

Gems of Identity: Unveiling Female Archetypes, Cultural Narratives, and the Facets of Womanhood in Lebanese Jewelry Advertising

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how jewelry advertising in Lebanon constructs female archetypes and negotiates cultural narratives of womanhood through distinct branding strategies. Drawing on McCracken's Meaning Transfer Model [1], Gobe's Emotional Branding Theory [2], and Jung's Archetype Theory [3], the research compares two campaigns: Zoughaib & Sons featuring celebrity Haifa Wehbe, and Moukarzel's "J'ai Envie." The analysis reveals how Zoughaib relies on celebrity endorsement to project archetypes of glamour, seduction, and authority, while Moukarzel employs emotional appeal to foreground individuality, love, and self-expression. By situating these portrayals within the framework of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality), this study highlights the dual role of advertising as both a commercial tool and a cultural text that influences gender representation. The findings underscore how commercials shape consumer psychology while simultaneously negotiating the multiplicity of women's identities in contemporary Lebanese society.

Keywords: Gender Equality (SDG 5), Female Archetypes, Consumer Psychology, Cultural Narratives, Celebrity Endorsement, Emotional Branding, Jewelry Advertising, Representation of Women, Identity Construction

INTRODUCTION

Advertising has long been recognized as a cultural force that extends beyond the simple promotion of goods. Commercials, particularly in the luxury sector, operate not only to highlight the material value of a product but also to shape symbolic meanings, gendered identities, and aspirational lifestyles. Jewelry, as an emblem of femininity and social prestige, becomes an especially rich site for exploring these dynamics. In Lebanon, a country where media and culture intersect in complex ways, jewelry advertising provides insight into how women are portrayed, consumed, and idealized within a broader cultural narrative.

Within this framework, two Lebanese brands—Zoughaib & Sons and Moukarzel—offer compelling case studies of how marketing strategies construct female archetypes. Zoughaib & Sons, founded in 1981, relies heavily on the celebrity endorsement strategy, enlisting the star power of Lebanese singer and actress Haifa Wehbe to embody glamour, desirability, and social elevation. By associating their products with a celebrity who herself represents an archetype of modern Arab femininity—bold, sensual, and unapologetically glamorous—the brand amplifies its visibility and appeals to consumers who aspire to a lifestyle of prestige.

In contrast, Moukarzel, established in 1994, pursued a different path through its campaign "J'ai Envie." Instead of relying on celebrity influence, the campaign engaged with emotional appeal, invoking sentiments of nostalgia,

love, intimacy, and aspiration. This strategy foregrounds the relational and psychological dimensions of jewelry consumption, presenting women not only as objects of admiration but also as agents of feeling, memory, and personal expression. The jewelry thus becomes more than a commodity; it transforms into a symbolic medium through which women's inner lives and desires are validated.

By juxtaposing these two advertising strategies, it becomes clear that different archetypes of womanhood emerge: one built on the projection of a glamorous, star-like image, and the other on the evocation of intimate, emotional narratives. These dual representations highlight the multiple facets of female identity in Lebanese society—where women are at once icons of beauty, keepers of cultural memory, and active participants in consumer culture.

This case study therefore extends beyond branding techniques to interrogate how commercials construct and communicate gendered identities. It connects directly to Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality) by examining how media portrayals contribute either to the reinforcement of limiting stereotypes or to the empowerment of women through more diverse, emotionally resonant representations. Ultimately, this analysis explores how advertising strategies, cultural narratives, and psychological appeals intersect to shape the symbolic role of women in consumer behavior, thereby offering a lens into broader questions of gender, identity, and power within contemporary Lebanese society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Celebrity Endorsement and Gendered Consumption

The literature on celebrity endorsement highlights its enduring impact on consumer behavior, yet also reveals a distinct gendered dimension. Tor-Kadioglu and Bozyigit [4] emphasize that female consumers tend to be particularly responsive to celebrity figures whose attractiveness and perceived integrity align with aspirational ideals of femininity. The celebrity becomes more than a promotional tool; she functions as a mirror of societal expectations around womanhood. Interestingly, the same study found that male consumers were less influenced by attractiveness or integrity, suggesting that female consumption behaviors are uniquely tied to symbolic identification with celebrities.

