“CULTURE & ADVERTISING”

How masculinity or femininity of a culture is influencing the consumers’ responses on the gender appearance in advertisements?
Abstract

Everybody has seen advertisements in his/her life even if this person is never watching television or listening to radio. However, an average person watches television 1 to 4 hours per day. In these hours of watching television, there is a big probability that this person will see an advertisement. But how does he/she react to this advertisement? There are probabilities of reacting positively or negatively or indifferently. Culture is one of the significant aspects that can determine the reaction of the viewer.

The purpose of this master thesis is to understand the influence of the cultural background on consumers when they see a man or a woman appearing on advertisements. This study can be used by managers as a part of their considerations they should have when deciding communication strategies. Moreover, it can bring further understandings for students who are interested on culture and advertising. The main question I wanted to answer with this research is “How masculinity and femininity of a culture is influencing the consumers’ responses on the gender appearance in television advertisements”?

In order to accomplish this goal, I used a quantitative and a deductive scientific method. The empirical data were collected by distributing questionnaires to 40 students of Umea University. The questionnaires are given in order to find out how consumers are affected by culture towards advertisements.

The theoretical framework is actually divided in two parts. The first part is presenting some definitions, components, layers and dimensions of culture combined with masculinity and femininity. The second part is presenting advertising and gender where someone can see how to manage an advertising communication and which strategy to follow.

After the theoretical framework, the empirical results of this study are presented. In the analysis of the empirical data I found out that the masculinity-femininity level of the country a person comes from does not affect his/her reactions towards the genders appearance in advertisements. This can be a result either of the size or homogeneity of the sample either of the personality aspect or the subculture belonging of the person. So it can be said that the personality and the subculture belonging of people may be some factors that influence their reactions towards advertisements. However, what was proved by this research is that a person’s reactions towards advertisements can be influenced by the fact that this person is a man or a woman.

At the end of the study some suggestions are given to marketers such as to define who the target group of the advertising communication is and then develop the appropriate strategy. Moreover, suggestions are given to future researchers such as to conduct the same study but with a bigger sample.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ...........................................................6

1.1: BACKGROUND ......................................................................................................6  
   a) Companies & Advertisement ...........................................................................6  
   b) Advertising & Consumers Markets ........................................................................8  
   c) Cultural differences.........................................................................................9  
   d) Gender Concepts...........................................................................................10  
1.2: RESEARCH QUESTION.........................................................................................10  
1.3: PURPOSE.............................................................................................................11  
1.4: OUTLINE OF THE STUDY ....................................................................................11  

## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY ........................................................12

2.1: CHOICE OF SUBJECT...........................................................................................12  
2.2: PRECONCEPTIONS...............................................................................................12  
2.3: PERSPECTIVES ....................................................................................................13  
2.4: RESEARCH STRATEGY ........................................................................................13  
2.5: SCIENTIFIC APPROACH .......................................................................................14  
2.6: EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS ................................................................15  
2.7: CONSTRUCTING THE QUESTIONNAIRE................................................................16  
2.8: SAMPLE SELECTION ...........................................................................................17  
2.9: COLLECTION OF SOURCES..................................................................................17  
2.10: CRITICISM OF SOURCES ...................................................................................18  
2.11: SUMMARY ........................................................................................................19  

## CHAPTER 3: CULTURE & MASCULINITY-FEMININITY .........20

3.1: DEFINITIONS OF CULTURE .................................................................................20  
3.2: CULTURE COMPONENTS .....................................................................................22  
3.3: LAYERS OF CULTURE .........................................................................................23  
3.4: CULTURE DIMENSIONS .......................................................................................24  
3.5: DEFINITION OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY................................................25  
3.6: MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE .........................................26  

## CHAPTER 4: ADVERTISING & GENDER.......................................27

4.1: DEFINITION OF ADVERTISING ............................................................................27  
4.2: GENDER IN THE MEDIA......................................................................................28  
4.3: MAIN STEPS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ADVERTISING COMMUNICATION ........29  
4.4: STRATEGY IN ADVERTISING ...............................................................................31  
4.5: EXECUTION IN ADVERTISING .............................................................................32  
   a) Language.......................................................................................................32  
   b) Image – Television Advertising ........................................................................33
4.6: Effects of Advertising ................................................................. 34

CHAPTER 5: EMPIRICAL RESULTS .................................................. 35

5.1: Demographic Results ................................................................. 35
5.2: Results of the General Questions .............................................. 38
5.3: Results of the Main Part ............................................................. 41
5.4: Crosstabulations ...................................................................... 47
5.5: ANOVA ....................................................................................... 51

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION OF THE EMPIRICAL
RESULTS ........................................................................................... 53

6.1: Analysis of the Masculinity-Femininity Effect ............................ 53
6.2: Analysis of the Difference Between Male & Female Respondents ............................ 55

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS & SUGGESTIONS ............................ 56

7.1: Conclusions .............................................................................. 56
7.2: Suggestions .............................................................................. 57
7.3: Suggestion for Future Research .................................................. 57

CHAPTER 8: CREDIBILITY CRITERIA ......................................... 58

8.1: Reliability .................................................................................. 58
8.2: Validity ...................................................................................... 58
8.3: Inter-subjectivity ........................................................................ 59
8.4: Practical Usefulness ................................................................... 59

REFERENCES .................................................................................. 60

Books .............................................................................................. 60
Articles ............................................................................................ 61
Electronic Resources ........................................................................ 61

APPENDICES .................................................................................. 62

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire ............................................................. 62
Appendix 2 – Geert Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Table .................. 65
Appendix 3 – Crosstabs Tables .......................................................... 66
Appendix 4 – ANOVA Table ............................................................... 69
TABLES INDEX

Table 2.1: Deductive process for this study 15
Table 3.1: Layers of culture 23
Table 4.1: Men categories in advertisements in USA 28
Table 4.2: Women categories in advertisements in USA 28
Table 5.1: Respondents countries 38
Table 5.2: Variables 51
Table B1: Geert Hofstede cultural Dimensions 65
Table C1: Cars*gender crosstabs 66
Table C2: Refreshments*gender crosstabs 66
Table C3: Alcoholic drinks*gender crosstabs 66
Table C4: Reaction a*gender crosstabs 67
Table C5: Reaction b*gender crosstabs 67
Table C6: Reaction c*gender crosstabs 67
Table C7: Reaction d*gender crosstabs 68
Table D1: ANOVA 69

FIGURES INDEX

Figure 3.1: Three levels of uniqueness in human mental programming 21
Figure 3.2: The onion “diagram” 22
Figure 4.1: Main steps in the management of advertising communication 29
Figure 5.1: Age 35
Figure 5.2: Rural / Urban 36
Figure 5.3: Gender 36
Figure 5.4: MAS / FEM 37
Figure 5.5: Quantity of watching tv ads 38
Figure 5.6: Feelings towards tv ads 39
Figure 5.7: Time of watching tv 39
Figure 5.8: Quantity of watching tv 40
Figure 5.9: Reaction to ad (a) 42
Figure 5.10: Reaction to ad (b) 43
Figure 5.11: Reaction to ad (c) 44
Figure 5.12: Reaction to ad (d) 45
Figure 5.13: Differences between ads 46
Figure 5.14: Crosstabs between gender and cars 47
Figure 5.15: Crosstabs between gender and refreshments 48
Figure 5.16: Crosstabs between gender and alcoholic drinks 48
Figure 5.17: Crosstabs between gender and reaction to picture (a) 49
Figure 5.18: Crosstabs between gender and reaction to picture (d) 49
Figure 5.19: Crosstabs between gender and reaction to picture (b) 50
Figure 5.20: Crosstabs between gender and reaction to picture (c) 50
Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter I will introduce the reader to the background of culture and advertisement and to what this study is about. Moreover, I will formulate the research question that will be answered in the following chapters and set clear the purpose of this research. At the end of this chapter there will be a short outline of the following chapters.

1.1: Background

a) Companies & Advertisement

Since the early 1960s proponents of globalization have understood that economic development would direct to converging needs and tastes of consumers, and make possible standardization of marketing and advertising. Nowadays, businesses from the larger to the smaller do consider that it is of great importance to advertise their products or services. Since the competition is growing and there is a great variety of products, companies need to make themselves appeal superior comparing to the concurrents. Not surprisingly, a successful advertisement can lead a company to great profits whereas an unfortunate commercial can drive a company to bankruptcy. For example, some global advertising campaigns that have been broadcasted in China were criticized as offensive. The reason could be that due to cultural insensitivity towards the advertising environment. Moreover, advertising has to be continuous and consistent and not a onetime action. Therefore, it is not irrelevant at all that companies provide high budgets to their marketing departments.

One of the most discussed issues on advertising is if it is doable to convince consumers in different markets with the same advertising message. When planning an advertising campaign it is significant to know if consumers will respond positively or if the advertising message should be adapted in order to represent the local culture. Moreover, advertising is frequently used as reflection of the cultural values. Therefore, they try to be appealing to the values that are supported by the target group. If it is not, then there is a risk that the consumer will not be able to relate to the product.

In this study we will be concerned only with consumer market (B2C) and not with business to business market (B2B). That is because these two markets have huge differences and somebody cannot treat them in the same way. Even if the

---

communication strategies are the same for B2C and B2B markets (advertising, public relations, direct marketing, indirect marketing etc), how they are performed and the results of the marketing activities are different. The aim of B2C marketing is to make buyers purchase as more as possible. But B2B marketing needs to build a relationship with the buyers by marketing activities. The B2C buyer is commonly searching for the best price whereas B2B buyer looks for the best customer service. Therefore, in this study consumer market is more interesting, because it is the most approachable to most people and the one we see in our everyday life.

Creating an advertisement is not as an easy task as somebody could think. The company, first of all, has to choose between an international and a local agency. The choice is depending on many factors such as cost, time, company’s strategy etc. After choosing the ‘right’ agent the company has to give him/her right directions in order to follow the company’s path. In case of choosing a local agency, the cultural differences are reduced to a great extent.

