Gendered Storytelling

A normative evaluation of gender differences in terms of decoding a message or theme in storytelling

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![Signatures](image-url)  
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Abstract

Background: The portrayal of men and women in various contexts and gendered-related research is a field of interest that has been extensively dealt with for more than three decades. Still, an acknowledgement of the “truth” is far from being attained. In marketing, the power of storytelling has revolutionized the way stories are used in business practice. This research focus on gender differences in marketing by adding storytelling as a parameter.

Purpose: This thesis was conducted to investigate if men and women's perceptions differ in terms of decoding elements in a story. The purpose was answered by two research questions: (1) Do men and women’s perceptions differ in terms of decoding a message or theme in storytelling? (2) If so, what elements plays major roles?

Method: This thesis takes on a triangulation method and uses an interpretivist research paradigm with a deductive research approach to explore the purpose. This was a qualitative study where primary data was collected using two qualitative research methods, and secondary data from peer-reviewed articles containing relevant theories to this research.

Conclusion: The conclusion is made that if marketers aims to target women, they should focus to create a highly emotional story that contains sentimental elements and shows the importance of family, relationships and love. If they want to target the male audience, they should focus on creating a story that includes a character that is distinctly portrayed as a hero, information is told clearly and straight away where the males easily can identify the mission and, also emphasize statistics and status.
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1 Introduction

In this chapter, the background of the research problem is introduced and previous research on gender differences, content marketing and storytelling are discussed in order to identify a gap in the existing literature. Furthermore, the research problem, research questions, and purpose are explained.

1.1 Background

Gender has been commonly used in marketing for businesses to segment persuasive markets (Putrevu, 2001; Putrevu, 2004; Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015) and the practice is consistent with observations that interests and characteristics, as well as, information process differ between the two genders (Meyers-Levy & Maheswaran 1991; Meyers-Levy & Sternthal 1991). It is usually accepted in most societies that both genders differ and that it is driven by social and biological factors (Putrevu, 2001). Gender roles can be defined as behaviors or professions the specific gender is expected to or more likely to engage in.

Gender roles changes over time, it differs between different cultures (Witt, 1997) and each individual has their own idea of who they are and what gender role they possess (Fischer & Anderson, 2012). Individuals grow into their gender roles as children and they are shaped by the society where culture creates variations in the expected gender roles (Witt, 1997). These gender-roles are commonly used in marketing as stereotypes where males are usually displayed as an authoritative figure, whereas females more often are portrayed as the user of the product or another dependent role such as a parent, spouse or homemaker (Furnham & Mak, 1999). This type of gender stereotyping and its positive and negative impact on the public have been highly debated by researchers (Schroeder & Borgerson, 1998; Furnham & Mak, 1999; Miller, Lurye, Zosuls & Ruble, 2009).

Since gender differences are commonly used in marketing (Putrevu, 2004), one important factor is to develop knowledge about whether men and women differ in terms of their perceptions of what elements in a story makes it attractive for the specific gender. For instance, it has been demonstrated that advertising that highlights the importance of family tends to connect women more intensely than men. In terms of male versus female
purchasing behavior, research has shown that men are more loyal to brands whereas women more loyal to good service (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). In addition, it has been identified that women’s purchasing behavior tend to be more pleasure oriented. When women shop, they search for an emotional experience that awake senses and emotions, which in turn make them feel more passionate and sentimental. Whereas, men’s motives for shopping are objectively and non-personal, and tend to follow a utilitarian or logic based approach. Men generally base their purchasing decision on facts and data (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Babin, Darden and Griffin, (1994) argues that utilitarian value in consumer behavior arise primarily from a functional and cognitive approach. In other words, men’s intention of purchasing is to get something done.

Marketers of today have more diverse options of marketing communication than ever before, and brands can communicate with its targeted consumers using several different tools and methods (Keller, 2009). Content marketing is a growing trend and it is said to be the new era of marketing (Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus & Riel, 2013). Consumers have changed their focus from the product to the brand, moving away from making rationally purchasing decisions to making buying decisions based on emotions (Laros & Steenkamp, 2005), and content marketing has been developed to fill the gap between how consumers like to buy and how companies like to sell (Jefferson & Tanton, 2013). It creates valuable, persuasive and relevant content in order to generate positive behaviors among consumers concerning their view of the brand. It is the idea that brands need to think and operate like media companies to attract and retain customers (Pulizzi, 2012c). Content marketing is used on several different platforms and in different shapes. One large part of content marketing is storytelling and it is said to be the treadstone of today’s new marketing (Pulizzi, 2012c).

Fog, Budtz and Yakaboylu (2005) stated that storytelling is the future shaping the brands of tomorrow. It is essential to get a deep understanding of consumer psychology (Woodside, Sood & Miller, 2008) and today the use of storytelling is a standardized tool in many companies, for both internal and external use. The power of a good story (Bruner, 1986; Green & Brock, 2000) has revolutionized the way stories are used in today’s business practice. Storytelling is powerful since it can be used both as a branding concept and as a communication tool. It is used to communicate brand values and company identities. Stories generate positive feelings in consumers and is more persuasive than facts, which
increases the brand trust and helps to develop the uniqueness of the brand (Lundqvist et al., 2013).

The important and crucial role storytelling obsesses in branding practice is that no matter of what tools or principles companies uses to enhance and control their advertisements, without compelling storytelling, none of them would be effective (Pulizzi, 2012c; Lundqvist et al., 2013). In the advertising industry, storytelling is given since commercials always have told stories (Fog et al., 2005). Stories should be built in a way in which consumers could connect emotionally to them (Woodside, 2010; Escalas 2004). There are four elements that sets up the base of storytelling, (1) the message, (2) the conflict, (3) the characters, and (4) the plot.

Scholars agrees upon storytelling being an effective tool (Adaval & Wyer, 1998; Fog et al., 2005; Lundqvist et al. 2013; Mossberg & Johansen, 2006; Woodside, 2010), however, research lack how it should be told and how specific indices should be displayed to reach a specific target group. Examples of indices are actions, locations, attitudes, characters, and problems, in other words different components of the story (Schank, 1999; Woodside, 2010). Indices can as well as stories create awareness, comprehension, and empathy between the audience (Schank, 1999). Schank (1999) also argues that indices are the most essential part when creating a good story. The greater number of indices means more links to prior experience, which creates empathy and makes it memorable and easier to recall for the listener (Schank, 1999; Escalas, 2004).

1.2 Research Problem

Gender-based marketing has been successfully and frequently used over the years, however, it has also been questioned since some advertisement strategies builds upon gender stereotypes (Furnham, Babitzkow & Uguccioni, 2000; Wolin, 2003). The rapid growth of companies using storytelling in their marketing communication requires new skills (Jefferson & Tanton, 2013). Therefore, research on gender-based marketing needs to be modernized to be applied on new marketing strategies such as storytelling. A great number of storytelling research have been conducted in the recent years (Fog et al., 2005; Mossberg & Johansen, 2006; Woodside, 2010). However, less research has been conducted
on how stories can and should be told to reach a specific target group, for instance, men and women. This is identified as a marketing skill gap and researchers within the field of marketing argue that the gap will continue to widen (Jefferson & Tanton, 2013). Looking at previous research concerning marketing towards both genders and storytelling, a clear gap exists of the understanding if men and women differ in terms of decoding a message in a story. Conducting research in this area can enable companies to target both genders in a more efficient way when using storytelling.

As mentioned before, indices are a vital part of a good story and they have a strong connection to consumer emotions. However, research is lacking the identification of how and if specific indices affect men and women differently. If specific indices have an effect on a specific gender, then marketers could use it to target consumers in a more efficient way.

Storytelling is and should be used on several different media platforms since one single media cannot fulfill people’s interest and lifestyles (Pratten, 2011; Scolari, 2009; Edwards, 2012). In this research, the focus will be on the story in a marketing campaign rather than the use of a specific platform. In addition, the focus will be on video commercials and how consumer’s responds to the information communicated through the advertisement. This can be connected to the research done by Peracchino and Escalas (2008) where they argue that the heart of the story is most essential since people do not remember a whole story. Fog et al. (2005) also strengthen this choice by arguing that a market campaign should be consistent and each story should only communicate one single message. Specific problems the paper aims to treat in its investigation is to go beyond the fact that sharing a good story can be a powerful marketing tool, and go further into the topic by including the aspect of gender differences. The issue lies within the context of what specific content is needed for men versus women for it to become more effective when telling a story.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to identify the role of gender differences in marketing stories, namely, if men and women’s perceptions differ in regards to decoding a message or theme
in a story. The focus of the research is gender differences within the area of marketing communications; storytelling will serve as a tool to investigate this. By investigating from the consumer perspective, the desired outcome of this research is to identify distinctive elements and themes marketers can include in a story to reach a specific gender in a more efficient way.

An evaluative, or normative purpose aims telling how something ought to be, for example to give recommendations (Bell, Raiffa & Tversky, 2011). Therefore, this paper will pursue a normative research since the outcome is desired to serve as recommendations towards marketers working with storytelling.

1.3.1 Research Questions

1. Do men and women’s perceptions differ in terms of decoding a message or theme in storytelling?

2. If so, what elements plays major roles?

1.4 Delimitations

In this study, we are aware of that several terms within gender identity beside men and women exists, such as transsexual which is a gender identity inconsistent with an individual's assigned sex from birth. However, this thesis is delimited to only focus on the male and female gender. Furthermore, the sample only consists of Swedish consumers and commercials that are related to that culture.

1.5 Target Group

The primary target groups for this thesis are students within business and administration as well as marketers.
2 Frame of Reference

In this chapter, previous research on gender differences and the underlying factors will be discussed as well as an explanation of marketing communication and its principles. Three major theoretical and interdependent perspectives concerning the origins of gender differences will be covered. The chapter ends with a description of content marketing where the focus is on storytelling and its role in today’s marketing as well as the power of stories.

2.1 Gender Differences

Historically, the terms “gender” and “sex” have been used interchangeably, with two separate definitions. Back in the days, sex was associated with biological traits an individual was born with and gender was described with an achieved status, constructed through social cultural norms created by the society. However, in modern society their meanings are becoming increasingly distinct (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015) and in this thesis, the terms are used with the same meaning.

Meyers-Levy and Loken (2015) defines the area of research that combines psychology with marketing in a descriptive way as “consumer psychology”. The authors have identified three major theoretical and interdependent perspectives, which try to explain the origins of gender differences. They include (a) sociocultural, (b) evolutionary, and (c) hormone and brain science approaches.

2.1.1 The Three Theoretical and Interdependent Perspectives

2.1.1.1 Socio-cultural Perspective

The socio-cultural aspect outlines that gender roles and behavior should change across cultures and time. It describes that the differences between the sexes arise from social, cultural, physiological and other external, environmental forces. Previous research state that the socio-cultural theory is like other gender theories where research acknowledges the roles of both biological and learned influences being potential factors of the emergence of gender roles (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). The socio-cultural theory can perhaps explain why women strive to become emotionally connected to advertising that includes family
influences and why it creates certain affection that more intensively draw their attention. This because, according to theory, Meyers-Levy and Loken (2015) argues that today’s physical differences between male and female originate from women’s abilities of childbearing and nursing children. It is observed that women naturally inhabited instincts of bearing and nursing children can be the logic behind the importance of feeling emotional connections when making a purchase decision. Meanwhile, physical strength and size influenced men’s ability to gain necessary resources for the family to survive and can be the reason why men’s motives when shopping is ‘to get something done’, in other words, more logic and efficiency based approach (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). The socio-cultural theory states that since men and women tend to have different roles in the society, they have become psychologically different to be able to adjust to their social roles. Stereotypically, men are larger and stronger than women and therefore receive greater attention, respect, and power in the society. However, differences between male and females are not based on psychological variances but are influenced socially (Wood & Eagly, 2012).

Further, Meyers-Levy and Loken (2015) stress the importance of the differences between men and women in terms of division of labor. For instance, women invested their time in home activities such as cooking and cleaning, while men farmed and hunted animals for food. The difference in the division of labor is important since it can explain the creation of cultural beliefs, which can be described as shared beliefs of what characterizes the both genders and are shared among the members. Here, imitation is stated to be the key factor in the formation process. This separates the sexes in terms of their behavior and the important objective of cultural beliefs is to guide behavior. Connecting these observations to marketing, the differences between the sexes that originate from cultural beliefs might be a major reason why men and women have different purchasing behaviors since they simply have been guided to believe in that from birth (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). However, within the socio-cultural perspective, across time, behavior and gender roles have changed, especially for women. Research state that communal ancient roles remain, but the stereotype of women has widened to welcome an increased focus on careers and greater acceptance of women possessing more “manly” traits such as assertiveness (Wood & Eagly, 2012).
2.1.1.2 The Evolutionary Perspective

The second perspective that takes on the origins of gender differences is the evolutionary psychology. It focuses on the impacts of human biology; the evolved mechanisms that humans developed, necessary to survive environmental challenges faced by their ancestors. An evolutionist seeks to address why differences of behavior, cognition, and emotions exist rather than focus on answering what it results in. In pursuance to answer this question, the evolutionary psychology relies on the basic assumption that the human mind is an outcome of an evolutionary process. Humans perform on the principle of natural selection; the forms of life with favorable traits that better enable them to adapt to environmental surroundings. Those who can compete over food and mates as well as adapt to change in climate will tend to survive and reproduce in larger numbers (Barkow, Cosmides & Tooby, 1992).

The key assumption from the evolutionary perspective is that natural selection has generated a human brain equipped with specific but diversified programs, each specialized to solve recurring obstacles faced by our hunter and gatherer ancestors. The programs were created to guide humans through challenges such as finding a mate, produce offspring, protecting the family or function as a navigator during hunting and gathering. Since ancient times, men and women often faced different concerns as they confronted these problems, they generated distinctive gender related programs (Tooby & Cosmides, 2015).

Wood and Eagly (2002) explains that gender differences exist since men and women faced different forms of pressure in their environment and therefore developed different strategies to secure their survival and reproductive success. This may explain why men and women differ on a psychologically level since they tend to occupy different social roles. For instance, women across times have invested greatly in reproduction of children and they have developed traits that helps to improve the likelihood that each child will survive. However, like other gender perspectives, the evolutionary view also recognizes factors beyond biology, such as culture, also have affected the human development (Kenrick & Luce, 2000).

Previous literature within the evolutionary perspective concerning gender differences focus to a large degree on the programs that early men and women developed to confront
mating-related problems (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Smiler (2011) clarifies that research has identified several basic assumptions about the logic behind the genders’ sexual activity. For instance, desired number of sexual partners differs between men and women, as well as specific characteristics each gender desires in choosing mates. Research have concluded that, since females have a higher risk in their selection of male due to the possibility of getting pregnant and are also limited in the number of children they can have during their lifetime; their desired number of sexual partners are lower than males. Because of this limit, women are greatly motivated to find a partner with physical and psychological characteristics that in turn can provide her healthy children (Wood & Eagly, 2002).

