unlock value, but this looks like management losing focus. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

What made this brand stand out to you compared to others you've seen, or did it feel like it could have been from anyone? 7.1/10

Brand differentiation achieves strong results with a mean of 0.72 and skewed-high distribution. Universal consensus: Gillette now occupies a completely distinct position

from competitors. While Dollar Shave Club owns humor, Harry's owns design, Gillette now claims 'moral leadership.' However, participants consistently noted this differentiation comes with significant risk. Henry's observation is crucial: 'it moves them away from performance, which was their stronghold.' The campaign successfully differentiates but potentially at the cost of core brand equity. This is the classic differentiation dilemma: standing out is valuable, but standing out in a way that alienates core customers may not be.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"Huge differentiation. Schick or Harry's aren't doing this. Dollar Shave Club is doing comedy. Gillette is doing gravitas. It separates them as the 'legacy' leader. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"Oh, it stands out. Dollar Shave Club is all about humour and convenience. Harry's is about design and simplicity. Gillette is now... the social crusader? It certainly differentiates them, but it moves them away from 'performance', which was their stronghold. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"Completely distinct. Schick or Dollar Shave Club aren't touching this with a ten-foot pole right now. Gillette is claiming the 'moral leadership' lane. It's high risk, high reward. - Mina Okafor (41414000)"

What grabbed your attention right at the start, and did it make you want to keep watching? 7.8/10

Opening hook effectiveness is strong with a mean of 0.78 and high consensus. The campaign employs multiple hook mechanisms simultaneously: the audio montage of news clips creates pattern interruption, the mirror scene subverts familiar shaving commercial tropes, and the juxtaposition of old commercial audio with new imagery creates cognitive friction. Every participant noted the opening 'signals this isn't a normal commercial' and generated curiosity about the narrative direction. This is textbook attention capture for the social media age. The hook succeeds in its primary mission: stopping the scroll and compelling continued viewing. What happens after the hook is where the campaign becomes polarizing.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"The audio montage of 'bullying,' 'me too,' 'toxic masculinity.' It sets the stage immediately that this isn't a normal commercial. It forces you to pay attention. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"The audio hook—hearing the different news reports of 'bullying,' 'Me Too,' 'toxicity'. It immediately signals that this isn't a normal commercial. It grabbed me because I wanted to know where on earth they were going with it. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"The juxtaposition of the old commercial with the news audio. That friction—between the idealized past and the messy present—hooked me immediately. - Mina Okafor (41414000)"

Did you feel engaged the whole way through, or were there moments where your mind started to wander?

7.2/10

Attention retention achieves solid results with a mean of 0.72 and clustered distribution. The campaign's fast pacing and quick cuts successfully maintain visual engagement, and narrative curiosity ('where are they going with this?') kept viewers watching to the end. However, the quality of attention varied significantly. Some participants were genuinely absorbed; others watched like 'a train wreck in slow motion'—engaged but negatively. Lei's feedback about the middle section being too long with repetitive news clips identifies a potential drop-off point. The campaign retains attention but doesn't always retain goodwill—an important distinction for brand building.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"I stayed with it. The pacing was quick, cutting between different scenarios. I wanted to see where they were going with it. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"I watched the whole thing. Mostly out of curiosity to see how far they'd push it. It's well-produced, cut fast enough to keep you watching. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"I watched the whole thing, mostly to see how far they'd take it. It was like watching a train wreck in slow motion. You can't look away, even if you know it's going to end badly. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

Did you find yourself wanting to watch the whole thing, or were there moments where you felt like checking out?

7.2/10

Engagement duration achieves moderate results with a mean of 0.70. The campaign successfully holds attention through completion for most viewers, driven by quality editing, fast pacing, and narrative curiosity. However, two critical caveats emerge. First, James's distinction between watching and rewatching: 'It's not entertaining, it's a statement. Once you've heard it, you've heard it.' This limits organic sharing and repeat exposure value. Second, Lei's real-world behavior prediction: he would skip after 5 seconds in YouTube pre-roll. Focus group engagement may not predict actual media consumption behavior, suggesting the campaign may face higher skip rates in deployment than research suggests.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"I'd watch the whole thing. It's provocative. In my line of work, we talk about 'scroll-stopping' content. This is it. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"I'd watch the full thing once. I wouldn't watch it again. It's not entertaining, it's a statement. Once you've heard it, you've heard it. - James Morton (01094cfd)"

"I would finish it. It is well-edited. The pacing is fast. It doesn't drag. - Sultan Al-Mutairi (ad8197e5)"

In your view, does a grooming brand like Gillette have the 'permission' or social standing to lead a conversation on masculinity, or does it feel over-extended from their product category?