But sometimes the companies may choose an international agency. This may happen if the cultural differences are not so big. The advertiser in spite of all the issues he/she has to face, he/she also has to consider the different cultures that the advertisement is going to be exposed to. When it is about making advertising decisions, a careful, fact-based scrutiny of the dynamic information of how consumers are feeling, thinking, processing, and behaving is vital in taking successful advertising solutions. Especially for companies that may want to follow the same strategy in every country they sell their products or services, they have to think if the same action that is considered to be right in one culture, is also appropriate in another one. According to Geert Hofstede, if we go into another country and make choices based on how we work in our own home country there are chances that we will make some very bad decisions.

When creating an advertisement, multinational companies have to choose between standardizing their marketing operations or to adjust them to the local conditions. Advertising standardization means to make use of the same optical and verbal communication with only exception the language. It has been discussed several times if standardization of advertisements or making different ones for each country is the best option. The key point here is that making many advertisements is much more costly than just translating the main one to other languages.

---

5 [www.vista-consulting.com/marketing-articles/b2b-b2c-marketing.htm](http://www.vista-consulting.com/marketing-articles/b2b-b2c-marketing.htm) (24-05-08)
7 [www.geert-hofstede.com](http://www.geert-hofstede.com) (18-04-08)
8 Hans Hoeken, Corine van den Brandt, Rogier Crijns, Núria Domínguez, Berna Hendriks, Brigitte Planken and Marianne Starren (2003), “International advertising in Western Europe: Should differences in uncertainty avoidance be considered when advertising in Belgium, France, The Netherlands and Spain?”, The journal of business communication, volume 40, number 3, p.197
b) Advertising & Consumers Markets

The pressure of culture is mainly significant in transferring advertising strategy across the borders, because communication patterns are directly associated with cultural norms in each market\(^9\). The degree to which people like or dislike, approve or disapprove of, advertising in general also is related to their culture. For example, the Dutch and the Scandinavians have a critical position toward advertising, whereas the Americans, the British, and especially the Japanese have made it a part of their daily lives.\(^{10}\)

Today Asian markets are the most rapidly growing, aggressive and promising throughout the world\(^{11}\). This gives the opportunity to companies to expand and increase their profits. However, the Asian culture is totally different from the European and the American ones. Asia is really a series of localized markets with their own characteristics including different economic and cultural settings due to historical reasons\(^{12}\). They have their own exclusive sides of history, culture and consumption patterns including variations in consumer tastes and requirements that could differentially affect advertising content\(^{13}\). Therefore, companies should be aware of this difference of culture, to make the ‘right’ commercials in each place and be led to success.

But the Asian market is not the only available one. There are still the Arabic, European, American markets and many others as well. So, how can a company be successful in marketing its products or services in each market with respect to the consumers’ culture, in order to sell its products? Understanding cross-national differences is often believed to be a key condition for successful international advertising\(^{14}\). This research will be based on cultural differences in order to contribute on giving some directions to companies so that they can improve their advertising campaigns. This study can be interesting for multinational companies which sell their products in many countries and for small firms which wish to expand abroad and involve some international strategies on their advertising campaigns.

\(^{10}\)Geert Hofstede and Associates (1998), Masculinity and femininity: the taboo dimension of national cultures, Sage Publications p.70
\(^{13}\)Young Sook Moon, Kara Chan (2005), “Advertising appeals and cultural values in television commercials: A comparison of Hong Kong and Korea”, International marketing review, Vol. 22 No. 1, p.49
c) Cultural differences

Culture has many dimensions and does not mean only a nation or a country with territory boarders. There can be many cultures within the same country, even within the same city, there will be met many diversities. People with same characteristics tend to have the same culture. But what is culture? According to Hofstede culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another\textsuperscript{15}. (Further discussion on chapter 3)

Hofstede states that there are five types of cultural dimensions. These are: individualism towards collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, the power distance, the uncertainty avoidance index and the long term orientation. In this research the dimension that is going to be investigated is the influence of masculinity-femininity level on consumers towards the gender appearance in advertisements. Masculinity versus its opposite, femininity refers to the distribution of roles between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society to which a range of solutions are found\textsuperscript{16}.

I chose the masculinity-femininity dimension because it appears to be an important factor to think about when planning a communication strategy. It is a subject that I was interested in myself and it is remarkable to get to know how the masculinity-femininity dimension in advertisements is influencing the decisions of the consumers. The idea that cultural values identify who we are and therefore have an effect on which advertising appeals we like better has influenced the progress of global advertising strategies and attracted significant research attention\textsuperscript{17}. Therefore, companies have to be prepared to make a choice between placing a man or woman in their advertisements. Selecting the right person (man/ woman) to appear in an advertisement can influence the consumers’ perception about the product or the company that is advertised.

Moreover, cultural differences may influence other aspects as well. For instance, cultural masculinity and femininity can have an influence on the choice of media communication\textsuperscript{18}. Investigating cultural differences connected with masculinity/femininity may help both researchers and advertisers better comprehend cultural effects\textsuperscript{19}. As soon as a company understands these differences then it will be able to decide which strategy to follow in order to be successful.

Finally, advertisements are influencing the consumers’ behavior when it comes on choosing brands. This behavior is a result of many influences of a culture somebody has grown up with. In many societies the fact that somebody is born a girl or a boy

\textsuperscript{15} Geert Hofstede (1991), Culture and Organizations: Software of the mind: Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival, Mc Graw-Hill, p.5
\textsuperscript{16} www.geert-hofstede.com (18-04-08)
\textsuperscript{17} Chingching Chang (2006), “Cultural masculinity/femininity influences on advertising appeals”, Journal of advertising research, p.315
does make a difference on the way they grow up, the ideas they get and the behavior the others will have towards them in school, job and society. So after all, these factors affect the personality of someone and make him/her have an attitude towards advertisements and especially towards the gender appearance on advertisements.

According to Iris Mayne women are frequently shown in television advertisements to use cosmetics, personal hygiene products or products for cleaning the home. This gives the message that women have to improve their looks and their natural place is the house.  

\[d) \textit{Gender Concepts}\]

In this thesis the word “gender” will be used several times. Nevertheless, this can lead to some confusion and therefore it is essential in this part to explain all the related concepts that will be used.

In this research the term masculinity-femininity will refer to the differences between men and women in the society as it concerns their roles and what is expected from them to be done. A further definition of this term is provided on part 3.5 of this research.

Another common term that will be used is the “gender appearance”, which refers actually to the biological and cultural gender that appears on nowadays advertisements. The biological and the cultural gender may be two different concepts but in this research they have some common characteristics to share as they concern the appearance of people on advertisements. Therefore, except the obvious biological gender that everybody can see, we will meet also the cultural gender which is determined by the culture of the people that belong to one society.

\[1.2: \textit{Research Question}\]

This research is conducted in order to answer the following question:

\[
\textit{How masculinity or femininity of a culture is influencing the consumers’ responses on the gender appearance in advertisements?}
\]

This will be done in order to provide companies with a tool to improve their advertisements. An implication to this study is to find out how companies should understand the different cultures in order to avoid mistakes and increase the likeliness of consumers through their advertisements when it comes to gender issues. It will indicate how companies could behave under different environments in order to be successful.

1.3: Purpose

This research deals with culture and gender in advertisement. The purpose of this research is:

*To give a clear view of the influence, on consumers, of the cultural background, as it concerns the masculinity and femininity of a culture, on the appearance of genders in advertisements.*

1.4: Outline Of The Study

*Chapter 1* is the introduction of this research where somebody can read about the background of culture and advertisement, the research questions and the purpose.

*Chapter 2* is about the methodology that is going to be used further in the research. It includes the reason for choosing this topic and which perspectives are going to be followed in this research. There are indications on which strategies are used in this research and for which reason. As we will see later, I am going to base my study on a quantitative research. Moreover, the questionnaire construction and the sample selection are quiet analyzed in this chapter. In addition there are details about the selection of sources used in this study.

*Chapter 3* explains what culture is from different points of view. Moreover, it defines the masculinity-femininity dimension and how somebody can meet it in everyday life. In addition, different components, layers and dimensions of culture are analyzed in order to understand better how culture affects people.

*Chapter 4* includes the definition of advertisement and some categories of how women and men are appearing in the media. In addition, the main steps in management of advertising communication are described. Moreover, it is explained how strategy and execution are essential in advertising. At the end the effects of advertisements are clarified.

*Chapter 5* presents the empirical results of this study. There are given percentages of the demographic data, the general’s part and the main’s part results. Afterwards, the data are processed with crosstabulations and ANOVA.

*Chapter 6* provides the reader with an analysis of the empirical results found in the previous chapter.

*Chapter 7* includes the conclusions that come out of this study and there are also some suggestions for marketers and managers of companies and suggestions for further research in the future.

*Chapter 8* is the final chapter of this study and it presents the credibility criteria used for this thesis. These four criteria are: reliability, validity, inter-subjectivity and practical usefulness of this study.
Chapter 2: Methodology

In this chapter I will explain how I chose the subject of culture and advertisement, the preconceptions I had about this subject and from which perspectives it will be seen. Moreover, there is information about which research strategy, scientific approach and epistemological considerations are chosen and why. After this, I will explain how the questionnaire was constructed and how I chose the sample. There will be also information about the method of collection of sources and a criticism will be provided for them. At the end of this chapter there is a summary in order to have all the important points gathered together.

2.1: Choice Of Subject

As an author for this thesis I based the choice of the subject on my interest and especially my curiosity for culture and advertising. It was not of course an easy decision. But advertising and marketing were always areas that I had a great interest in. Subsequently, it was expected my master’s thesis subject to be around them. However, after changing many times my mind about the subject and after some discussion with my tutor, Karl Bonnedahl, I decided to write about culture and gender appearance in advertising.

2.2: Preconceptions

Every person has preconceptions that affect his/ her attitude and behavior towards everyday issues. It is almost impossible to be totally objective when making a research. Being aware of the preconceptions somebody has, make it easy to understand how they could have affect the outcomes of this research.

To be more precise in these preconceptions I will give you a small review of who I am, where I have born and what my experiences are.

I was born and grew up in Athens, the capital city of Greece which is a country full of tourists and there somebody can meet many cultural differences existing just in one place. I studied in Athens University of economics and business in the business administration department and was specialized in marketing. After finishing my bachelor degree I decided to come to Umea University to continue with a master on marketing. However, I have been in Sweden before as an Erasmus student which gave me the opportunity to integrate in another culture than mine as I had to stay 6 months. Even though it was not enough to understand this new culture in 6 months, I did notice many differences from my home country which is characterized as more masculine than Sweden\(^1\), since people in Greece do make a difference between men (strong) and women (weak), whereas in Sweden all people are considered equal.