Connecting this premise to marketing and consumer behavior, weather choosing a mate or a clothing item, women are assumed to be more comprehensive searches, known as the selective hypothesis (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Men have no restriction concerning their reproduction. When it comes to differences in terms of characteristics men and women seek in their mate, research has demonstrated that women tend to look for males who have ‘resources’ to support their parental efforts such as power and money, whereas men tend to search for a partner with reproductive traits such as childbearing hips, as well as a female with qualities of being nurturing (Looy, 2001). Evolutionary researchers suggest that mating-related issues may answer some well-established gender differences such as men’s greater strive for financial resources and risk seeking. In the consumption context, research suggest that men have a greater need and motivation of acquiring resources such as technology and cars, which deliver a message of ‘status’ when attempting to find a mate. Women on the other hand have a greater motivation toward maintaining youth and physical attractiveness (Buss, 1989).

2.1.1.3 Hormone and Brain Science Perspective

Research has indicated that hormone and brain science can be contributing factors to why gender differences in behavior and cognition exist. Marketers can implement findings within the hormone and brain perspective by considering that the stress hormone ‘cortisol’ remains in women bodies longer than men’s. Due to this, women are easier turned off by conflict and stress and therefore tend to dislike marketing communication ignoring this finding (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015).
A female brain has a larger prefrontal cortex, which influence emotions and how they are processed. This makes women more in touch with their emotions, resulting in the fact that women generally can express their feelings easier than men. Due to this, marketing communication that focuses on emotions is most efficient to reach women (Hines, 2004; Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Men have a larger parietal lobe and therefore tend to prefer images over reading. In an attempt to answer the question why females tend to connect stronger to emotional marketing content than men, one explanation can be that the male brains separate language in the left hemisphere and emotions in the right, whereas women’s emotions are present in both parts. Research suggest that due to differences in the brain structure between men and women, in terms of the left and right hemisphere, their motives for shopping differ (Hines, 2004; Roivainen, 2011). Men use a larger portion of the left hemisphere, which is the logical/rational side of the brain in charge of performing logic estimations and processing facts. Women have a thicker ‘bridge’ of nerve tissue called ‘Corpus Callosum’ that connects the left and right hemisphere. This provide women to use both sides of the brain to a higher extent since the bridge allow women transfer data between the left and right hemisphere faster than men. This finding corresponds with the assumption that women tend to see the ‘bigger picture’ in situational thinking whereas men perform better on a problem-solving basis. The differences in their brain structure might explain well-established reasoning that men tend to be mission and task-oriented shoppers while women are discovery-oriented shoppers, more on a journey than a mission (Tian, Wang, Yan & He, 2011; Graff, 2013).

Research behind differences concerning hormones as being a contributing factor to why gender differences exist, is a complex area where the answer is far from being attained. What is known is that testosterone are the male hormone and estrogen the female, however, both genders are exposed to the hormones to some degree, which highly differs from one to another. Although, research agrees that testosterone typically present at higher levels in men than women, plays a major role in producing gender differences (Cohen-Bendahan, Van de Beek & Berenbaum, 2005). Cohen-Bendahan et al. (2005) explain that most of our knowledge of hormonal influences originated from indirect research investigations, such as comparing control groups with individuals that have disorders, which produce gender-atypical hormone exposure. The most demonstrative evidence that hormone exposure might explain why gender differences exist, arise from investigations of children playing with toys. Pasterski, Geffner, Brain, Hindmarsh, Brook, and Hines (2005)
identified, after observing girls with a disorder that produce higher levels of testosterone, presented more male-typical toy choices compared to unaffected girls with higher levels of estrogen.

2.1.2 Gender Stereotyping

Lorber and Farell (1991) in their book called “The Social Construction of Gender”, illustrate gender stereotyping describing a morning on the subway, seeing a well-dressed man with a year-old child in a stroller. Regardless how seeing a man taking care of a small baby in public today is increasingly common, still, the man was obviously stared and smiled at. A clear example of a routine-based gender assumption, done by us humans without knowingly thinking about it. West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that gender is a socially constructed phenomenon, which characterizes men from women and vice versa. The concept of social constructionism explains attributes such as roles, norms, and relationships that it is what differentiate men from women but varies from society to society and can be changed over time. When an individual or group does not behave with the frame of these thought norms and beliefs, they can experience the feeling of being an outsider and can face discrimination or social exclusion (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Zevallos, 2014).

The portrayal of men and women in various contexts and gendered-related research is a field of interest that has been extensively dealt with for more than three decades. Still, an acknowledgement of the “truth” is far from being attained (Epure & Vasilescu, 2014). In terms of gender and marketing, the understanding of gender differences is a critical factor in a business consumer research. After all, one of businesses aim, from the outcome of their consumer analysis, is to develop an effective marketing strategy. Depending on the ideal consumer they wish to target, the research can show if elements in their marketing communication should be directed more intensively to men than women or vice versa (Wolin, 2003).

The sociology of gender examines differences of femininity (what the society believes is appropriate behavior for women) and masculinity (what the society believes is appropriate behavior for men) and that these beliefs in turn influences individual’s identities and social practices (Zevallos, 2014). Researches are in an agreement that when considering the
question of what is typical feminine and masculine attributes, we are entering a field called gender stereotyping (Epure & Vasilescu, 2014). Deaux and Lewis (1984) define the term gender stereotyping as beliefs that certain attributes differentiate women and men. Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell and Ristikari (2011) discuss the basis of the socio-cultural theory about gender differences, that gender roles are united with cultural beliefs, which has the function to guide behavior. The society’s expectations influence behavior through social rewards and punishments for conforming or not conforming to roles and may develop gender differences that otherwise might not have occurred. The authors illustrate this observation with the example that not only female leaders are being evaluated more negatively than male leaders. They are also being more negatively evaluated when possessing typically “male” traits such as dominance, directness, confidence and anger. However, this observation also applies for the male sex since studies has shown that men are being punished for pursuing female occupations (e.g., ballet) or for possessing typically female traits such as agreeableness or being a “nice guy” (Judge, Livingston & Hurst, 2012). The authors also state that gender roles create pressure to adapt and become internalized as gender identities, even to the extent to when other individuals are not present, they still behave consistently with a standardized self-image.

Witt and Wood (2010) stress the importance of not forgetting that it is not only the society taking advantage of the term gender roles; men and women also use gender stereotypes to self-regulate and justify their behaviour. Epure and Vasilescu (2014) further describe stereotyping as a standardized view of a group of people that ignores “normal” individual differences. Instead, the standardized view is what characterizes a group by a specific set of features, motives, values and behavior as a part of each person. In other words, gender stereotypes refer to the society’s expectations regarding how we should act and think as boys and girls. These expectations from the society can in turn be associated with “gender identity”, which refers to how individuals feel about expressing their gender and gender roles towards the society, for example clothing behavior and personal appearance (Deaux & Lewis 1984). The term femininity is often described as emotional, sensitive, weak, nurturing, self-critical and graceful. Whereas masculinity can be described with words such as non-emotional, competitive, hard, rebellious, strong and aggressive. Regarding physical characteristics and role behaviors, girls usually have long hair and nursing children is often considered ideally done by women, while men often have leadership roles as well as are taller than girls. In terms of differences in occupation, most nurses until recently were
women while most doctors and truck drivers were men (Deaux & Lewis 1984: Meyers-Levy Loken, 2015).

2.1.2.1 Gender-role Stereotyping in Advertisement

Although different cultures differ, gender-role stereotyping has the tendency to be rather consistent among different countries. Males are commonly displayed as an authoritative figure, whereas females often are portrayed as the user of the product or another dependent role such as a parent, spouse or homemaker (Furnham & Mak, 1999). However, even though gender roles are commonly used in marketing, important to know is that literature discusses its impact on the public. In research done by Miller et al. (2009), children described girls as pretty, having long hair, wearing dresses, and makeup, whereas boys were described as liking sports and having traits connected to fighting and playing rough. This is a clear example of how gender stereotyping is a big part of our society. Often reality and advertising acts upon one another and together with the mass media advertising helps shaping identities, especially gender identities (Schroeder & Borgerson, 1998).

Research has shown that gender role stereotyping influences people’s beliefs concerning men and women, precisely among the young (Furnham, et al., 2000). This is especially true if used on television where it can impact both children and adults view of gender roles (Furnham & Bitar, 1993). Recent research on stereotyping gender roles in marketing are more focused on a specific gender, most often women, compared with older research where the comparison of the two sexes is more common (Fowler & Thomas 2015). When it comes to gender stereotyping in advertising recent research made by Fowler and Thomas (2015) shows that the displayed gender roles are changing with the changes in the society, moving to a less stereotypical state. Knowing this, looking at how different societies are formed can be helpful when creating content for a specific gender.

2.2 Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is the study of how people act before, during, and after purchases. It includes everything around a purchase that can affect the procedure and consumers’ choice of brand/product that can satisfy their necessities as well as wants. How different
organizations reaches out to the public and displays themselves have certain impact on consumers (Solomon, 2008; Yu, 2011).

Gender differences are inevitable in consumer behavior; every consumer has their own idea of who they are and what type of gender role they have. Each culture differs on what a man respectively a woman should, and what is considered right or wrong. These guidelines have more effect in some cultures than others, however, everyone gets affected by it to some extent. Therefore, assumptions about genders are used in marketing to target men and women differently and why certain niches of marketing approach that attract women more strongly than men and vice versa exists (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015).

2.3 Marketing Communication

The importance of marketing communication has grown dramatically over recent years due to technological advancement, which has created new ways of communication and changed the way marketers can communicate with their consumers. Another factor influencing the importance of marketing communication is the change in consumer behavior (Keller, 2001; Keller, 2009). Today’s consumers are more educated and critical of business practices, they also possess the power of having interconnection boundless of time and space. Since consumers can access information easier than ever before there is a risk of consumers being overloaded with information, which might lead to confusion. Therefore, marketers need to create messages that are unique in order differentiate themselves from their competitors and to create content that provides value for the consumer (Kitchen & Proctor, 2015).

Marketing communication are the direct or indirect ways companies tries to inform, persuade, incite, and remind consumers of their brand and their products. It describes or illustrates how, why, by who, where, and when a product is used. Marketing communication is the voice of a brand and it is the instrument of how firms can establish a dialogue with consumers (Keller, 2009). Today’s modern marketing communication program includes several different communication options. A communication option can be defined as every marketer-initiated form of communication that is directly or indirectly connected to the brand (e.g. website, social media, ad campaign, different types of sponsorships etc.) (Keller, 2001).
In order to communicate with its consumers as efficiently as possible, the understanding of communication and its process is vital. Communication is the human activity that ties individuals together and generates relationships; it can be defined as a transactional process between two or more people where meaning is exchanged through the intentional use of symbols (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). The process can include both verbal and nonverbal messages. A vital element in communication is the message, which needs to be understood by the receiver in the same terms as intended by the sender. It is important that the people involved shares the same meaning and has similar experience in order for the receiver to encode it properly (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). This is a challenge in marketing since the message is delivered to the public who all, most likely, do not share the same experience. However, sharing the same languages and cultures are two factors that can be translated into sharing the same experiences (Keller, 2001).

There are two different types of communication, one-way communication and two-way communication. A two-way communication is said to be incomplete if the receiver does not respond with feedback. (Windahl, Signitzer & Olson 2008). Marketing communication has traditionally been a one-way process where companies used the media to communicate with consumers and limited feedback was given by the marketing research tools available at the time. However, the new technology has opened the possibility of a two-way communication where consumers can share and discuss brands more easily with each other as well as with brands and companies (Senecal & Nantel, 2004). What market a company operates in is also important and Kitchen and Proctor (2015) concluded in their research that different markets need different communication methods.

The marketing communication process builds on Shannon and Weaver’s (1961) communication process (figure 1) where companies encode messages that are sent to the consumers (receivers) who then decodes them and then gives the company feedback. In the case of video commercials, the brand or company encodes messages within the commercial and then the audience, in this case consumer, decodes it. Surrounding distractions called noises can hinder this marketing communication process. Consumers may not pay fully attention when the message is delivered and an example of a noise is children playing during a commercial break (Belch G & Belch M, 2004).
As discussed earlier several factors such as the fast-technological developments, the rapidly globalization, the deregulations of markets, and the individualization of consumption patterns have changed marketing communication; it has moved from tactics to strategy (Schultz & Kitchen, 2000), and today one is talking about integrated marketing communication (IMC). An IMC strategy is a set of processes which includes planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of coordinated, measurable, and influential brand communication programs with all kind of different stakeholders. It is often seen as an efficient brand strategy (Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan & McDonald, 2005). Duncan (2002, p. 8) defines IMC as “A cross-functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging data-driven, purposeful dialogue with them”. In their research, Schultz and Kitchen (2000) detected four stages of IMC; tactical coordination of promotional elements, redefining the scope of marketing communications, application of information technology to financial and strategic integration. The authors also found that the majority of businesses are established in the first two stages where some are proceeding to stage three and a low number are moving to stage four.
2.3.1 Brand Strategies

Brand strategies play a crucial role in marketing communication, it is based on the fundamental visions and values brands encompass and how they are portrayed to the public. Thus, companies need to implement the most suitable ones to reach and satisfy their targeted consumers. The chosen strategy is used by the brand to display who they are, who they want to be, and to show people why they should stay loyal to the brand (Amalancei, 2013).

An aspect of brand strategy is positioning, it puts emphasis on displaying values of brands and connecting it with consumers and their perceptions. Consumers should be able to identify how the brand differentiate themselves from their competitors (Crawford, 1985; Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010). Danciu (2007) argues that positioning a brand is a way to fill a gap in the market. By displaying the brand as something unique, it puts the brand in a good place and attracts the wanted customers. The position is developed through three levels of brand values: functional, emotional and sensorial. The functional level refers to product attributes that solve consumer’s wants and needs. Emotional level is based on the status of the brand and how customers buying the product are perceived by others when being associated with the brand. Finally, the sensorial level grasps traits of the brand that are meeting the needs of the consumer in terms of being new and exciting (Danciu, 2007).

2.3.2 Content Marketing

A detailed definition of content marketing is given by the content marketer Joe Pulizzi, founder of the Content Marketing Institute, he defines it as “a strategic marketing technique of creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action by changing or enhancing consumer behavior” (Pulizzi, 2012a). In other words, content marketing includes all varieties of content that add value to consumers. Lieb (2011) also emphasizes that the content should influence both consumers and the business.

Content are words, knowledge and information given, whereas valuable content is content with a higher purpose that is created for a specific audience. It is also said that content works best for business if it is helpful, entertaining, authentic, relevant, and timely (Jefferson & Tanton, 2013). Valuable content can inspire customers and it helps building
ongoing relationships (Lieb, 2011). Content in advertising has been shown having an important impact on consumer’s choice (Bertrand, Karlan, Mullainathan, Shafir & Zinman, 2010). The capability of supplying information in multiple formats offers the possibility to meet consumer needs (Pophal, 2015). Brands need to think and operate like media companies to attract and retain customers. Content marketing takes place both offline and online and it is a continuing process, which should be included into the overall marketing strategy (Jefferson & Tanton, 2013).

