# The Use of Brand and Masculinity Archetypes in Analysing Consumer Engagement in Advertising

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## Abstract

**Purpose of the article:** To review recent research into the connection between brand archetypes and masculinity archetypes in advertising and assess them from a consumer engagement perspective. The study focused primarily on two main questions. The first was to find out which brand archetypes and masculinity archetypes are the most common in advertisements concentrating on traditional and modern masculinity. The second main question was to find out which brand and masculinity archetypes get more approval from the consumers and which have more positive feedback.

**Methodology/methods:** The researchers used qualitative content analysis, video content analysis, and sentiment analysis. The qualitative content analysis was conducted using the Nvivo 11 qualitative data analysis software to help organise, analyse, and find relevant insights in the text. The authors chose to have a mixed content analysis of conventional and direct content analysis. The qualitative content and sentiment analysis were used to analyse consumer opinions from 2400 YouTube comments on certain advertisements where masculinity is identified as a critical concept.

**Scientific aim:** To see whether the brand archetype theory and masculinity archetype theory are compatible in analysing consumer opinions about masculinity advertisements.

**Findings:** The results from the video content analysis show that the most common brand archetypes in masculinity advertisements are the Caregiver, Ruler, Lover, and Hero. Regarding masculinity archetypes, the most common ones are the King, Lover, and Warrior.

**Conclusions:** The most positive consumer discourse was for the advertisements with the Lover, Creator, Everyman, Explorer, and Hero brand archetypes. Concerning masculinity archetypes, the most positive consumer discourse was with the Lover and Warrior masculinity archetypes.

**Keywords:** Brand, archetype, masculinity, advertising, marketing.

**JEL Classification:** M37, M31

## Introduction

The main focus of this research is brand and masculinity archetypes in advertising. Researchers of advertising and branding have argued for over a decade that the use of archetypes can connect more profoundly and faster with the psyche of consumers. That ultimately leads to purchases of a particular brand (Keller, 2012; Bechter *et al.*, 2016) because the brand archetype is mainly the abstraction and generalisation of the brand attribute of brand personality. Other researchers believe that brand archetypes are a part of brand personality because marketing managers may use an archetypal approach to brand personality to define what a brand is, what it stands for, and the relationship with its consumers. That provides a real meaning associated with their customers' desires and motivations (Xara-Brasil *et al.*, 2018, p. 143). It is considered that archetypes may be building blocks of a successful brand (Bechter *et al.*, 2016), and by aligning archetypes and brand personalities, advertisers can define their campaign objectives in another deeper dimension. That is because archetypes are used to interact with consumers' deepest motivations and give meaning to the products and brands associated with their conscious and unconscious desires (Mark, Pearson, 2001; Xara-Brasil *et al.*, 2018). Other researchers concur, saying that consumers take brand archetype as the standard of cognition and then form an overall judgment of brands through the classification of brands (Lianxiong, Rui, 2012).

Similarly, with brand archetypes, masculinity archetypes, as argued by the authors of this research, can also help the advertisers to create a deeper and quicker connection with the psyche of consumers. Many researchers of advertising claim that masculinity is now branded (Scheibling, Lafrance, 2019), and men are increasingly marketed to and offered visions of masculinity for consumption. In other words, masculinity has become a product (Zayer *et al.*, 2020). Usually, when masculinity is involved in interdisciplinary research, for instance, in research about advertising, the researchers mainly distinguish between two types of masculinity, such as traditional and modern or inclusive masculinity. Traditional masculinity is most commonly associated with physical strength (Pollack, Todd, 2017), bravery (Smith, 2012), patriotism and emotional stoicism (Ging, 2013), power and aggression (Oswald, 2007), wealth (Zayer *et al.*, 2020), dominance, and a sense of entitlement (Connell, 2014), decisiveness and risk-seeking (Jaffe, 1990), athleticism (Zayer *et al.*, 2020), and being a breadwinner, in other words providing for the family (Kimmel, 1996). In contrast, modern masculinity is most commonly associated with progressive thinking and being emotionally expressive (Ging, 2013), having an interest in culture (Oswald, 2007), being open-minded (Kimmel, 1996), narcissism and immaturity (Coad, 2008), interest in fashion (Oswald, 2007), being sensitive and compassionate (Lalancette, Cormack, 2020), and inclusiveness (Kimmel, 1996). However, researchers rarely use masculinity archetypes in research about advertising and branding. This study is focused on using both masculinity and brand archetypes together in answering the research questions:

- Which brand archetypes and masculinity archetypes are the most common in advertisements focusing on traditional and modern masculinity?
- Which brand and masculinity archetypes get more approval from the consumers, and which have more positive feedback and a more positive discourse?
- How are brand archetype theory and masculinity archetype theory compatible in analysing consumer opinions about advertisements with a focus on traditional and modern masculinity?

This research article consists of four parts. First, this research has a theoretical framework, summarising the two significant

theories of brand and masculinity archetypes. Then there is the Methods section with an explanation of how the research was carried out and the reasoning for the video content analysis, qualitative content analysis, and sentiment analysis methods. The third part shows the research results, and finally, in the fourth part, there is a discussion of these results, followed by conclusions.

## 1. The theoretical framework of this research

According to Carl Gustav Jung's masculinity archetype theory, archetypes can be viewed as components of the "collective unconscious, deeply embedded personality patterns that resonate within us and serve to organize and give direction to human thought and action" (Jung, 1954, p. 77). The authors Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette took Carl Jung's work and created four masculinity archetypes (King, Magician, Lover, and Warrior) as crucial concepts in masculinity (Moore, Gillette, 1990). Many renowned psychologists to this day have considered these four archetypes to be the building blocks of masculinity (Figure 1).