\(^1\) [www.geert-hofstede.com](http://www.geert-hofstede.com) (18-04-08)
In addition, as I like to travel a lot, this always gave me many opportunities to observe people’s behaviors under different circumstances. That is where my interest for culture is coming from, and combining with the fact that I am a marketing student, it results on choosing to write my thesis about culture and advertisement.

Though belonging to one culture and living in another one makes me think that adaptation is always needed. As a result, this thinking has been always make me assume that as I have to adapt myself, then companies have to adapt as well to other cultures.

### 2.3: Perspectives

What a researcher sees depends on which perspective he/she has. Of course everybody has his/her own perspective on life and this naturally can change according to the circumstances people face. The choice of a perspective from the beginning can help the research not to lose his/her way during the research process. As it is already said before, a part of the purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding of how companies should perform in order to improve their advertisements in different cultures. Therefore, the problem will be solved with the perspective of managers of companies.

A managerial perspective is focused on marketing strategies in order to increase sales and profit as well. Therefore, a quantitative study will be conducted with the intention of viewing consumers’ reaction on different situations and to be able to give the necessary information to managers.

### 2.4: Research Strategy

The purpose of this research is to find out how men and women that appears on television advertisements are influencing the consumers’ reactions according to their masculinity-femininity of their cultural background. Therefore, in this study I am going to follow a quantitative research strategy in order to collect the needed data. A survey will be conducted and distributed to students in Umea University in order to find out how culture influences the gender appearance on advertising and how they perceive it.

Quantitative research can be interpreted as a research strategy that emphasizes quantification in the collection of data. The main tool for conducting a quantitative method is the usage of a questionnaire. A questionnaire is built from a set of questions that has the purpose to gather the needed data. Here, a questionnaire is essential in order to get to know if consumers react to genders appearance in advertisements.

---

2.5: Scientific Approach

It is necessary in a research to clarify the scientific approach that is going to be followed. Like the selection of the research strategy, the choice of the scientific approach is based on the purpose of the research and the author’s aim.

A researcher has two options when it comes to the scientific approach, either a deductive or an inductive approach is going to be followed each time. In this study I will start from reviewing the already existing theories and then the empirical part will follow. According to this topic, it is essential to find a theory on culture and advertisement, and then do the analysis of the questionnaire that will be distributed to 40 students.

At the end of the presentation of the empirical part, ANOVA method will be used as a complementary part to the study in order to test some hypotheses. These hypotheses are:

- **H₀₁**: The masculinity-femininity level of the country someone comes from does affect the rest variables (more details on chapter 5)
- **H₀₂**: There is a difference between men and women as it concerns the rest variables.

The first hypothesis is testing if the masculinity-femininity level of the country someone comes from is affecting the other variables of the questionnaire which are presented in table 5.2. The second hypothesis is testing if men and women have different attitudes towards the other variables of the study. The other variables include the feeling of the viewers when watching television advertisements, the time and the quantity of watching them, the preference of watching a certain gender advertising some products, reactions towards some advertisements, etc.

It is important to mention that the role of these hypotheses is only supplementary to the research purpose. At the end we will know if the hypotheses were confirmed or rejected which will contribute to the conclusions of the research.

All the above steps lead to a deductive approach, which will be followed in this study. In the following table there is a more precise description of the deductive process that is going to be followed in this particular research.

---

**Theory** → **Culture & Gender, Advertising & Gender**

**Hypotheses** → **H₀₁**: The masculinity-femininity level of the country someone comes from does affect the rest variables. **H₀₂**: There is a difference between men and women as it concerns the rest variables.

**Data collection** → **Survey to Umea University students**

**Findings** → The masculinity-femininity level of the country someone comes from does not affect the consumers’ responses towards the genders appearance in advertisements. There is a difference between men and women as it concerns the rest variables.

**Hypothesis confirmed or rejected** → **H₀₁** is rejected and **H₀₂** is confirmed.

**Conclusions** → The gender of a person affects his/her reaction towards the gender appearance in advertisements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.1: Deductive process for this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 2.6: Epistemological Considerations

An epistemological issue concerns the question of what is considered as adequate knowledge in a discipline. According to Alan Bryman and Emma Bell, there are three epistemological positions which are positivism, interpretivism and realism.

In this thesis, I will use a positivistic approach because according to this approach, reality exists objectively out there and we can get knowledge about it only by following the scientific method of testing hypotheses. According to Alan Bryman and Emma Bell, positivism is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond.

Since, my study is going to test if the masculinity or femininity level of a country somebody is coming from influences his/her reaction towards the gender appearance in advertisements; I find that this approach is appropriate to my research. To find out this, a survey will be conducted to accept or reject the hypotheses. Moreover, I get for granted the answers of the respondents without questioning them.

---


2.7: Constructing The Questionnaire

The questionnaire that was used for this study was divided into three parts. The first part is formed by four general questions that aim to introduce the respondent to the topic. However, the answers in these questions are very important to be able to judge the results. The respondents had only to choose between a ready set of answers for the first four questions. The questions were about the feeling of respondents toward advertisements, the quantity of watching television and which time of the day they are watching television.

The second part of the questionnaire was about the perceptions of gender in advertisements the respondents have. In this part, the respondents were provided with different pictures that they had to choose between the one they prefer. Moreover, there were pictures that the respondents could put their own comments about the reactions they get from them. At the end of part two there were two open questions that aim to find out if there are any advertisements that have upset the respondents recently and if they recognize differences between television advertisements broadcasted in different countries.

Finally, part three was formed of four demographic questions in order to be able to identify the respondents and categorize them later in the analysis.

I have to mention that the questionnaire was based only on advertisements that the respondents could see. Therefore the study is more concerned with television advertisements rather than radio or internet advertisements etc.

When planning the questionnaire I was thinking that the results are going to show that there are influences that depend on people’s country of origin. My plan was to categorize the respondents into three groups depending on which country they are coming from. Each country has a certain score according to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions table, as it concerns the masculinity-femininity level (see appendix 2). This table includes numbers from 5 to 110 where 5 means a country with low masculinity level and 110 is a country with the highest masculinity level. The three groups I form are:

- Respondents who are from countries with score 28 and under are characterized as low masculine,
- Respondents who are from countries with score between 29 to 49 are characterized as medium masculine, and
- Respondents who are from countries with score 50 and over are characterized as high masculine.

The categorization may seem as not equally divided from 5 to 110 but scores over 70 are kind of rare and that is the reason I followed this categorization.
Last but not least, I have to mention that after distributing the questionnaire, the gathered data will be inserted into a SPSS database and then will be processed with SPSS program in order to get the results of the survey.

2.8: Sample Selection

Another important factor, somebody has to consider when doing a survey is the selection of the sample. In this research a convenience sample will be used in order to find out how students are influenced by culture towards advertisements in terms of gender. As a student of Umea University myself, it is easy and most possible to approach students in this environment that I have learnt to work in better. Students will be the sample for this research, because I needed the opinion of high-educated people who are aware of the existence of culture differences.

In the beginning, I run a pilot survey to 5 students to see if the questionnaire was workable and easy to understand. I found that some points were hard to be understood by most people and I correct them accordingly. Afterwards I distributed the questionnaires to 40 students of Umea University. Due to the limited time, I did not have the possibility to get a bigger sample.

A convenience sample was used, because Umea University students are my closest environment. A convenience sample is one that is simply available to the researcher by virtue of its ease of access. However, I tried to get as many as possible students from different nations, in order to get more clear view of the cultural background influences. The students that are selected are both foreigner and Swedish students. Nevertheless, we do not have to forget that the foreigner students have lived some time in Sweden and therefore maybe their perspectives of culture have changed or adapted. As a matter of fact, their answers may be not representative of the countries they are coming from as they should be if the questionnaire was distributed to them in their home countries. Though, the main values of a culture are something that people learn from a very young age and therefore it is hard to change them (further discussion about this on chapter 3)

Of course, I am aware of the fact that the results could be hard to generalize. However, the purpose of this research is not to provide a theory that is general to all populations.

2.9: Collection Of Sources

After performing the purpose and the research questions of this study, there was a need of finding information for this topic. As culture and advertising is a broad subject there was plenty of information about it. However this information was too broad when it comes to the gender dimension and its influence on consumers.

The search of sources began by searching in Umea’s university database via ALBUM. There I found some books that were useful for this study. Most of the theories for culture were based on Hofstede’s books and website, but especially on his book “Culture and organizations: software of the mind: intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival”. These books assist me a lot in writing chapter 3.

Furthermore, I used books such as “Advertising as communication” from Gillian Dyer, “Kleppner’s advertising procedure” from J. Thomas Russell and W. Ronald Lane, “The advertising business: operations, creativity, media planning, integrated communications” from John Philips Jones. There I found much useful information about advertising which help me to develop chapter 4.

In addition I used the Umea’s university database for articles, such as Emerald and EBSCO Premier. There, I found some articles that were of great importance and very helpful to conduct this study. To find these articles I used key words such as “culture”, “advertisement”, “culture components”, “Hofstede”, “masculinity and femininity in advertising”, “gender and advertisements”, etc. In each search I got many articles that I had to choose which ones to use. To make this selection I was picking up the most interesting titles of the articles and read their abstracts to find out if they were relevant to my topic and could help me on this study.

Even though internet sources are not considered to be reliable enough when conducting a research, I had to use some information from websites. However, I tried to limit sources from internet and used information only from reliable websites of big well known organizations and some information from Google scholar.

2.10: Criticism Of Sources

It is important to be critical when collecting second source information in order to increase the credibility and the validity of the research. However it is not always easy to have the wanted information available. Due to the limited time and schedule, not all the planned information was used, as some books in the library were already rented out to other students.

To increase the quality of the research I was always trying to choose scientific articles that were read by many other researchers. Therefore, the articles with the highest “peer-reviewed” were selected in order to keep the trustworthiness in high levels.