Using content in marketing is not new, however, in recent years it has moved away from forming clearly promotional messages to building meaningful content that adds value. Researchers agree upon the change in the digital environment being one of the main reasons for the change of how content is used today (Pulizzi, 2007; Pulizzi, 2012ab; Jefferson & Tanton, 2013; Pophal, 2015). Pulizzi (2012b) explains that the shift of how content is delivered is due to several factors. One of those factors is the Internet (Pulizzi, 2007) and the fading of technology barriers, which, has resulted in anyone being able to publish for free (Pulizzi, 2012b). The Internet has also changed the behavior of consumers. Consumers of today are more educated and Internet-smart, and search for valuable and useful content from all kinds of different sources (Pulizzi, 2007). Today’s consumers have consciously tried to avoid being disrupted by marketing messages, such as ads and other methods used by marketers. Shock advertising and different ways to gain consumers attention is not as efficient as it used to be. This due to consumers having the ability to choose whether they want to listen or see the message or not. In today’s competitive environment, businesses need to engage consumers rather than disturb them.

Content marketing can have different shape and it can come both in long-form (such as Articles, eBooks, blogs etc.) and short-forms (such as Facebook updates, Twitter updates, Instagram updates, images etc.). Conversation and sharing content online is one other form. By creating and distributing content that helps consumers, the brand becomes a part of their lives, which can build trust over time. The fundamental advantages of content marketing are that it builds brand awareness and relationships with the targeted consumers (Jefferson & Tanton, 2013).

The increased use of content marketing has resulted in new challenges for marketers. The main challenges for today’s marketers are connected to the popularity of content
marketing. In 2016 one of the main issue for marketers were the large distribution of different content, which created greater competition among the ones trying to control this tool. This can be referred to as a content shock. The challenges also exist due to the higher standard and quality that content marketing of today holds. Most companies are today aware of the need of making compelling content (Pophal, 2017).

2.3.3 Storytelling

As mentioned before storytelling is said to be the treadstone of today’s new marketing (Pulizzi, 2012abc), and it is essential to get a deep understanding of consumer psychology (Woodside, Sood & Miller, 2008). It is a standardized tool in many companies, for internal and external use. In an experiment, Lundqvist et al. (2013) investigated the effect on consumers using brand stories, where half of the participants were exposed to the story and the other half were not. The ones exposed to the story chatted more about the brand and behaved more energetic when making connections to the brand. This shows how large of an impact a brand story can have on consumers. Storytelling is powerful since it can be used both as a branding concept and as a communication tool and it has both a strategic and operational dimension. It plays a crucial role in branding practice since it enhances the effect of business marketing tools such as search engine optimization (SEO), conversion or leveraging social media (Lundqvist, et al., 2013; Pulizzi, 2012). When it comes to the advertising industry, storytelling is given since commercials always have told stories (Fog et al., 2005). It is used to communicate brand values and what companies stand for. It generates positive feelings in consumers and it is more persuasive than facts, which increases the brand trust and helps to develop the uniqueness of the brand (Lundqvist et al., 2013).

Research has also been conducted on what media platforms the stories should be told (Pratten, 2011; Scolari, 2009; Edwards, 2012). Stories should be told through various platforms since one single media cannot fulfill people’s interest and lifestyles (Pratten, 2011), and each media acts on what it does best (Scolari, 2009). Multi-platform storytelling refers to a story where the content takes place on several different media platforms (such as film, radio, television, websites, cell phones, novels and music) in a coordinated way (Edwards, 2012). Using several platforms enables one to create content that is right-sized, right-timed and, right-placed (Pratten, 2011).
2.3.3.1 Stories

In the Lundqvist et al (2013) research, the power of a story is displayed and they argue that storytelling is more efficient than traditional marketing tools, even if it lacks emotional intensity. A story can be defined as a description of events, myths and narratives (Hopkinson & Hogarth-Scott, 2001). Numerous scholars have stated that individuals naturally think and reflect in story-like forms (Bruner, 1986; Shank, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1991; Adaval & Wyer, 1998), which creates understanding of the great influence that a story possess. Good stories have the power to grow over time, which gives the character’s room to build their personalities, making it easier for the audience to connect and embrace the story (Fog et al., 2005; Mossberg & Johansen, 2006). Singh and Sonnenburg (2012) discuss how stories can provide meaning to a brand, and how it can help build brand awareness, understanding and recognition. The meaning of a brand can be explained as the outcome of consumers feeling a belongingness towards the story and in that way feeling like they are a part of it. The strengthened brand connection is partly due to the theme of the story, which creates a conversation between the consumers and the brand, where consumers can identify themselves and their own experiences (Escalas, 2004).

Cultures around the world differ; one thing can seem “weird” or “unusual” to some, might be seen as normal to others, our beliefs shape our own reality and creates our own truth. Mythical stories are built on components within cultures. They work as “instructions” of how to deal with the everyday life and how to process information, therefore it is significant for marketers to consider myths within cultures when targeting certain people or areas (Hopkinson & Hogarth-Scott, 2001; Solomon, 2008). Commonly, marketing messages are built upon cultural myths, however, it is rarely done on purpose; marketers unintentionally use the values of a myth to demonstrate the meaning of the product or service that they are selling (Hopkinson & Hogarth-Scott, 2001).

There are four elements that set up the base of storytelling (1) the message, (2) the conflict, (3) the characters and, (4) the plot. The message needs to be clear and only consist of one single message to not be blurry and unclear. The story should have a central message that works as a centric theme throughout the story. This will help the listener to understand the intended message (Fog et al., 2005).
The motivator for a good story is the conflict because it drives people to action. This since humans naturally strive to have harmony in their lives and when faced with a problem or a conflict the natural thing is to find a solution. Storytellers communicate the message through conflict and its resolution. The conflict needs to be balanced to not be over-the-top, which could make the story chaotic and in turn lose the attention from the audience. Nevertheless, too much harmony and lack of conflict makes the story boring and not exciting (Fog et al., 2005).

A story needs to have compelling characters to be able to resolve and make the conflict interesting. The characters are one of the most essential indices and if one can identify with the character the likelihood of embracing the story will be greater. Usually a story begins with the main character or hero pursuing a goal. Listeners need to be able to identify with the characters, which happens when recognition of oneself in the characters occurs. When developing stories and creating characters, the target audience needs to be in focus since they are the ones that needs to identify themselves with the character traits. Humans recognize feelings such as sorrow, desperation, fear, joy or hope. However, the audience also needs to recognize the motivation of the action made by the characters (Fog et al., 2005).

The plot is the last element and here the flow and structure of the story is made (Fog et al., 2005). By holding the story together, the structure of the story engages the audience (Lundqvist et al., 2013), as well as an authentic and true to life story (Green, 2004). However, an unexpected or extraordinary twist can make the story more convincing (Peracchio & Escalas, 2008). The elements are built on the traditional fairytale-model and they can be used as checkpoints when businesses develop stories (Fog et al., 2005).

Numerous commercials use and borrow from already existing stories; this enables companies to place its product or service in an already known environment without the need to explain everything in detail (Fog et al., 2005). Research also shows that stories can influence people, gain listeners attention and, move an audience to action (Adaval & Wyer, 1998; Woodside, 2010). They are also valuable since they build on indices that the receiver can understand and connect emotionally to (Escalas 2004; Woodside, 2010).
3 Methodology & Method

In this chapter, the methodology and method this thesis undertakes is described. The chosen approach, method of analysis and its suitability for this thesis are discussed, as well as the credibility of the research.

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Methodological Triangulation and Research Paradigm

This research follows a triangulation method, also known as multiple methods (Collins & Hussey, 2014), since multiple sources in form of an analysis of commercials, focus groups and previous research are used. Davis, Golicic and Boerstler (2011) defines multiple methods as research where data is collected from more than one source and uses more than one analysis. Multiple methods studies can use two or more qualitative methods, two or more quantitative methods, or a mixed of the two methods (Davis et al., 2011).

However, Collins and Hussey (2014) argues that the term mixed method should be used instead of multiple or triangulation when methods from different paradigms are used. In this research, two qualitative methods are used. In multiple methods, the second method is used as a development of the findings in the first method (Davis et al., 2011). The main reason for the use of several methods is, according to Denscombe (2009), the ability to investigate a phenomenon in a broader perspective. Davis et al. (2011), also argues that multiple methods are stronger and more powerful than studies using single methods.

Important when using methodological triangulation is that the methods are chosen from the same paradigm (Collins & Hussey, 2014).

This thesis follows an interpretivist research paradigm and takes on a deductive research approach since its purpose is to understand gender differences with an analysis of commercials and focus groups as a base. However, since the thesis tries to fill a gap in previous research, some elements of an inductive reasoning can be recognized. Moreover, the research also follows an interpretivist research paradigm due to it being a type of gender study. Conducted research findings under the interpretivist paradigm are not drawn
from statistical analysis of quantitative data, as they generally derive from the usage of qualitative research methods (Collins & Hussey, 2014).

3.1.2 Deductive Research Approach

Conducted research under the interpretivist paradigm usually involves an inductive research approach (Collins & Hussey, 2014), however, this thesis undertakes a deductive research approach with some inductive elements. This, since most of the theoretical aspects are known (scientifically based) and some still needs to be explored in order to generate new knowledge (Reichertz, 2010).

Deductive research approach is based on the idea of taking general knowledge and using it to get precise answers. This can include taking an already known study and testing it on a different market. In contrast, inductive research approach is about finding new general data through empirical observations, i.e. not extending already known knowledge, but finding new (Collins & Hussey, 2014). In this thesis, previous research on gender differences and how marketers use this to their advantage is known however, applying these theories on storytelling would most likely generate new knowledge. The intention of using this research approach was to use already known knowledge and identify new findings in a theoretical and methodological way; using a deductive approach with some inductive elements (Taylor, Fisher & Dufresne, 2002).

3.1.3 Qualitative Methodology

Since this research follows an interpretivist research paradigm, where the focus is on quality and in depth data collection, a qualitative methodology is used. Quantitative data is data in nominal form and a qualitative methodology emphasizes the themes and patterns of understanding the phenomena. As the research aims to understand how men and women’s perceptions differ regarding what elements in a story catches their attention and to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, qualitative methods are preferable since it allows the researchers to gain more in-depth knowledge (Collins & Hussey, 2014).
3.2 Method

3.2.1 Data Collection

This paper is based on both primary and secondary data to get deeper knowledge about gender differences and in terms of perceptions of content in marketing stories. The secondary data was collected from existing literature and marketing campaigns, whilst the primary data was gathered from conducting an analysis of video commercials and focus groups.

3.2.1.1 Secondary Data

The secondary data included in this thesis was mainly gathered from previous research through peer-reviewed articles in relevant journals. To find these articles, keywords based on this paper’s two main subjects (gender differences and storytelling) were used to get results for a broader understanding. Examples of these keywords were “gender”, “gender differences”, “gendered marketing”, “marketing stories”, “storytelling”, “gendered stories”, “content marketing”, and “branding content”. Furthermore, to get a deeper understanding about specific topics, such as brand strategies and gender stereotyping, other related keywords were used. To find the articles, databases such as Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Jönköping University’s own database was used.

Other secondary data used in this thesis was gathered from YouTube clips based on video commercials from several brands. The video clips were used in the analysis of the commercials and two of them during the focus group sessions. To find these video clips, keywords based on the brand or the title of the commercial itself were used. YouTube was the main source for this; however, other websites containing information about the videos was also used. To find the most suitable commercials for this study, companies known for using storytelling were searched for and incorporated into the analysis.

3.2.1.2 Primary Data

The primary data in this thesis was conducted using two different qualitative methods; an analysis of 32 commercials and three focus group sessions.
3.2.2 Analysis of Commercials

The authors conducted an analysis of commercials that uses storytelling and chose to analyze the commercials themselves due to several reasons. Firstly, the analysis was built on the secondary data included in the “theoretical framework”, which makes the authors knowledgeable within the subject. Secondly, the aim of the analysis was to create a base for the focus groups. Nevertheless, important to note is that all authors were female, which could have affected the answers being more relatable to women. However, since females tend to see the ‘bigger picture’ (Tian et al., 2011; Graff, 2013) they might be more suitable for these kinds of analysis.

The objective of this analysis was to find indices in the commercials that could relate more to a specific gender and to create a base for the focus groups. To find appropriate commercials, inspiration was taken from the web page “Advertising Age” where the “best campaigns” are listed (Adage.com, 2017) and the Swedish Website “Guldägget” were different Swedish commercials are awarded (Guldägget.se, 2017). Commercials were also found by searching the web using Google and YouTube. Keywords such as “best storytelling ads”, “ads using storytelling”, and “best ad campaign” were used as keywords. The commercials needed to have a clear story since the focus of this paper is storytelling. Therefore, a checklist was created where the commercials needed to reach specific objectives concerning the four elements of storytelling (the message, the conflict, the characters, and the plot) (Appendix III, table 1).

Starting the analysis process, 32 commercials were selected and evaluated using the checklist (See Appendix III, table 2 and Appendix II). Based on the result from the checklist, ten commercials were chosen for the analysis (Appendix III, table 3). The questions for the analysis were constructed using the four elements of storytelling in a combination with the findings in the theoretical part concerning gender differences (Appendix IV). These questions were then analyzed by the authors one by one. This to get different views without influencing each other. The answers were then discussed and summarized systematically to identify patterns of differing gender traits in the stories (Appendix I), and to provide material for the focus groups. During the discussion about the different commercials, a clear pattern of emotions playing a crucial role was identified, as well as the context in which the movie was delivered (Appendix I). Based on the result,
two commercials were chosen to be used during the focus group sessions, since the authors believe that one being more feminine and one being more masculine. After the choice of commercials, questions were formulated based on the result from the analysis, the authors’ experience with the questions in the analysis, and the chosen commercials. Questionnaires were created for each chosen commercial (Appendix V).

3.2.3 Focus Groups

The second step of collecting primary data included three focus groups with people divided based on their genders (Table 1). Each session was recorded and the participants were assured of their anonymity. The intention of this was to observe if different answers were given based on the group dynamic. Focus group is the most suitable method to use when aiming to collect data concerning thoughts and perceptions. The method includes interviews where answers can be given straight or discussed among the participants, however, it also incorporates observation of reactions, feelings, and behaviors. The aim of a focus group can be to get a deeper understanding of a topic, while at the same time get response on the already known facts (Collins & Hussey, 2014); a suitable approach to solve the research problem in this thesis.

The first group contained only females, the second was a mix of both genders, and the final consisted of only men (Table 1). Since the sample only consisted of Swedish consumers, the sessions were held in Swedish to make the participants feel comfortable and in that way, create more lively discussions.

Table 1 Focus Groups

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<tr>
<th>Focus Group 1</th>
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<th>Focus Group 2</th>
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<th>Focus Group 3</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
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The structure of the focus groups was based on three main activities: observation of commercials, answering questions in written form, and group discussions. Each group watched two commercials, after each commercial each participant had to answer nine questions in writing (Appendix V). These questions were based on the analysis of the
commercials (Appendix I). Afterwards, the monitor, who led the discussion, gave verbal questions. The chosen commercials were the Swedish grocery retailer ICA’s commercial “Stigs livs kärlek” \(^1\) and the commercial made by Volvo named “Epilogue” \(^2\) (Appendix II). The commercials were chosen based on the analysis of commercials where the authors concluded ICA being more female, whereas Volvo being more connected to the male gender.