From a cultural standpoint, Crespo et al. [5] demonstrate that celebrity endorsement does not operate uniformly across societies. In contexts like Lebanon, where celebrity culture intersects with traditional and modern conceptions of femininity, the meanings transferred from a celebrity figure to a brand acquire additional weight. The public persona of a celebrity such as Haifa Wehbe, often associated with glamour and bold femininity, extends beyond the brand into the broader cultural discourse about what it means to be a woman in contemporary Arab society.

At the same time, scholars caution against assuming a uniformly positive outcome. Macheke, Quaye, and Ligaraba [6] note that while celebrity credibility can indeed enhance brand loyalty, the effectiveness of endorsements often relies on the consumer's perception of authenticity. For young female audiences in particular, the attachment to celebrity figures can evolve into a parasocial relationship—an imagined intimacy [7] that strengthens brand loyalty but may also reinforce narrow or commercialized archetypes of femininity. In this sense, celebrity endorsement does not merely sell products; it also participates in the construction of cultural ideals of womanhood, a phenomenon that resonates with the aims of SDG 5, as it raises critical questions about representation, empowerment, and stereotype reinforcement.

Emotional Appeal and Cultural Narratives

Parallel to celebrity endorsement, emotional appeal has emerged as a key strategy in branding, particularly in industries tied to personal identity and self-expression. Rakeshyanand and Thamilselvan [8] underline how emotional marketing influences consumer decision-making by linking products to affective states such as love, nostalgia, and happiness. This approach is especially significant in jewelry advertising, where objects are not purchased solely for utility but as markers of personal milestones, intimate relationships, and cultural rituals.

Building on this, Ganassali and Ganassal [9] explore the connection between emotional appeals and consumer social responsibility. They argue that advertising campaigns that tap into emotions can foster not only loyalty but also a sense of shared identity and ethical alignment with a brand. When emotional appeal is grounded in cultural familiarity, it allows consumers—particularly women—to see their lived experiences reflected and validated.

In the digital era, Mohammadi et al. [10] show how emotional and rational appeals converge in video marketing on social platforms. For female consumers, whose purchasing decisions often balance symbolic and rational motives, emotional appeals create resonance while rational cues provide legitimacy. In Moukarzel's "J'ai Envie" campaign, emotional appeal is not simply about sentimentality but about presenting women as multifaceted

beings—capable of desire, longing, and aspiration. This contrasts with celebrity endorsement’s focus on outward glamour, revealing how different strategies project different archetypes of womanhood.

Together, these studies highlight the dual role of advertising strategies: they drive consumer behavior while simultaneously shaping how women are represented in public culture. This duality reinforces the need to evaluate advertising through a gender-sensitive lens, connecting consumer psychology to broader cultural questions of empowerment and equality.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on three theoretical perspectives to analyze how Lebanese jewelry advertising constructs female archetypes:

1. **Meaning Transfer Model (Celebrity Endorsement Theory).** Proposed by McCracken [1], this model explains how the symbolic meanings associated with celebrities are transferred to the products they endorse. In the case of Zoughaib & Sons, Haifa Wehbe’s public image as glamorous and sensual is projected onto the brand’s jewelry, encouraging consumers—particularly women—to align their self-image with that archetype.
2. **Emotional Branding Theory.** Developed by Gobé [2], emotional branding emphasizes creating deep, affective bonds between consumers and brands. Jewelry, which often carries personal and emotional significance, becomes a prime example of how brands humanize themselves by aligning with consumers’ intimate experiences. In Moukarzel’s “J’ai Envie” campaign, emotional branding constructs a narrative of longing and desire, presenting women not only as objects of beauty but as emotional agents who define meaning through consumption.
3. **Archetype Theory.** Jung’s [3] concept of archetypes as universal images rooted in the collective unconscious offers a powerful lens for analyzing female representation in advertising. The glamorous star archetype (embodied by Haifa Wehbe) contrasts with the archetype of the romantic, emotionally expressive woman portrayed in Moukarzel’s campaign. These archetypes resonate with audiences because they tap into shared cultural narratives of womanhood, while also influencing consumer behavior and identity construction.

