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# CAN EMOTION BRIDGE THE DIVIDE BETWEEN COLLECTIVISM AND INDIVIDUALISM? FROM HERITAGE TO INDIVIDUALITY: EMOTIONAL BRANDING AS CULTURAL NEGOTIATION ACROSS MENA AND WESTERN LUXURY JEWELRY

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## ABSTRACT

*Emotional branding has become a defining strategy in luxury jewelry marketing, where value lies less in materiality than in symbolic meaning and affective resonance. This qualitative comparative study examines three Lebanese jewelry campaigns—Moukarzel's Mother's Day [17], Zoughaib's Power Women [18], and Yeprem's Set to Shine [19]—and contrasts them with Western campaigns such as Cartier's Love collection [20], Tiffany & Co.'s Believe in Dreams [21], and Pandora's [22] charm narratives. Drawing on emotional branding [5], cultural branding [6], archetypal resonance [8], and semiotic analysis [2], [12], the research shows that MENA brands emphasize family, heritage, and collective resilience, while Western brands prioritize individuality, romantic freedom, and sustainability. Findings confirm Gobé's argument that emotions forge enduring attachments [5] but extend Holt's theory by revealing how cultural tensions vary regionally [6]. The analysis also complicates Faizan's view that campaign ethics rest mainly in execution, suggesting instead that cultural framing of empowerment is equally decisive [14]. By aligning results with Sustainable Development Goals—SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption)—the study demonstrates that emotional branding operates not merely as persuasion but as cultural negotiation. Jewelry advertising thus emerges as a site where global ideals and local traditions intersect, shaping consumer identities and values across regions.*

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**KEYWORDS:** Emotional Branding, Cultural Branding, Archetypes, Semiotics, Jewelry Marketing, Gender Equality (SDG 5), Inclusivity (SDG 10), Sustainability (SDG 12), MENA Region, Western Luxury Brands.

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to explore how emotional branding strategies in jewelry advertising vary across cultural contexts, with a focus on Lebanese (MENA) and Western luxury brands. By analyzing campaigns from Moukarzel, Zoughaib, Yeprem, Cartier, Tiffany & Co., and Pandora, the research investigates how emotions such as love, empowerment, and individuality are framed through archetypes [8], narratives, and visual codes [2]. The study further examines how these emotional appeals intersect with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5, SDG 10, and SDG 12), highlighting the role of jewelry advertising as both a marketing tool and a cultural negotiation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Luxury jewelry has always been more than a material good; it is an object of meaning, ritual, and emotional investment. Across regions, however, the ways in which jewelry brands mobilize emotion differ significantly. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), campaigns often root themselves in collective values—family, heritage, maternal bonds, and cultural resilience—reflecting the role of jewelry in sustaining intergenerational narratives. In contrast, Western luxury jewelry brands frequently emphasize individualism, personal empowerment, and sustainability, framing jewelry as a symbol of self-expression and autonomy.

This paper explores these contrasting emotional strategies through a comparative, qualitative analysis of three Lebanese jewelry houses—Moukarzel, Zoughaib, and Yeprem—and selected Western counterparts. Moukarzel's Mother's Day campaign mobilizes familial care and intergenerational loyalty; Zoughaib's Power Women series celebrates female resilience and authority; and Yeprem's avant-garde aesthetic transforms jewelry into performance art. In contrast, Tiffany's Believe in Dreams campaign or Cartier's Love collection focus on personal journeys, individual freedom, and the universalization of romantic and self-expressive narratives.

By integrating theories of emotional branding [5], cultural branding [6], archetypal resonance [8], and semiotics [2], [16], this study analyzes how these campaigns encode emotion and cultural meaning. Furthermore, by aligning these findings with global sustainability discourses and the Sustainable Development Goals—particularly SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption)—the paper situates jewelry branding within broader questions of gender

representation, cultural identity, and social responsibility. Ultimately, emotional branding is shown not merely as a persuasive technique but as a cultural negotiation between heritage and modernity, collectivism and individualism, tradition and innovation.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Emotional Branding

Emotional branding has been described as “the art of building brands that appeal directly to a consumer's emotional state, needs, and aspirations” [5]. In luxury contexts, where symbolic value outweighs functional utility, emotion becomes the decisive differentiator [11]. Jewelry, in particular, is rarely purchased solely for material worth; it embodies affection, memory, and identity. Thomson, MacInnis, and Park [10] showed that emotional attachment predicts loyalty more strongly than satisfaction, which explains why jewelry houses cultivate sentiment-rich storytelling.

