

Analysis of Gender Stereotyping in Gulf-focused Advertising

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Purpose

- **To understand how men and women are portrayed in Gulf-focused advertising, and how this plays into gender stereotyping**
- As part of its mandate to promote best practices in the advertising industry in the region, the Advertising Business Group (ABG) would like to understand how genders are portrayed in the Gulf's advertising media, specifically through gender stereotypes as a persuasion technique.

Background

- A number of countries such as the United Kingdom are introducing new rules on gender stereotyping in advertising to help tackle harmful and outdated practices after commissioning research that suggests some advertising could reinforce harmful stereotypes, which could restrict the choices, aspirations and opportunities of children, young people and adults.
- There are no regulations defining the issue in the Middle East, despite a push by governments to promote more integration of the female population into the workforce.

Within this context, these are the questions that the ABG would like to address:

- Is there an awareness of the need for breaking with convention when it comes to regional advertising?
- Is advertising in MENA promoting gender equality or enhancing the anachronistic & outdated gender roles? OR Is the MENA Ad Industry portraying realistically the increasingly progressive role of women in the region or does it continue to perpetuate traditional stereotypes?
- Are global initiatives to tackle gender issues being welcomed by advertisers in the Gulf?
- Do consumers in the Gulf relate to the largely gender stereotypical advertising, and what would they like to see changed?

Three research
teams from
Zayed
University
focused on
these questions

- Is advertising in MENA promoting gender equality or enhancing the anachronistic & outdated gender roles? OR Is the MENA Ad Industry portraying realistically the increasingly progressive role of women in the region or does it continue to perpetuate traditional stereotypes?
- Do consumers in the Gulf relate to the largely gender stereotypical advertising, and what would they like to see changed?

Gender Stereotypes

- Are personal beliefs that certain attributes differentiate men and women including
 - physical characteristics (men are taller than women),
 - roles (women are homemakers and men are providers),
 - activity preferences (women like to shop; men like to do sports); and
 - personality traits (men are independent and women are dependent) (Miller, 2016)

Gender Stereotypes and their Consequences

- Although stereotypes are not necessarily negative, stereotypes become problematic when they reduce the wide range of differences among people to simplistic categories.
- Each gender stereotyping component could lead to negative consequences, particularly for women, such as body dissatisfaction, reduced self-confidence, and restricted career and professional opportunities (Eisend, 2010; Zotos & Tschla, 2014).

Gender Stereotyping in Advertising

- One of the ways in which gender stereotypes are propagated and reinforced is through mass media texts, specifically advertising.
- Most of the research on gender portrayal has been content analyses of advertisements including comparative designs (e.g., Matthes, Prieler, & Adam, 2016), and on various formats such as print ads in magazines and newspapers (e.g., Tartaglia & Rollero, 2015) and television ads (e.g., Fowler & Thomas, 2015; Verhellen, Dens, & Pelsmacker, 2014)

Gender Stereotyping in Advertisements in the Middle East

- The scant research on advertising from the Middle East has mostly conducted comparative analyses of Arab and U.S. cultural values as portrayed in advertisements and made recommendations on localizing advertising to Arab consumers (e.g., Chun et al., 2015; Sobh et al, 2018).
- However, there is hardly any research on gender portrayals in advertising in the Gulf.

The following sections will report on the major findings from the three research studies that examined gender stereotyping in advertisements in the Gulf



Portrayal of Gender Stereotypes in Television Advertisements in the Gulf

Ali Khalil & Ganga Dhanesh
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2019

Aim of the study

- To examine gender portrayals in television advertisements in the Gulf

Research questions

- **RQ 1:** In which product categories are women likely to appear more often than men?
- **RQ 2:** In which environment (home, work) will women be more likely to appear than men?
- **RQ 3:** Which gender will be portrayed as young relative to the other gender?
- **RQ 4:** Which gender will be portrayed as product users versus experts?