Together, these frameworks enable a nuanced reading of jewelry advertising as a site where gender, culture, and consumer psychology converge. By examining how archetypes are mobilized through different marketing strategies, this study highlights the broader implications for SDG 5: advertising can either reinforce limiting stereotypes of women or contribute to more diverse and empowering representations of femininity.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore how Lebanese jewelry commercials construct feminine archetypes through distinct branding strategies. Two advertisements were selected as case studies: the Zoughaib & Sons campaign featuring Haifa Wehbe and the Moukarzel “J’ai Envie” campaign. Each commercial represents a different branding technique—celebrity endorsement and emotional appeal—and both reveal contrasting ways of imagining and addressing female consumers.

The analysis is guided by three theoretical lenses introduced earlier: McCracken’s Meaning Transfer Model [1], Gobé’s Emotional Branding Theory [2], and Jung’s Archetype Theory [3]. Together, these frameworks enable a layered reading of how cultural meanings, emotional narratives, and universal archetypes intersect in the portrayal of women. Rather than treating the advertisements as mere promotional tools, this study considers them as cultural texts that reflect and shape societal expectations of womanhood in Lebanon.

Attention is given to the psychology of appeal in advertising, focusing on how imagery, symbolism, and affect influence consumer perceptions. While this research does not directly employ musicological or feminist theory, it draws on gender-sensitive insights to interrogate how the ads simultaneously empower and constrain representations of women, thereby engaging with the objectives of SDG 5.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Zoughaib & Sons: The Glamour of Celebrity Endorsement

The Zoughaib & Sons campaign starring Haifa Wehbe demonstrates the powerful application of McCracken’s Meaning Transfer Model [1]. Haifa’s public persona—bold, glamorous, and unapologetically feminine—becomes inseparable from the brand itself. The advertisement leverages her celebrity status to reach not only luxury consumers but also her wider fan base, thus expanding brand visibility.

The effectiveness of this strategy lies in the construction of identity. Consumers who admire Haifa do not simply purchase jewelry; they purchase a fragment of her aura, embodying the archetypes she represents. Within Jung's framework [3], Haifa embodies both the Lover (sensuality, desire, intimacy) and the Ruler (prestige, control, dominance). Her stylized gaze, confident performance, and luxurious aesthetics resonate with women who aspire to a life of beauty and authority.

This approach has clear commercial advantages—greater trust, increased brand awareness, and emotional attachment through parasocial relationships [7]. Yet, it also raises questions: does the repeated projection of women as glamorous, sensual rulers expand gender representation, or does it risk reinforcing narrow ideals of womanhood centered on appearance and desirability? In this sense, Zoughaib's strategy both empowers and constrains, revealing the double-edged nature of celebrity endorsement in gendered advertising.

Moukarzel: The Intimacy of Emotional Branding

In contrast, Moukarzel's "J'ai Envie" campaign exemplifies Gobé's Emotional Branding Theory [2] by prioritizing storytelling and affect over celebrity influence. The phrase "J'ai Envie" ("I desire") encapsulates the emotional orientation of the campaign, where jewelry is framed not as a status object but as an extension of inner longing and personal narrative.

Set in Paris—the archetypal "city of love"—the commercial relies on romantic visuals, nostalgic music, and relational symbolism to create resonance. Instead of projecting women as icons of glamour, it invites viewers to imagine themselves within the narrative: walking Parisian streets, cherishing intimate moments, embodying elegance through jewelry. Here, Jungian archetypes shift from Haifa's "Ruler" and "Lover" to the Explorer (freedom, individuality) and the Innocent (purity, self-love) [3].

This strategy appeals strongly to modern, independent women who view jewelry not only as adornment but as a marker of identity, memory, and aspiration. It expands the representation of women beyond seduction, offering more nuanced portrayals rooted in self-expression and autonomy. Such framing aligns with the principles of SDG 5, by foregrounding women as agents of desire and individuality rather than passive objects of beauty.

Comparative Insights

Placing the two campaigns side by side reveals how different archetypes of womanhood emerge through divergent branding strategies. Zoughaib & Sons emphasizes visibility, celebrity glamour, and the allure of fantasy, while Moukarzel foregrounds intimacy, individuality, and emotional truth. Both succeed in creating consumer attachment, yet they do so by constructing different cultural scripts of femininity.