Lastly, as mentioned before for the internet sources I tried to use information only from reliable websites. These were Hofstede website, some well known organizations and little information from Google scholar.
2.11: Summary

This part is a summary of the whole chapter, in order to have a clear structure of the method that is going to be followed in this research. As mentioned already, to find out if consumers are affected by the masculinity-femininity level of their culture towards advertisements, a managers’ perspective will be taken into consideration. The research strategy is quantitative and I will follow a deductive approach. The epistemological consideration for this research is positivistic and a survey will be conducted in order to accept or reject the hypothesis. The questionnaire will be given to 40 students of Umea University and a convenience sample was used. The collected data were processed with SPSS program so as to have the needed results.
Chapter 3: Culture & Masculinity-Femininity

In this chapter there will be given different definitions of culture and masculinity-femininity from various authors. Moreover, I will explain the components of culture, the layers of culture and its different dimensions. In addition there are information about how somebody can meet masculinity and femininity in everyday life.

3.1: Definitions Of Culture

To begin the theoretical framework it is essential to understand what culture is. Somebody could claim that the definition of culture is a hard task. That is true since there are many definitions of cultures given by several authors. Some of them are:

- Edward Hall explains culture as those deep, common, unstated experiences which members of a given culture share, which they communicate without knowing, and which form the backdrop against which all other events are judged\(^{27}\).  
- Gareth Morgan describes culture as “an active living phenomenon through which people jointly creates and recreates the worlds in which they live”\(^ {28}\).”
- A definition given by Varner Iris & Beamer Linda is: “Culture is the coherent, learned, shared view of a group of people about life’s concerns that ranks what is important, furnishes attitudes about what things are appropriate, and dictates behavior”\(^ {29}\). I will explain slightly this definition. Each culture, past or present, is consistent and complete within itself. Moreover, it is not something we are born with; rather, it is learned. If culture is learned it is also learnable. In addition, a culture is shared by a society. Members of a society probably agree without having to say so that something is necessary and important.\(^ {30}\)
- Every person carries within him or herself patterns of thinking, feeling, and potential acting which were learned throughout their lifetime. In accordance with Hofstede culture is the “software of mind”. The programming starts within the family; it continues within the neighborhood, at school, in youth groups, at the work place, and in the living community.\(^ {31}\) That means that culture is something we learn through all our life and can be changed from by our environment.

\(^{28}\) www.soi.org/reading/change/culture.shtml (01-05-2008)
\(^{31}\) Geert Hofstede (1991), Culture and Organizations: Software of the mind: Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival, McGraw-Hill, p.4
Among the many definitions of culture, this will be the one to be used at this thesis. According to Hofstede culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. The following figure clarifies Hofstede’s concept of the three levels of uniqueness in human mental programming:

![Figure 3.1: Three levels of uniqueness in human mental programming](image)

The human nature is what all people have in common: feelings. The feeling of happiness, sadness, love, hate, anger, calm, etc. But how somebody is expressing these feelings is adapted to culture. The personality of an individual, on the other hand is her/his unique personal set of mental programming which s/he does not share with any other human being.

After understanding what culture is, it is essential to see the culture components, layers and dimensions in order to understand that one culture differs from another one and which are these points that make it differs. If somebody can realize that there is a difference between cultures, it is easier to comprehend that there can be an influence on consumers’ responses when they see an advertisement.

---

33 Geert Hofstede (1991), Culture and Organizations: Software of the mind: Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival, Mc Graw-Hill, p.6
34 Geert Hofstede (1991), Culture and Organizations: Software of the mind: Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival, Mc Graw-Hill, p.6
3.2: Culture Components

Various authors talk about different components when trying to explain culture. Here, I am going to describe the culture components based on Hofstede’s components. It is essential to comprehend the components of culture so to be able to understand the background of culture and on which basis we are standing. According to Hofstede from the many terms used to describe manifestations of cultures the following four together cover the total concept rather neatly: symbols, heroes, rituals and values.  

Symbols are language, words, gestures, pictures or objects that have a special meaning for only those people who share the same culture. Language is one of the most important factors to get to know a particular culture. Language and generally symbols are easily changing from one generation to another. Heroes are people, alive or not, who possess characteristics which are highly evaluated in a culture. Many times these heroes are like models for behavior. Rituals refer to the activities such as religion, shaking hands, political life and ways of respecting the others. For example, the way a country is governed and how stable the system is or not gives an illustration of rituals in culture. Values are feelings with an arrow to it: they have a plus and a minus side. For example good vs. bad, beautiful vs. ugly, right vs. wrong, etc.

In the following figure these four components are presented as the skins of an onion, where symbols are the most superficial and values the deepest manifestations of culture. Moreover, rituals, heroes and symbols are tagged under the term practices as they are easy to be seen from an outsider.

![Figure 3.2: The onion “diagram”: manifestations of culture at different levels of depth](image)

---

It is essential to know that each country has different values, rituals, heroes and symbols when conducting the empirical part. As a result, each person has different background which is important when it will come to judging the gender appearance in advertisements. Two people may see the same advertisement and get different messages. For example, a person may see that a nice girl is advertising a car and the other one may find the same advertisement offensive because the girl is wearing a mini skirt. Reactions towards advertisements are very close connected to the values each person has got during his/her life.

### 3.3: Layers of Culture

According to Hofstede people unavoidably have several layers of mental programming within themselves, corresponding to different levels of culture. These different layers they are performed during our lives and get influenced from our background, the country we live in, the language we talk, the gender, the age we are and several other factors. Hofstede has created a list of layers which can be followed to “identify” somebody’s culture. These are:

| Layer 1: | A national level according to one’s country. |
| Layer 2: | A regional and/or ethnic and/or religious and/or linguistic affiliation level, as most nations are composed of culturally different regions and/or ethnic and/or religious and/or language groups. |
| Layer 3: | A gender level, according to whether somebody was born as a girl or as a boy. |
| Layer 4: | A generation level, which separates grandparents from parents from children. |
| Layer 5: | A social class level, associated with educational opportunities and with a person’s occupation or profession. |
| Layer 6: | For those who are employed, an organizational or corporate level according to the way employees have been socialized by their work organization. |

Table 3.1: Layers of culture

For this research, what are important to keep in mind of this table are layers one and three. It is important to understand that culture begins in a country. That is because people in one nation have a common language, a common political system, a common system of education, common heroes, etc. In one country that the majority of people have to follow the same rules, consequently, almost the same ideas are developed in their mind. However, there are still many cultural differences in one country and that is because all the people are not the same and they have different personalities as we saw before in the three levels of uniqueness in human mental programming.

---

The second important layer to this research is the third one, the gender level. If we are aware of the fact that in the society there is a men’s culture which is different from women’s culture, it will be easier to comprehend that it is hard to change traditional gender roles. Therefore, it is hard as well to change gender roles on advertisements, because simply people are so used to them. Television advertisements are using the plan that is tried tested and had worked for a long time and people are used to what is shown.

3.4: Culture Dimensions

After the culture components and layers are presented, the next important points to explain are the culture dimensions. Hofstede mentions that there are five types of cultural dimensions. These are: individualism towards collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, the power distance, the uncertainty avoidance index and the long term orientation. Below there will be explained these dimensions with few words.

Individualism (IDV) relates to societies where the ties between individuals are loose and everyone is expected to look after himself/herself and his/her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite refers to societies where people from the time they born they are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, grandparents, etc) which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

Power Distance Index (PDI) that is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unknown, surprising, different from usual situations.

Long-Term Orientation (LTO) versus short-term orientation can be said to deal with Virtue regardless of Truth. Values associated with Long Term Orientation are thrift and perseverance; values associated with Short Term Orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and protecting one's 'face'.

---

42 www.geert-hofstede.com (18-04-08)
43 www.geert-hofstede.com (18-04-08)
44 www.geert-hofstede.com (18-04-08)
Finally, we have masculinity (MAS) versus its opposite, femininity which refers to the distribution of roles between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society to which a range of solutions are found\textsuperscript{45}.

### 3.5: Definition Of Masculinity And Femininity

Masculinity is a term used for a society where men are considered to be self-confident, rough, and focused on material success whereas women are considered to be more humble, modest, caring, and concerned with the quality of life. The opposite term, femininity, is used for a society where both men and women are considered to be humble, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.\textsuperscript{46}

All human societies consist of men and women. This had as a result a distribution of roles which in some cultures may be seen as unfair comparing to others. For example, in some countries, women are supposed to be staying home and growing up the kids and men work and bring money home and in some other countries, for example Sweden, women have equal rights with men.

The statistical and complete biological differences between males and females are the same all over the world, but their social responsibilities are only to a certain extent formed by the biological restrictions. Every society identifies several behaviors, not instantly connected to procreation, as more appropriate for women or more appropriate for men; but which behaviors belong to which gender varies from one society to another.\textsuperscript{47} It is important here to make clear that when we say masculinity-femininity, we refer to the social behaviors such as feminine and masculine and not the biological differences between men and women\textsuperscript{48}.

\textsuperscript{45} www.geert-hofstede.com (18-04-08)
\textsuperscript{46} Geert Hofstede and Associates (1998), *Masculinity and femininity: the taboo dimension of national cultures*, Sage Publications p.6-7
\textsuperscript{47} Geert Hofstede (1991), *Culture and Organizations: Software of the mind: Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival*, Mc Graw-Hill, p.80
\textsuperscript{48} Jonathan Silverman, Dean Rader (2003), “The world is a text: Writing, reading and thinking about culture and its contexts”, Prentice Hall, P.412
3.6: Masculinity And Femininity In Everyday Life

To begin with we can see the effect of the masculinity-femininity dimension in the family. Family is the first place where somebody is facing the cultural differences. For example, a girl may be raised with the prototype to be quiet and moderate and a boy to have as a prototype to become strong.

The following place somebody may face the differences between genders is at school. Especially at early ages, kids tend to hang on with other kids of the same gender.

Moreover, we can see the affect of the masculinity-femininity dimension when we compare occupations. Some jobs are more male and some more female. This, of course, has a direct impact on the salary. Not surprisingly, in some countries, some jobs are more highly paid when it is done by a man rather than a woman.
Chapter 4: Advertising & Gender

In this chapter there will be described the definition of advertisement and the gender in the media. Afterwards, we will see the main steps in management of advertising communication. Moreover, I will explain how strategy is needed in advertising and the use of language in it. In addition, there are explained the effects of advertising. Finally, we will see some points on television advertisement.