Methodology

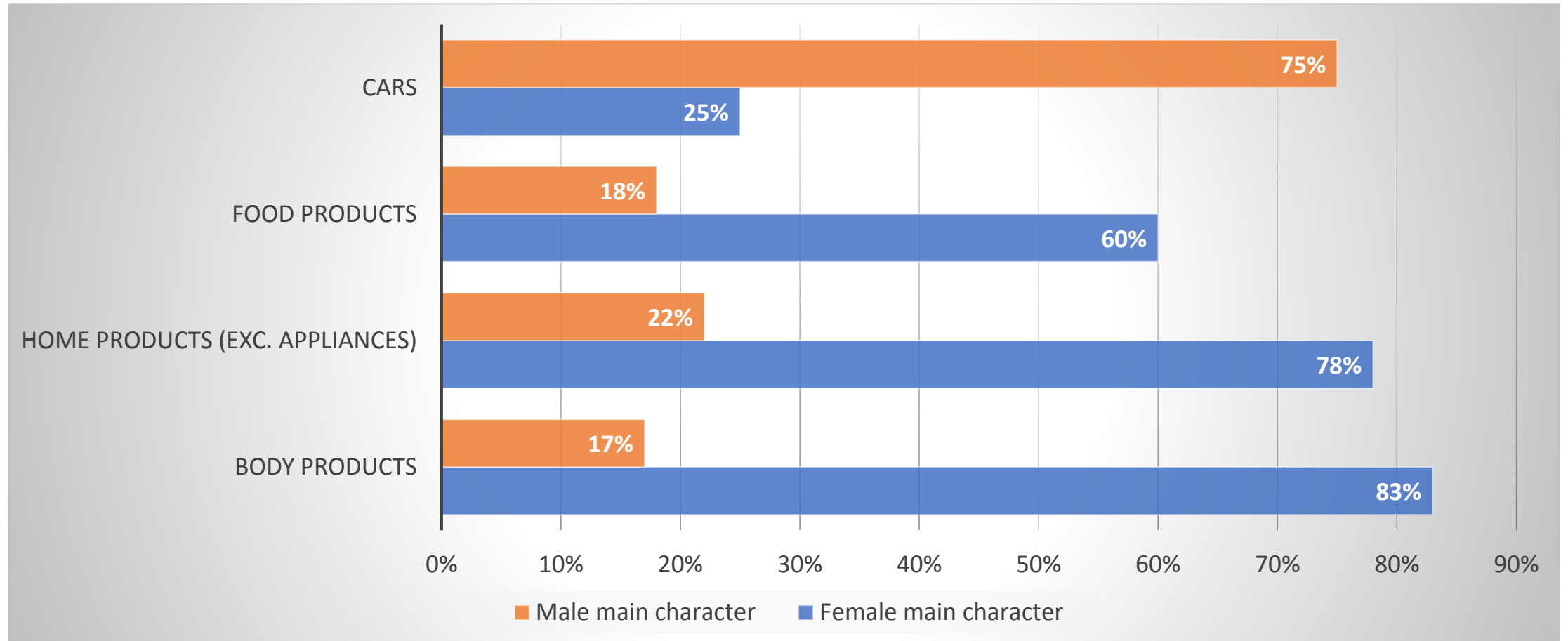
Quantitative content analysis of television commercials aired over one full week on MBC1 channel

Total of 950 ads before filtering for repeats

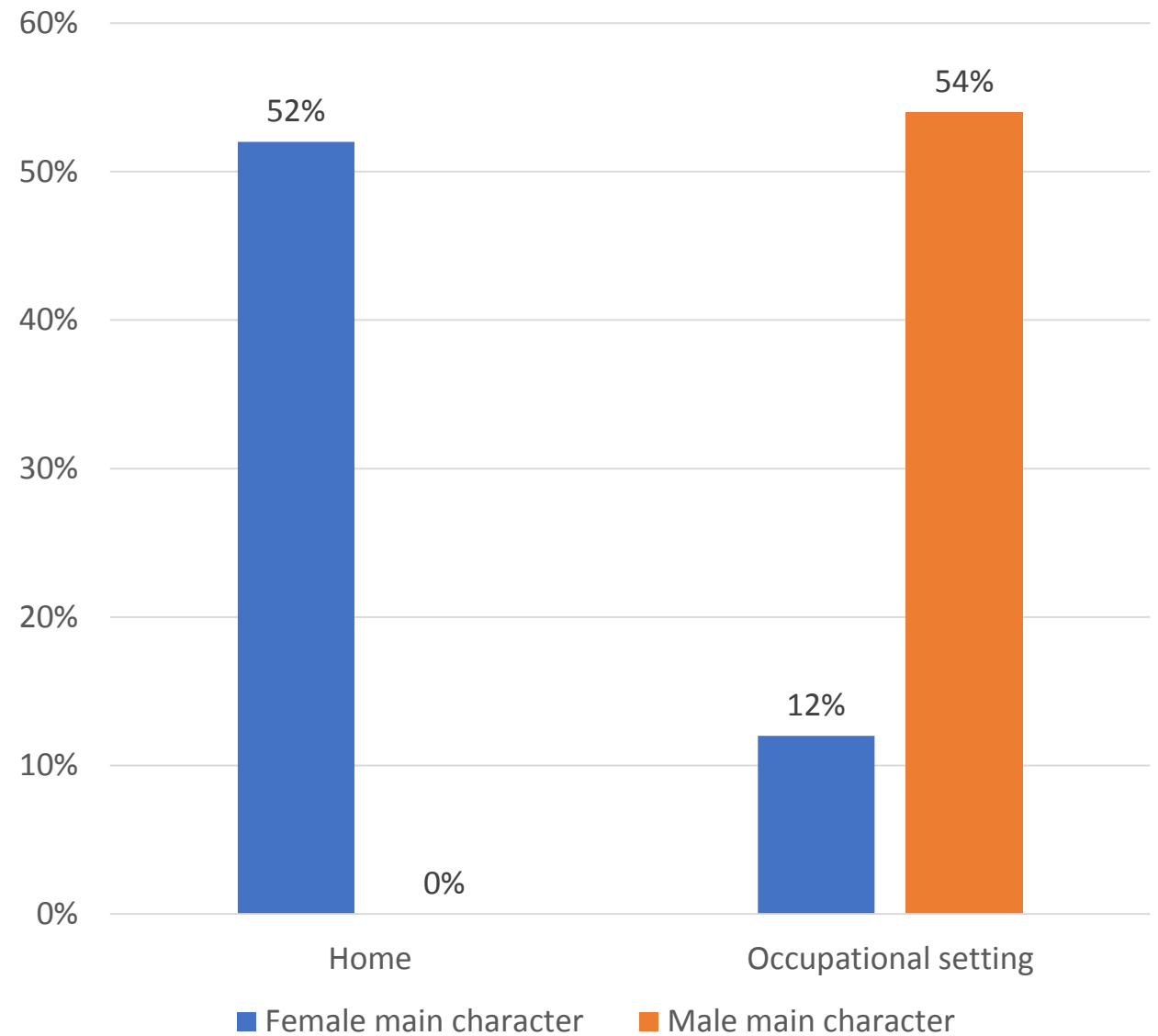
Excluded repeat advertisements and focused on examining distinct advertisements