The summary of what each of the masculinity archetypes entails, their description, and their main characteristics from this theoretical perspective (Table 1). Each of these four

*Table 1. Carl Jung's Masculinity archetypes.*

| Archetype | Description | Characteristics (positive) |
|---|---|---|
| King | The archetype of a King is a man who unites the people and cares for them while maintaining order and power over people. The King is a man who is willing to make sacrifices and puts the well-being of others above himself. | Powerful, brave, fair, taking sacrifice for the goal, organised, creative, loves order, strongly against chaos, relentless, hard-working, having self-control, sees potential in others, born leader; calm, confident, supportive, and thoughtful. |
| Magician | The Magician is the epitome of the student who has become a master. He carefully and thoroughly chooses his methods. The Magician thinks that he can outsmart everyone. | Knowledgeable, cautious, articulate, well organized, having a long-term thinking, always curious, detail-oriented, devoted to the goal, witty, hard-working, and willing to learn. |
| Lover | The archetype of a Lover is a man who loves beauty, both inner and outer. The ultimate purpose is love, not power or success. The Lover is also sensitive and in touch with his feelings. | Compassionate, extrovert, open, charming, playful, empathic, passionate, optimistic, emotionally accessible, charismatic, affectionate, capable to be intimate with others, and having good social skills. |
| Warrior | The Warrior goes into a conflict head-on and is willing to sacrifice anything to reach that goal. The Warrior wants to be a hero, as it is the archetype of action. | Trustworthy, brave, determined to reach the goal, does not change his mind, loyal, resilient, never gives up, willing to sacrifice himself for the cause, respects the code of honor, is resilient, and protects others. |

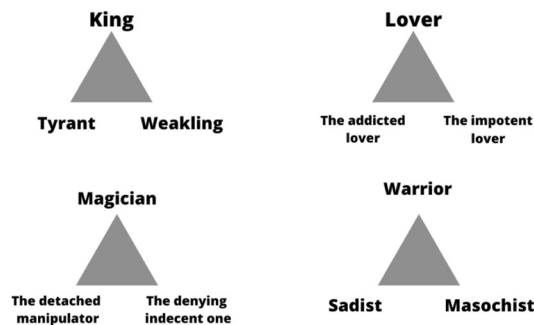*Source: Adapted from Moore, Gillette, 1990.*



*Figure 1. Carl Jung's masculinity archetypes. Source: Moore, Gillette, 1990.*

archetypes also has two shadow archetypes with negative traits. However, since the advertising characters almost always are portrayed positively, with features that might resonate with the audience and so that the audience might want to emulate these characters, Table 1. consists of the four main masculinity archetypes and their positive characteristics.

Carl Jung's view of archetypes is echoed by many modern-day authors and researchers, who also see archetypes as myths and symbols due to their universal topics in fairy tales, films, and novels (McPeek, 2008; Faber, Mayer, 2009). Considering that brands are representations of modern myths, it can be well assumed that brands and archetypes have certain things in common. Brand archetypes

*Table 2. Mark and Pearson's Brand archetype theory.*

| Archetype | Description | Characteristics | Brands |
|---|---|---|---|
| Outlaw | They want to shake things up, their basic desire is revolution. They want to destroy what does not work for them or for society. | Rebellious, the survivor and a rule-breaker. Can be wild and destructive. | Harley Davidson |
| Jester | They want to live in the present with full joy. | Living for fun. Entertaining, and sometimes irresponsible. | NFL |
| Lover | They want to achieve intimacy and experience sensual pleasure. Aim to maintain a relationship with people. | Intimate, romantic, sensual, and passionate. Seductive, delighted, warm, playful, erotic, and enthusiastic. | Old Spice, Victoria's Secret |
| Sage | They want to find the truth. Use their intelligence and analysis to understand the world. | Values enlightening and knowledge, truth, and understanding. | Google |
| Caregiver | They want to protect others from harm, to help, and to take care of people. | Caring, compassionate and generous. Protective, devoted, friendly, helping, and trusting | Nivea, Pampers, Gillette |
| Hero | They are all about rising to the challenge. They want to prove their own worth through difficult action. | Courageous, rescuer, crusader, persistent, strong, resilient, determent, disciplined. | Nike, Barbasol |
| Magician | They want to know how the world works and influence its transformation. | The visionary, the alchemist, and focused on natural forces. | Disney |
| Explorer | They seek discovery and fulfillment. Desire to be free, to find out who they are by exploring the world. | Independent, adventurous, and searching for an authentic and fulfilling life. | The North Face, Jeep |
| Creator | They live for creative self-expression and want to participate in forming a vision. | Innovative, artistic, self-driven, inventive, a dreamer. Often non-social. Focused on quality. | Lego, Apple |
| Everyman | They have the basic desire to connect with others; want to belong, to fit in. | The working-class or common person, the neighbor, and realistic. | GAP, Axe |
| Ruler | They want to control, raise a family, and/or build a successful company or community. The leader, the boss, and the judge. | Influential and stubborn. High level of dominance, a strong sense of power and control. | Dos Equis, Rolex |
| Innocent | The desire for simple purity, goodness, happiness, faith, and optimism. | Pure, faithful, naive, optimistic, child-like character; humble. | Dove |

*Source: Adapted from Mark, Pearson, 2001.*

and myths support the construction of brand--consumer relationships (Muniz, Woodside, 2015; Xara-Brasil *et al.*, 2018). Another author claims that archetypes offer one way to project a consistent brand persona that will be understood around the world (Hollis, 2008, p. 173). Mark, Pearson (2001) used Carl Jung's archetypal model and proposed a business application. Thus the second fundamental theory of this research with its brand archetypes is summarised in Table 2.