4.1: Definition Of Advertising

Everybody see in their lives plenty of advertisements quite every day. Even if somebody is not watching television, listening to radio or reading magazines and newspapers, it is not possible to stay away from all forms of advertisements such as posters on the roads, on bus stations, leaflets etc.

But what is advertising? According to Gillian Dyer in its simplest sense the word advertising means **drawing attention to something, or notifying, or informing somebody of something**⁴⁹. There are many ways of advertising. You can advertise by word of mouth which is an inexpensive way or either you can distribute leaflets, make a newspaper or radio or internet or television advertisement.

One of the most important roles of advertising is to indicate to people how to solve various issues that may occur in their everyday life⁵⁰. Since people can see advertisements, they get aware of what is available on the market and they can compare the different alternatives to solve their own problem. But advertising is not only affecting the consumers in a positive or negative way, it also has a very important impact on businesses. Without advertising, businesses would not be capable to bring new goods to the attention of a sufficient amount of consumers in such a fast way, enough to make the huge cost of creating, developing, manufacturing, and distributing these products realistic⁵¹.

This research is going to be based on the reaction of customers on advertisements that they are able to see and to be exposed to. Nowadays, in all developed countries there is at least one television in each house. It is very important for a big company to be successful, to have advertisement either international either regional.

4.2: Gender In The Media

Gender as a cultural dimension becomes obvious when different cultures’ considerations of gender appearance are contrasted, for example, the Islamic woman versus the Western woman, or the 18th-century dandy versus today’s man. Whether they would like or not, growing persons must take onto themselves some side of gender identity.52

Cultural gender definitions more and more take within them their own modifications and reversals: for example, in some cultures, it is ok for a man to be sensitive (at moments) and it is not a problem for a woman to be independent and decisive (to a point). As gender structures in cultures become more flexible, they get more worthy of careful scrutiny by young people.53

However, we are all aware of the fact that there are stereotypes towards gender as it concerns their appearance in advertisements54. For example in some countries, men appear stronger, women appear sensitive, men like cars, women like chocolates, etc. Stereotypes are so strong and have a great influence on people’s beliefs and actions, even if we do not realize it55.

There are many categories how women and men are seen in advertisements. For example, in the tables below we will see the categories of men and women appearance in advertisements and their meanings in USA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Common social roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body as tool</td>
<td>Women’s bodies are often represented as tools, as things to be used for social or personal achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strippers</td>
<td>Women seem as strippers or dancers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodies only</td>
<td>The advertising world shows women as being connected to their bodies, not their minds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Women categories in advertisements in USA56

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violence Against males</th>
<th>Advertisements that illustrate forms of violence committed against men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phallic</td>
<td>Representations of phallic signifiers in popular advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male heroes</td>
<td>Representation of men as saviors, as those who save women from peril or harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men in control</td>
<td>Advertisements that show men as powerful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male objects</td>
<td>Advertisements that show men as sex objects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Men categories in advertisements in USA57

56 www.genderads.com (16-05-08)
57 www.genderads.com (16-05-08)
4.3: Main Steps In The Management Of Advertising Communication

Since advertising is largely based on language and image, it is influenced by culture. Moreover, language, be it through words or images, is the strongest link between advertisers and their potential audiences in marketing communications.\(^{58}\) As said before language belongs to the symbols category of the main components of culture and these are changing between generations. Therefore, marketing communications have to change over time and to get adapted to the new trends in each period. However, the process of advertising is based on six main steps which should be followed in the management of advertising communication. The figure below indicates these six steps.


To manage an advertisement, it certainly requires many skills that could take long time to describe, but that is not the point of this research. However, among all the other issues somebody has to think about when creating an advertisement an important point to consider is also the influence of the cultural background of the potential customers. The process of an advertising communication needs feedback in each stage, to achieve positive responses from the consumers. At the same time these six steps have to be followed in a certain order so that companies avoid mistakes and pitfalls. This is:

1) Firstly, a company has to identify the problem that has to be solved with the advertisement campaign. This can be to increase the brand awareness, to modify the brand image, to increase sales, to take market share from the competition or even differentiate from them, to provoke consumers to try the product or to build consumers’ loyalty. This step is closely connected to culture differences since brand awareness and brand image are depending from the degree each customer is concerned with advertising of products. As a result then the consumer will be either loyal or not. Loyalty is another aspect that depends on cultural background of each person.

2) Secondly, the company has to identify the target of the advertising communication. It has to find which consumers segments it is targeting and which are their sociodemographics and psychographic characteristics. Moreover, it has to identify their consumer habits and how do they use the product when they buy it. Sociodemographics and psychographic characteristics define the habits of the targets groups, which are formed from the cultural environment each one is surrounded by. Marketers have to keep in mind that habits are different from one culture to another and therefore modify their strategies.

3) The third step in the advertising communication is to define the communication objectives. These objectives may be to let consumers try a product or to let them like it.

4) The fourth step is to choose which creative strategy is going to be used and how the brand name will be emphasized. This step comes to summarize what just mentioned before in step one and three, that marketers have to be aware of the cultural differences in order to create the appropriate communication strategy.

5) The fifth step of this process is to choose a media strategy. This includes the selection of the best media that is going to be used (television, radio, etc) in order to reach as many as possible from the target group that has been aimed from the company before. Again here, a marketer has to consider which media is capturing the highest number of consumer which depends of the culture.

6) The sixth and final step is to implement and control the advertising campaign.
These steps are important when creating an advertising communication. As it concerns the purpose of this thesis it is significant to know how an advertising communication is constructed in order to know that the selection of the gender that is going to appear in advertisements has to follow some certain steps.

4.4: Strategy In Advertising

After seeing how an advertisement is created, it is crucial to see the strategy that is used in advertisements. The function of an advertisement is to communicate a message to an audience. This is based on two main aspects: strategy and execution. Advertising strategy is focused on what is said to the audience whereas execution focuses more on how it is said which is based on language, images and gestures. In this part strategy in advertising will be explained and in the following part execution will be discussed.

Indeed, the right message, in the right way has to be transmitted to the consumer if a company wants to have positive results from its advertising campaign. The secret of effective strategy formation is in choosing which data are significant and which are not. The advertiser has to ask himself/ herself what the consumer is buying and for which reason. Then, he/ she can decide which strategy to follow in order to gain customers.

To make an effective strategy, one must decide a brand’s position in a competitive environment and find the best way to defend and improve this position. Naturally, one is creating the advertising message based on the strategy that he/ she has been indicated to follow. There is a significant difference between the skills that somebody needs for writing a strategy and those for writing the campaign. Therefore, these two jobs are made by different people. However, the strategy and the campaign are closely linked, because the strategy is the tool that points imagination and intuition in the correct direction.

A well planned advertising strategy ensures that things will not be omitted. Therefore, it gives directions to all the people that are involved in this process to do the right things and not to waste time by doing unnecessary things. Moreover, it put limits in order to avoid exaggerations and to help guide decision making.

---

As a general rule, advertising strategy must be in harmony with the local orientation regarding information content and style of advertising. For example, if consumers are not information seekers then they will be insensitive to information provided by advertisements. Moreover, a great attention should be paid to the type of information that are given in each advertisement and which information consumers like.

Studying a certain culture can be a key to lead the marketers or the managers select the right communication strategy that will be followed there. Ignoring the cultural aspect may bring not the desirable results to the companies. Gender appearance in advertisements is an aspect that cannot be excluded when planning the advertising strategy because according to the chosen strategy the consumers will react positively or negatively.

4.5: Execution In Advertising

As mentioned before, execution focuses more on how the message is said to the audience of the advertising, which is based on language and images.

a) Language

Language can make very specific references, which we interpret as part of the real world, since it is the most accessible to us of all the forms used in ads, and we use it ourselves – it almost become our speech. Of course, as language is a component of culture which change during time, then language in advertisements is changing continuously as well.

Advertisers use language quite distinctively: there are surely advantages in creating bizarre and controversial declarations in strange ways as well as communicating with people using easy, simple and not complicated language. For that reason, advertisers they play with words, use them out of context, create new ones in order to catch our attention and to help us remember a certain brand. Also, the tone of voice that is used determines the style of language.

Another point that we need to pay attention to is the usage of words. For example in a French context, in order to be effective, 50 per cent of all words in an advertisement are supposed to be nouns and verbs, the percentage of words exceeding three syllables not be higher than 10 per cent, most of the long words should be familiar words, and sentences should have an average length of about 10-13 words.

A final point there is a need to focus on is advertisements that have to be internationalized. The advertisement should be done in such way that a voice-over can be added in the local language in each country. Another problem that it occurs is the

---

67 Gillian Dyer (1999), ”Advertising as communication”, Routledge, London and New York, p. 139
translation of a message into another language which can raise problems with comprehension. That occurs because the sense attributed to specific words, depends on cross-culturally differing association norms 69.

Keeping the same commercial, with the same pictures and translating only the message can be effective for companies because it keep the cost of advertising low comparing to if they had to make new commercials to all the countries they sell. However, even if the same advertisement is on television, people will not respond the same regarding some aspects such as the gender appearance.

b) Image – Television Advertising

Nowadays, in developed countries, there is at least one television in each household. Therefore, it is an easy tool for advertisers in order to communicate their messages to potential customers. Television is the most powerful advertising medium because it mixes images, sounds and motions that can generate emotional responses in only 15-30 seconds.

The main advantages of using television are 70:

- There is no advertising medium that approaches the popularity of television
- Television is reaching virtually everyone
- Television is a valuable tool for selling virtually any product or service
- Television has a high household penetration
- Television offers creative flexibility, not found in any other medium
- A 24-hours medium with an ability to reach viewers of each lifestyle

On the other hand, the limitations of televisions are 71:

- An expensive medium
- The demand for television’s limited time has created a seller’s market
- High cost of television time
- High cost of producing commercials
- Due to the high number of available channels, there is small audience per channel

Television is the major medium for packaged goods advertising that allows to all successful campaigns to be models in their efficient and multicolored use of visual communication 72. The advertisements that are broadcasted on television have effects on consumers which can lead them to buy or not the product.