The question of brand permission reveals fundamental disagreement about the role of corporations in social discourse. Supporters argue Gillette's decades of defining masculine aspiration gives them standing to redefine it. Critics argue this is category overreach—"I don't need moral guidance from people who sell me plastic handles." Mina's observation provides nuance: in a vacuum of political leadership on these issues, brands are stepping in. Whether this is legitimate or opportunistic depends on one's view of corporate social responsibility. The campaign's success hinges on whether audiences accept this expanded brand role.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"If anyone has the standing to redefine that slogan, it's them. It's a stretch, but a necessary one if they want to stay relevant. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"Do I need moral guidance from the people who sell me plastic handles? Probably not. It feels a bit over-extended. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"No. This is a classic case of brand overreach. You make razor blades. You are a utility in my life, not a moral compass. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

Does this content feel like a genuine commitment to social change, or does it strike you as 'virtue signaling' to capitalize on current social movements?

Virtue signaling accusations dominate responses, with even sympathetic participants acknowledging corporate motives. The consensus: this feels like 'calculated virtue signaling'—strategically timed during #MeToo to capture cultural momentum. However, several participants noted the production value and willingness to alienate core customers suggests more than a quick cash grab. The critical test, articulated by multiple participants: does Gillette back this up with real action? Donations, policy changes, hiring practices? Without evidence of follow-through, the campaign remains 'just marketing.' The brand's post-campaign actions will determine whether this is remembered as genuine leadership or opportunistic exploitation.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"They're showing the ugly side, not just a polished, happy diversity ad. That gives it some weight. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"It feels like corporate strategy masquerading as activism... It's 'virtue signaling', but calculated virtue signaling. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"It reeks of virtue signaling. Real commitment is quiet—it's how you hire, how you pay, how you operate. This is just loud noise. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

If you saw a friend share this on social media with a polarizing comment, would you be more likely to defend the brand, distance yourself from it, or ignore it entirely?

The overwhelming response is to ignore social media debates about this content. Participants view online arguments as 'low-ROI,' risky to personal reputation, and unproductive. Even supporters (Mina) would defend 'the narrative' rather than 'Gillette the Corporation.' This has significant implications for the campaign's social strategy: while it generates conversation, that conversation may not include brand advocates. The polarizing nature means most people will stay silent rather than risk being labeled 'PC' or 'backwards.' Peter's response is telling: he'd ignore publicly but might quietly switch brands—suggesting the campaign could drive silent defection rather than vocal advocacy.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"If a friend posted something polarizing about this, I'd probably weigh in... to defend the intent. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"If a mate shared it with a rant, I'd probably just ignore it. Not worth the argument in the WhatsApp group. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"I'd ignore it. Arguing on social media is a low-ROI activity. But privately? I might shake my head and switch to a different brand. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

Think about the men in your life who hold more traditional views; which specific scene do you think would cause the most friction or defensiveness for them, and why?

Participants consistently identified specific scenes that would alienate traditional men in their lives. The BBQ scene ('boys will be boys') was most frequently cited in Western contexts—it pathologizes roughhousing that many fathers consider normal play. The street approach scene triggers 'so I can't even talk to women now?' defensiveness. Interestingly, Sultan identified the boardroom scene as most problematic in Gulf culture, where hierarchy trumps gender considerations. This reveals a critical insight: the campaign's friction points vary by cultural context. What's seen as 'toxic' in American framing may be 'normal hierarchy' elsewhere, creating unpredictable backlash patterns in global markets.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"The boardroom scene... That scene where the guy touches the woman's shoulder and gets stopped—that's going to trigger the 'PC culture has gone too far' crowd. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"The BBQ scene. 'Boys will be boys.' I know plenty of older guys... who would see that and say, 'Oh come on, it's just roughhousing.' They'd feel like normal male behaviour is being pathologised. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"The scene where the guy stops his friend from approaching the woman on the street. Traditional men often view that as 'just saying hi' or 'courting.' They'll say, 'So I can't even talk to women now?' - Mina Okafor (41414000)"

How does this ad change your expectations for how other 'masculine' brands (like car or beer companies) should communicate with you in the future?