Results reported here are from 66 distinct adverts aired on MBC1 on one day in September 2018

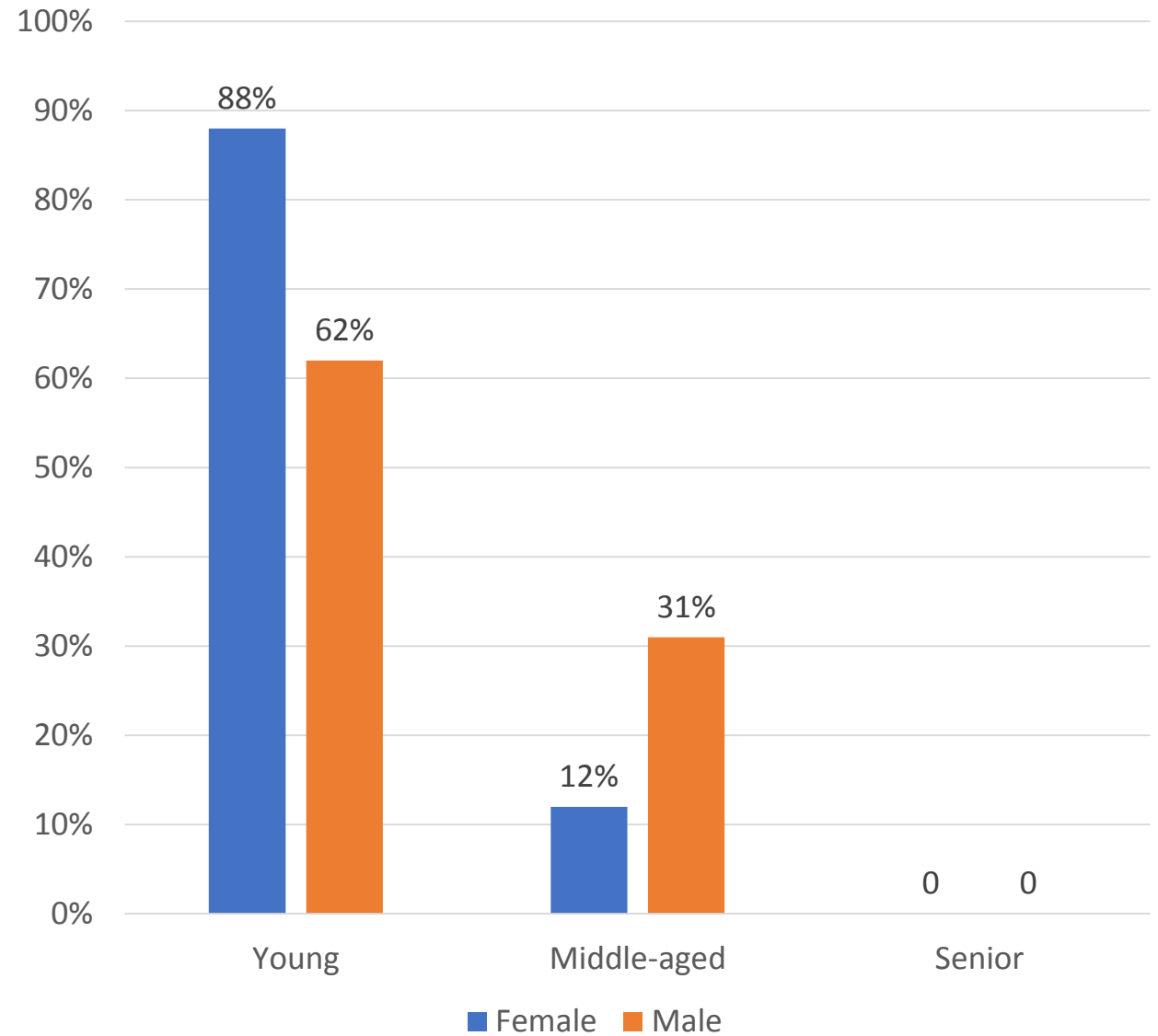
Gender distribution based on product types