Even though each archetype is autonomous in terms of personality traits, they do have some similarities with few other archetypes, which is why Mark, Pearson (2001) suggested creating clusters of the brand archetypes: "belonging and enjoyment," "independence and fulfillment," "stability and control" and "risk and mystery." An argument is made that these motivations are deep, and pull customers in different directions, so they should be included in marketing and brand strategies (Xara-Brasil *et al.*, 2018).

## 2. Methodology

There were several criteria (Table 3) that were determined to help the authors choose the appropriate methods for this research. The criteria emerged from literature review and analysing the theory about masculinity as a socially constructed phenomenon presented through advertising and advertising itself. The reason for selecting these criteria was the insights gathered throughout the literature review process and the concept at the core of this research which is masculinity. As well as the social constructivist perspective of masculinity and the nature of this research, *i.e.* qualitative research.

When the criteria for choosing analysis methods were determined, there was a need to find matching methods for the criteria. Considering all of these criteria, several methods were chosen to analyse further whether they can be useful for analysing the data. These selected methods that fit the criteria,

*Table 3. Criteria for method selection.*

| Criteria | Literature source |
|---|---|
| The selected method has to analyse the sentiment of the content expressed by the consumers, to assess the support for the advertisement. | (Graves, 2010; Artun, Levin, 2015; Levin, 2019) |
| The method should look for patterns in the conversations and opinions to discover the meaning. | (Jorgensen, Phillips, 2002; Charmaz, 2006; Fairclough, 2013; Tannen *et al.*, 2015) |
| The method should be suitable to analyse consumer engagement. | (Graves, 2010; Quesenberry, 2018) |
| The method should include the context of the phenomenon, to ensure a more accurate analysis. | (Jorgensen, Phillips, 2002; Fairclough, 2013; Berke *et al.*, 2018; Kundsen, Andersen, 2020) |

*Source: Authors' original work.*

*Table 4. Methods for data analysis.*

| Method | Strengths of the method | The use for this research |
|---|---|---|
| Qualitative Content analysis | Identifies themes or patterns. Helps validate or extend a theoretical framework. (Hickey, Kipping, 1996) | For analysing YouTube comment sections on the selected advertisements. using coding and identifying patterns. |
| Video Content Analysis | The method is used to describe, interpret and understand the content. (Levin, 2019) | For analysing advertisements, the visual representations of masculinity and their rhetoric. |
| Sentiment Analysis | This method is used to analyze the attitudes, moods, and opinions of texts (Artun, Levin, 2015). | For analysing the consumer feedback in terms of how positive or negative was their opinion about the advertisement. |

*Source: Authors' original work.*

as well as their strengths and the use for this research, are summarised in the Table 4.

A more detailed description of how the methods were applied in this research can be found in chapters 2.3., 2.4., and 2.5.

## 2.1 Data collection

Based on the literature review of possible methods used for the research, the authors decided to use online data collection by extracting YouTube comments as data. On YouTube, consumers willingly give their opinions on specific ads where masculinity is at the center of the advertisement. The data collection was done using a YouTube comments downloader. Using YouTube comments as data also means that there has to be a large number of comments analysed with the interest of getting an insightful understanding of consumers' perception of masculinity in advertising and, consequently, the archetypes that are being displayed in the advertisements. There were six advertisements in which YouTube comments were analysed in this research. The authors of this research decided to take a sample of 400 YouTube comments from each advertisement, making a total of 2,400 comments. The reason for choosing YouTube comments is that, according to the literature review, it provides a certain level of authenticity (Tolson, 2010), where users are more open and speak freely by posting their uncensored opinion. Many researchers argue for YouTube as the platform where to get an insightful idea about what consumers genuinely care about and appreciate. YouTube is a crucial site where the discourses of participatory culture and the emergence of the creative, empowered consumer have been played out (Benson, 2016). What is more, researchers suggest the academic value of using YouTube comments as data, saying that YouTube has attracted academic interest in emerging literature that tends to view YouTube as a technological, media, or cultural phenomenon (Jones *et al.*, 2015). All of these arguments from other re-searchers make a case for using consumer opinions in the form of YouTube comments even stronger.

## 2.2. The selected advertisements depicting masculinity

In order for the methods to be used appropriately, there was a need to select suitable advertisements that would provide content for YouTube commentators to express their approval or disapproval of the advertising tactics when depicting masculinity. The authors selected six advertisements that heavily focus on masculinity to get consumer attention. Three of them were ads depicting traditional masculinity, and three showed modern masculinity. The criteria for selecting these advertisements were the following:

(1) Focus on masculinity in the advertisements.
(2) Large amount (at least 400) of YouTube comments (that provides material for qualitative content, and sentiment analysis).
(3) Variety of products being advertised.
(4) Timing of the advertisement (released in the last decade).
(5) Variety of brand archetypes and masculinity archetypes.

The advertisements selected were from six different brands (Barbasol, Old Spice, Dos Equis, Gillette, National Football League, and Axe) selling different products, such as shaving products, deodorants, beer, *etc.*, therefore, providing researchers with different audiences and their unique feedback about the advertisements. A brief summary of video content analysis of each of these advertisements can be found in Chapter 3.2.2. and Table 5.

The primary part of the research was carried out in early 2021. Since then, a few changes have occurred 1) Gillette has hidden the "The best man can be" comment section; 2) the National Football League has made their advertisement private.