4.6: Effects Of Advertising

Almost everybody may have catch himself/herself singing a jingle of an advertisement or buying a product just because he/she remember a nice or funny or catching advertisement. Especially is small ages, we can find kids that can sing better an advertisement jingle rather than a school song their teacher tried to learn them. All these above are small examples of everyday effects of advertising. However, to study these effects there are many perspectives. For example we could see these effects on a single individual or on a whole society. Advertisements on a single individual may form attitudes or behavior whereas on a whole society it may promote ideas and beliefs about the lifestyle they should follow.  

Moreover, advertising can have effects on market research. For instance, the advertiser is involved, through an agency, in researching the effects of likely effectiveness of a campaign. Agents and clients are interested to know that consumer have purchased the products after a campaign. This can be done by distributing questionnaires to the consumers after the launching of a campaign and by asking them if the advertisements influenced their choice of buying the product.

The question of whether advertisements influence people is as well of concern to sociologists, psychologists, teachers, general public, politicians, etc. Many of them argue that all the influences have an impact on culture. For example, the language used in an advertisement, many times, is influenced by the new generations with new words that may have not existed ten years before. This example is a proof of the development of culture as well.

The effects of advertisements and especially the gender appearance in them, on consumers are important in this thesis because they are determinant to the results of this study.

---

Chapter 5: Empirical Results

In this chapter the gathered data of the questionnaire will be presented. Firstly, I will give the percentages of the answers that the respondents gave and then I will examine some questions with crosstabs and ANOVA methods.

5.1: Demographic Results

In this part of the study I will present you the results of the survey that I run in Umea University. The results were processed with SPSS program. To begin with, I will present the demographic results in order to know how the sample looked like.

![Age Chart]

**Figure 5.1: Age**

In the figure above, we can see that 47% of the respondents are between 21 and 24 years old, 40% are from 25 to 29 years old, and 13% are 30 years old or above. We have to keep in mind that the respondents were all students; therefore most of the sample (87%) is under 30 years old.

There is a possibility that the results of the whole questionnaire should be different if the population was differently aged. However, as said in the beginning I used a convenience sample and that is the reason they are all students.
Figure 5.2: Rural / Urban

In the figure above, we can notice that 20% of the sample grows up in a rural place, whereas 80% grow up in an urban place. The place that somebody grows up is important to his / her cultural background. As we can see from table 3.1, “Layers of culture”, the regional level of a person is included in the second layer on Hofstede’s list. That means that the regional level of a person is of great importance in order to identify somebody’s culture.

Figure 5.3: Gender

As seen above, 47% of the sample is men and 53% are women. I tried to have as much as possible equal men and women in order to have a more valid opinion. However, the average of 53% of women and 47% of men can be considered as an equal distribution of the studied population.
The last question of the demographic characteristics was asking the respondents to write down from which country they are from. However, the answers were very different and I had to group them so we can get a clear picture of the level of masculinity-femininity they have. The grouping of the answers has been done according to the scores of Hofstede cultural dimension table (see appendix 2), as it is said in paragraph 2.7.

Therefore,
- countries with score 28 and under are characterized as low masculine,
- countries with score between 29 to 49 are characterized as medium masculine,
- and countries with score 50 and over are characterized as high masculine.

As a result, we have 22% of the respondents are from countries that are characterized low masculine, 48% are from countries that are characterized medium masculine and 30% of the respondents are from high masculine countries. Although it should be better if the answers here were symmetrically distributed, it was not always easy to guess where each respondent is coming from.

In the table below we can see where the respondents were coming from exactly, and in the parenthesis it is indicated the score the countries have on Hofstede’s cultural dimension table:
5.2: Results Of The General Questions

In this part, I will present you the results of part 1 of the questionnaire. Part 1 was the introduction of the questionnaire and aimed to gather information about the quantity of watching television advertisements, the feeling of the respondents when watching advertisements, the quantity of watching television and which time of the day they are watching television.

![Do you watch tv ads?](image)

**Figure 5.5: Quantity of watching tv ads**

In the figure above, we can see that 5% of the respondents are always watching television advertisements, the majority of the respondents, 80% are watching advertisements sometimes, and 15% are rarely watching television advertisements. The results to this question were quiet expected, at least for me, since I think that most of television viewers tend to zap channels during the advertisements time or do something else.
As seen above, 25% of the respondents like to watch television advertisements, 30% hate it, and for 45% it is indifferent. As we can see here, answers vary and capture the three possible answers the respondents could have given.

Respondents maybe like advertisements because they want to see new products and get informed about them. On the other hand, those respondents that may hate advertisements can feel annoyed and interrupted during their favourite program or movie. The last option is to be indifferent towards advertisements because people take for granted the advertisements’ existence and may be doing other things during this time as said before.
From the figure above, we can see that 12% of the sample is watching television in the mornings, 55% are watching on evenings and 33% are watching at nights. Here, it can be said that it was quiet expected that the majority of the answers given should be evenings and nights because the sample is consisted of students, who are busy in the mornings. It is important to know which time people tend to watch television because, as a matter of fact, there are different advertisements broadcasted, depending on the time.

Figure 5.8: Quantity of watching tv

In the figure above, we can see that the majority of the sample, 50% is watching television 1 to 4 hours per day. The second big group is 32% of the respondents and they are watching television 2 to 5 times per week. Finally, 13% of the respondents are watching television 2 to 5 times per 15 days. Television has been in our lives many years now. Therefore it is not surprising that most of us watch at least one hour per day.
5.3: Results Of The Main Part

The main part of the questionnaire was consisted of two different types of questions. In some questions the respondents had to choose between two options and the rest were open questions.

The first question was showing the respondents different pictures and they had to choose between the one they prefer. The main object of this question was to find out how the gender appearance on an advertisement is affecting the consumer and which one they tend to prefer.

Therefore, for the following pictures, 42% of the respondents prefer the one where a woman advertises the car whereas 58% prefer a man. As it concerns refreshments, 60% prefer a woman and 40% prefer a man. For alcoholic drinks, 37% prefer a woman and 63% prefer a man.
The next question was an open one that was asking the respondents to say what their reaction to the following 4 pictures is. It is impossible to state here all the given answers. However I categorized them into three parts and I will state some of the given answers.

The purpose of these four questions was to examine the consumers’ answers and reactions as it concerns the gender appearance on advertisements. The gender appearance refers to the biological and cultural gender. On the other hand, the respondents as well are affected by their own cultural background.

As we can see in the figure above, for picture a 27% had positive reactions, 45% had negative reactions and 28% were indifferent. For this picture some respondents were confused whether it is an advertisement for a burger or for a car. Even if it is an advertisement for a burger, as I explained to most of the respondents, they told me that their reaction should not differ even if it was a car advertisement. Some of the comments the respondents wrote were:

- “The celebrity environment helps selling the product” (Swedish respondent)
- “Unrealistic, bizarre” (German respondent)
- “It is not about the product, they are selling a lifestyle” (Iranian respondent)
- “Sexy”, (Kenyan respondent)
- “Nice, interesting” (French respondent)
- “Too much naked skin” (1 Ethiopian and 1 Swedish respondents)
- “I am discussed, angry and feel fat” (Swedish respondent)
- “Too naked, too unrealistic” (Moroccan respondent)
- “Sexistic” (Swedish respondent)
- “Inappropriate, bad taste” (French respondent)
- “It is totally unnecessary for the object of advertising” (Swedish respondent)
As we can see in the figure above, for picture b, 25% of the respondents had positive reactions, 37% had negative reactions and 38% were indifferent. It is important to mention that most of the positive answers were coming from the female population of the sample. Some of the comments were:

- “I will buy it for my boyfriend” (Iranian respondent)
- “Embarrassed, angry” (Swedish respondent)
- “It is a commercial for an underwear so it is ok” (Swedish respondent)
- “Attractive, muscular” (Chinese respondent)
- “I like it, it is common for underwear” (Swedish respondent)
- “It is ok” (Iraqi respondent)
- “I would change the channel” (1 French and 1 Brazilian respondents)
- “Artistic, eye catching” (French respondent)
- “Too much naked skin” (Swedish respondent)
- “Well trained, but ridiculous” (Ethiopian respondent)
- “Nice model, I may buy” (French respondent)

It is not surprising that respondents from the same country give contradictor answers to the same question. That is a result of the uniqueness and the personality of each person.
As we can see in the figure above, for picture (c), 7% of the respondents had positive reactions, 60% had negative reactions and 33% were indifferent. It is important to mention that only a small percentage had a positive reaction to this advertisement. Some of the comments left for this advertisement were:

- “Too provocative” (1 Swedish, 1 Iranian and 1 French respondents)
- “I feel bad, discussed and upset” (Swedish respondent)
- “Too attractive” (Chinese respondent)
- “Too nude” (Iranian respondent)
- “I do not like it, it is a bit too much” (Iraqi respondent)
- “Sexistic” (Swedish respondent)
- “Too extreme” (Iranian respondent)
As we can see in the figure above, for picture d, 30% of the respondents had positive reactions, 32% had negative reactions and 38% were indifferent. An important point to mention here is that women on advertisements tend to look all thin and perfect with a consequence to make the female population feels uncomfortable. Some of the comments were:

- “I like it” (Iranian respondent)
- “I feel discussed and fat” (2 Swedish respondents)
- “Summer like, not too sexy” (Swedish respondent)
- “Boring” (Ethiopian respondent)
- “Tempting” (Kenyan respondent)
- “Too nude for TV” (Iranian respondent)

The next question was about advertisements that have upset the respondents recently. In this question there were 35% who were upset by something. Answers that were given to this question were concerning mostly nudity of girls on advertisements that it is not needed or it is not related to the product. Another interesting comment was that commercials nowadays sell beauty ideals and are not giving much information for the product itself. It is essential to say here that many of the respondents could not recall a specific advertisement that annoyed them.
The last question I am going to explain is whether the respondents recognize differences between television advertisements broadcasted in Sweden and their home country or their vacation destinations.