In the MENA region, emotional branding often reflects familial and collective values—maternal devotion in Moukarzel's campaigns, or resilience in Zoughaib's Power Women. By contrast, Western brands such as Tiffany & Co.'s Believe in Dreams or Cartier's Love collection often emphasize individual empowerment, self-realization, and romantic freedom. Both approaches illustrate the power of emotion, but they reveal distinct cultural priorities: collectivism versus individualism.

### 2.2. Cultural Branding and Identity Myths

Holt [6] conceptualizes cultural branding as the construction of identity myths that help societies resolve tensions and anxieties. In Lebanon, where tradition and modernity coexist uneasily [9], brands like Moukarzel and Zoughaib articulate myths of maternal sacrifice or women's resilience. These narratives speak not only to consumers but also to broader socio-cultural negotiations around gender and identity.

Western jewelry houses resolve different cultural tensions. Cartier, for example, universalizes romantic attachment through its iconic Love bracelet, presenting jewelry as an emblem of personal freedom and eternal passion. Similarly, Pandora encourages self-curation through charms, crafting identity myths of individuality and choice [4]. Where MENA brands position jewelry as continuity and legacy, Western brands position it as autonomy and self-expression.

### 2.3. Brand Archetypes and Persona Construction

Jungian archetypes offer brands narrative shortcuts to universal resonance [8]. Mapping archetypes onto consumer personas clarifies how emotional branding works across cultures. In Lebanon, Moukarzel embraces the Caregiver, Zoughaib channels the Hero/Ruler, and Yeprem embodies the Rebel/Creator. Each appeal to specific consumer segments: mothers safeguarding lineage, professional women asserting strength, and cosmopolitans pursuing artistic freedom.

Western brands, meanwhile, often employ archetypes such as the Lover (Cartier's Love), the Explorer (Tiffany's adventurous Believe in Dreams), or the Creator (Mejuri's "fine jewelry for my damn self"). These archetypes mirror Western cultural emphasis on self-determination, passion, and boundary-pushing.

### 2.4. Semiotic Visual Rhetoric

Semiotics interprets campaign visuals as culturally coded signs [2], [16]. Jewelry advertising is saturated with such codes: Moukarzel's soft light and maternal gestures signify security; Zoughaib's symmetrical frames and austere color palettes signify authority; Yeprem's kinetic choreography conveys avant-garde disruption.

By contrast, Western campaigns frequently deploy minimalist cosmopolitan aesthetics—Tiffany's use of "Tiffany Blue" as an emotional semiotic code of optimism, or Cartier's red boxes symbolizing eternal passion. Sustainability cues also appear: recycled gold, conflict-free diamonds, and lab-grown gems are increasingly visualized in Western jewelry, aligning with SDG 12 [13]. MENA brands, though less explicit about sustainability, often rely on heritage-based semiotics (craftsmanship, legacy, intergenerational bonds) as a form of cultural sustainability.

### 2.5. Storytelling, Brand Love, And Empowerment

Narrative branding fosters "brand love"—a passionate attachment that drives advocacy and loyalty [15], [3]. Moukarzel's maternal stories, Zoughaib's empowerment narratives, and Yeprem's performance-based storytelling all pursue brand love through emotion. In the West, Tiffany's and Pandora's narratives cultivate intimacy and self-expression, producing equally strong affective bonds [4].

What emerges is not a hierarchy but a cultural

contrast: MENA storytelling anchors emotion in community, legacy, and shared history, while Western storytelling privileges individuality, agency, and self-actualization. These distinctions matter for the SDGs: SDG 5 is at stake in how women are represented (caretakers vs. agents), while SDG 10 is implicated in who is included or excluded from aspirational storytelling.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative, interpretive case study approach to explore how jewelry brands in the MENA region and in Western markets construct emotional appeals through narrative and visual strategies. The focus is on how emotion functions as a cultural code, shaping consumer identity and brand perception.

*Research Design:* The study follows a comparative discourse and semiotic analysis. Three Lebanese jewelry campaigns—Moukarzel's Mother's Day, Zoughaib's Power Women, and Yeprem's Set to Shine—are analyzed alongside selected Western campaigns, including Cartier's Love collection, Tiffany & Co.'s Believe in Dreams, and Pandora's charm narratives. Each campaign is treated as a case study, allowing for both deep contextual analysis and cross-regional comparison.