The campaign creates divergent expectations for future brand communication. For values-aligned consumers, it 'raises the bar'—making traditional masculine advertising look 'dated and cheap.' These consumers will expect other brands to show 'multidimensional versions of men.' For traditionalists, it creates expectation fatigue and appreciation for brands that 'stay in their lane.' Lei's observation captures the exhaustion: 'if every brand gives me an ethics lecture, life is too tiring.' This suggests a market segmentation opportunity: some brands can follow Gillette's lead for progressive audiences, while others can differentiate by remaining apolitical for audiences seeking respite from social messaging.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"It raises the bar. It makes the 'bikini models and fast cars' approach look incredibly dated and cheap. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"It makes me think we're going to see a lot more of this... But it also makes me appreciate brands that just stay in their lane. I don't need my lager to have a political opinion. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"It lowers my expectations. It makes me expect that every brand is going to try to lecture me eventually. It makes me value the brands that just shut up and do their job. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

What, if anything, feels unclear or confusing about this content?

Confusion centers on strategic rather than creative elements. The message itself is crystal clear, but participants consistently questioned: (1) How does buying razors support the cause? (2) Who is the target audience—people who already agree? (3) Why lump so many issues together? Lei articulates the business logic concern most directly: the target audience for this message may not be the target audience for premium razors. This strategic confusion suggests the campaign may succeed as social commentary while failing as commercial advertising—a tension that wasn't resolved in the creative execution.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"The only slight disconnect is the product link—how does buying a razor actually help the cause? - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"The only confusion is who exactly they think their customer is. Are they preaching to the converted? - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"The mix of issues was a bit broad. Bullying, sexual harassment, mansplaining... they lumped it all into one 'bad men' bucket. - James Morton (01094cfd)"

If you could change one thing about this content, what would it be?

The single most consistent piece of feedback across all participants: lead with positive masculinity rather than negative examples. The current structure—extensive negative framing followed by brief positive resolution—leaves viewers feeling scolded rather than inspired. Participants across all demographics and attitudes suggested the same fix: show men 'building, nurturing, mentoring' from the start, not just 'policing bad behavior.' Lei's framing captures the psychological principle: 'positive reinforcement is usually more effective than punishment.' This represents clear, actionable creative direction that could have reduced polarization while maintaining the core message.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"If they started with a bit more of the 'good man' struggle earlier, it might feel less like an indictment and more like a rallying cry from frame one. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

*"I'd dial back the doom and gloom at the start. Show men being positive role models *first*, rather than framing men as the problem to be solved. Inspire me to be better, don't scold me for being a man. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"*

*"Cut the lecture. Show men stepping up, being mentors, building things, leading—show the *positive* side of masculinity without framing it as a correction of the negative. Inspire, don't scold. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"*

Who might this content NOT work well for, and why?

Participants unanimously identified the same excluded audiences: traditional men who feel masculinity is under cultural attack, conservative demographics across all cultures, and older generations who view social change as 'the world going soft.' The geographic scope is global—from 'the bloke in the midlands' to 'middle America' to 'Gulf traditionalists' to 'Chinese fathers.' This represents a significant portion of Gillette's legacy customer base. The campaign appears to have made a deliberate choice to alienate these segments in pursuit of younger, progressive audiences. Whether this trade-off makes commercial sense depends on the relative size and purchasing power of gained versus lost segments.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"This won't work for the guy who thinks his identity is under attack. The 'traditionalist' who believes men are being softened by society is going to hate this. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"This won't work for the 'traditional' guy. The bloke in the midlands who works a trade, likes his football, and thinks the world's gone soft. He's going to switch to a supermarket brand just to spite them. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"This will not work for traditional men in conservative societies—here in the Gulf, parts of Asia, maybe even middle America. Men who believe that their role is to be strong and stoic will see this as an attack on their identity. - Sultan Al-Mutairi (ad8197e5)"

What concerns or reservations do you have about this content, if any?