This comparative perspective underscores that advertising is not a neutral practice: it actively participates in shaping how women are seen, valued, and imagined in society. It also reveals the importance of interrogating marketing strategies not only for their commercial outcomes but also for their cultural and gendered consequences.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined how Lebanese jewelry advertising mobilizes different branding strategies to construct female archetypes and negotiate cultural narratives of womanhood. By comparing Zoughaib & Sons' reliance on celebrity endorsement with Moukarzel's emotionally driven campaign "J'ai Envie", the analysis demonstrated how two divergent approaches produce contrasting yet complementary cultural scripts of femininity. Zoughaib emphasizes glamour, desire, and authority through Haifa Wehbe's star power, while Moukarzel foregrounds intimacy, individuality, and emotional resonance. Together, these campaigns illustrate advertising's dual capacity to both empower and constrain women's identities.

From the standpoint of SDG 5, the implications are profound. Advertising is not a neutral tool but a cultural practice that influences how women are seen, valued, and represented. By repeatedly associating empowerment with consumption, these campaigns risk perpetuating what Lazar [11] has described as commodity feminism, where female agency is reduced to purchasing power. Yet at the same time, they offer spaces for representing women as subjects of aspiration, individuality, and emotional expression—an important step toward greater inclusivity in gender portrayals.

In terms of theoretical contributions, this study both affirms and challenges existing scholarship. It agrees with McCracken [1] that the Meaning Transfer Model effectively explains how celebrities infuse brands with cultural meaning; Haifa Wehbe's persona undeniably strengthens Zoughaib's brand aura. At the same time, the findings complicate Erdogan's optimistic view [12] that celebrity endorsement universally boosts brand likability. In this case, endorsement also narrows femininity to glamour and seduction, revealing endorsement's cultural and gendered contingencies.

Similarly, Gobé's Emotional Branding Theory [2] is validated in Moukarzel's campaign, which demonstrates the ability of emotional narratives to forge deep consumer bonds. However, this study also supports Gill's [13] and Lazar's [11] critiques of postfeminist media culture by showing that emotional branding continues to tether empowerment to consumerism. While Moukarzel expands portrayals of women through archetypes of the Explorer and Innocent, the campaign still equates autonomy and self-expression with the act of jewelry consumption.

Finally, Kraidy's [14] concept of cultural hybridity is strongly reflected in the findings. Lebanese jewelry advertising negotiates between global and local discourses: Zoughaib mirrors Western luxury campaigns such as Cartier's celebrity-driven narratives, while Moukarzel resonates with global emotional branding trends like Pandora or Tiffany. Yet both remain anchored in Lebanese cultural codes of prestige, romance, and memory. This hybridity highlights advertising's role in mediating not only between brands and consumers but also between global ideals and local cultural expectations.

The broader ethical implications for SDG 5 are clear. As Drumwright and Murphy [15] argue, advertising practitioners hold social as well as commercial responsibility. Brands must recognize that their messages contribute to societal understandings of gender. If they continue to equate empowerment exclusively with consumption, they risk reinforcing inequality. Conversely, if they embrace diversity, authenticity, and inclusivity, advertising can contribute to the cultural goals of SDG 5 by affirming women's multiplicity, autonomy, and agency.

In conclusion, Lebanese jewelry advertising offers a mirror to the facets of womanhood: from the glamorous celebrity archetype to the romantic dreamer and the independent explorer. This study demonstrates that while advertising can risk narrowing femininity to commodified archetypes, it also holds potential for advancing gender equality by creating more inclusive narratives. The challenge for both advertisers and scholars lies in ensuring that future campaigns move beyond narrow fantasies toward representations that genuinely support women's empowerment and align with the transformative aspirations of SDG 5.

Originality and Value

This study offers originality by situating jewelry advertising within the intersection of consumer psychology, gender studies, and cultural representation in the Middle Eastern context, an area still underexplored in academic literature. Unlike prior research that views advertising primarily through commercial or branding effectiveness, this work critically examines how female archetypes are constructed and mobilized through cultural narratives. Its value lies in connecting marketing strategies with SDG 5, showing how advertising functions as both a market-driven practice and a cultural discourse that impacts perceptions of femininity. The study contributes to broader debates on empowerment, identity, and representation.

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