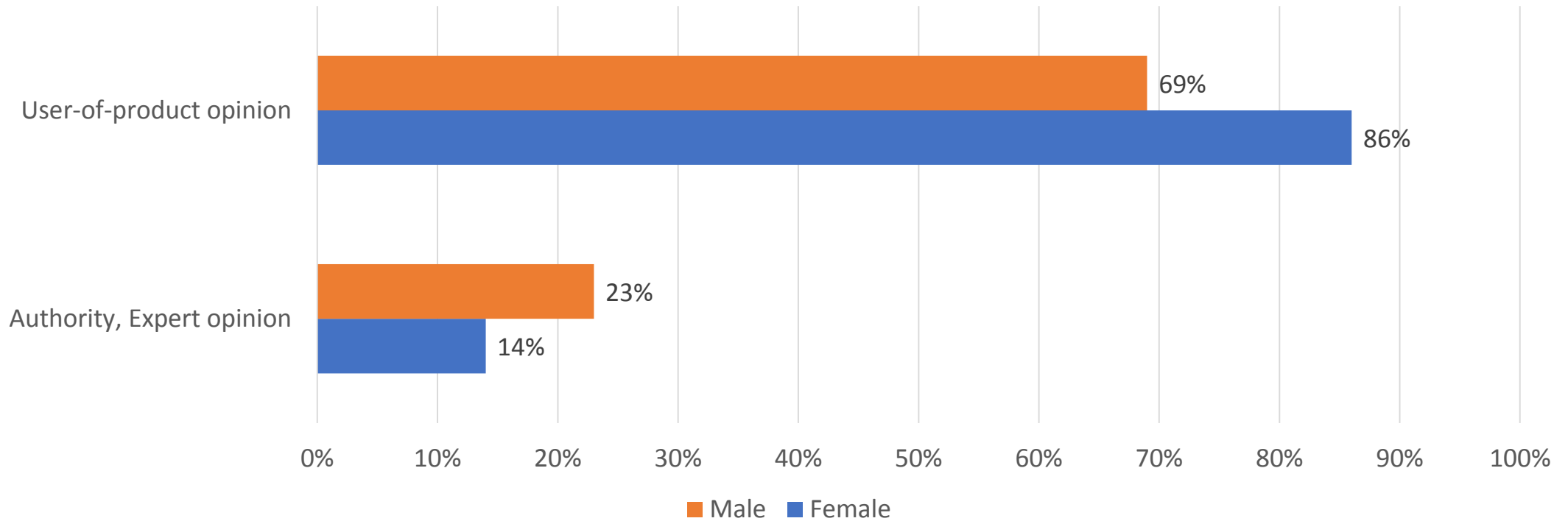
Gender portrayal based on location (home, work)



Gender portrayal in age distribution



Gender portrayal in character's credibility



Conclusions

- Television advertising in the Gulf continues to perpetuate traditional gender stereotypes, and does not portray realistically the increasingly progressive role of women in the region
- Women continue to be the queen of the home



Measuring Emirati's Reactance to *Femvertising*,
Menvertising, and Traditional Gender Roles in
Advertising

Claire Sherman & Gaelle Duthler
Zayed University
March 2019

Background

- Adverts in the media keep on relying on gender roles stereotypes to describe how men and women operate in society. Recently, there has been a shift in how women are portrayed in advertisements. This shift is known as “Femvertising” which is defined as a “type of advertising that makes use of female talents and powerful messages to empower women and girls by avoiding perpetuating female advertising stereotypes” (Akestam, Rosengren, & Daheln, 2017). To a lesser extent there has also been a focus on male gender roles and what we have similarly termed ‘menvertising’.

Purpose of research

- How do Emiratis perceive gender role stereotypes in advertising?
- How do Emiratis perceive the responsibility of brands toward using less stereotypical ads?
- How do Emiratis react to traditional and new gender roles in advertising?

Methodology

- Experimental Design
- Randomly assigned participants to look at 6 different ads:
 - Male Traditional Role: 106 participants
 - Female Traditional Role: 109 participants
 - Male Non Traditional Role: 103 participants
 - Female Non Traditional Role: 108 participants
 - Male Neutral Role: 117 participants
 - Female Neutral Role: 108 participants
- Respondents were recruited via social media and email invitations
- 651 Emiratis participated (467 women, 318 men), average age of 24 years old
- Online bilingual questionnaire (497 answered in English & 288 answered in Arabic) using Qualtrics survey software

Non-traditional

Neutral

Traditional

Female



قالوا إنها ليست وظيفة للصغار
انهم على حق
إنها وظيفة للمرأة

إذا كان بإمكانك تصور ذلك،
يمكننا مساعدتك في الوصول إلى هناك.

- التوفير الخاصة
- القروض
- خدمات التمويل
- الإستثمارات و الحماية

بنك أبوظبي التجاري
ADCB
Money Can't Buy Ambition



لأنني في الوظيفة المناسبة الآن.

إذا كان بإمكانك تصور ذلك،
يمكننا مساعدتك في الوصول إلى هناك.

- التوفير الخاصة
- القروض
- خدمات التمويل
- الإستثمارات و الحماية

بنك أبوظبي التجاري
ADCB
Money Can't Buy Ambition



They said it was the perfect job for a woman...

I couldn't agree more.

If you can visualise it,
we can help you get there.

- Private Banking
- Loans & Mortgages
- Brokerage Services
- Investment & Protection

بنك أبوظبي التجاري
ADCB
Money Can't Buy Ambition

Male



They said it's not a job for little boys.
They're right...
It's a job for a man.

If you can visualise it,
we can help you get there.

- Private Banking
- Loans & Mortgages
- Brokerage Services
- Investment & Protection

بنك أبوظبي التجاري
ADCB
Money Can't Buy Ambition



Because I'm in the right job now.

If you can visualise it,
we can help you get there.

- Private Banking
- Loans & Mortgages
- Brokerage Services
- Investment & Protection

بنك أبوظبي التجاري
ADCB
Money Can't Buy Ambition



قالوا إنها الوظيفة المثالية للرجل
لم أستطع الموافقة أكثر

إذا كان بإمكانك تصور ذلك،
يمكننا مساعدتك في الوصول إلى هناك.