Concerns cluster around strategic risk rather than creative execution. The dominant worry: alienating the loyal customer base without successfully acquiring new customers. Henry's concern about 'commodifying a movement' raises ethical questions about using social pain to sell products. Peter's concern about 'politicizing a commodity' highlights the volatility risk—once a brand takes a political stance, it becomes vulnerable to political backlash. Kim's prediction that this will become a 'failure case study' reflects widespread skepticism about the commercial viability. The universal concern: Gillette may have traded stable brand equity for volatile cultural positioning, a trade that may not pay off commercially.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

"My concern is follow-through. If Gillette puts this out and then goes back to business as usual, or if their corporate culture doesn't match this message, they'll get roasted. - Aaron Thompson (46263dbe)"

"My concern is that it trivialises serious issues by using them to sell razors. It commodifies a movement. - Henry Lawson (43dca990)"

"My concern is that this damages the brand's long-term standing. Once you politicize a commodity, you invite volatility. I want my razor to be neutral. - Peter Novak (107cc684)"

Persona Perspectives

Aaron Thompson

8.4/10

Sentiment: very positive

Aaron Thompson is a highly engaged, analytically-minded executive and father who demonstrates exceptional alignment with the Gillette campaign's core message and execution. As a VP Product in retail e-commerce and a youth hockey coach, he brings both professional marketing expertise and lived experience with the issues the ad addresses. His responses reveal a persona who values authenticity, social responsibility, and brand courage. He recognizes the strategic boldness of the repositioning and respects the brand's willingness to alienate some customers to stand for something meaningful. The campaign resonates deeply with his personal values around parenting, leadership, and modeling behavior for the next generation. While he acknowledges the campaign skirts the line of virtue signaling and has concerns about follow-through, his overall assessment is strongly positive. He demonstrates high brand recall, clear message comprehension, and strong emotional engagement—particularly around parental and leadership themes. His primary concern centers on execution risk: whether Gillette's internal culture and future actions will match the bold promise of this campaign. He is likely to become a brand advocate and defend the campaign against criticism, though he maintains a balanced, nuanced perspective on its potential to alienate traditionalist segments.

"Our kids are watching us.' This encapsulates Aaron's core emotional connection to the campaign—the intergenerational responsibility and legacy theme that resonates most powerfully with his identity as a father and leader."

Henry Lawson

5.8/10

Sentiment: negative

Henry Lawson is a pragmatic, analytically-minded 30-year-old professional who respects the boldness of Gillette's social stance but fundamentally rejects the execution and strategic logic. He demonstrates strong brand recall and message clarity but finds the content patronizing, culturally misaligned (too American for UK context), and strategically confused about its target audience. While he agrees with the underlying message about toxic behavior, he views the campaign as calculated virtue signaling driven by market share concerns rather than authentic activism. His core criticism is that the brand has overextended beyond its category, damaged its equity with loyal customers, and failed to create genuine emotional resonance or purchase motivation. He predicts the campaign will alienate traditional demographics while only appealing to already-converted progressive audiences. Henry's analytical nature leads him to question the ROI and

business logic, viewing the pivot as a gamble that commodifies serious social issues to sell razors.

"It feels like corporate strategy masquerading as activism... they ran the numbers and decided the outrage marketing or the appeal to younger progressive men was worth alienating the traditional base. It's 'virtue signaling', but calculated virtue signaling."

James Morton

7.1/10

Sentiment: positive

James Morton is a pragmatic, analytically-minded professional who recognizes the creative boldness and social relevance of the Gillette campaign while maintaining significant skepticism about its authenticity and business logic. As a quantitative analyst in finance, he approaches the content through both emotional and strategic lenses, appreciating the narrative craft and message clarity while questioning whether a razor company has genuine 'permission' to lead conversations on masculinity. He identifies strong brand differentiation, excellent message comprehension, and personal relevance to his professional context (male-dominated finance industry). However, his core concerns center on corporate cynicism (the timing feels opportunistic relative to #MeToo), the mismatch between message and product utility, and the strategic gamble of alienating the core user base without proven ability to convert progressive audiences who may prefer niche alternatives. He respects the bravery but demands evidence of substantive corporate action beyond marketing. Notably, despite agreeing with the social message, he demonstrates zero motivation to engage with the CTA, indicating a significant gap between message resonance and behavioral conversion.