## 2.3. Video content analysis

As a part of this research, the authors were extensively looking for advertisements on YouTube depicting masculinity to analyse which of the theoretical masculinity archetypes and brand archetypes advertisers use to communicate their versions of masculinity to consumers. Most of the advertisements were Super Bowl ads (Super Bowl is an annual event in American football) from the previous decade (from 2010 to 2020). However, to increase the size of the sample, several other advertisements from well-known brands in Europe and the United States were added. These advertisements appeared on YouTube and Google when using the search words "masculinity" paired with "advertising" or "commercial" or "ad." A qualitative video content analysis was conducted by viewing around 300 advertisements, of which 92 were categorised as "masculinity ads," meaning that these advertisements had a strong emphasis on masculinity as a concept to help the brand resonate with the audience. Of the 92 "masculinity ads", the authors selected 50 (25 traditional masculinity and 25 modern masculinity) of them for a closer examination; in other words, the qualitative video content analysis (N=50). The authors wanted to select an equal amount of advertisements representing the two major types of masculinity.

Important criterion for choosing these 50 advertisements was the amount of material that the ad can provide for content analysis because while the advertisement is usually only 30 to 60 seconds long, it had to display the main character long enough to provide him with personality and behavioural characteristics or perhaps statements about men or masculinity. In other words, in order for the advertisement to be selected for the analysis, it had to be revealing of the masculinity narrative or message that the marketers and brand strategists behind the advertisement were trying to convey to the audience.

## 2.4. Qualitative content analysis

The qualitative content analysis was conducted using the Nvivo 11 qualitative data analysis software to help with the process of organising, analysing, and finding relevant insights in the text. The researchers took a sample of 400 comments from each of the advertisement's YouTube comments (a total of 2,400 comments analysed). The authors chose to have a mixed content analysis of conventional and direct content analysis. That means that some codes were defined before the analysis of the data based on the theoretical framework, and some codes were defined during the analysis of data making it a partially open and partially pre-conceived coding. The content analysis using a directed approach is guided by a more structured process than a conventional approach (Hickey, Kipping, 1996). However, there was also the process of allowing new categories and codes to emerge from the data as a conventional content analysis with open coding. After the coding process was done with 198 different codes, the codes were sorted into larger categories based on how they are related and what they reveal. These larger categories were formed into themes that emerged from the YouTube comments. Some comments had more than just one theme, which is why the percentage of combined themes displayed in Table 6 exceeds the 100% mark.

## 2.5. Sentiment analysis

The sentiment analysis was conducted to determine how positive or negative was the consumer engagement expressed in YouTube comments. The sample for the sentiment analysis was the same 2,400 YouTube comments gathered from all the advertisements. The sentiment analysis was done in simultaneously with qualitative content analysis by marking the positive comments in green color, negative in red color, and neutral comments in gray color. The sentiment analysis is defined as the computational process of identifying opinions expressed in the

comments in response to the content, which helps to determine attitudes toward a particular topic or product (Levin, 2019, p. 156). The positivity or negativity was determined from the perspective of the brand in question. The sentiment analysis helps researchers and advertisers to extract the attitudes, moods, and opinions of individuals and groups from text data and content. The sentiment analysis is most commonly applied to small messages comprised of texts such as Facebook posts or Twitter tweets, or YouTube comments, providing insightful data.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 The results from the video content analysis

#### 3.1.1 The results from the Superbowl advertisement video content analysis

The results of the video content analysis showed that the combined total of brand archetypes and masculinity archetypes exceeded 25 (which was the sample size of each type of masculinity ad) because, in most cases, the ad displayed multiple (usually two) brand archetypes and masculinity archetypes. Some of the reasons why one advertisement was attached to two different brand archetypes are due to the fact that many advertisements

displayed multiple men with very different behaviour and personal characteristics, not only one main character. In addition, some of the main characters in the ads analysed had a significant transformation from one type of person to another. For example, a particular Axe advertisement displayed men who are very shy to speak to girls until they use the product, after which they immediately gain confidence and glamour, and charm. It is an old cliché tactic in advertising, but it still is very evident in today's marketing.

First, when analysing the selected masculinity advertisements and the twelve brand archetypes (Mark, Pearson, 2001) that they display, it became clear that the most popular brand archetypes for traditional and modern masculinity ads are very different (Figure 2). For instance, while traditional masculinity ads mostly emphasised strong, powerful, stoic, and emotionless brand archetypes such as the Ruler, Hero, and Outlaw, modern masculinity ads emphasised the Caregiver, Everyman, Jester, and Innocent, which are brand archetypes associated with empathy, sensitivity, care, and a sense of equality. The only exception was the Lover archetype which was the second most common brand archetype in both traditional and modern masculinity samples. However, the Lover as an archetype was displayed in very different
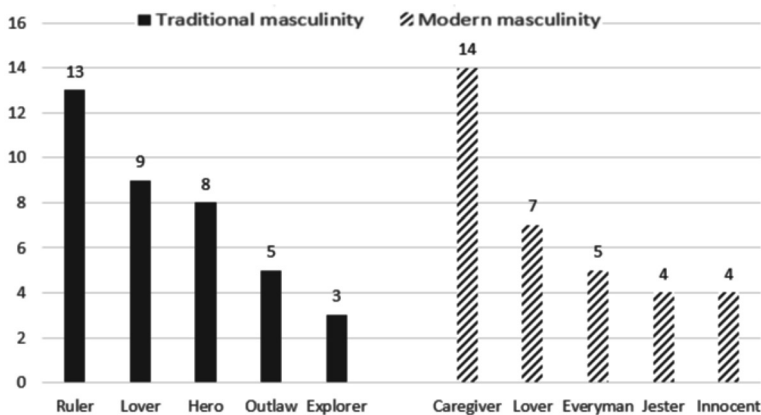