- التوفير الخاصة
- القروض
- خدمات التمويل
- الإستثمارات و الحماية

بنك أبوظبي التجاري
ADCB
Money Can't Buy Ambition

Adverts

Experimental Measures

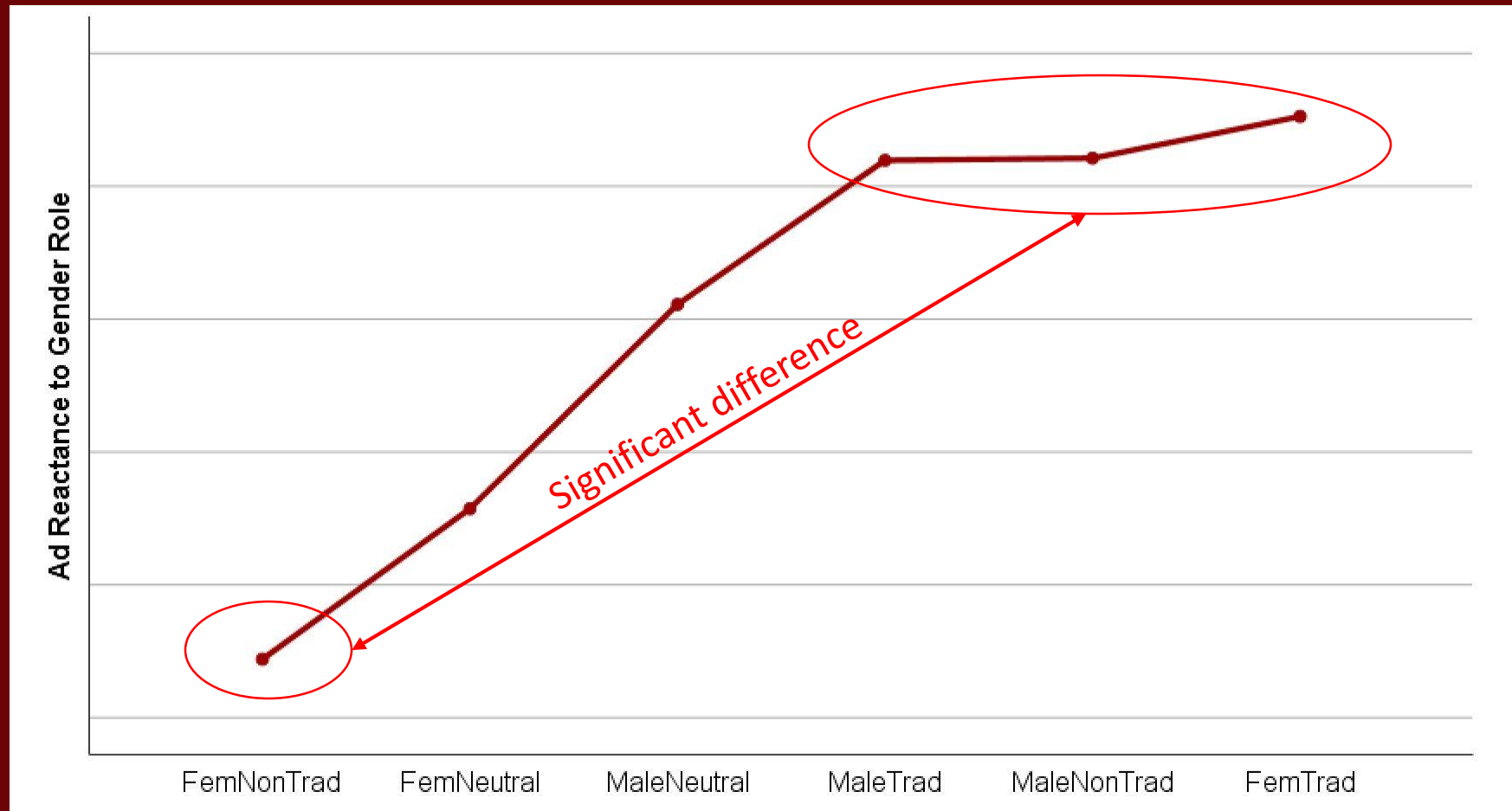
After exposure to the advertisement, participants answered questions about:

- Advert Evaluations
 1. Acceptable/Ethical/Realistic/Convincing
 2. Offensiveness
 3. Advert Reactance (gender role/model)
 - The ad makes me want (me/men/women) to be the exact opposite
 - I do not approve of how the ad tries to affect me/men/women
 - The choice of model in the ad annoys me
- Brand Evaluation
 1. Liking/Positivity/Good

