**ABSTRACT**

This study will examine the gender effects in perceiving advertising archetypes. Our society is constantly becoming more and more media saturated, and advertisers need to focus on employing evidence-based strategies to reach their target audiences. One repeating pattern throughout advertising is the use of archetypes. This study analyzes the prominent use of archetypes in today’s advertising and factors in information on how gender can potentially impact the effectiveness of archetypes. Many studies in the past have shown females are naturally better at non-verbal cues and communication, and perhaps this translates over into them being better able to recognize advertising archetypes.

**CHARACTER ARCHETYPES**

What is an archetype? It’s the original pattern or model from which all things of the same kind are copied or on which they are naturally better at recognizing. Perhaps this translates over into them being more able to recognize advertising archetypes.

**METHODOLOGY**

- Thirty-six students enrolled in media classes at a junior college participated in the present experiment. There were sixteen females and twenty males involved in the study. The average age of the participants was 20-years-old.
- The survey was administered to six, fairly small classes and took 10-15 minutes to administer.
- Data was collected by showing the participating students five commercials, each containing a different character archetype. Before playing the commercials, a definition of each character archetype was read to the students. The students were also given a paper copy of the character archetype definitions. In addition, a general definition as to what an archetype is was provided.
- After watching each commercial once, the students were given around 15 seconds to choose from four choices what archetype that they think the advertiser used in their commercial.
- The brands used in the experiment include Apple, Campbell’s, The North Face, Levi’s, and Duracell.

**DISCUSSION**

The study examines how gender can potentially affect one’s ability to recognize advertising archetypes. The results of this study certainly have implications on the way advertisers should use archetypes in the future:

- Advertisers should take into account the increased archetype recognition by women.
- When they are trying to sell a product or service to women, perhaps they should try and use more archetypes in their advertisements.
- A limit to the study is the small sample size. Though the amounts of males and females that participated in the study were fairly equal, a larger study would have shown more accurate results.
- All of the students surveyed were enrolled in media classes. This may have skewed the results. These type of students may have a better understanding of not necessarily archetypes, but how advertisers use certain tactics to manipulate consumers into purchasing their products.

**RESULTS**

Overall Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Correct</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>61%</td>
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<tr>
<td>63%</td>
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<td>60%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>60%</td>
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<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall the females tested 3% better than the males.

As seen in the graph above, the females did better on every question except the North Face commercial, where the males tested better.