As we can see from the figure above, 47% of the respondents do recognize differences, 28% they see differences sometimes and 25% they do not see any differences. In this question the respondents had also the opportunity to mention some of these differences. Some of the answers I get were:

- “They do not show advertisements about underwears or drinks in my country” (Iranian respondent)
- “Swedish commercials are more humorous” (Ethiopian respondent)
- “People seem more natural in Sweden” (French respondent)
- “Different products, different targets” (South African respondent)
- “More open advertisement in sweden, can show almost everything” (Iraqi respondent)
- “Longer advertisements out of sweden” (Iranian respondent)
- “Much more nudity in Sweden” (Iranian respondent)
- “Advertisements in Sweden seems more attractive” (Chinese respondent)
- “Types of jokes are different” (Brazilian respondent)
- “Advertisement in Sweden are more vivid” (Chinese respondent)
5.4: Crosstabulations

According to Ray Kent the SPSS crosstabs procedure enables the researchers to study the relationship between categorical variables\(^76\). Here, I am going to use crosstabs method in order to find out if there is any relationship between the answers we got from men and women on questions 5 and 6. For question 5 which was asking the respondents to choose between two pictures the one they prefer mostly, the answer I got as seem in the figures below were quite depending on the gender of the person who answers. In the following figures, the horizontal axes present the women and men that have been appearing in the advertisements while the vertical axes present the male and female respondents of the questionnaire. In other words the horizontal axes indicate the gender appearance in advertisements which refers to the biological and cultural gender as well and the vertical axes indicate the respondents gender which refers to the biological term. The vertical axes show the number of the respondents, for example 12/40 and not the percentages.

![Bar Chart](image)

Figure 5.14: Crosstabs between gender and cars

As expected men had the tension to prefer the pictures with the woman and vice versa. This is of course normal and marketers should take it into serious consideration when planning their communications strategies. Therefore, when the target group is mostly women, there should be a man advertising the product and the opposite, of course depending always on the product and the culture of the country the advertisement is shown. In appendix 3, somebody can find the tables that were accompanying the tables above.
The other important question I used crosstabs was question 6 which was asking the respondents to give a short comment for a picture they see. As said before I had categorized their responses into three categories: positive, negative and indifferent reactions. In the following figures, the horizontal axes present the reactions of the respondents towards the shown advertisements while the vertical axes present the male and female respondents of the questionnaire. The vertical axes show the number of the respondents, for example 8/40 and not the percentages.

Figure 5.17: Crosstabs between gender and reaction to picture (a)

Figure 5.18: Crosstabs between gender and reaction to picture (d)
For pictures (a) and (d) that were both showing a woman little dressed the reactions were positive mostly from the male respondents and negative from the female respondents.

![Bar Chart](image1.png)

**Figure 5.19:** *Crosstabs between gender and reaction to picture (b)*

On the other hand, for pictures (b) and (c) that were showing two different men, the reactions were more positive from the female respondents and negative from the male respondents. However, we can see from the figures above that there is a difference between the positive reactions of the women which in case (b) they are higher than case (c). This may be a result of the fact that the second picture was showing an almost nude man which seems to be annoying in advertisements. This difference was not noticed in the male population even though there was a difference between pictures (a) and (d). In appendix 3, somebody can find the tables that were accompanying the tables above.

![Bar Chart](image2.png)

**Figure 5.20:** *Crosstabs between gender and reaction to picture (c)*

[50]
5.5: ANOVA

In this research, I wanted to see if the masculinity-femininity dimension of a culture affects the consumers’ responses on the gender appearance on television advertisements. To achieve this I used ANOVA method where I needed to state the null and alternative hypotheses. The statement or prediction that is made about the population of the sample in advance is usually called the null hypothesis (H₀)\(^{77}\). To accept the null hypothesis the p value has to be \(p > 0.1\), otherwise the researcher has to accept the alternative hypothesis H₁.

To begin with, I supposed that the masculinity level of the country someone comes from can affect many variables, such as if they are watching television advertisements, how they feel when they watch them, if they prefer a man or a woman advertising certain products, their reaction towards certain pictures, etc. To test if this was true I stated the following hypotheses.

H₀₁: The masculinity level of the country someone comes from does affect variables var.1 to var.13.
H₁₁: The masculinity level of the country someone comes from does not affect the variables var.1 to var.13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>var.1</th>
<th>Watching TV ads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>var.2</td>
<td>Feeling when watching TV ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>var.3</td>
<td>Time of watching TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>var.4</td>
<td>Quantity of watching TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>var.5</td>
<td>Choice of gender on cars ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>var.6</td>
<td>Choice of gender on refreshments ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>var.7</td>
<td>Choice of gender on alcoholic drinks ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>var.8</td>
<td>Reaction towards picture (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>var.9</td>
<td>Reaction towards picture (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>var.10</td>
<td>Reaction towards picture (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>var.11</td>
<td>Reaction towards picture (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>var.12</td>
<td>Upsetting ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>var.13</td>
<td>Differences between ads in different countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2: Variables

Although here, I was expecting to find differences, ANOVA analysis did prove (\(p > 0.1\)) that there was not any difference towards the other variables between the three groups of the masculinity level of the countries of the respondents. In the beginning, I thought that it was normal to have such a result as I had three groups that were supposed to be equal. Therefore, I tried to divide the sample population only into two groups, one with high masculinity and one with low masculinity. Nevertheless, the results were again not significant. As a result I had to reject my null hypothesis and accept the alternative one.

Consequently, from this research I can say that the masculinity level of the country someone comes from does not affect the consumers’ responses towards the genders appearance in advertisements.

After this, I tried to see if there are other aspects that affect the consumers’ reactions towards television advertisements. Therefore, my second hypothesis was:

$H_0^2$: There is a difference between men and women (respondents) as it concerns variables var.1 to var.13.

$H_1^2$: There is not any difference between men and women (respondents) as it concerns the variables var.1 to var.13.

Here, I did find some results that were indicating that:

- There is a different attitude between men and women towards the selection of which person they prefer to appear in car advertisements.
- There is a different attitude between men and women towards the selection of which person they prefer to appear in refreshments advertisements.
- There is a different reaction between men and women towards picture a.
- There is a different reaction between men and women towards picture b.

To get these results I set the condition that p-value should be less than 0.1 (and not 0.05 as usually). The results of ANOVA test can be found in appendix 4.
Chapter 6: Analysis & Discussion Of The Empirical Results

In this chapter the purpose is to connect the empirical results with the theoretical framework. I will analyze and discuss the answers given in the questionnaires with a theoretical and practical point of view.

6.1: Analysis Of The Masculinity-Femininity Effect

Reflecting back to the purpose of the study, which was to show the influence of the masculinity-femininity level of a culture on consumers’ reaction towards the appearance of gender in advertisements, we can see that there is a need to reflect back to the definition of culture. As mentioned in the theory, culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people other than others.

To analyze the results of the questionnaire the key question was where each respondent is from. Then I categorize the answers into three groups, in accordance with Hofstede’s cultural dimension table. To be precise, I used only one dimension, the masculinity-femininity. However, after comparing my data with this important variable I did not find significant culture’s influence on consumers’ responses towards gender in advertisements. This result was not expected since the purpose was to test if there are cultural influences.

Nevertheless, this comes to show that Hofstede’s pyramid is valid. Hofstede’s pyramid was describing that there are three levels of uniqueness in human being mental programming (see figure 3.1). These three levels are:

- **human nature** which is universal and means that all people have the same needs,
- **culture** which depends on the given culture to the person, and
- **personality** which is different between individuals

**Personality** can be one possible answer to what went wrong and did not get the wanted results. Not surprisingly in some questions even though if the respondents were from the same country, the answers were contradictor. It has been shown that in some questions, respondents from the same country gave opposite answers. That is because people may have the same cultural background but on the other hand they have their own unique personality. For example, in question 6, for picture (a), I get the following answers from two French respondents:

- “Inappropriate, bad taste”
- “Nice, interensting”

---

Another example appears in the same question for picture (b), where I get the following answers from 4 Swedish respondents:

- “It is a commercial for an underwear so it is ok”
- “I like it, it is common for underwear”
- “Embarrassed, angry”
- “Too much naked skin”

Here, we can see that the two first Swedish respondents find it appropriate to present a half-naked man in an advertisement for an underwear whereas the two other Swedish respondents find that it is still too much skin shown and make them angry and embarrassed. Even if these 4 people are from the same country they can still belong to different subcultures. This can be one of the reasons the answers were different. Another reason, as said for the previous picture too, can be the personality of the respondents which is naturally different.

There are also two more interesting opinions given for picture (b) from 2 French respondents. The answers given were:

- “Artistic, eye catching”
- “I would change the channel”

Here, we can see again two very opposite answers where one respondent claims that the advertisement is eye-catching and the other claims that he/she would change the channel. The same explanation as before with the Swedish respondents can be given here too.

However, except the differences between personality and subcultures there is another probability of which could be the reason for not getting the wanted results. It is important to mention that the sample contributes to the results of the study. As a consequence, the size of the sample could have been small for a subject such as culture and advertisement.

On the other hand, another possibility could be the fact that it was a convenience sample. As mentioned already, I have used a convenience sample of 40 students. This could have influenced the results of this research because it is maybe not so representative of the reality as other sample types.

Moreover, we do not have to forget that the sample was kind of homogeneous since the respondents were all students that have been living in Sweden some time. This could influence the results as these students have “learn to react” in the same way as Swedish students. Probably if the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents in their countries then the result should be different. Moreover, if the questionnaire was distributed to a different sample of non-students and of different ages then the results could be different.
All the above possibilities, separately or a combination of them, could be a reason for not getting the wanted results of this study.

6.2: Analysis Of The Difference Between Male & Female Respondents

ANOVA showed that there were different attitudes between the male and female respondents in two sections. The first one is when it comes to choose which person they prefer to advertise cars and refreshments. In the second section, it is confirmed that there is a different reaction towards pictures (a) and (b).

For the first section, ANOVA with combination with crosstabs proved that the majority of men prefer to see a woman advertising cars and refreshments, and women prefer to see men.

For the second section, ANOVA with combination with crosstabs proved that there is a different reaction between men and women towards pictures (a) and (b). For picture (a), the majority of men gave positive comments and the majority of women gave negative and indifferent comments. For picture (b), the majority of men gave indifferent and negative comment whereas the majority of women gave positive comments.

These tensions are certainly usual and not new to the marketers. Here, we can see a reflection of the results to the theoretical framework of the main steps of advertising communication (see figure 4.1). These results have an impact on some steps in the management of advertising communication.

Especially, when it comes to identifying the target group (step 2) of the advertising communication, marketers have to consider whether the target group is men or women or both of them and act accordingly. When it is a product targeted to women then it is better to have a man advertising it and vice versa. However, this statement depends on the nature of the product.