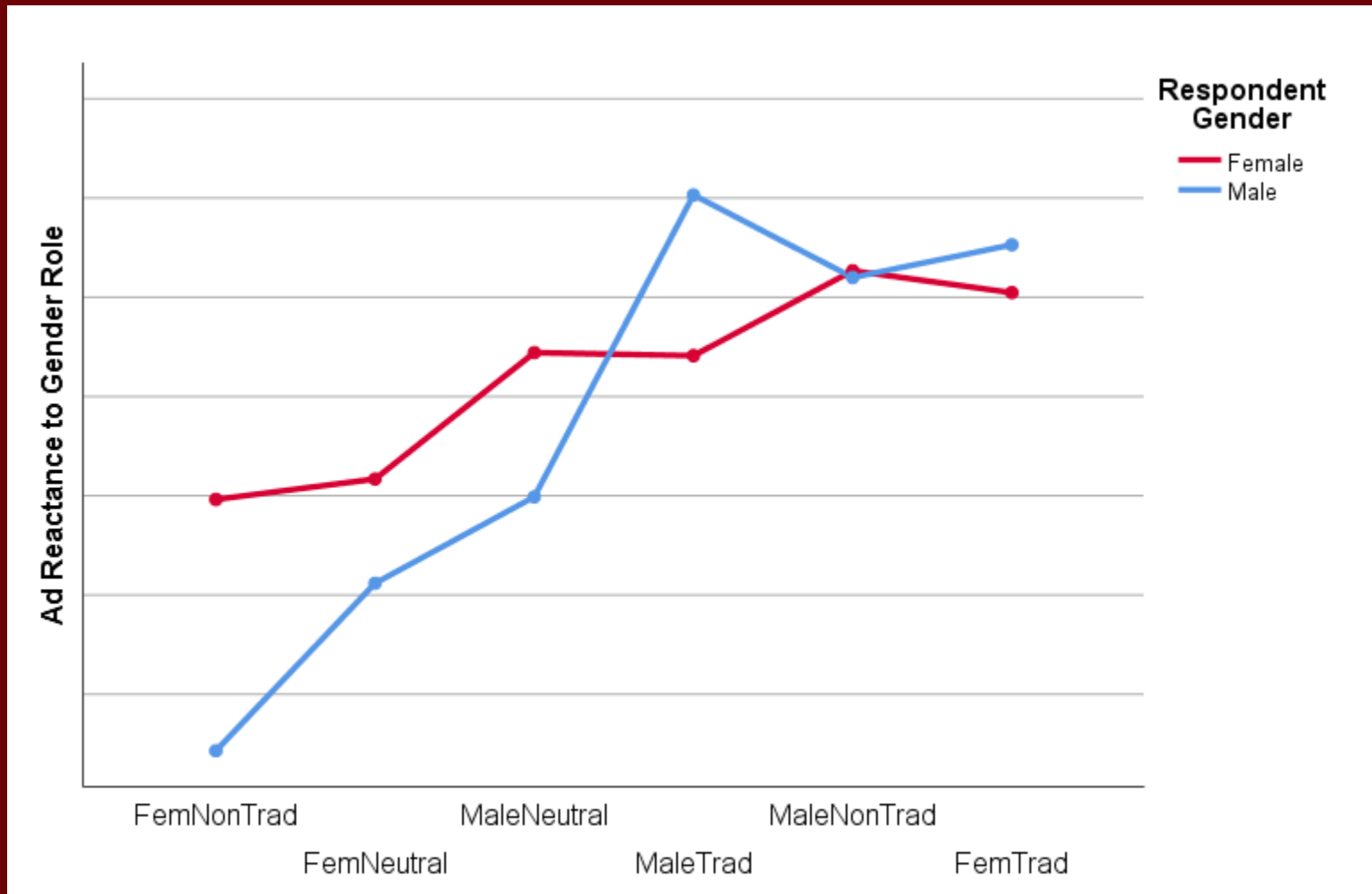
Results

- No differences in perceptions of gender role stereotypes in advertising by respondent gender
- No significant difference between adverts for Acceptability of Adverts
- No significant difference between adverts based on Offensiveness
- No significant difference between adverts in brand evaluations
- Only...

Significant difference in ad reactance



But, no significant difference by respondent gender



What does this mean?

- Emiratis express significantly less resistance to femvertising than menvertising
- There is also significantly more support for femvertising when compared to adverts reinforcing traditional gender roles
- There is no difference in the perceived ethicality, realism, acceptability or convincingness between femvertising, menvertising and traditional gender roles
- Nor is there any difference in resultant affect for the brand

Conclusions

- Emirati consumers support adverts that portray women in non traditional roles
- Emirati consumers are not as supportive for adverts that portray men in non traditional roles
- Emirati consumers perceive that brands should portray men and women in a positive role
- Emirati male and female consumers have similar perceptions



Gender Roles Stereotypes in Instagram Advertisements in the United Arab Emirates

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2019

Key objectives

- Analyze gender role stereotypes in Instagram advertisements from UAE based companies
- Reveal the existing gender roles stereotypes in terms of occupational roles portrayed in the advertisements
- Compare the portrayal of men and women in the advertisements