The objective of this method was to get real-life perceptions supporting the indices found in the analysis of commercials and to find other data connecting the different genders and marketing content. Furthermore, by observing the difference of answers between the three groups, the hope was to find out how genders affect each other in their answers in a discussion setting.

3.2.3.1 Sample Selection

As mentioned before, when following an interpretivist paradigm research data is not analyzed statistically, generalizing from the sample of the population, therefore, there are no need for a selection of a random sample (Collins & Hussey, 2014). Therefore, convenience sampling has been used in this research. This is a practice where data is collected from members of the population who are conveniently available for the study (Collins & Hussey, 2014). In order to find people for the focus groups, invitations were sent out through Facebook and telephone calls; the ones available got to participate in the study. However, since the sample is small, it is important to know that the findings might be biased and less applicable to the greater population (Collins & Hussey, 2014).

3.3 Credibility

Credibility relates to whether the research was conducted in a way where the subject of the investigation was identified and described in a correct manner (Collins & Hussey, 2014). In this thesis, validity has been taken into consideration to guarantee credibility. Validity is the degree to what a test measures and what the researchers wants it to measure. There are numerous of different ways of how the validity of a research can be evaluated. Face validity

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\(^1\) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNicj9OUqmk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNicj9OUqmk)

\(^2\) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SRQUxdNppg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SRQUxdNppg)
is commonly used, it ensures that the tests or measures tests what they are intended to test (Collins & Hussey, 2014). In order to ensure validity, the research questions in this thesis were in focus throughout. Triangulation has been used to ensure credibility of the two qualitative methods. It means that one looks on the problem from different angles and gathers information from different sources (Collins & Hussey, 2014). The use of multiple methods, such as analysis of commercials, focus groups, and existing literature has been supported with monitoring bias, giving a more valid, reliable and diverse structure of realities (Denscombe, 2009).

3.4 Method of Analysis

Williamsson (2002) argues that the analysis of qualitative data often is left to the end of the thesis, which might result in a shortage of time to analyze it. To prevent this, the data should be analyzed as the researchers gather it. In this thesis, the data from the commercial analysis was discussed and summarized the day after each person’s analysis in order to keep it fresh in mind and to easier discover patterns concerning gender and storytelling at an early stage. The same method was used when analyzing the data from the focus groups. After each session, a discussion between the authors took place were the thoughts were summarized in text. Later the authors listen to the recordings and once again had a discussion where more details and patterns were found and added to the summary. When summarizing the recordings, factors such as tone of voice and the intensity of the discussion were taken into consideration, which is in line with the Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) research. Since the focus groups were held in Swedish, the researchers translated and summarized the findings into English in order to stay in line with the purpose of the thesis.

When analyzing qualitative data there are no strict rules that needs to be followed (Williamsson, 2002), therefore this thesis uses different techniques to make the analysis as efficient as possible to fulfill its purpose. Miles and Huberman’s (1994) overlapping stages in qualitative data analysis has worked as a base for the structure of the analysis, however this has been done with a combination of stages made by Williamsson (2002). Two stages from Miles and Huberman’s (1994) model have been used in combination with two stages from Williamsson (2002) (Figure 2).
Data collection

Figure 2  Overlapping stages in this thesis qualitative data analysis

Source: Adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994) and Williamsson (2002)

1. Data reduction (Miles & Huberman, 1994) – the data from the commercial analysis were summarized and the most essential and relevant data were displayed. The same was applied on the focus groups, where discussions not relevant for the thesis topic were removed.

2. Read through each transcript in order to familiarize yourself (Williamsson, 2002) – the researchers read through each summary from the data reduction several times to get familiar with the data.

3. Categorize the data (Williamsson, 2002) – the findings were categorized to facilitate for the researchers. Later the data for the commercial analysis were categorized in 4 head categories to make an easy followed structure. The data collected from the focus groups was divided into 5 categories (message, conflict, character, plot, and emotions)

4. Conclusion and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994) – from the categorized data, conclusion were drawn.
4 Empirical Findings and Analysis

This chapter presents the qualitative data gathered from the analysis of commercials as well as data collected from the focus groups. It is presented in a combination with the analysis of the empirical findings in relation to the theories in the frame of reference. The outline has been chosen by the authors since it was seen as the most suitable way to present the findings of this thesis.

4.1 Analysis of Commercials

This analysis was conducted to get a deeper understanding of advertising using storytelling and its theory in practice and connect it to gender difference research. The findings presented in this part is based on a summary of the analysis made by the authors which can be found in Appendix I.

4.1.1 The Message

The message is essential in storytelling and marketing communication (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998; Fog et al., 2005), therefore the messages communicated in the commercials were analyzed. Factors such as how the message was presented, the level of emotions involved, and what the message wanted to portray were analyzed.

It was found that the videos delivered the message in two different ways: straight away verbally or built up as a journey with the message at the end. According to theory, men are more prone to understand and process information that is told clearly and straight away, while women prefer to recall information told as a journey, with the main point in the end (Tian et al., 2011; Graff, 2013). These opposites are illustrated in the Nike commercial, as well as the Ica commercial. The authors interpreted the message of the Nike commercial being that everyone can make it in life, if they work hard enough, portrayed verbally in the beginning of the video. In contrast, the message of the Ica commercial was interpreted in the way that, every little thing one do counts, which is displayed in form of a journey where hints are given visually throughout the video, building up to the main message which the authors thought were clearly given at the end. The large contrast of how the messages are
conveyed might possibly, to some extent, attract and change the different genders’ attitudes towards stories.

Another discovered aspect of the message was the context in which it was portrayed. This includes the environment such as music and colors as well as stereotypical interests and actions. Gender stereotyping is common in today’s environment, and the picture of how men and women should be or act has developed over the years (Witt & Wood, 2010). Therefore, stereotypes about the different genders’ interests and actions could possibly play a role in their separate evaluation of commercials. When analyzing the different commercials, several stereotypical components affecting the message was identified by the authors. In the Volvo, Nike, and WFO commercials, football as an interest is highly recognized. This would, according to the authors’ stereotypes, be more appealing to men rather than women. Identified when analyzing was a difference in the usage of several environment components, like music and colors. Although this was not found in theory to divide the attention of men and women, it is one of the components that possibly could.

Furthermore, another feature of the commercials that could separate women’s and men’s attitudes towards messages are emotions. According to theory, women tend to connect and react more than men, when emotions are involved (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). The commercials analyzed included different levels of emotions, and based on theory (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015) could therefore appeal differently to the genders. For example, the message of the World Food Programme (WFP) commercial was seen as that everyone should be equally important, regardless of where one come from, and that everyone should have equal rights to basic requirements such as food and water. This message has a high level of emotions, and emotions such as empathy and sadness were identified, which according to theory should be more appealing to women (Hines, 2004). A contrast to this was the Ikea story where the message of opening up to strangers was displayed. Although happiness was connected to the message as an emotion, the level of emotions identified by the authors was rather low. This would consequently mean that it would allure more men rather than women (Hines, 2004; Roivainen, 2011).

Lastly, the values of the context in which the message is displayed might affect whether a story in a commercial appeal more to women or men. For example, research has shown that women are more connected to values regarding family and children, whilst men tend
to connect more with values such as status and success (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). The commercials included different values regarding the message, and varied depending on its story and purpose. In the commercial for P&G, the value of family was strongly conveyed in the message, which women, according to research, should connect more to (Wood & Eagly, 2012; Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). This could also be identified in the commercial for Systembolaget, where the message displayed the values of family and children. Moreover, comparing this to the Nike commercial, where the message portrayed success as a value; this could be more appealing to men instead of women (Looy, 2001). Since a distinct difference in values portrayed in the messages exists, it could be another component separating men and women’s attitudes towards storytelling commercials.

4.1.2 The Conflict

The conflict is the motivator for a good story since it drives people to action (Fog et al., 2005). Therefore, this was studied during the analysis. When choosing videos to analyze, one of the criteria was that it included a conflict that was identifiable and did not have an immediate solution (Appendix III, table 1) since one wants to keep the story exiting (Fog et al., 2005).

Indices found when analyzing the conflict of the commercials were emotions. According to theory, women are more prone to connect with emotions than men (Hines, 2004; Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Therefore, videos containing emotions should be more relatable for women, including a conflict playing on emotions. It was found that some of the videos included more emotions than others, while some videos’ level of emotions were low. An example of a commercial with a high level of emotions were the P&G commercial, it had a conflict that was about facing one’s fears even though it can be tough and scary. This situation itself might be relatable for both men and women, as it was not gender-specific and could happen to anyone. However, since the conflict had a high degree of emotions, such as fear, women should be more prone to connect to.
4.1.3 The characters’

Usually a story includes a hero or a main character that follows an objective and tries to reach a certain goal. If the audience can identify themselves with the characters the likelihood of embracing the story will be greater. This identification can be based on the emotions expressed by the characters as well as the action made by them. When creating characters, the target audience needs to be in focus since they are the ones who needs to identify themselves with the characters (Fog et al., 2005). Therefore, when carrying out this analysis of commercials, characters were identified and compared with theory to see if there possibly could be a distinguish between the genders.

The audience might find it easier to identify themselves with the characters if sharing the same gender. However, other attributes might also affect the different genders’ ability to relate to the character. When a character behaves in a certain way or has a certain characteristic as the person watching the video, they can easier embrace the story (Fog et al., 2005). Gender stereotypes are thoughts and labels people have on a specific gender, such as characteristics and behavior (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Therefore, distinctive gender stereotypes might affect men and women relating differently to characters that have certain stereotypical female and male characteristics and behavior.

When analyzing the video commercials, it was found that the characters had stereotypical behaviors and characteristics that were in line with the actors’ gender. This was established in commercials like P&G, Systembolaget, and Ikea, where the female characters behaved caringly and showed a good amount of emotions. In contrast to Nike and Volvo, where the male characters displayed stereotypically male behavior related to braveness and sports. On the other hand, some of the videos included characters that were of one gender but acted and had attributes related to the opposite. For example, the main character of the Ica commercial is a man that shows a lot of emotions and has behaviors that can be categorized as caring and loving. This kind of behavior and characteristic is stereotypically connected to the female gender (Wood & Eagly, 2002), and therefore different to the gender of the character. Since a large difference was found, and no clear relation between the characters’ behavior and attributes in the different videos, it is unsure if this will show difference between men and women. Therefore, this will be further analyzed during the focus group to see if a difference exists.
Additionally, research has shown that women are more emotional than men (Hines, 2004), yet no correlation between the levels of emotions characters withholds and different genders’ connection has been mentioned. If this would apply to the different genders’ abilities to relate, the characters in commercials such as Ica, P&G, and ATG, where the hero showed a lot of emotions, would be more relatable to women.

Finally, since some of the commercials include famous people and not just actors, the different genders might relate depending on who the influencer is. For example, if the influencer is famous for doing sports, men might easier relate since it is a stereotypical male interest (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). Both the Volvo and the WFP commercials have an influencer, Zlatan Ibrahimovic, who is displayed throughout the video. He is a famous football player, and might be more relatable for men for reasons stated earlier. However, since Zlatan is portrayed as an international superstar, people might find it difficult to relate to him as they live a different life.

4.1.4 The Plot

The flow and structure of the story relates to the plot (Fog et al., 2005) and by holding the story together, the structure engages the audience (Lundqvist et al., 2013). The plot relates to building the different elements such as the message, the conflict and the characters together (Fog et al., 2005). Therefore, the context in which the message is delivered, how the characters are portrayed and how the conflict is handled and resolved all relates to the plot. This section will focus on the structures of the stories and the context the message is delivered in.

Most of the commercials had a clear structure, a good working flow and the structure of the stories seemed to have minor effects whether the genders perceptions would differ. This could be explained by the structures in most commercials being built on the traditional fairytale model (Fog et al., 2005), and not on the specific target audience such as men or women. In that sense, other attributes of the commercials were displayed for a specific gender. However, since women are more discovery-oriented than men and enjoys the journey (Tian et al., 2011; Graff, 2013), the general structure of a story might be more appealing to the female gender.
When analyzing, attention was drawn to the context the message was delivered in. Several commercials such as Nike, WFP and Elgiganten were delivered in a more male context. Where the environment and the atmosphere seemed to be more connected to the male gender due to the use of darker colors and different elements such as a football, car or PlayStation portrayed in the video (Looy, 2001). In the analyzed commercials, no video seemed to be delivered in a clear female context, the videos women connected more strongly to was due to other reasons. Another aspect that relates to the context is the when and how the brand was portrayed. As discussed in the theoretical part, men are more loyal to brands (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015) therefore, commercials such as NIKE and Volvo might appeal more to men than women due to the brand being portrayed in a distinctive way creating a brand identity. On the other hand, men also want important information upfront therefore commercials such as P&G where the brand is portrayed in the end, might not build as strong brand connection among males. As with the other elements in storytelling, the plot and the context it is delivered in is highly dependent on the level of emotions. If it is delivered in an emotional context women are more likely to embrace the story since they strive to become more emotionally connected to advertising (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Examples of such commercials are ICA, Systembolaget, ATG and WFP.

4.1.5 Identified Elements

To find what to further investigate, main recurring indices were identified in this analysis; emotions, story structure, context, values, and character connection. These elements were the base for the focus groups, as well as, the creation of the questionnaires used in them.

4.2 Focus Groups

Based on the commercial analysis and its identified elements, three focus groups were conducted (See Appendix VI for detailed descriptions of the focus groups) to investigate the identified elements that might affect women’s and men’s perceptions in terms of decoding a message or theme in a story. In this part, results of the focus groups are presented and analyzed with already known theory.
4.2.1 Ica Commercial – Stigs livs kärlek

This commercial is based on a flashback of Stigs life with his now passed love. Short clips of special moments between the couple are shown including the first meeting, their wedding and her passing in breast cancer. It ends with going back to the ICA store in presence.

Scenes from the commercial in chronological order:

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNicj9OUqmk

4.2.1.1 Focus Group 1 – All Females

The focus of this research is gender differences, however, one observation from the focus group consisting of only females was a highly differing interpretation between ages in terms of how they felt after watching the ICA story. On the question form the participants were asked to rate the level of emotions they perceived the story projected; the commercial got the average score 4.2 out of 5 across the three groups, and among the females the average score was 4.2. This result indicates that it is a highly emotional commercial. Here, a significant difference was identified from the question ‘How do you feel after watching this commercial?’ A woman with the age 58 answered that she felt happy after watching the movie. On the question form, she wrote, “Yes! Breast cancer is something we need to fight”. While the other women with the age ranging from 22-25 didn’t identify the happiness in the commercial at all. Instead the younger women expressed feeling miserable,
sad and touched. During the discussion about how they felt, the whole group agreed that one could see the joy of sorrow. Additionally, the older woman who felt happy after watching the commercial affected the other younger girls with her interpretation and allowed the others to agree.