The analysis focuses on: Emotional cores (family, empowerment, individualism, sustainability) - Archetypal narratives (Caregiver, Hero, Rebel, Lover, Explorer) - Semiotic visual codes (color, composition, gesture, symbols) - Narrative strategies (heritage vs. self-expression, community vs. autonomy)

*Data Collection:* Primary materials include: Official campaign visuals on websites, catalogs, and Instagram - Campaign videos and brand storytelling narratives - Captions and slogans, which crystallize emotional meaning.

The selection covers campaigns from 2021 to 2024, focusing on those explicitly designed around emotional storytelling. For Western comparisons, publicly available campaigns from Cartier, Tiffany, and Pandora were included as cultural benchmarks.

**Analytical Tools: The analysis integrates three interpretive methods:**

*Visual Semiotic Analysis* (Barthes, 1977; Oswald, 2015): interpreting symbolic signs, gestures, and imagery.

*Archetypal and Narrative Analysis* (Mark & Pearson, 2001): mapping emotional strategies onto universal archetypes and consumer personas.

*Comparative Cultural Interpretation* (Holt, 2004): identifying how campaigns negotiate different

cultural tensions (heritage vs. modernity, collectivism vs. individualism).

This design enables a nuanced qualitative comparison, highlighting how MENA and Western brands mobilize emotions differently while still aligning with global cultural trends and SDGs.

#### 4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

##### 1. *Moukarzel Mother's Day (MENA) vs. Cartier Love (West)*

- **Moukarzel:** Anchored in the Caregiver archetype, the campaign elevates motherhood and intergenerational heritage. Jewelry functions as a vessel of familial love and continuity, resonating with Lebanon's cultural valorization of maternal roles. [17]
- **Cartier:** In contrast, Cartier's iconic Love collection embodies the Lover archetype, framing jewelry as an eternal bond of passion and personal choice. The symbolism emphasizes exclusivity and intimacy between individuals, aligning with Western ideals of romantic autonomy. [20]

**Comparative Insight:** While both campaigns mobilize intimacy, Moukarzel ties emotion to family continuity (collectivist values), whereas Cartier anchors it in dyadic romance and self-directed passion (individualist values).

##### 2. *Zoughaib Power Women (MENA) vs. Tiffany Believe in Dreams (West)*

- **Zoughaib:** Mobilizes Hero/Ruler archetypes by celebrating resilience and empowerment, particularly tied to International Women's Day. Jewelry becomes a metaphorical armor, symbolizing inner strength and social recognition for professional women. [18]
- **Tiffany:** The Believe in Dreams campaign emphasizes Explorer/Creator archetypes, portraying jewelry as a symbol of individuality, aspiration, and limitless possibility. The focus is not on community recognition but on personal freedom and creative identity. [21]

**Comparative Insight:** Both campaigns target women's empowerment, but in different registers. Zoughaib aligns empowerment with resilience in a collective, culturally resonant narrative, whereas Tiffany frames it as individual liberation and aspirational self-making.

##### 3. *Yepprem Set to Shine (MENA) vs. Pandora Charms of You (West)*

- **Yepprem:** Driven by Rebel/Creator archetypes, the campaign transforms jewelry into kinetic art—an extension of bodily expression, avant-garde creativity, and cosmopolitan modernity. [19]
- **Pandora:** Focuses on personal storytelling, where charms allow consumers to construct individualized emotional narratives. Jewelry here is democratized, accessible, and tied to everyday identity expression. [22]

**Comparative Insight:** Yepprem appeals to a niche, elite audience that values distinction and artistic boldness, while Pandora appeals to mass audiences by translating emotional branding into accessible, customizable products. Both highlight self-expression, but with vastly different social positioning.

##### **Cross-Cultural Synthesis: The comparison reveals clear emotional orientations:**

- MENA brands emphasize family, heritage, communal resilience, and cultural continuity.
- Western brands emphasize individuality, personal empowerment, sustainability, and freedom.

Both sets, however, employ emotional branding as cultural storytelling, but the cultural tensions they negotiate differ: tradition vs. modernity in MENA; self-expression vs. social responsibility in the West.