*Figure 2. The most common brand archetypes in traditional and modern masculinity advertisements. Source: Authors' original work.*
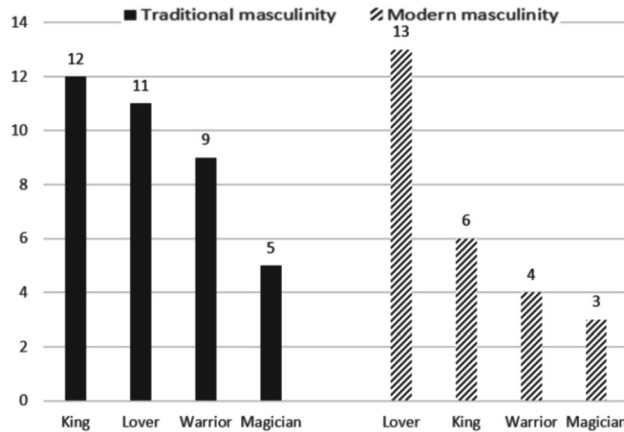
*Figure 3. Most common masculinity archetypes in traditional and modern masculinity advertisements.*
*Source: Authors' original work.*

ways in modern and traditional masculinity advertisements. While the modern masculinity ads displayed the Lover archetype as someone who is a loving person to the whole society, family, and friends, the traditional masculinity ads on the other hand always without an exception showed the Lover archetype as a man who is targeting women in an attempt to seduce them.

As for the masculinity archetypes (Figure 3), the video content analysis showed that, in many ways, the brand archetypes are quite similar to the masculinity archetypes (Moore, Gillette, 1990). The main difference is that with the masculinity archetypes, the Lover archetype would also include care for the family, such as being a loving father. Therefore, in modern masculinity advertisements, the Lover archetype becomes the dominant one.

The traditional masculinity advertisements, however, display a broader appeal to consumers with the focus on dominance, being aggressive, and fighting for success, which shows in the high number of the King and Warrior masculinity archetypes, but also strong sexuality and approaching women as evidenced by the high number of advertisements displaying the Lover masculinity archetype. Overall, the video content analysis showed remarkable similarities between the masculinity archetype theory and brand archetype theory.

### 3.1.2 The video content analysis of the six selected advertisements

This sub-charter focuses on a brief video content analysis of each selected advertisement, the summary (Table 5) of all of the ad-

*Table 5. Selected advertisements' archetype summary.*

| Brand | Advertisement | Type of masculinity | Brand Archetype | Masculinity archetype |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barbasol | "Shave like a man" (2013) | Traditional | Hero/ Everyman | Warrior |
| Old Spice | "The man your man could smell like" (2010) | Traditional | Lover | Lover/ King |
| Dos Equis | "The most interesting man alive" (2014) | Traditional | Outlaw/ Lover/Ruler | King/ Lover |
| Gillette | "The best man can be" (2019) | Modern | Caregiver/ Innocent | King |
| NFL | "Touchdown celebrations" (2018) | Modern | Lover/ Creator | Lover |
| Axe | "Is it ok for guys" (2017) | Modern | Everyman/ Explorer | Lover/ Magician |

*Source: Authors' original work.*

vertisements, their masculinity type, brand archetype, and masculinity archetype. Further, there is a qualitative content analysis of each selected advertisement.

Firstly, in Barbasol!s "Shave like a man"advertisement, the main character displays patriotism and bravery by fighting for freedom, thus performing a man's duty in a stereotypical sense of manhood. Furthermore, by showing a complete lack of sentimental emotions, the man embodies traditional masculinity. The war in this advertisement is used as a symbol of "real masculinity", the ultimate act of bravery and sacrifice. In contrast, the advertisement also shows the exact opposite of today's struggles of Western men, whereas there is too much focus on the drama of the "cancel culture" on social media. Therefore, the ad is partially humorous and ironising about how times have changed, and thus masculinity has changed, while suggesting that masculinity has not changed for the better. The advertisement clearly implies that men have become soft and do not understand what is truly heroic and brave, which perpetuates the crisis in the masculinity narrative. The brand archetype exhibited in this ad is both the Everyman and Hero. The Everyman, because the character is realistic, disappointed in today's youth, and presents himself as someone who sees things clearly as they are in reality. The character also displays some Hero archetype attributes, such as courage and taking action, taking a challenge, and showing strength and discipline for a higher cause. From the standpoint of the masculinity archetype, the main character in this advertisement mainly shows signs of a Warrior archetype. The character is fighting a war on behalf of a greater goal and does not show any emotions or feelings. The character also displays a few Magicians characteristics, for instance, educating the men of today about what constitutes real problems and the privilege of freedom.

Old Spice's "The man your man could smell like" advertisement is clearly meant

as a humorous exaggeration of traditional masculinity. However, traditional masculinity is still the main focus of this ad when discussing masculinity in the advertising context, even though it is presented in an ironic manner. The advertisement depicts a very assertive man, who is a mixture of a Lover and a King masculinity archetype according to Moore, Gillette's (1990) masculinity archetype theory, due to specific characteristics that are being displayed. The man in the advertisement shows his ability to be flirtatious and charismatic. He also shows signs of care for the women by offering things and comfort, as the Lover archetype would suggest, while also showing signs of being in control and a significant amount of confidence, therefore, displaying the archetype of the King as well. Similarly, the brand archetype is classified as the Lover due to being romantic, passionate, seductive, and playful.