Methodology: Content Analysis

20 BRANDS FROM
THE UAE

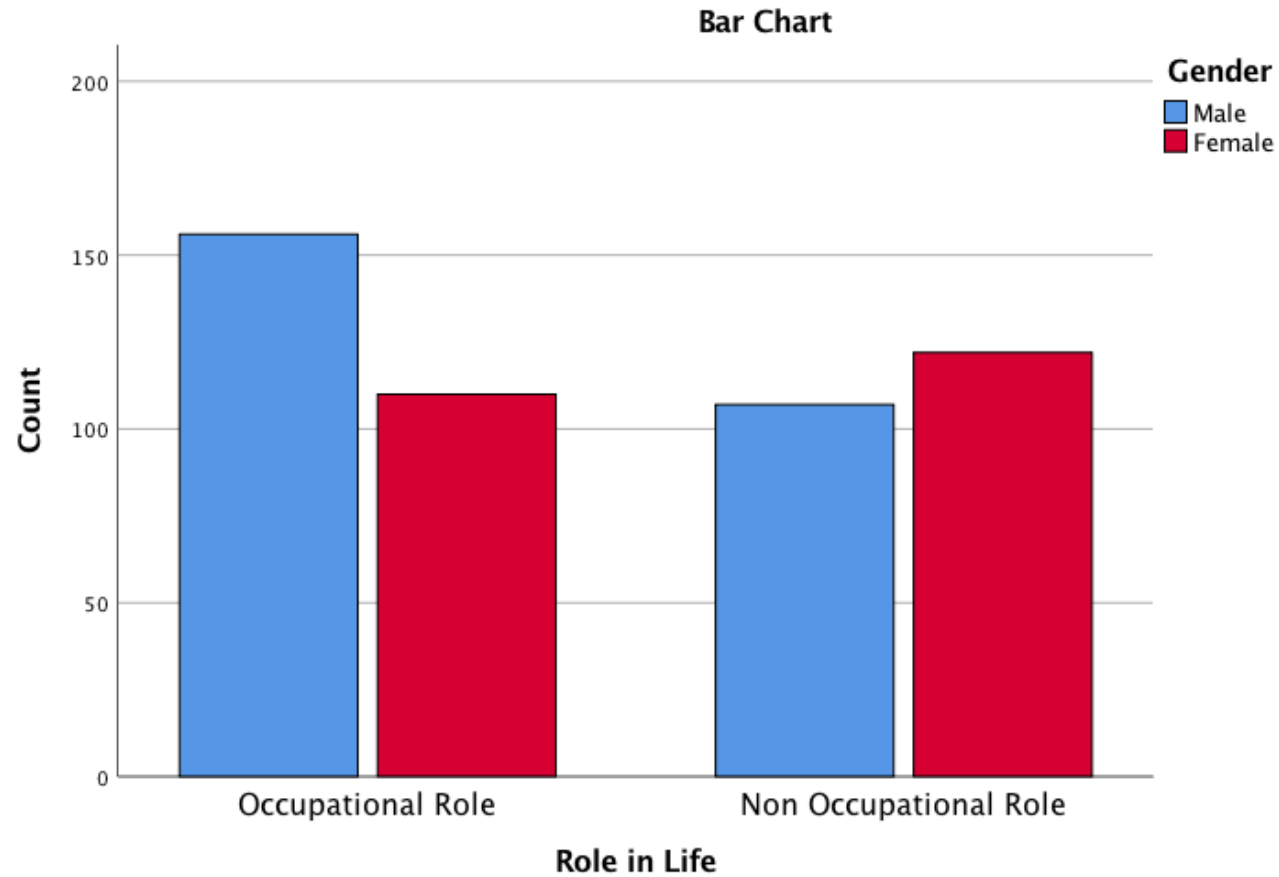
ANALYZED LAST 50
POSTS FROM EACH
BRAND

ANALYZED GENDER,
AGE GROUP,
OCCUPATIONAL
ROLES, NON
OCCUPATIONAL
ROLES, AND DRESS
TYPE

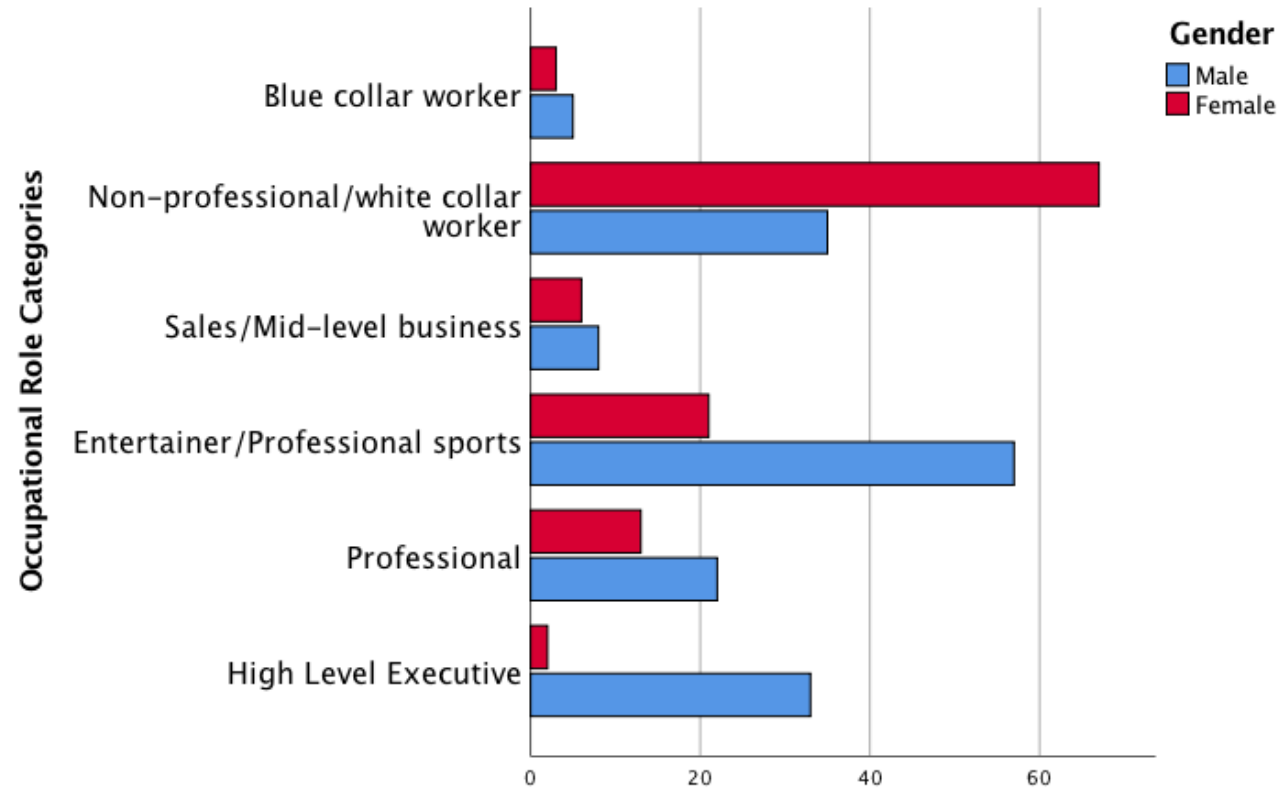
Sample description

Total	Gender	Age	Dress
Total of 1055 posts analyzed	Gender representation: 25% men, 22% women, 53% none (no people in the ads)	Age representation: 13% under 18, 78% 18-34 years old, 7% 35-54 years old, and 2% 60 and older	Dress style representation: 83% Western style, 16% Emirati style, 1% other