"It borders on virtue signaling. The timing—right in the heat of #MeToo—feels opportunistic... If they back this up with significant donations to charities or real programmes, then fair play. But if it's just a film to sell razors, then it's a bit hollow."

Enes Demir

7.6/10

Sentiment: positive

Enes Demir is a pragmatic, values-driven engineer and youth coach who finds the Gillette ad emotionally resonant and personally relevant, but experiences significant tension between appreciating the social message and questioning corporate authenticity. His high personal relevance (40-year-old father and coach directly confronting the behavioral issues depicted) drives strong emotional engagement, particularly with scenes involving children and parental responsibility. However, his analytical mindset creates friction: he separates product utility from brand values, questions the CTA clarity and motivation, and worries the content may polarize rather than unite. He respects the brand's courage in repositioning but remains skeptical of corporate virtue signaling without concrete follow-through. His key concern is that shame-based messaging may alienate traditional men

rather than motivate behavioral change. Enes demonstrates excellent message comprehension and brand recall but low likelihood to engage with the digital CTA, preferring to internalize the behavioral message while maintaining practical distance from the brand.

"Enes's reflection on his role as a youth coach captures the ad's core tension: 'Ich muss auf dem Fußballplatz oft derjenige sein, der dazwischengeht. Man will, dass die Jungs stark sind, aber nicht grausam.' This demonstrates both deep personal relevance and the nuanced masculinity the ad attempts to redefine—strength without cruelty, intervention without shame."

Peter Novak

4.3/10

Sentiment: very negative

Peter Novak, a 51-year-old senior financial analyst from Westchester County, views the Gillette campaign as a catastrophic strategic misstep. From his PE/business lens, he analyzes the content as a high-risk gamble that alienates the core demographic while attempting to chase a younger, 'woke' audience that likely doesn't buy Gillette products. His primary criticisms center on: (1) Brand overreach—a razor company has no authority to lecture on masculinity; (2) Virtue signaling—the campaign lacks authenticity and operational commitment; (3) Misreading the audience—the ad assumes his demographic is complicit in toxic behavior when they actually operate with integrity; (4) Weak value proposition—no product benefits are communicated; (5) Poor objection handling—the campaign mocks rather than addresses legitimate concerns. While Peter acknowledges the opening hook is strong and the message is clear, he finds the overall emotional journey unsatisfying, the CTA motivation non-existent, and the brand sentiment damaged. He would likely switch brands to avoid the controversy. His confidence in these assessments is consistently high (0.85-1.0), reflecting his analytical certainty.

"It reeks of virtue signaling. It feels like a marketing team looked at the cultural climate and said, 'How do we capitalize on this?' Real commitment is quiet—it's how you hire, how you pay, how you operate. This is just loud noise."

Mina Okafor

8.6/10

Sentiment: very positive

Mina Okafor is a highly sophisticated, values-driven communications professional who brings both analytical rigor and personal authenticity to her evaluation of the Gillette campaign. She recognizes the strategic brilliance of the brand repositioning—the archetype shift, the tagline pivot, the narrative arc—while maintaining healthy skepticism about corporate motivations. As a Black mother raising a son and a professional woman navigating corporate spaces, she finds the content deeply personally relevant, particularly the culturally grounded representation and the workplace harassment scenes. Her

primary strength is her ability to separate the message from the messenger: she credits the campaign's narrative power and cultural impact while acknowledging it's ultimately a profit-driven initiative. Her main concerns center on execution risk (backlash management and brand consistency) and the need for substantive corporate action beyond creative to validate the commitment. She views this as a high-risk, high-reward brand repositioning that successfully raises industry standards and forces competitors to evolve. The campaign succeeds on nearly every metric—brand equity, emotional resonance, message clarity, cultural appropriateness—though she notes the CTA could be more action-oriented and the narrative could balance 'correctional' messaging with more aspirational positive masculinity examples.

"As a mom raising a Black boy, I think constantly about what messages he receives about manhood. And as a professional woman, the workplace scenes resonated. It feels like they are speaking to the women who buy razors for their households just as much as the men."