Dos Equis' "The most interesting man alive" character embodies rebellion, confidence, charm, success, decisiveness, lack of emotion, bravery, and ruggedness. All these characteristics and more make this character the epitome of traditional masculinity. Thus, the brand archetype is a mixture of the Outlaw and Lover, but also the Hero and Ruler. The Outlaw brand archetype is evident in the main character being a rebel and defining his own rules, while the Lover brand archetype is evident in being playful, seductive, and intimate with women. However, the character also shows courage, power, and being in control, thus exhibiting also the Hero and Ruler brand archetypes. From a masculinity archetype standpoint, this character is a mixture of the King and Lover masculinity archetype. The character shows control of his faith, power, confidence, and admiration from the public, which fit the King's masculinity archetype description, while also showing some of the Lover's key characteristics such as the seduction of women around him and playfulness depicted in the flirty interactions with women.

Gillette's "The best man can be" advertisement takes a stance against toxic masculinity, which according to the literature review process of masculinity as a subject, is a part that is associated with traditional masculinity. It rejects the notion that men have to act in a stereotypical manner to be considered as men, for instance, displaying physical strength, dominance, and aggressively pursuing women. The ad recognises that there is a need for a change in masculinity and that change is already taking place towards a more inclusive and modern idea of what masculinity should be. Gillette's slogan used to be "The best man can get", and now Gillette has changed it to "The best man can be". Strangely, the advertisement also uses the same brand narrative of crisis in masculinity as many traditional masculinity advertisements. In this instance, instead of arguing that men are becoming too soft or emotional or weak, Gillette is suggesting the exact opposite, that men are becoming too toxic thus harmful to others and themselves. The advertisement shows several different characters, but they all can be classified as either the Innocent, Caregiver, or the Hero brand archetype since the ad displays both victims and the people who help out those who are bullied or marginalised. The Innocent, because there are child-like characters who are pure and humble and the Caregiver and Hero, because the ad shows the characters as protecting, caring, and showing compassion, all the typical characteristics of modern masculinity. Finally, from masculinity archetypes, the ad shows a bit of the King's archetype, as someone who is protecting someone and fighting toxic masculinity as well as someone who is caring and compassionate.

The National Football League's "Touchdown celebrations" advertisement is a complete reverse of the NFL's previous advertisements promoting this evidently aggressive sport. It replaces seemingly macho activity embodying traditional masculinity traits with men dancing after "scoring" as something new, creative and unique while displaying emotions such as laughter and carefreeness. The level of openness and emotionality undoubtedly points to the Lover's masculinity archetype, while the brand archetype is a mix of the Jester, Lover, and Creator archetypes. The characters show living for fun and joy, which would suggest the Jester as the brand archetype. However, the warm and playful behaviour, not to mention dancing, which is an intimate and sensual activity, points to the Lover archetype. In addition, the innovative and artistic act also suggests a Creator brand archetype.

Finally, while Gillette and NFL have made drastic changes from emphasising traditional masculinity to displaying modern masculinity, it pales in comparison to the changes Axe as a brand has made in terms of masculinity and brand archetype issues. Axe used to focus entirely on traditional masculinity, including concepts such as sexual objectification and gender conformity. However, with the advertisement "Is it ok for guys," Axe, as well as their sub-brand Lynx (in the UK and other countries), have made a radical change to position men in an entirely different way. Nevertheless, it has to be pointed out that Axe is not saying how men should be (as Gillette does). They are implying that men should not always have stereotypical traditional masculinity traits, which is something that Axe themselves used to depict in their ads. To some extent, it is a clever strategy because if facing backlash from consumers, Axe can now simply respond that they are merely asking questions, challenging the masculinity norm. The brand archetype mostly emphasised in this ad is the Explorer, although there are also some signs of the Everyman brand archetype. The Explorer archetype characteristics are evident in independence (from the gender and social norms), authenticity, and seeking discovery and fulfillment. However, while the characters seem to show signs of independence, they also want to be accepted. They are asking is it ok to be different from

the traditional masculinity norm and yet still be accepted, therefore, displaying characteristics of the Everyman brand archetype by wanting to belong somewhere and fit in. The masculinity archetype, thus, exhibits Lover's archetype primarily due to the compassion, openness, sexuality, sincerity, and emotional accessibility, but in a way also shows signs of the Magician archetype by showing curiosity and suspicion of the social gender norm and opposition to it.

## 3.2 The results from the qualitative content analysis

The qualitative content analysis was conducted to find out what discourses emerged from each selected advertisements comment section and how much the advertisement and the archetypes in it resonated with the audience. Table 6 shows the top 10 most common themes in all of the six advertisements. As evident from the table, the most consistently common themes were the advert appreciation and humor appreciation, while other themes have a highly inconsistent frequency in the YouTube comment sections. As it is visible (Table 6), the advertisements received major approval from the consumers, with a notable exception of Gillette's "The best man can be" advertisement, where the most common theme was disapproval of the ad (65%), where consumers expressed their distaste and so-

metimes even anger about the tactics of the advertisement including calling for a boycott of the brand.

The most common theme that emerged from Barbasol's "Shave like a man" YouTube comments was ad appreciation, where consumers expressed how much they appreciate the advertisement and provided some reasons for why that is. This theme was evident in 32% of the comments. Most often, the reasons for approving the ad were not provided, but other times the reasons were associated with the humorous script and tone of the ad, which was evident in 13% of the comments. Some of the comments (6%) expressed interest in becoming a Barbasol customer, which indicated approval of the ad as well, therefore could be combined with the other 32% and the 13%, making a strong approval rate of 51%.