When the group of females discussed the message in the ICA commercial, a significant theme was that they were very expressional, descriptive and in depth with their answers, as well as provided profoundly similar answers on the question form. The females interpreted the message as: important and even the smallest contribution can make a large difference. They describe the message as powerful, lovingly and important. A great focus throughout the session was on emotions and the bigger picture of the message ICA was trying to deliver, rather than on the details.

During the discussion about the important elements in the story, the focal point was the loving couple. When they describe the relationship and the couple, they used the word “family” instead of “couple” even though no children were involved. The women also identified the music as an important element, the environment felt welcoming and homely, and that the environment itself was emotive. The questionnaire that all groups filled out included a choice among fifteen alternatives in terms of which values one could identify with the message of the movie. Again, we noticed a difference between ages. Two females who were 48 respectively 58 choose “motivation” as a value, whereas none of the younger female did. This topic also came up during the discussion, and the group agreed that perhaps age and experience can be an explanation to why the older women saw ‘the driving force’ whilst the younger ones did not. This might have something to do with the expression that “you must live to learn”, as the older woman answered, “Important message is that no matter what happens, it is possible to find happiness again and move on.” All participants in the group selected the values “love”, “empathy”, and “make a difference”.

On the question if one could identify oneself with a character in the movie, only 2 out of 5 answered yes, and that character was Stig. Building on the theory behind storytelling (Fog et al., 2005), generally, humans tend to connect stronger to characters that are like themselves, and since Stig is a man, that could perhaps be the reason to why no more than two identified themselves with him. The theory also states that receivers who do identify
with characters, occurs through recognition of oneself in the characters, for instance if one has been involved in a similar event in their own life (Fog et al., 2005), as the two women states on the question form. Which perhaps can be an explanation to why the two women could identify themselves with Stig, even though he is a male. Another explanation can also be that beyond the obvious characteristic of being a male or female, other attributes can influence the different genders’ ability to relate to the character (Fog et al., 2005). This could simply be that Stig behaved in a certain way that the two women could relate and identify with, such as caring and loving. The final question asked the participants to describe the story using five words. Again, they provided very similar answers, stating that the commercial itself was warming, loving and highly emotional.

4.2.1.2 Focus Group 2 – Mixed Genders
All participants in the group identified the ICA story as moving, sad, sympathetic and inspiring. A woman also answered that she was moved after the commercial, however, also got a little bit disturbed on the fact that ICA “uses” breast cancer to increase sells. Besides that, the woman quickly identified the selling aspect of the commercial; two men also quickly went into that aspect of the story instead of how they felt about it on an emotional level. Although, during the discussion, they all agreed that regardless of the marketing aspect and that ICA “uses” a breast cancer campaign to sell their products, it is for a good deed and that they conveyed this in a really good way. Overall, the key findings if one were to compare the genders, was that the males were straighter to the point and believed that the main message ICA was trying to deliver was the connection with breast cancer and ICA selling products. Whereas the females connected the message to love, emotions and family. The male participants included statistics when the group discussed the topic of donate a margin of the profit received from selling breast cancer labelled products. This observation can be connected to theory stating that females make decisions based on emotions, whereas men approach decision making with facts and data (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Additionally, when women shop, they are searching for a more emotional experience that awakens senses and emotions, which in turn make them feel more passionate and sentimental. Whereas, men’s motives for shopping are more objectively and non-personal, and tend to follow a utilitarian or logic based approach (Babin et al., 1994). The message in the ICA commercial evoked the female’s emotions whereas the men connected the message with sales and marketing strategies.
In terms of which elements that caught their attention, all respondents answered the music and the characters. However, when it came to identifying which of the characters, two of the three men could not identify themselves with any of them. Two out of three women as well as one man could identify themselves with Stig. In this group both males and females could easily identify with a character, regardless of Stig being a man. As mentioned earlier, perhaps Stig behaved in a certain way that females more easily could identify themselves with (Fog et al., 2005).

Concerning emotions and how emotional the participants found the ICA commercial, the average overall score for the group was 4.2, whilst the females in the group only scored 3.7 and the males scored an average of 4.67. So far, the finding differs from the theory that females are generally more emotional (Hines, 2004) since the males scored a higher average. However, the followed question asked the participants which emotions they could connect to and identify with. Here, only one of the three males could express feelings in words, since the only emotion the male respondent could identify himself with was sadness. The other two men left the question blank and did not engage in expressing their emotions towards the commercial verbally. Here, one can find similarities with previous findings in gender research. In attempt to answer the question why females generally find it easier to express their feelings verbally and more openly than men; brain research states that the male brains separate language in the left hemisphere and emotions in the right whereas women emotions are present in both hemisphere. Research suggest that due to differences in the brain structure between men and women, females are more closely in touch with their feelings, making it easier to express them (Hines, 2004; Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Men uses a larger portion of the left hemisphere which is the logical/rational side of the brain, in charge of performing logic estimations and processing facts (Tian et al., 2011; Graff, 2013), which might be one explanation to why the males in the group connected the message in the ICA commercial with the selling aspect instead of emotions.

4.2.1.3 Focus Group 3 – All Males
The majority of the males answered that they felt a bit down, moved and sad after watching the ICA commercial; cited from one of the male’s answers on the question form ‘I felt sad since he lost the love of his life’. Another male answered that the commercial ‘hit straight into the heart’. The average score among the males on how much emotions the message
delivered was 4. The emotional aspect however was not something that the participants discussed openly or verbally, as no one answered the question on which emotions they could identify themselves with. Once again, we identified that the males found it more difficult to express their emotions. The theory states that females tend to connect more to emotional marketing content than men since the male brains separate language in the left hemisphere and emotions in the right, whereas women emotions are present in both hemisphere (Tian et al., 2011; Graff, 2013). However, on the question ‘Describe the commercial using 5 words’, the participants answered that they felt sad but inspired, as well as describing the commercial as intense and important. Here, it seemed like the participants found it easier to express their emotions towards the story, whereas describing how they felt individually, was more difficult.

In terms of describing the message, the group agreed that regardless if the message builds on additional sales for ICA, there exist an importance behind it. This group described the message itself by dividing the commercial into paragraphs and summarizing it on a factual basis instead of connecting emotions to the message. Again, one can identify the males’ logic based, non-personal approach when reasoning. Here, there exist a connection to what Meyers-Levy & Loken (2015) research regarding men versus women’s consumer behavior. Men’s motives for shopping are more objective, non-personal, and tend to follow a utilitarian or logic based approach. They also generally base their purchasing decisions on facts and data (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Babin et al., (1994) argues that utilitarian value in consumer behavior arise primarily from a functional and cognitive approach. In other words, men’s intention of purchasing is to get something done. When the men described Stig's behavior in the commercial, they identified him as on a mission rather than being on a journey. In terms of the characters, 4 out of 6 wrote on the questionnaire that Stig was the element that got their attention, and during the discussion, Stig was also the character the males could identify themselves with. Building again on the theory behind storytelling, generally, humans tend to connect stronger to characters alike themselves (Fog et al., 2005), and since Stig is a man, this can perhaps explain why all the males could directly identify themselves with him. To conclude, the ICA commercial delivered an emotional story. It might be an explanation to why the group found it difficult to discuss it openly and verbally.
4.2.1.4 Synthesis

The three groups all agreed that ICA wanted to deliver an important message: support of breast cancer research is needed and even the smallest contribution can make a large difference. However, from this message, two different directions of how to further interpret the ICA story emerged from the three focus groups. The first direction focused on the emotional and sentimental aspect of the story. The second emerged direction from discussion was the financial or marketing aspect; that it was a beneficial way for ICA to market and create demand for their products, regardless if it was for a good cause or not. Both directions came up during the discussion with all three focus groups. However, to what extent the two directions were discussed varied greatly.

The financial aspect was only mentioned once during the discussion with the female group. Instead, the focus was on the emotional direction; the relationship and the love between the couple, as well as the importance of family. In the mixed group, the financial aspect was the main topic, which created a discussion that engaged both genders. Whereas when the emotional direction was on the agenda, the females were the ones who engaged the most. The group with only male participant also discussed both direction, but primary focus was on the financial aspects. To conclude, both directions created a discussion, but generally, the female participants discussed their emotions towards the story in a bigger picture, whereas the males discussed the selling aspect, which can be argued to be more objectively or non-personal reflections.

Furthermore, the women generally focused on describing Stig’s different stages of life, as being on a journey, whilst the men identified Stig pursuing a mission; to support the breast cancer research. According to theory, men are more prone to understand and process information told clearly and straight away, while women tend to prefer to recall information told as a journey, with the main point in the end (Tian et al., 2011; Graff, 2013). This can be an explanation to why significant differences were identified in terms of interpreting the commercial as a mission or a journey through life. Furthermore, these differences are in line with the research behind men and women’s purchasing behavior. When women shop, they are searching for a more emotional experience that awake senses and emotions, which in turn make them feel more passionate and sentimental. Whereas, men’s motives for shopping are more objective, non-personal, and tend to follow a utilitarian or logic based approach. Men generally base their purchasing-decisions based on
facts and data (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Babin et al., (1994) argues that utilitarian value in consumer behavior arise primarily from a functional and cognitive approach. In other words, men’s intention of purchasing is to get something done.

Continuing with the emotional direction and connecting it with values; the loving couple was the element who created empathy and sentiments among all three groups, regardless of gender. An interesting difference identified was that the female group and the women in the mixed group referred to the couple as a “family” while the men used the term ‘couple’ and did not identify the term family as they viewed the commercial. Theory has shown women being more connected to values regarding family and children, whilst men tend to connect more with values such as status and success (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Since the women identified values such as family, while the men focused more on the selling aspect of the ICA story, these findings agree with the theory. Furthermore, this observation can be built upon the theory behind the socio-cultural perspective. It states that, since men and women tend to have different roles in the society, they have become psychologically different to be able to adjust to their social roles. Historically, women’s primary role in the society was to dedicate their time to nurse their children (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). This stereotypical view of women has generally today widened to welcome an increased focus on women and their careers as well as greater acceptance of men staying home with their children. However, across time, behavior and gender roles have changed, especially for women (Wahlstrom & Deming, 1980; Francis, 2016), it might still explain why the female group identified the word ‘family’ as they described the couple whereas the male group used the word couple throughout the discussion.

The female group itself scored the highest on average emotions among the three groups (Table 2). However, the men in the mixed group scored highest among all participants as well as the male gender scored the highest average total among the both genders. By looking only at the numbers, this observation is not inline with the theory that women generally are more closely in touch with their emotions than men (Hines, 2004: Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). However, from this finding, it was identified that men are more unlimited when it comes ranking their emotions from 1 - 5 and write it down on a piece of paper, but find it difficult to express them openly in a group. Whereas women find it easier to express their feelings and emotions openly and verbally. Additionally it was identified that the males seemed to find it easier to express themselves emotionally by using a
number, yet found it difficult to verbalize their feelings. Whereas, the women could express themselves freely concerning their feelings.

Table 2  
Level of emotions, ICA commercial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial ICA</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Group 1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Group 2</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Group 3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average genders</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The characters are one of the most essential indices and Fog et al (2005) argues that if one can identify with the character then the likelihood of embracing the story will be greater. One clear pattern that can be connected to all three groups is that the characters traits portrayed in the story are essential in order for the individual to connect with it. In the female group, only two out of five could identify themselves with Stig. In the mixed group however, there were more women than men that could identify with Stig, and in the male group, four out of six could identify themselves with him. From this observation, it was identified that since Stig is a man, the males found it easier to identify themselves with him. However, to explain why the women who also could identify themselves with him, the theory state that beyond the obvious characteristic of a male or a female, other attributes can influence the different genders’ ability to relate to the character (Fog et al., 2005). In other words, perhaps the women found certain parts of Stig’s behaviour more relatable to the female gender, such as love and affectionate, and could therefore also identify themselves with him.

4.2.2  Volvo Commercial – Epilogue

This commercial is built on the story of the main character, Zlatan Ibrahimovic, and his career change of quitting the Swedish national football team. The video starts with the end of his last game with the national team in Paris, followed by his journey back with his family in a Volvo car to the place where he grew up, Rosengård. It ends with Zlatan hanging up his shirt and joining his family.
Scenes from the commercial in chronological order:

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SRQUxdNppg

4.2.2.1 Focus Group 1 – All Females
The participants were asked how they felt after watching the commercial and four out of the five participants answered that they did not feel anything particular, whereas the 48-aged female answered with one word that she felt earnest. The answers on the first question relates to the question of emotions where, on a scale 1-5, the participants were asked to answer how much of emotions they felt the commercial delivered. The group’s average on this question was 2.6, which is a rather low number. In this question, the 48-year-old women again distinguished from the crowd by ranking the level of emotions as a 4. During the discussion, she explained her choice being made due to the music, which she felt created strong emotions. On the other hand, the 22-year-old female said, “I don’t think it includes a lot of emotions and it is difficult to feel sorry for someone that has it all”. The lack of feelings expressed after the commercial could be explained by the rather low score on emotions. This since women are more likely to embrace a story and connect to it if it is delivered in an emotional context (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015), which based on the questionnaire and the discussion afterwards seemed to be the case in this group.

The question on how the participant felt after watching the commercial seemed to reflect the answers on the question whether someone could identify oneself with some of the characters as well. Here only one answered yes (Female 58 years old). However, reading her
description no specific character was named instead she wrote that she recognizes herself in the value of family. To embrace a story the audience needs to identify themselves with the traits and actions made by the characters (Fog et al., 2005). In the discussion, the motivation for Zlatan driving from Paris to Sweden was rather difficult for the participants to understand, which could be one reason for them not identifying themselves with the characters as well as the trait of Zlatan being a football player. The 27-year-old female also pointed out that this story is difficult to relate to since it uses one of the largest influencer in Sweden and as a “normal” Swede it is difficult to relate. This could be connected to the importance of a story being authentic and true to life (Green, 2004), which the 27-year-old female argued was not the case in this commercial.

Even though the group struggled to connect to the movie, they still seemed to have interpreted the message in similar ways. The 58-aged-female identified two different messages, where the first related to the car “drive a Volvo” she wrote, and the second was described as where something ends, something new begins and when it does, the family is there to support you. The female aged 25 also interpreted the message as “where a chapter ends a new begins”. The 48-female differed a bit and pointed out the grief of something being over but the safety of the car and the family being the strengths. Two of the participants (female 27 and 25) had troubles connecting the message to the brand Volvo. The female 25 wrote, “Can’t see the connection to Volvo”. As Fog et al. (2005) argues the most successful way of using storytelling in branding strategies is to have a clear and fundamental brand message, which this group argued that Volvo did not have. When it comes to the message it is also important that it is understood by the audience in the same way as intended by the sender (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998) which, was true to some extent with this group however, they struggled with connecting the product to the message.

When choosing the values, three participants choose family. This can be connected to the theory that has demonstrated that advertising that stress the importance of family tends to connect women more intensely than men (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). The values change, success, ambition, and determination were also commonly used. The value joy was only mentioned by the 58-aged female who said that she connected it to the value of family. The 25-year aged female distinguished herself by only having one in common value (determination). The other values were responsibility, respect and devotion, all connected
to Zlatan and his successful career. The 22-year-old female did not choose family as a value and described it with her own words “it did not feel real”.