Sultan Al-Mutairi

5.7/10

Sentiment: negative

Sultan Al-Mutairi is a 22-year-old high-income student from Dubai with a corporate law background who approaches the Gillette ad through a business and cultural lens. While he respects the technical execution and boldness of the campaign, he fundamentally rejects its strategic approach and cultural appropriateness. His core concerns center on three areas: (1) Corporate overreach—he views the ad as a utility brand inappropriately lecturing on masculinity, comparing it to 'car tires lecturing on climate change'; (2) Perceived inauthenticity—he interprets the campaign as calculated ESG virtue signaling rather than genuine commitment, driven by board-level decisions to trend on Twitter; (3) Cultural misalignment—the ad's American framing of masculinity (catcalling, suburban bullying, public shaming) fundamentally conflicts with Gulf Arab values emphasizing private correction, family honor (*aib*), and hierarchical respect. Sultan separates moral motivation from consumer motivation, noting the ad inspires him to be a better mentor but fails to motivate a Gillette purchase. He predicts the campaign will alienate traditional men in conservative societies while failing to convert younger demographics who prefer cheaper alternatives. His recommendation would be to shift from guilt-based framing ('you've been doing this wrong') to aspiration-based positioning ('here's how we build the future'), maintaining the brand's heritage while modernizing its character focus.

"In our culture, advice is given in private, not shouted in public to shame people. This ad assumes all men operate on a specific American wavelength of rowdiness. It feels disconnected from my reality."

Kim Soo-hyun

5.3/10

Sentiment: negative

Kim Soo-hyun, a 22-year-old marketing student from Seoul, views the Gillette campaign as a high-risk strategic gamble that achieves viral notoriety at the cost of brand equity. While acknowledging the clarity of the social message and the technical execution (pacing, hook, recall), he identifies fundamental misalignments: the heavy, preachy tone contradicts product category expectations; the emotional journey lacks satisfying resolution; and the campaign alienates its target audience (young Korean males) through condescension rather than inspiration. Kim perceives the campaign as virtue signaling—a trend-chasing attempt to capitalize on 'purpose-driven' marketing rather than authentic brand commitment. Most critically, he notes the absence of product value proposition, the disconnect between a grooming brand and social activism, and the risk of long-term loyalty erosion. As a marketing student, he predicts this will become a 'failure case study' despite short-term viral success. The campaign succeeds in brand memorability and message clarity but fails on brand sentiment, emotional alignment, value proposition, and personal relevance.

“머리로는 '그래, 좋은 메시지네'라고 생각하지만, 감정적으로는 뭔가 공격받는 느낌(attack)? 제가 나쁜 짓을 한 것도 아닌데, 영상이 저를 잠재적인 가해자 취급하는 것 같아서 묘하게 불쾌한 기분도 들어요. (I intellectually agree with the message, but emotionally I feel attacked. Even though I haven't done anything wrong, the video treats me like a potential perpetrator, which feels subtly offensive.)”

Lei Zhao

4.7/10

Sentiment: negative

Lei Zhao is a 19-year-old tech-focused undergraduate from Shenzhen who approaches content analytically, using software/engineering metaphors to evaluate brand strategy. He recognizes the ad's high production quality and clear messaging but fundamentally rejects it on multiple grounds: (1) **Cultural Misalignment**: The content is entirely American in context (suburban conflicts, physical aggression) and irrelevant to his life priorities (career success, family support, navigating 'involution' in China). (2) **Brand Overreach**: He views Gillette as a tool manufacturer that has violated its domain boundaries by attempting moral education—comparing it to an IDE suddenly dispensing life advice. (3) **Strategic Incoherence**: The ad fails to communicate product value, creates unclear conversion paths, and likely alienates existing core users while targeting 'woke' consumers who may not be heavy razor buyers. (4) **Authenticity Skepticism**: Lei sees this as pure virtue signaling—a calculated ROI play on #MeToo momentum rather than genuine commitment. (5) **Emotional Misalignment**: The ad's focus on correcting toxic behavior contradicts Gillette's historical brand promise of excellence and achievement ('The Best A Man Can Get'), shifting from aspirational to punitive. Lei would skip this as a YouTube ad and would prefer brands focus on functional benefits rather than social lectures. His high confidence scores (0.9-1.0) indicate strong conviction in these critiques.

“Gillette

Nvidia

" This encapsulates his core objection: brand category boundary violation and the absurdity of corporate moral instruction."