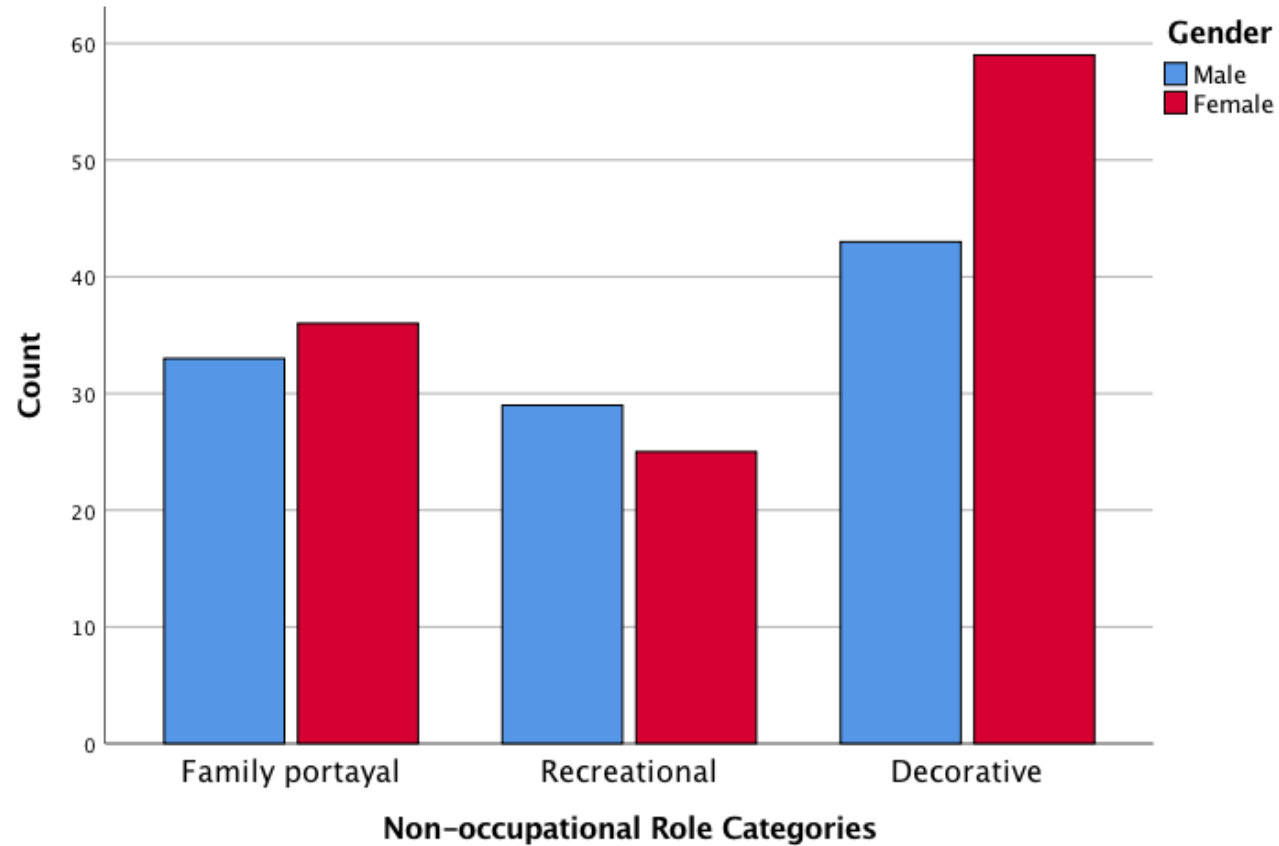
Gender Differences: Occupational vs. Non occupational Roles



Gender differences by occupational roles



No gender differences by non occupational roles



Conclusions

- Brands like to stick to gender roles stereotypes, even in social media
- Traditional gender roles are shown more often in advertisements compared to non-traditional gender roles
- Women and work in the UAE: Home life vs work life?

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