The next affected step is the third one. Defining the communication objects includes the question who are going to be the targeted consumers. So according to the targeted consumers the appropriate strategy has to be chosen and followed. In this way we pass to the fourth step. Here, the marketers have to be careful when choosing a communication strategy depending on the targeting group and the product.

Last but not least the fifth step of the process is affected. Choosing the right media depends from the nature of the product and the culture of the consumers. As we can see all the steps of the process are connected and completing each other. This is why a process of advertising communication needs feedback all the time in order to have positive results.
Chapter 7: Conclusions & Suggestions

In this chapter I will provide the reader with some final conclusions of the whole thesis. At the end of the chapter there are given some suggestions for marketers and managers of companies and there are proposals for further researches as well.

7.1: Conclusions

During the writing of this thesis I had to face many challenges, although the subject was interesting and motivating and gave me the opportunity to learn many new things.

In order to answer how masculinity or femininity of each culture is influencing the consumer’s responses on the gender appearance in television advertisements, I firstly had to understand the cultural and advertising framework.

In order to provide the reader with an understandable, significant and interesting study, I linked the purpose of the thesis with the theoretical framework and the empirical results, in order to get the analysis of this research.

From the analysis it is shown that there are not any cultural influences on consumers’ responses on the gender appearance in advertisements. This was explained as a result of many factors such as the personality of the respondents, the subculture they belong to, the size or the homogeneity of the sample. After this research it can be said that personality or the subculture belonging of a person can be some of the aspects that may be influencing the consumers’ reactions towards advertisements.

However, this research proved that it does matter if a person is a man or a woman because this influences his/her reactions towards the appearance of gender in advertisements. This reflects to the theoretical framework where it is said that all societies identify some behaviors, not directly linked to procreation, as more suitable for women or more suitable for men; but which behaviors belong to which gender varies from one society to another.79

As a general conclusion it can be said that the gender of a person affects his/her reaction towards the gender appearance in advertisements.

7.2: Suggestions

In this section I will give some suggestions to marketers and managers of companies in order to act more effectively. First of all they have to define who the target group of the advertising communication is. Depending on the product as well, they have to put the right person to appear in the commercial.

The personality factor cannot be predicted as each person has a different personality of course. On the other hand, subcultures can be important to take into consideration when planning an advertising communication.

Even though my empirical results could not prove it, all the theories are supporting that the marketers and the managers of companies, have to focus on the cultural differences as well, in order to avoid pitfalls.

7.3: Suggestion For Future Research

Throughout writing this thesis some questions have arise which appear interesting. In order to find more reliable results the same research can be conducted but to a larger sample. An interesting side to investigate is to do this research with respondents answering the questionnaire in their own countries and natural environment in order not to be influenced by external factors.

In addition the subcultures influences can be investigated in order to find out if their role is important when it comes to marketing strategies and communications.

Finally, one more point to base a research is a deep investigation on all Hofstede’s dimensions towards advertisements in order to see if they can have an impact on the consumers’ reactions.
Chapter 8: Credibility Criteria

To come to an end, this last chapter will discuss the credibility criteria, which aim to help the author see if the planned goal of the thesis has been fulfilled. The four credibility criteria that are discussed are reliability, validity, inter-subjectivity and practical usefulness.

Credibility criteria of a research are important to be discussed, in order to give the reader the opportunity to be able to judge himself / herself if the research goals are accomplished. The main purpose of the thesis was to find out the influence of culture on the consumers as it concerns the masculinity and femininity of each culture, on the appearance of genders in advertisements. The criteria that are chosen in order to see the veracity of the thesis depend on the nature of the study, which was quantitative. In order to give my opinion of credibility there are four criteria: reliability, validity, inter-subjectivity and practical usefulness.

8.1: Reliability

Reliability is actually measuring if the results of a study are repeatable. This means that if this study should be conducted a second time then the gathered information should be the same.

I have to admit that one of the taken risks in this study was the convenience sample for the questionnaire. Convenience sample is may be not the most representative of the population and therefore the results may be not representative as well. However, where I placed effort was on the construction of the questionnaire that I tried to make easy to understand by the respondents.

Reliability is difficult to achieve in this study because it concerns culture. As, it was stated in the theory every person’s culture depend on the human nature, the culture given to him / her and the personality. The last aspect is what makes reliability hard to be reached as the uniqueness of each person is determinant to his/her opinions.

8.2: Validity

The most important criterion for a research is validity which refers to the integrity of the results that come out in a research. In simple words validity checks if the research have studied what it was supposed to.

---

In view of the fact that I used a theoretical framework before constructing and distributing the questionnaires, this research captures sections of what managers should take into consideration when preparing a communication strategy. As a result, I think that what was supposed to be studied has been studied therefore this study can be considered to have high validity.

### 8.3: Inter-subjectivity

Inter-subjectivity is accomplished when the researcher’s interpretations are accepted by the respondents. In order to reach inter-subjectivity I should have sent back the interpretations to the respondents and they should give their opinion and then make the appropriate changes. It was not possible to send back my interpretations to the respondents. However, most of the times, during the time the respondents were filling the questionnaires I was around so that they could ask me if they need some more clarifications or if they needed me to explain to them something. Another point that contributed in having high inter-subjectivity was to have open questions in some parts that were important so that the respondent could fill in his/ her thoughts.

I think that the interpretations I did after the study of the questionnaires, and especially of the open questions, are right. I believe that there were not language bias since the used language of the questionnaire was simple English. Therefore, I consider that this thesis has achieved a high inter-subjectivity level.

### 8.4: Practical Usefulness

I think that this research is useful for companies which are operating in different countries. This thesis can provide them with information about culture and advertisement in order to be able to use it for planning an advertising communication. It can provide them with information that concerns the masculinity-femininity influence on consumers’ responses on the genders appearance in television advertisements. Managers could make use of this thesis as a part of their considerations they should have.

In addition, this thesis could bring further understandings to students while studying culture and advertising.
**References**

**Books**


Geert Hofstede and Associates (1998), Masculinity and femininity: the taboo dimension of national cultures, Sage Publications


Judith Williamson (2002), “Decoding advertisements: Ideology and meaning of advertisements”, Marion Boyars publishers Ltd,


Articles


Hans Hoeken, Corine van den Brandt, Rogier Crijns, Núria Domínguez, Berna Hendriks, Brigitte Planken and Marianne Starren (2003), “International advertising in Western Europe: Should differences in uncertainty avoidance be considered when advertising in Belgium, France, The Netherlands and Spain?”, The journal of business communication, volume 40, number 3, p.195-218


Electronic Resources

www.geert-hofstede.com (18-04-08)

www.soi.org/reading/change/culture.shtml (01-05-2008)

www.vista-consulting.com/marketing-articles/b2b-b2c-marketing.htm (24-05-08)

www.genderads.com (16-05-08)
Appendices

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

The following survey is done by an Umeå University student without any commercial aim. This study is about culture and advertisements. Please reply by putting a tick (√) in the box corresponding to your answer. The questionnaire should take you only a few minutes. The results will be treated in strict confidence.

Part 1: General questions

1) Do you watch television advertisements?
   Always □  Sometimes □  Rarely □

2) How do you feel when you watch television advertisements?
   I like it □  I hate it □  I ignore it □

3) Which time of the day is more likely that you watch television?
   Mornings □  Evenings □  Nights □

4) How much television do you watch?
   5 or more hours per day □  2 to 5 times per 15 days □
   1 to 4 hours per day □  2 to 5 times per month □
   2 to 5 times per week □

Part 2: Perceptions of Gender in Advertisements

5) Which option do you prefer for advertising the following?
   (Please tick only one case each time)

   a) Cars □  □
6) How do you react to these advertisements? (describe with 2-3 words)

(a) (…………………………..)

(b) (…………………………..)
7) Is there any advertisement on television that has upset you recently? Why did it upset you? (Please mention briefly)
…………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………

8) Do you recognize differences between television advertisements broadcasted in Sweden compared to your home country or your vacation destinations?

Yes □(*)    Sometimes □(*)    No □

(*Can you describe the differences? …………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………)

Part 3: Demographic characteristics

9) How old are you?

Under 20 □    25-29 □
21-24 □    30 or above □

10) How should you characterize the place you grow up?

Rural □    Urban □

11) Where are you from? (country)

…………………………………………………………………………………

12) Gender?

Male □    Female □

Thank you very much for your time and your cooperation!!! ☺
# Appendix 2 – Geert Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>MAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab World **</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh *</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria *</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China *</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic *</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Africa **</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia *</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary *</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg *</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta *</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco *</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland *</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania *</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia *</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia *</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriname *</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad *</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam *</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Estimated values

** Regional estimated values

“Arab World” = Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates

“East Africa” = Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia

“West Africa” = Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone

---

82 [www.geert-hofstede.com](http://www.geert-hofstede.com) (18-04-08)
### Appendix 3 – Crosstabs Tables

#### Cars * gender Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Cars</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>woman</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>man</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Cars</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>woman</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>man</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table C1:** Cars*gender crosstabs

#### Refreshements * gender Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>Refreshements</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>Refreshements</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table C2:** Refreshments*gender crosstabs

#### Alcoholic drinks * gender Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>Alcoholic drinks</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>Alcoholic drinks</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table C3:** Alcoholic drinks*gender crosstabs
### reaction a * gender Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reaction a</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>indifferent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table C4:** Reaction a*gender crosstabs

### reaction b * gender Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reaction b</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>indifferent</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table C5:** Reaction b*gender crosstabs

### reaction c * gender Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reaction c</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>indifferent</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table C6:** Reaction c*gender crosstabs
**reaction d * gender Crosstabulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reaction d</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>indifferent</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table C7: Reaction d*gender crosstabs*
## Appendix 4 – ANOVA Table

Factor: *gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cars</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1,544</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,544</td>
<td>7,130</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>8,231</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>217</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9,775</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refreshements</strong></td>
<td>0,678</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0,678</td>
<td>2,886</td>
<td>.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>8,922</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>235</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>9,600</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>reaction a</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1,604</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,604</td>
<td>2,988</td>
<td>.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>20,396</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>537</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>reaction b</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>8,371</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>19,975</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>526</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24,375</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table D1: ANOVA*