4.2.2.2 Focus Group 2 – Mixed Genders
One of the questions the participants had to answer directly after the commercial was how they felt after watching the video. Looking at the written answers on this question, one could see a clear difference between the participants. Two out of three men answered the question where the male aged 25 wrote “pride” and the male aged 27 wrote “buy and travel”. All three females answered the question, where the 26 aged women wrote “A little bit confusing since it was a commercial for Volvo but felt like a commercial for Zlatan”. The woman aged 22 also expressed the feeling of confusion and then she also added that she felt irritated. The third female (20-year-old) wrote, “Home is where you belong”. No clear pattern between the genders could be identified based on this question, however one could see that clear differences among all participants existed.

When the group in written form answered the question of how they would describe the message in the commercial, different answers were given. Two female (22 and 26) described the message in similar ways that when something ends, something new begins. The 26-year-old female then added that, this is why one should own a good car. The 20-year-old female wrote that everyone could own a Volvo. The males described the message in completely different ways where the 25-year-old saw the message such as belonging to a community, the 27-year-old saw the message such as one should like football and buy a Volvo, whereas, the 26-year-old saw it in the way that Volvo exists as a safe car even during difficult times. Looking at just the written answered no clear difference between the genders could be identified, however, this question led to a lively discussion where a distinction could be found. Firstly, all females stated that the message was unclear whereas two males (26 and 25) stated the completely opposite and said that the message was crystal clear. The third male stated that he agreed with the females however, he still connected the car easier to the message than the females did. When encoding a marketing message, it is important that the audience of the message share the same meaning and have similar experience (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998), which become clear during this discussion where different meanings were expressed. The females seemed to share similar experience, including the 27-year old male, whereas the other two males shared similar experiences with each other.
A clear difference between the genders also existed regarding the level of the emotions communicated through the commercial. When asked how much emotions they thought the commercial delivered on a scale of 1-5 one could see a pattern. Together this group had 2.8 as an average. Two of the males (25 and 26) gave the commercial a 5 whereas the third only gave 2 as a score, leaving the males average to be 4. The two males, who gave the movie a 5, connected it to the feeling of joy as well as a strong story. The 25-year-old also mentioned a “Braveheart feeling”. The male with the lower score on the other hand said that he felt something about the family but that was it. Moving on to the females, the 26-year-old female gave the commercial a 0 because she did not feel anything at all. A score of 1 was given by the 22-year-old female who said that she felt emotions such as anger however, those were not the feelings that she thought Volvo was communicated. The last female (20) gave the score 2.5 to the commercial and during the discussion she motivated it by saying, “I think it was somewhat emotional at the end of the commercial when the family was included, but I thought it was difficult to know if one should be happy or sad”. The average score for the females was 1.167, which is a low score.

Looking at the chosen values, both similarities and differences between the participants were identified. Firstly, 5 out of 6 choose the value family. The 26-year-old male motivated his choice of family due to the security. Four participants, where two were men and two were women, chose security. The two males (26 and 27) argued during the discussion that their chose of security was related to the security of the car whereas the females said that they based their choice on the security given by the family. The attention from the men towards the car could be connected to previous research, which states that men have greater need and motivation of acquiring resources such as cars (Buss, 1989). Whereas the focus from the women towards the family can be strengthen by Meyers-Levy and Loken (2015) research that demonstrated that advertising which highlights the importance of family tends to connect women more intensely than men.

When asking if someone could identify themselves with a character from the commercial, all participants answered no. However, during the discussion, it became clear that two males (25 and 26) had large respect and understanding of Zlatan as a character. The 26-year-old male also expressed that the commercial was not only about Zlatan as a character, it was rather about his amazing story, which in turn gives respect to the character. The 25-
year-old male added that he believes that Zlatan’s story relates to today’s society with alienation and that it is cool to have a guy like him representing Sweden, whereas the females (26 and 22) had strong emotions against him. The 22-year-old female stated openly that she had difficulties with Zlatan as a character and that was one of the reasons she struggled to connect to the commercial. All three females also talked about the characteristics of Zlatan and stated that he is arrogant and selfish, loving himself more than his family. The females did not only struggle with the characteristics of Zlatan, it also became clear that they did not understand the actions made by him, which is essential in order to connect to the character (Fog et al., 2005). The three women did not understand the actions, such as driving the car and leaving his shirt in “Rosengård”.

4.2.2.3 Focus Group 3 – All Males

Since this group had two participants whose age were 28 and two whose age were 21, they will be divided into 28a and 28b, respectively 21a and 21b.

All participants in this group left their answers blank when they were asked to answer whether they could identify themselves with some of the characters, yet, the answers and discussion in this group focused a lot on the main character. During the discussion, all participants agreed upon the commercial including a lot of Zlatan, and that less focus was made on the car. Zlatan was also one of the elements that the group felt drawn to in the commercial (four out of six wrote Zlatan as an answer to this question). The music was also an element that the group felt a connection to, as three out of six wrote it.

Different feelings were expressed after they had seen the commercial. The 24-year-old wrote that he felt emotional whereas the 23 year old wrote, “Did not evoke any particular emotions”. The 21 year old got a patriotic feeling, and the male aged 21b said that he got a little bit entertained. The two others left this question blank. One interesting thing, connecting this question to the one where they were asked to on a scale 1-5 rank how much of emotions they believed the commercial delivered, was discovered. The 24-year-old that answered that he felt emotional on the first question only gave the movie score of 3, which was the same score as the 23-year-old gave the movie and he was the one who earlier stated that the movie did not evoke any emotions. The 28a-year-old also ranked it as a 3, whereas, the 28b-year old and 21b year-old gave the movie a score of 2. The highest score was given by the 21a-years-old who gave it a 4, with the motivation that it focused a
lot on origin, which evoke his emotions. The 28a-year motivated his answer by saying that he felt a little bit proud over Volvo whilst the 28b-year-old and 21b-year old felt like it wanted to inspire but that it failed doing so and one do not believe in the message. The average score for this group was 2.8, which is rather low score. One thing that was observed from this group was that even though emotions were expressed, the males struggled with putting words on them and started to talk about other things.

The participants in this group differentiate themselves from one another regarding the message of the commercial. The 24-year-old just wrote, “inspiring”, however in the discussion he added that he also thinks that Volvo wants to deliver the message of Zlatan being one of us by driving their car. The 23-year-old and 28a-year-old both wrote that they thought the message was about something ending and something new beginning. The 28a-year old then added during the discussion that he felt that Volvo is a family car, which it always has been and that was also communicated through this commercial. The origin of Zlatan was once again mentioned by the 21a-years-old male whilst the 21b-year-old thought Volvo was trying to convey a nice impression but failing doing so. He thought the commercial just was another cliché. The last message was described by the 28b-year old who wrote, “How even stars like Zlatan are driving Volvo cars”. This thought was also brought up by the 28a-year-old who stated that a national hero driving a Volvo gives a big impression.

Looking at the values, family was commonly used, which was chosen by 4 participants. The 21-year-old motivates his choice of family by saying that it is a new chapter in Zlatan’s life to which he brings his family. The 28a-year-old chose security, family, status, and ambition, which all were based on the brand Volvo. His choice could be strengthened by Meyers-Levy and Loken (2015) research that states that men are more loyal to brands. The 28b-year-old had responsibility, family and inspiration as his values, which he connected to the character Zlatan. Respect, devotion, and status were selected by the 21b-year-old who also connected his values to Zlatan. Both the 23 and 24-years-old had the value inspiration, which they connected to the change in the life of Zlatan. Five out of the six participants used Zlatan as the base for choosing their values whilst one connected his values to the brand.
4.2.2.4 Synthesis

Comparing these completely different sets of groups, different patterns and dissimilarities has been identified. In the group only consisting of women, discussions occurred, however they were not as lively as the one in the mixed group. The group only consisting of men was a little bit slow started and the discussions never really took off. One clear pattern that can be connected to all groups is that the traits of the characters are essential. This is in line with Fog et al. (2005), that states that the audience need to identify with the characters, which occurs when recognition of oneself in the characters happens. In group 1 no one could really connect to the character whereas in group 2, two of the males could connect. In group 3 no one could really connect however, Zlatan was in centrum throughout the session which indicates that the character did have some impact on the audience. Drawing from this one could see a clear pattern of the men connecting more strongly to the character, which indicates that Volvo most likely has used this gender as their target audience. No specific traits of Zlatan were given by the audience however, the males in group 2 and 3 all discussed Zlatan as a national hero and that he is a status symbol. This could mean that men are more likely to connect to an actual hero. It also connects to the Buss (1989) research, which argues that men have greater motivation of acquiring resources such as technology and cars that deliver a message of ‘status’. In this commercial, Volvo delivers a status message by using Zlatan as a character.

Another clear pattern was that the females in both groups had problems understanding the message. The same thing was true for one participant in group 2 and one in group 3. As discussed, the message needs to be clear (Fog et al., 2005) and the receivers needs to have the same meaning and similar experiences (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). In group 1 it became clear that they did share the same meaning and, to some extent, even the same experience, which led to all participants having trouble understanding the message. In group 2 on the other hand it became clear that the participants did not share the same meaning. The three females and one male struggled with the message whilst two males thought it was crystal clear. In the third group a clear message was not identified however, as discussed above the message described in the group mostly reflected the character and is once again connected to the Buss (1989) theory about status.

Looking at the level of emotions in the commercial (Table 3) one can see that the average for the groups are quite similar. However, in group 2 one could see a clear difference
between the genders where the women gave the commercial a score of 1.167, whilst the men gave it a score of 4. Comparing the total average of women, which was 3.1, and the total average of the men, which was 3.2, no clear difference can be seen. However, since all groups’ average was rather low one could say that the commercial did not connect that strongly to the female gender. This because women often are more in touch with their emotions, and therefore marketing communication that focuses on emotions are the most effective way to reach women (Hines, 2004; Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015).

Table 3  Level of emotions, Volvo commercial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial Volvo</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Group 1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Group 2</td>
<td>1.167</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Group 3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average genders</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the main findings based on the analysis are concluded. The conclusions will relate back to the purpose and the two research questions are answered in a suitable way.

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the role of gender differences in terms of decoding messages or themes in storytelling. The aim was to discover which elements play major roles and influence men and women’s perceptions of a satisfying story that capture their attention and if it differs between the two genders. This was fulfilled through investigating two research questions:

Research Question 1: Do men and women’s perceptions differ in terms of decoding a message or theme in storytelling?

Based on the findings from the qualitative examination, this thesis concludes: yes, it is identified that men and women’s perceptions differ in terms of what elements capture their attention and in that way, make them connect and relate to the story.

Research Question 2: If so, what elements play major roles?

From the conclusion drawn from research question 1, the dominant identified elements that differ in terms decoding a message or theme in storytelling between the two genders include: Women tend to connect stronger with stories that brings them on a desired mean. By this it is meant that women prefer to recall information told in a story as a journey where little hints are given along the story with the main point in the end. On contrary, men seemed to be more prone to understand information that is clearly stated and straight to the point since their primary focus seem to be finding the mission in the story rather than see the bigger picture. Additionally, we have observed men being more prone to connect to a story if some sort of status involved. For instance, status that a character brings to the story or status delivered by the brand. It was identified that men seem to find it easier to relate to statistics when they retell a story verbally. The content identified for the women on the other hand, was that it was supposed to bring the females on a journey and that it should be emotional across the four storytelling elements. The message should
awake emotions, the conflict should play on emotions, the plot should be affecting and the character’s behavior should be affectionate and sentimental. For instance, a story that include the importance of family and love. In other words, if marketers consider targeting mainly females with their story, they should focus on creating a story that includes these identified elements.

In the investigation, characters are found to be an important element for both men and women. However, what has been identified to distinguish the genders is that women generally relate to certain behaviors of a character that they can identify themselves with, such as caring and nurturing. Whilst men connect more with who the person is. Zlatan was in centrum when the males discussed the story, whereas the women mentioned Zlatan’s behavior of being a father in the story but their focus was on the family in its entirety. The male participants discussed Zlatan as a national hero and that he is a status symbol. This could mean that men are more prone to connect to an actual hero. From this finding, one can conclude that if marketers were to target mainly men with their story, they should focus on creating a story that include a character distinctly portrayed as a hero, information told clearly and straight away where the males easily can identify the mission and also emphasize statistics and status.
6 Discussion

This chapter presents further reflections and interpretations of the research. Strengths and weaknesses of this thesis are discussed as well as suggestions for further research.

6.1 Implications

This thesis was conducted to investigate if men and women’s perceptions differ in terms of decoding elements in a story. By investigating this, the aim was to complement previous research within gendered marketing by adding storytelling as a parameter. The thesis may be of interest for marketers and businesses since it provides insights of how men and women process elements in storytelling. The desire is therefore that these insights can be valuable for business to incorporate in their stories that specifically wants to target men or women. As well as, which elements that is beneficial to include in order to target both genders. The thesis may also be of interest to content marketing website that wants to provide information about gendered storytelling, since the platforms often lack theoretical evidence behind their statements of gendered marketing.

6.2 Limitations

This study contributes to the field of gendered marketing, specifically, storytelling. This since it provides insight in an important and continuously growing marketing trend. A content analysis of a total of ten commercials provided an extensive amount of information on which elements tend to be typically male or female, as well as three highly interactive focus group discussions. Which in correlation to the frame of reference created a solid ground for further analyzing the topic. However, the findings should be viewed as a starting point for further research since gender research in storytelling is a relatively unexplored field. Nevertheless, discretion must be taken since three females conducted the research. Regardless the fact that the attitudes towards the investigation was from an objective and non-personal point of view, it is inevitable to assume that, from a certain point, it is interpreted with female influences. However, since telling stories is generally how women empathize and connect with content, which in turn create meaningful
experiences, inspire women and awake the emotional senses in the brain (Meyers-Loken & Levy, 2015), it does not necessarily mean that this must be a negative thing.

6.3 Further Research

The findings suggest that men and women’s perceptions differ in terms of decoding elements in a story, which can be used as a template for further investigation in this area. The sample size of this thesis was too limited to conduct a quantitative research which would allow to measure and analyze a larger amount of data. This was a study using qualitative research, which means that the researchers are heavily involved in the process, the chance exist that it gives the researcher a subjective view of the study and its participants. Thus, conducting a quantitative study on the topic and testing a large sample size would be advantageous to recognize more findings and patterns within the studied area. For instance, an in-depth analysis of specific character traits as well as other elements such as music, environment and colors of the commercial. Nevertheless, further research can also include other aspects such as different demographics.
7 References


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Appendix I

Summary of the results from commercial analysis

Movie 3 – Nike “The Chance”

Source: https://vimeo.com/40035962?width=1080

Nike is a brand from the United States that designs and produces sports related products, such as shoes, clothes, and accessories. This featured commercial is about a boy working hard to balance his everyday life, such as school, family, friends, and sports. The campaign is called “The Chance”, and portrays struggles that come with growing up in a lower-class community.