In Old Spice's "The man your man could smell like", a significant amount of comments (24%) were categorised as satire. In these comments, the consumers were trying to extend the humor depicted in the ad with one of their own humorous ways how to make the advertisement even funnier. Notable, referencing popular culture as a theme was also evident in significant amount (22%) of the comments.

In Dos Equis' "The most interesting man alive", the most interesting finding was the

Table 6. The results of qualitative content analysis (%).

| Theme | Barbasol | Old Spice | Dos Equis | Gillette | NFL | Axe |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ad appreciation | 32 | 31 | 21 | 4 | 38 | 41 |
| Humour appreciation | 13 | 16 | 16 | 0 | 20 | 0 |
| Disapproval | 3 | 1 | 5 | 65 | 8 | 17 |
| Competitor discourse | 31 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| Masculinity discourse | 15 | 2 | 3 | 19 | 3 | 24 |
| Main character discourse | 2 | 7 | 31 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Product discourse | 14 | 1 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 4 |
| Branding discussion | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 17 |
| Satire | 1 | 24 | 29 | 1 | 8 | 0 |
| Popular culture | 0 | 22 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 |

*Source: Authors' original work.*

large amount of comments discussing the main character, who, as analysed, has a mixture of the Outlaw/ Lover/ Ruler brand archetype. The authors argue that ad appreciation comments also consist of appreciation for the main character theme (18%), who is the central figure of the ad. If these statistics are summed up together, then the total amount of comments that display consumers' support for the advertisement would be 55%, which is another surprising result of positivity and approval of the ad.

Most notably, Gillette's "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be" comment section provided a lot of discussion about masculinity, where consumers debated and defended their stance on what it means to be a man. Not surprisingly, there was also a more specific debate happening in the comment section, particularly the theme of "Crisis in masculinity" (10%), where consumers were debating that men are losing their sense of masculinity. The combined percentage of masculinity being involved in the advertisement's comment section is 19% and therefore stands out as an important element for consumers.

The most common National Football League's "Touchdown celebrations" advertisement's comment section was ad appreciation,

which was evident in 38% of the comments, and additional 20% were commenting with a theme of humour appreciation where consumers expressed their approval of the ad due to its humorous content. However, this particular advertisement's comment section did not provide the researchers with anything remarkable.

A notable part of Axe's "Is it ok for guys?" comment section was related to masculinity, even more than usual in the analysis of these advertisements. A general masculinity discussion was evident in 11% of the comments, with additional disapproval for modern masculinity (4%) and disapproval of traditional masculinity (3%). In these comments, consumers were more specific in what they support or, in this case, what they are against, rather than debating the issue from a more general standpoint.

### 3.3 The results from the sentiment analysis

The sentiment analysis measuring likeability or how positive, negative or neutral were each advertisement's comment section showed that of the selected ads, traditional masculinity's advertisements comment sections were on average more positive than
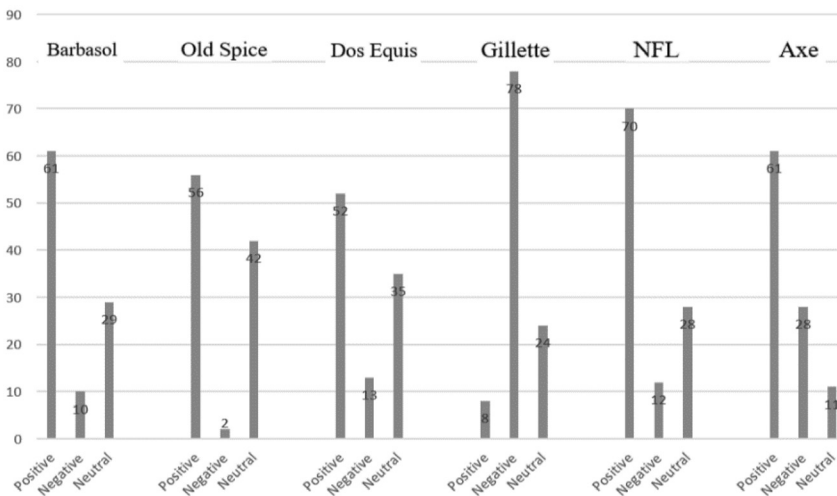


*Figure 4. Sentiment analysis results of selected advertisements. Source: Authors' original work.*

modern masculinity's, with an average of 56% positivity rate to 46% positivity rate (Figure 4). However, that might be due to the significant discrepancy between Gillette's positivity rate and NFL's and Axe's. For instance, only 8% of Gillette's "We Believe: The best man can be" comments were positive, with 78% being negative. While on the other hand, the rest of the comment sections, especially the NFL's "Touchdown celebrations" (70% positivity rate), had a high level of positivity rate, despite what people mostly associate internet comment sections with. Due to Gillette's "The best man can be" advertisement's high negativity rate, the average negativity rate of the selected modern masculinity ads (39%) is notably higher than the average negativity rate of traditional masculinity ads (8%).

Regarding the neutrality of comments, suggesting consumers' lack of emotional involvement, the traditional masculinity ads had much higher neutrality (35%) in their comments than modern masculinity ads (21%). This indicates that consumers are more emotionally expressive and opinionated when viewing modern masculinity content than traditional masculinity, which also applies to the archetypes involved.