#### 5. DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis of emotional branding in MENA and Western jewelry campaigns reveals that emotion functions as both a universal language and a culturally specific code. While Gobé [5] argued that emotional branding universally creates long-lasting consumer attachments, our findings suggest that the content of these emotional appeals is deeply mediated by cultural values. In Lebanon and the wider MENA region, campaigns such as Moukarzel's Mother's Day [17] and Zoughaib's Power Women [18] anchor emotion in collectivist traditions—maternal care, intergenerational legacy, and communal resilience—reflecting a cultural emphasis on continuity and social belonging. By contrast, Western brands like Cartier's Love [20] and Tiffany's Believe in Dreams [21] privilege narratives of individuality, freedom, and romantic autonomy, aligning with Western ideals of self-determination.

This divergence confirms Holt's [6] theory that branding resolves cultural tensions, but extends it by demonstrating that the nature of these tensions varies across regions. In MENA, the tension lies between preserving heritage and embracing modernity, while in Western contexts, it is between

self-expression and social responsibility. The symbolic strategies employed by brands thus act as mirrors of broader socio-cultural negotiations.

The findings also shed light on gendered narratives, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality). Zoughaib's campaign exemplifies a collective model of empowerment, celebrating women as resilient community figures, whereas Tiffany and Mejuri highlight individual liberation and autonomy. This contrast complicates Faizan's [14] assertion that ethical value lies primarily in execution; instead, our study shows that cultural framing of empowerment is decisive in shaping audience identification.

Sustainability, tied to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption), further distinguishes East and West. Western brands increasingly foreground eco-materials, recycled metals, and lab-grown diamonds as part of their emotional storytelling, while MENA jewelers implicitly practice sustainability by valorizing artisanal heritage and intergenerational craftsmanship. Both approaches, when authentically framed, enhance emotional resonance and strengthen brand legitimacy.

Overall, the study suggests that emotional branding serves as cultural negotiation: between heritage and innovation in MENA, and between individuality and responsibility in the West. These insights not only contribute to cultural branding theory but also highlight pathways for brands to align with global development goals while remaining culturally authentic.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that emotional branding in jewelry is deeply cultural. Lebanese brands such as Moukarzel, Zoughaib, and Yeprem mobilize emotions rooted in family, empowerment, and artistic distinction, reflecting regional priorities of heritage, resilience, and prestige. Western brands like Cartier, Tiffany, and Pandora, meanwhile, foreground individuality, romantic autonomy, and sustainability, aligning with global discourses of self-realization and responsible consumption.

**By analyzing these campaigns qualitatively, three key insights emerge:**

1. Emotion as a cultural code: Our findings confirm Gobé's [5] argument that emotional branding is essential for building long-term consumer attachment, but they also extend Holt's [6] theory of cultural branding by showing how brands resolve different cultural tensions depending on context—tradition

versus modernity in MENA, individuality versus social responsibility in the West.

2. Gender and empowerment (SDG 5): The analysis supports Mark and Pearson's [8] archetypal framework in demonstrating how Caregiver, Hero, and Rebel narratives resonate differently across regions. Yet, it complicates Faizan's [14] claim that the ethical value of campaigns lies primarily in execution rather than in cultural framing. Our findings suggest that the cultural register of empowerment—collective resilience versus individual autonomy—is equally critical to audience reception.
3. Sustainability and inclusivity (SDGs 10 & 12): While previous studies (e.g., Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau [13]) argued that sustainability in luxury often risks superficiality, our analysis indicates that when embedded within authentic cultural storytelling—whether through Western eco-material narratives or MENA heritage continuity—sustainability can enhance emotional resonance and symbolic legitimacy.

In this sense, emotional branding functions not only as a strategic differentiator but as a cultural negotiation. Jewelry advertising does not merely sell products; it sells stories of who consumers are—or aspire to become—within specific cultural worlds. By situating these narratives within the Sustainable Development Goals, this research highlights the potential of emotional branding to shape not just consumer behavior but also cultural perceptions of gender, inclusivity, and responsibility.

### 6.1. Originality and Value

This study contributes original comparative evidence on how emotional branding in jewelry advertising differs between MENA and Western markets. While confirming the centrality of emotion in forging consumer attachment (Gobé, 2001), it extends cultural branding theory (Holt, 2004) by showing how brands resolve distinct cultural tensions: tradition versus modernity in the MENA region, and individuality versus responsibility in the West. The findings challenge Faizan's (2017) emphasis on execution by underscoring the importance of cultural framing in shaping empowerment narratives. By linking results to SDGs, the paper provides scholarly and managerial insights into inclusive, sustainable, and culturally attuned branding.

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