The message of this video relates to that it doesn’t matter where you come from, if you put your mind into it and work hard enough you can do it. The message itself can be relatable for both genders however, since it is delivered in a male context it might be easier for men to connect to it. It could also be easier for men to recall since it is delivered straight away. Emotions are shown in the commercial to some extent, which could make it easier for women to recall. Looking at the values presented, such as family, friendship, joy, happiness and working hard, some can be more connected to the female gender whereas some, such as the working hard, is more connected to the male gender.

The conflict in this video lies in the difficulties of growing up with not the best circumstances, but still wanting to make something good of your life. It is to the most part relatable for both genders as the situation itself is not gender-specific when it comes to real life, however, as the conflict is in a male context men might easier relate to it.

The boy is the hero of this story, who can be identifiable to both genders as probably many boys and girls who have wanted to become a star have practiced until late in the evening. However, since the most characters are male and it is about football, it develops to a more male context, which men might have easier to identify with. If one were to change the boy to a girl, perhaps both genders would have easier identified with the character. The behavior of working hard in order to reach your goal is something both genders can relate to, however, the drive and courage to do it could possibly be more of a male “macho” behavior, and therefore men could easily relate to it.
The plot itself could be as easy for both gender to recall, however, as discussed earlier the commercial is delivered in a male context, which could make it more appealing for men. The brand was also portrayed from the beginning towards the end that could be connected to men since it is said that men cares more about the brand.

**Movie 5 – Procter & Gamble (P&G) “Thank you mom”**

*Source:* https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/storytelling-done-right-5-best-commercials-olympics-rio-van-beusekom

Procter & Gamble (P&G) is an American company selling products related to hygiene, personal care, and household cleaning. Its “Thank you mom” commercial is about four international Olympic stars that has had difficulties in their life when younger, but with the support of their mothers has managed to work through. It also portrays them under pressure when competing in their current sports, which their moms also help them go through by moral support.

The message of this commercial is about how important a role model (in this case a mother) can be in a child's life, that it takes someone strong to make someone strong, and that we should be grateful for the supporting people around us. The message is appealing to both genders since both men and women often have a strong connection with their mothers. However, since the message is delivered in a highly sensitive and emotional context, it might be more appealing to women. The message is conveyed both verbally and visually and builds up throughout the whole video. Since there is a journey to reach the message, it might be more appealing to women, rather than men. Values portrayed in the commercial include the importance of family, gratefulness, working hard for what you want, never give up, security, and emotions such as fear and happiness. Since there are so many different values and emotions portrayed, both of the genders can connect with at least something. The commercial brings “status” in a way as they have the goal of becoming a “star”, however, since they do not necessarily come from wealthy families and needed to work hard in order to reach their goal, the “star” quality fades and pushes the status of the story away from the message.

In the case of this commercial, the conflict lays in the children growing up and becoming independent individuals. It also relates to being brave and facing one's fears even though it
is scary. Both men and women are likely to understand and recall the conflict, however, since the conflict includes a lot of emotions women might recall more easily.

The heroes of the story are the moms as they support and protect their children in tense situations. As the hero is of the female gender, it is easier for women to relate and identify with them, however, men with children might also identify with the hero as they might have experience with that situation. Other characters, such as the children, can be identifiable for both of the genders since facing one's fears is not genders specific. The behavior of the hero is mostly identifiable for women as they have a more caring and emotional way of interacting with their children, as portrayed in the video. However, being a supporting parent is not connected to a specific gender, and is therefore connectable for both men and women. The same can be said about overcoming one's fears and staying brave.

The plot is, for the same reasons as for the conflict, easier for a woman to recall, yet both genders can connect to it since they are both as likely to end up in similar situations as the characters in the commercial. Women might also recall the plot easier due to the brand being stated in the end since men value brands more and like to get information straight up.

**Movie 6 – World Food Programme (WFP) “805 million names – Zlatan Ibrahimovic”**

**Source:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDjicL9Ya4c

World Food Programme (WFP) is an international organization working towards lowering hunger across the world. This commercial, featuring the international football star Zlatan Ibrahimovic, is about recognizing and telling the story of the 805 million names of children suffering from hunger. It starts with the display of the main character's career and status, followed by the recognition of these names in form of tattoos on his body, which are presented during a football game as he takes his shirt of. Then in the end, facts about world hunger are explained verbally and connection the organization is made.

The message of this commercial is that everyone is equally important, everyone should be able to have the basic requirements such as water and security and we need to support the
children that are suffering from poverty and injustice. Also, the message is about informing the rest of the world about these major issues. The message itself is more appealing to women since it involves a lot of emotions especially regarding children. However, the message is delivered in a more male context as it involves sport and Zlatan, a world famous male sport influencer and perhaps more a role model towards men. In addition, injustice is something both genders can relate to and get emotional about. The message is conveyed both visually and verbally and delivered in the way that you get a hint in the beginning then you understand it in the middle and then explained in detail in the end. Values such as equality, justice, commitment, fairness, goodness, making a difference, strength and power, a mix that is appealing to both men and women. There is no certain status being portrayed, rather the opposite that everyone is equal, however since Zlatan is a status symbol it might come through in the background.

The conflict is that there are so many children suffering from injustice and poverty. It is relatable to both genders, however, since it involves children and emotions, it might be more relatable to women rather than men in that context.

The hero of this video is Zlatan, who is standing up for the suffering children’s rights. He is a hero since he delivers that message and because of his status it gets very powerful and people listens to it. Zlatan is an icon known for being liked by many people but mostly men, therefore men might identify more with him rather than women. There are not any other characters in the video other than the people mentioned to live in hunger, which can be identifiable for both of the genders. The behavior of the character is mainly relatable to men in that sense that he is running around taking his shirt off, a sort of “macho” behavior showing his tattoos. However, both genders can relate to the behavior of taking stance and support the helping children in the world.

The plot might be more appealing to men due to it being about a stereotypical male interest (football) and gives a “macho” feeling. However, it is highly emotional and is about children, and therefore also appealing to women. There is statistics involved, which is a parameter that connects with men.
Movie 11 – Aktiebolaget Trav och Galopp (ATG) “Vinnie: Episod 11 Återföreningen /The reunion”

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTTC0vBXrxU

Aktiebolaget Trav och Galopp (ATG) is a company founded by the Swedish government that regulates and organizes horseracing events and betting related to it. This commercial is one chapter out of couple that has been made by ATG about the miniature horse Vinnie. In this chapter, Vinnie is on a tour bus with his fellow rock star companions on their way to Solvalla, where Vinnie is expecting to meet his long lost mother. Then, their plans changes and Vinnie decides to find his mother instead of continuing with his band. In the end, the mother appears and the story ends.

The message of this commercial is that no dream is too big and that you can do anything you put your mind to. It is relatable for both genders, however, in this context, following the dream is to take risks, which can be more appealing to men. Furthermore, since the message is conveyed in the beginning and visually in the video, males might appeal more to it. Values displayed include family, braveness, and willingness, relatable for both genders.

The conflict is that the main character has to make a choice of a career as a rock star or possibly meeting his long lost mom. It is relatable for both of the genders, however, since there is display of emotions women might easier relate to it.

The hero of this commercial is the main character as he follows his dream to meet his mom. Both genders can relate to him, however, as mentioned above, since taking risks is connected to the male gender, they might easier relate to him. Other characters included in the video, such as the other band members are easier relatable for men since they have a “rockstar” status, which stereotypically men value more. The behavior of the main character can be relatable for genders. Women as they tend to act on their emotions and men because of the braveness to take action. Furthermore, men can relate more to the other characters as they act on status.

The plot of this story is more appealing to women as it involves emotional aspects, however the story of choosing between your fame and family can be relatable for both
genders. Since the brand is portrayed straight away, men might be more appealed to the video.

**Movie 14 – Ikea “Leva utan dörr”**

**Source:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDPMNkQDFzA

Ikea is an international furniture company founded in Sweden. Its commercial “Leva utan dörr”, or “Living without door”, is about an apartment complex where one of the residents door is removed, which creates openness to the neighbors and other people attending the building. The story ends with the residents and their neighbors sharing a fun time together in the open apartment.

The message of this story is that by opening up to other people, one can have fun and make new connections; shortly one can say that the message is to be more open. This story focuses a lot on family and the kitchen, which might be more appealing for women. The message is built up throughout the commercial and perhaps more appealing to women since there is a journey and not a straightaway message. The values of family and belongingness are more appealing to women, while friendship and joy is appealing to both genders.

The conflict is that Swedish people want to spend more time with others but are at the same time very restricted and “closed” when meeting new people, which both genders can relate to.

The hero in this case is the person removing the door however this person is unknown since we do not get to see this. Therefore, which gender that connects more to it more is not applicable in this case. There is a mix of other characters that attracts both genders. The Old lady might be more connected to the female gender. Whereas the dad and the mailman is more connected to the male. Behaviors of the characters are relatable to both genders as there are many different ones.

The plot of this video is appealing to both genders since most Swedish people can relate to the humoristic satire feeling of how they are, however, the plot is mostly conveyed visually as well as statistical data included, and therefore more appealing to men. On the other hand, the brand is portrayed in the end, and therefore might connect women more than
men since women focus more on the value it delivers rather than the brand itself.

**Movie 15 – Volvo “Zlatan Epilogue”**

*Source:* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SRQUxdNppg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SRQUxdNppg)

Volvo is an international automobile designer and producer that were founded in Sweden. This commercial is about the main character, Zlatan Ibrahimovic, and his career change of not being part of the Swedish national football team. The video starts with the end of his last game with this team in Paris, followed by his journey back with his family in a Volvo car to the place where he grew up, Rosengård. It ends with Zlatan hanging up his shirt and joining his family.

The message of this video is about the special connection to your home community (home is where you grow up), and that when a story ends a new one begins. But also that even though Zlatan is a superhero, at the end of the day he is a normal man just like everyone else. The message is appealing to both genders since everyone can relate to the special connection with the place where you grow up. The context that the message is delivered in is perhaps more appealing to men since it involves sport and a well recognized influencer connected to the male gender. A hint of the message is provided in the beginning, yet it builds up to it and is fully delivered in the end (a journey), which can be more relatable to women. Values such as family and relationships are more appealing to women and belongingness to both genders, whilst the value of not give up is more appealing to men. The status of the main character is displayed, as he is a football icon, as well as he is driving a “status” car.

The conflict of ending a long career in the national team and not knowing what the future holds is displayed. However, there are various conflicts depending of what you know about the main character before watching the commercial. If one were not to know that it was his last game in the national team, another conflict could for instance be that you should never forget where you come from. Both of these conflicts are relatable to both genders and do not have characteristics that stand out to connected one of them.

The hero of this story is Zlatan, which can perhaps be more identifiable to men since he is a famous male sports icon. Other characters such as his wife and kids are more appealing
to women since it portrays the importance of family. Both Zlatan and his wife have behaviors of loving and caring parents and both genders can therefore relate to them.

The plot of this video is in one way more appealing to women as they stereotypically choose family over career, which is displayed in the video. However, as it is about the end of Zlatan’s football career, it might in that sense appeal more to men. In the commercial he is driving a Volvo car, which makes the brand identity clear, however the brand itself is only displayed clearly in the end of the commercial. The car that has the brand on it, is displayed throughout the commercial and can perhaps be more appealing to men in that sense. The beginning might also be more appealing to men as the focus is on the main character and his status. The middle and end has a focus on family, which is stereotypically more relatable for women.

**Movie 25 – Ica “Stigs livs kärlek”**

**Source:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNicj9OUqmk

Ica is retail chain operating in Sweden with the focus on groceries and related products. The company is quite known for continuously producing new commercials where one can follow the store manager Stig and his employees. The commercial “Stigs livs kärlek”, or Stig’s love story, is based on a flashback of his life with his now passed love. In the video, one gets to see short clips of special happenings between the couple, like their first meeting and their wedding. The last clips shows how his loved one gets sick and passes away. It ends with going back to the presence where they are promoting breast cancer awareness in the store and Stig stating that everything we do can make a difference.

The message of this story is that if doing something that makes a good difference, even if it only is a small one, is better than not doing anything. It is appealing to both genders as it involves values and actions related to them both. However, the message is delivered verbally in the end, which women might relate more to since they value the journey of a story. The commercial involves really strong emotions. This is also shown in the values where values such as family, love, and making a difference is displayed. Since strong emotions are displayed women might relate more easily than men.
The conflict delivered in the video is the girlfriend passing away, which is really emotional and therefore connects more to women. However, the conflict is also that people are unaware that little things also can make a difference, which can be connected to both genders.

The main character Stig is the hero of this story since he is trying to make difference and support the science behind cancer. He is identifiable for both genders as his life story and what he stands for can be relatable for both genders. However, the behavior of showing a lot of emotions and care might be more relatable for women.

Overall the plot is very emotional, which is more connected to the female gender. However, since both genders can face these troubles, as the situation displayed in the commercial, both genders can relate to it.

Movie 26 – Elgiganten “The old man”

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mT36PzEwZfY

Elgiganten is a Swedish retail chain, selling most things related to consumer electronics. This commercial is one out of a couple connected to a promotion called “Säg det med en grej”, or “Say it with a thing”. The story starts with an old man looking lonely and sad, then his doorbell rings and at the doors is his friend with a present. The friend comes in to the apartment and the old man opens his gift, in it is a PlayStation console, here they both break out in laughter and the story ends.

The message of the commercial is that you can show your love and appreciation for someone with a thing, and that a small gesture can make a big difference. It is mostly relatable for men as showing your care with materialistic things can be more relatable to their values, rather than showing care with words and emotions that are connected to the female genders values. However, showing care and emotions at all is mostly relatable for women and since there is a journey and not a message that is displayed directly, females are more likely to connect. Values of friendship, humor, caring and consideration are included in the video, connecting both women and men.
The conflict of this story is that the old man is sad and lonely after losing his wife. It is relatable for both of the genders as the situation is not gender specific. However, as it is highly emotional women might connect more with that part of the conflict.

The hero of this video is the friend who shows up with a gift. Since he and the other character are men, males might connect more to the story. However, both of them easily show their emotions and appreciation towards each other, which women are more prone to connect to. As the behaviors of the characters involve giving a materialistic thing to show emotion, men might relate to the character more easily.

The plot of this video is in one way more relatable for men as it is about giving a manly present to show emotions. On the other hand, relationships are seen as more relatable for women and can therefore make the plot more appealing to them. Furthermore, since there is an emphasis on loneliness both the genders can connect and relate to the story as a whole. The beginning is not gender specific, as we all can end up alone when growing old. The middle part has a focus on friendship, which stereotypically is more appealing to women. And the end has a humor aspect including a manly present, which men are more appealed to.

**Movie 28 – Alvedon “Flu is in the air (Part 1)”**

**Source:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Awck26blZs8

Alvedon is a Swedish brand for over the counter painkillers. This commercial is part one, out of two, of a love story. The story begins with a man being sick in his apartment, as he sneezes, he sees a women, in the apartment across from him, also sneezing at the same time. They make a connection, as the rest of the video is about both of them being sick at home but still interact with each other through the window. The story end with the doorbell ringing at the man’s door.