## 4. Discussion

The results of this study further support the idea of researching masculinity, both the traditional and modern forms in the context of advertising, and the connection with brand and masculinity archetypes. This study examined which brand and masculinity archetypes are used in advertising and set out to harvest data that would indicate consumer engagement and consumer feedback expressed in their attitudes and opinions. The video content analysis showed that traditional masculinity ads mainly emphasised strong, powerful, stoic, and emotionless brand archetypes such as the Ruler, Hero,

and Outlaw (Mark, Pearson, 2001), with the notable exception of the Lover. In contrast, modern masculinity ads emphasise the Caregiver, Everyman, Jester, and Innocent, which are brand archetypes associated with empathy, sensitivity, care, and a sense of equality. A similar situation is with the masculinity archetypes, whose characteristics also correspond with traditional and modern masculinity characteristics analysed in the literature review process, as well as the brand archetype characteristics found in the majority of the advertisements. Therefore, it seems that the brand archetype theory (Mark, Pearson, 2001) and masculinity archetype theory (Jung, 1954) are compatible in analysing consumer opinions about advertisements with a focus on traditional and modern masculinity.

The results of the video content analysis showed the authors that traditional masculinity is more evident in modern advertising emphasising masculinity stereotypes; however, studies have come up with conclusions, in a number of cases, that gender stereotyping results in negative ad and brand attitudes (Bellizzi, Milner, 1991; Jaffe, Berger, 1994). This can be explained by the fact that counter-stereotypical appeals are more surprising and could, therefore, provoke more positive feelings (Orth, Holancova, 2003). Therefore an argument could be made that advertisers should depict modern masculinity more frequently, thus also focusing on masculinity archetypes and brand archetypes that reflect modern masculinity ideals.

The qualitative content analysis showed various themes emerging from the YouTube comment sections. Many were related to the appreciation of the advertisement in general, and some provided specific reasons for that such as the main character, the concept of masculinity, humor, the stance against political correctness, and other themes. However, the qualitative content analysis also showed that in some cases, while the consumer engagement might be large, the content of that

engagement is often not about the brand or the advertisement but about satire and references to popular culture or other themes that are not so relevant for the advertisers. On the one hand, these results indicate consumers' interest in humorous content, which is not significant for masculinity, but on the other hand, it shows that joking about masculinity is something that consumers feel interested in and want to be engaged in. Masculinity as a separate theme was evident in a relatively small amount of comments, but it was often evident in other themes, for example, when discussing the main character of the advertisement, signaling appreciation for the character and thus the advertisement as a whole.

The sentiment analysis showed unexpected findings, primarily due to how positive was the feedback of these advertisements. This result is somewhat counterintuitive, particularly considering that the environment where the data was collected was the internet, which usually is associated with a highly negative place where consumers are harsh in their feedback. However, besides the notable exception of Gillette, consumers showed positive discourse and mostly appreciation of these advertisements, where masculinity was one of the critical elements in the ads selected.

This study had its limitations; for instance, the focus was on advertisements from the last decade to increase the novelty and make the study more current and easier to apply the implications. In addition, the limitation was on the data since the authors could only analyse those advertisements' comment sections that were made public and had enough material to be analysed. Unfortunately, no similar study has been conducted to compare the results of this research.

The study lays the groundwork for further research analysing masculinity in branding and advertising and archetypes that are being used to communicate the message more effectively. Further research will expand the methods for assessing consumer perceptions

of masculinity in advertising by conducting surveys and focus groups, as well as interviews with the experts of the advertising industry.

## 5. Conclusion

This study aimed ai understanding consumer opinions on advertisements that focus on traditional and modern masculinity with various brand and masculinity archetypes used to convey the message of advertisers. The following conclusions can be drawn from the present study:

(1) The brand archetype theory and masculinity archetype theory have a lot of common ground and similarities in their characteristics both in theory and practice, as proved by the video content analysis.

(2) Among traditional masculinity advertisements, the most common brand archetypes include the Ruler, Hero, Lover, and Outlaw, while among modern masculinity advertisements, the most common brand archetypes include the Caregiver, Lover, Everyman, Jester, and Innocent.

(3) Among traditional masculinity advertisements, the most common masculinity archetypes comprise the King, Lover, and Warrior, while among modern masculinity advertisements, the most common masculinity archetype is the Lover.

(4) Consumers pay little attention to the product, as masculinity in advertising has such a significant interest for the consumers that the product discourse does not get any noteworthy importance, indicating that consumers might be too distracted on the main character and depiction of masculinity to pay attention to the product.

(5) Contrary to popular belief, the discourse in internet comments concerning

masculinity is positive rather than negative.

(6) The most common themes from the qualitative content analysis among the advertisements' YouTube comment sections were the ad appreciation and humor appreciation, while other themes have a highly inconsistent frequency in the YouTube comment sections.

(7) The analysis also showed that the most positive discourse in the YouTube comment section among the modern masculinity ads was for the advertisements with the Lover, Creator, Everyman, and Explorer from the brand archetype viewpoint, and the Lover from the masculinity archetype viewpoint. However, among the traditional masculinity ads, it was the Hero and Everyman from the brand archetype viewpoint and the Warrior from the masculinity archetype viewpoint.

(8) Some practical implications of this study for advertisers include the analysis of the current popularity brand archetypes in advertising, which presents an idea to advertisers about which archetypes are perhaps too mainstream or too popular to use. Considering that advertisers want the ad to be unique and stand out, it would be advisable to avoid the same archetypes that are used too often in modern advertising. For instance, the Caregiver, Ruler, and Lover seem to be too popular brand archetypes in advertising, making it more difficult for the ad to stand out from the competition by using these same brand archetypes. Regarding masculinity archetypes, it would be the same story, with the Lover archetype being too popular and overly used in advertising.

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