The message of this story is that love is an important factor in order to get well. Since love and relationship involves emotions it might be more connected to women. However, since it also includes humor the male gender might feel a strong connection as well. The message is delivered both visually and verbally, which makes it clear and easy for both genders to understand it. Emotions are displayed to some extent in the commercial since the values of
family and love is involved. Since emotions are not that strongly displayed both gender can relate.

The conflict lies in being sick and not having someone such as a partner to take care of you. It also involves actually finding someone but not being able to meet each other due to the sickness. This is almost as easy for men as it is for women to relate to since everyone can be sick and knows what a pain a fever can be.

In the commercial no clear hero exists, however one could see the medicine (Alvedon) as a hero. Since the hero is the product, it is difficult to connect the hero with a specific gender and therefore it connects to both. Since there are two main characters, where one is a women and one is a man, both genders can relate.

When it comes to the plot there is a possibility that women might connect more strongly since it is a love story. However, men will most likely also connect to it due to other aspects, such as the humor.

**Movie 32 – Systembolaget “Antilangning”**

**Source:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSM1d50zAI0

Systembolaget is the governmentally owned liquor store chain in Sweden. The commercial “Antilangning” is about a mother and her underage daughter who wants her to buy a bottle of wine for her. It begins with the daughter asking, then several events that could happen if the mom buys the alcohol or not is displayed. It ends with the daughter pushing her to buy it, the mother not being able to make a decision, and a verbal explanation about the issue.

The message is that it is not easy to say no to your children when it comes to alcohol, the message is relatable to both genders; however, women are generally more anxious and indecisive and therefore might be more relatable to women. It is conveyed both verbally and visually, as well as with statistics (typically appealing to men), and therefore both genders can relate to it. However, the message is conveyed at the end (a journey) and therefore perhaps more appealing to women in that sense. Values displayed such as love, caring, concern and safety are typically more appealing to women. There is a status
displayed by what the daughter would have if she got the wine among her friends but also the mom if she would give into the daughter she would be portrayed as a “cool” mom.

The conflict is whether or not the mom should give the daughter the wine. It is relatable for both genders as it the situation is not gender specific. However, as stated earlier, indecisiveness can be categorized as stereotypical for women, which might make the conflict more appealing to the female gender.

The hero in this conflict is the company (Systembolaget), as they provide help with how to say no to children wanting their parents to buy alcohol for them; the hero is not gender specific. Other characters are female, however, they could easily have been male and therefore the gender in this situation is not relevant. The behavior of the mother being very anxious and concerned might perhaps be more relatable to women than men. However, all parents, regardless of gender, probably can relate to the behavior of being protective of their children.

The plot is more relatable to women as they tend to analyze and think about things before making a decision, rather than men who prefer to take the decision straight away. The beginning of the commercial is appealing to both genders as everyone has the possibility to be put into the situation. The middle and the end however is more appealing to women due to it being about analyzing a decision, which can characterized by women.
Appendix II

List of the 32 commercials with attached links

Movie 1: Apple - *What will your verse be?*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sGOb4njjHg

Movie 2: Google - *Reunion*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHGDN9-oFJE

Movie 3: Nike - *The chance*
https://vimeo.com/40035962?width=1080

Movie 4: Lego - *Inspire, imagination and keep building*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfhV3Q4LJPM

Movie 5: P&G - *Thank you mom*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0cxv_CX3NPA

Movie 6: WFP - *805 Million Names – Zlatan Ibrabimovic*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDjjeL9Ya4c

Movie 7: Lotto - *Snälla Åke*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i54BlJuse7A

Movie 8: Lotto - *Färjan*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swqPwy2XvFE

Movie 9: Triss - *Bilen*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vblwDJiCQ64

Movie 10: Triss - *Kontoret*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrsC3go4bZA
Movie 11: SJ - Kolla på film
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMtMVFqr6ks

Movie 12: ATG - Vinnie: Episod 11 Återföreningen /The reunion
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTTC0vBXrxU

Movie 13: ATG - Vinnie: Episod 1 Ingen dröm är för stor/No dream is too big
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipZzSuxpWt0

Movie 14: Ikea - Leva utan dörr
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDPMNkQDFzA

Movie 15: Volvo - Zlatan Epilogue
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SRQUxdNppg

Movie 16: Comviq - Från Bagdad till kiosken
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7d8ZhQZ0ygM

Movie 17: Comviq - Från bagdad till kiosken (kort)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVdJiRlounw

Movie 18: Adressändring - Astronauten
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvcAJ1gVe1I

Movie 19: Coop - Kära köttbit
https://youtu.be/XE54YxnrRsF

Movie 20: Volvo - XC70 feat. Zlatan - Made by Sweden
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbvdzQ7uVPe

Movie 21: Ikano Bank - Because life happens
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HT03ulhsmx0
Movie 22: Ikea - *En god lyssnare*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lRPBewglsRI

Movie 23: Ikea - *Varannan Vecka*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6OzlgXY1BY

Movie 24: Gevalia - *Oväntat besök (2017)*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqktDk3PtdI

Movie 25: Ica - *Stigs livs kärlek*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNicj9OUqmk

Movie 26: Elgiganten - *The old man*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mT36PzEwZfY

Movie 27: Elgiganten – *The mother*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSHAZeKUQJA

Movie 28: Alvedon- *Flu is in the air (Part 1)*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Awck26blZs8

Movie 29: PostNord - *Love Logistics*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgfVvYXbL9kE

Movie 30: Canal Digital - *Clowner*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCDOWvKLuYQ

Movie 31: Systembolaget - *Bröder*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wh3BgNXTK0E

Movie 32: Systembolaget - *Antilangning*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSM1d50zAI0
Appendix III

Checklist for commercials

Table 1 – Questions for the checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Message</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the Message clearly defined?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it only one message?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Conflict</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it a conflict at all?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it a conflict without an immediate solution?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is focus on the main conflict?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the conflict easy to identify?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Characters</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the story have a hero?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Can the target audience either men or women identify with characters?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Plot</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it a good start for the story?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the conflict introduced properly?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it a good end?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Should this movie be included in the analysis?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Movie 1</th>
<th>Movie 2</th>
<th>Movie 3</th>
<th>Movie 4</th>
<th>Movie 5</th>
<th>Movie 6</th>
<th>Movie 7</th>
<th>Movie 8</th>
<th>Movie 9</th>
<th>Movie 10</th>
<th>Movie 11</th>
<th>Movie 12</th>
<th>Movie 13</th>
<th>Movie 14</th>
<th>Movie 15</th>
<th>Movie 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **The Message**
| Is the message clearly defined? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Is it only one message? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **The Conflict**
| Is it a conflict at all? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Is it a conflict without an immediate solution? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Is focus on the main conflict? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Is the conflict easy to identify? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **The Characters**
| Does the story have a hero? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Can the target audience either men or women identify with characters? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **The Plot**
| Is it a good start for the story? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Is the conflict introduced properly? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Is it a good end? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Should this movie be included in the analysis? | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| The Message | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Is the message clearly defined? | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Is it only one message? | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The Conflict | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Is it a conflict of&w? | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Is it a conflict without an immediate solution? | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Is focus on the main conflict? | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Is the conflict easy to identify? | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| The Characters | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Does the story have a hero? | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Can the target audience either men or women identify with characters? | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The Plot | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Is it a good start for the story? | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Is the conflict introduced properly? | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Is it a good end? | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Should this movie be included in the analysis? | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No | Yes |
Table 3 - The 10 Chosen Commercials

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<tr>
<td>Is it only one message?</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<th>Movie 26</th>
<th>Movie 28</th>
<th>Movie 32</th>
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<td>Is there a conflict at all?</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Is focus on the main conflict?</td>
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<tr>
<th>The Characters</th>
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<th>Movie 6</th>
<th>Movie 12</th>
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<th>Movie 25</th>
<th>Movie 26</th>
<th>Movie 28</th>
<th>Movie 32</th>
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<tr>
<td>Does the story have a hero?</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Can the target audience either root or identify with characters?</td>
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<th>Movie 26</th>
<th>Movie 28</th>
<th>Movie 32</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it a good start for the story?</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is it a good end?</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Should this movie be included in the analysis? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
Appendix IV

Questionnaire for analysis of commercials

1) What is the message?
2) Is the message more appealing to men, women or both?
3) Is the message conveyed straight away or in the end?
4) Is the message conveyed visually or verbally?
5) How much of emotions are involved in the video? (1-5)
6) What values are portrayed? Are they more connected to men, women or both?
7) Is there a certain ‘status’ that the video brings?

8) What is the conflict?
9) Is the conflict more relatable for men, women or both?

10) Who is the hero?
11) Is the hero more identifiable for men, women or both?
    a) Other characters?
    b) Are the behaviors of the characters in the video more relatable for men, women or both?

12) Is the plot more appealing to men, women or both?
13) Is there facts/data included in the video?
14) Is the brand portrayed straight away / continuously in the commercial or just in the end?
15) Is the end/middle/beginning more appealing to men, women or both?
Appendix V

Questionnaire for focus groups, ICA commercial (Original, in Swedish)

Frågeformulär till Fokus Grupp - ICA

Namn: Ålder: Kön:

1. Hur känner du dig efter att ha kollat på denna reklamfilm?

2. Hur skulle du beskriva budskapet i denna reklamfilm?

3. Hur skulle du beskriva miljön i denna reklamfilm? (stämmning, musik, färg, etc.)

4. Vilka är de element (musik, karaktärer, berättarröst, miljön, etc.) som du dras till och/eller gillar i denna reklamfilm?

5. På en skala 1-5 hur mycket känslor tycker du att reklamfilmen levererar?

6. I vilka känslor känner du igen dig själv? (om du inte kan identifiera dig med några av känslorna lämna svar tomt)

7. Välj de värderingar som du tycker bäst stämmer överens med filmens budskap (max 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vänskap</th>
<th>Engagemang</th>
<th>Ansvar</th>
<th>Glädje</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hälsa</td>
<td>Empati</td>
<td>Att göra skillnad</td>
<td>Familj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Förändring</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>Gemenskap</td>
<td>Kärlek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djärvhet</td>
<td>Drivkraft</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Kan du identifiera dig själv med någon/några karaktärer i videon?
   a. Om ja, vilken/vilka och på vilket sätt?

9. Beskriv reklamfilmen med 5 ord:
Questionnaire for focus groups, ICA commercial (English translation)

Questionnaire Focus Group - ICA

Name: Age: Gender:

1. How do you feel after watching this commercial?

2. How would you explain the message of this commercial?

3. How would you explain the environment of this commercial? (mood, music, color, etc.)

4. Which elements (music, characters, narration, environment, etc.) are you drawn to in this commercial?

5. On a scale of 1-5, how much emotion do you believe the commercial is portraying?

6. In which emotions can you recognize yourself? (If you can’t identify with any emotions, leave this empty)

7. Choose those values that you feel is the best match with the message of the video (maximum 4)

- Friendship
- Engagement
- Responsibility
- Happiness
- Health
- Empathy
- Make a difference
- Family
- Change
- Inspiration
- Fellowship
- Love
- Boldness
- Driving force
- Status

8. Can you identify yourself with any of the characters in the video?
   a. If so, who and in what way?

9. Explain the commercial with 5 words:
Frågeformulär till Fokus Grupp - Volvo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Namn:</th>
<th>Ålder:</th>
<th>Kön:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Hur känner du dig efter att ha kollat på denna reklamfilm?

2. Hur skulle du beskriva budskapet i denna reklamfilm?

3. Hur skulle du beskriva miljön i denna reklamfilm? (stämning, musik, färg, etc.)

4. Vilka är de element (musik, karaktärer, berättarröst, miljön, etc.) som du dras till och/eller gillar i denna reklamfilm?

5. På en skala 1-5 hur mycket känslor tycker du att reklamfilmen levererar?

6. I vilka känslor känner du igen dig själv? (om du inte kan identifiera dig med några av känslorna lämna svar tomt)

7. Välj de värderingar som du tycker bäst stämmer överens med filmens budskap (max 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beslutsamhet</th>
<th>Engagemang</th>
<th>Ansvar</th>
<th>Glädje</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>Respekt</td>
<td>Förändring</td>
<td>Familj</td>
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<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>Framgång</td>
<td>Gemenskap</td>
<td>Djärvhet</td>
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<td>Status</td>
<td>Mod</td>
<td>Trygghet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hängivenhet</td>
<td>Att</td>
<td>göra</td>
<td>skillnad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Kan du identifiera dig själv med någon/några karaktärer i videon?
   a. Om ja, vilken/vilka och på vilket sätt?

9. Beskriv reklamfilmen med 5 ord:
Questionnaire Focus Group - Volvo

Name:  
Age:  
Gender:  

1. How do you feel after watching this commercial?

2. How would you explain the message of this commercial?

3. How would you explain the environment of this commercial? (mood, music, color, etc.)

4. Which elements (music, characters, narration, environment, etc.) are you drawn to in this commercial?

5. On a scale of 1-5, how much emotion do you believe the commercial is portraying?

6. In which emotions can you recognize yourself? (If you can’t identify with any emotions, leave this empty)

7. Choose those values that you feel is the best match with the message of the video (maximum 4)

   Determination  Engagement  Responsibility  Joy
   Ambition  Respect  Change  Family
   Inspiration  Success  Fellowship  Boldness
   Driving Force  Status  Courage  Security
   Devotion  Make a difference

8. Can you identify yourself with any of the characters in the video?
   a. If so, who and in what way?

9. Explain the commercial with 5 words:
Appendix VI

Group dynamics

Focus group 1
This focus group consisted of five women and the aged varied from the youngest being 22 to the oldest being 58 (See table below). The key theme of this group was that everyone agreed with each other on most parts, but had differing assumptions and perceptions of the stories. The group quickly brought up emotions and connected them to the story; this was especially true concerning the first commercial ICA. In terms of the group dynamic, there were no interruptions and everyone had patience with each other and waited until someone was finished before they talked.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender:</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Focus group 2
This group consisted of three men and three women were the aged varied from the youngest being 20 and the oldest being 27 (See table below). The key theme for this group was that opinions were both strong and different and sometimes no clear understanding of each other’s opinions. This was especially true during the discussion about the second commercial, Volvo. This commercial also awoke strong and mixed feelings among the participants, which led to lively discussions. Also, large division or differences between the genders existed. This group also focused somewhat on marketing and the financial perspective. This was the group who provided the most intense discussion, and was not afraid to speak their mind.

3 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNicj9OUqmk
4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SRQUxdNppg
Focus group 3

This group consisted of six men in the ages between 21 to 28 (See table below). The key theme of this group was that it generally was difficult to start a discussion and then keep it going. All men wrote down one or a couple of emotions, but did not engage to discuss the emotions openly. Very rational and straightforward answers were given, and no in-depth answers. In addition, the males divided the commercials into paragraphs when explaining rather than telling it in its entirety.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Focus Group 3</th>
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<tbody>
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