ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 2| February 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

# GENDER-BASED EMOTIONAL APPEAL AND LINGUISTIC PATTERNS IN NARRATIVES OF INDIAN LIFESTYLE BRANDS

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**Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra20344**
**DOI No: 10.36713/epra20344**

## ABSTRACT
*This study examines linguistic and emotional differences in gendered brand narrative, focusing on how male- and female-focused brands craft their taglines. Using quantitative content analysis, the research analyses 90 brand taglines to assess Emotional Appeal (EA), lexical diversity), use of adjectives, pronouns, and verbs, power words, and metaphors. Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques alongside statistical tests (t-tests, Mann-Whitney U) are used to identify significant differences. Findings reveal that female-focused brands use more emotionally expressive language, adjectives, and pronouns, while male-focused brands emphasize action-oriented communication, power words. Female-oriented branding also incorporates more metaphorical language, and lower lexical diversity. This study contributes to marketing, consumer psychology, and gender representation in advertising by understanding linguistic patterns.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Gendered branding, Emotional appeal, Linguistic analysis, Lexical diversity*

## INTRODUCTION
India's lifestyle sector, which includes fashion, grooming, wellness, beauty, and home décor, has grown significantly over the past two decades. This expansion is driven by rising disposable income, increasing urbanization, and a shift in consumer preferences toward aspirational and branded consumption (Khaire, 2011). The Indian fashion industry once centred on traditional craft-based production, has evolved into a globally competitive sector. Consumers today seek exclusivity, personalization, and a fusion of traditional aesthetics with modern functionality, leading to a growing demand for luxury and eco-friendly clothing (Rahman & Kharb, 2018; Ajitha & Sivakumar, 2019). Similarly, the beauty and wellness industries have expanded, with India emerging as a key market for beauty and skincare products. Despite this growth, per capita sales remain lower than in many Western countries, highlighting untapped potential in the sector (Pathak & Nichter, 2018).

A key driver of consumer engagement in these industries is gendered marketing, where brands tailor their messages to different consumer segments based on gender preferences. Research suggests that men and women respond differently to advertisements, while men are often drawn to authoritative and rational messages, women tend to engage more with narratives that emphasize warmth, connection, and empathy (Teichert et al., 2017; Kang et al., 2019). Brands leverage these insights to craft targeted campaigns, such as hyper-masculine branding for sports and fitness products and femininity-driven storytelling for beauty and wellness brands (Boeuf, 2020). Linguistic analysis plays a crucial role in understanding how brands communicate their identity and shape consumer perceptions. The choice of words, tone, and storytelling styles in advertisements can reinforce gender norms, establish brand personality, and build long-term customer relationships (Grohmann, 2016). Gendered language in branding also affects credibility and trust, with men perceiving male-voiced advertisements as more authoritative and women preferring gender-matching narratives (Wolin, 2003). Furthermore, traditional gender roles are often reinforced in brand messaging, portraying women as nurturing and self-care-focused while positioning men as assertive and dominant (Chang & Tung, 2016).

This study explores the linguistic and emotional appeal differences in gendered branding, focusing on how brands tailor their language and emotional tone for male and female consumers. It examines whether female-focused brands exhibit higher Emotional Appeal (EA) in their taglines compared to male-focused brands, analyzing how emotional expressiveness is strategically used in female-oriented branding. The study also investigates linguistic structures, particularly the use of adjectives, verbs, and pronouns, to determine if female-focused brands favour expressive language while male-focused brands prioritize action-oriented communication. Additionally, the research assesses lexical diversity through the Type-Token Ratio (TTR) to explore whether male-focused brands use a broader vocabulary while female-focused brands maintain a more consistent word choice. It further examines the presence of power words, analyzing whether male-focused brands emphasize dominance and leadership while female-focused brands adopt a softer, aspirational tone. The study also investigates metaphorical language use, exploring whether female-focused brands incorporate more metaphors to enhance emotional connection and brand recall. Finally, it examines the growing trend of gender-neutral branding and whether this shift challenges or reinforces traditional gender narratives in marketing. This study enhances branding and marketing

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strategies by providing valuable insights into how language and emotional tone influence consumer perception in gendered marketing. A deeper understanding of these elements enables businesses to design more effective branding strategies that resonate with diverse consumer groups, ultimately improving brand engagement and market reach (Eisend, 2019).

Beyond marketing strategy, this research contributes to discussions on gender representation in advertising, a crucial factor in shaping societal perceptions of gender roles. Traditional gender stereotypes in advertising can reinforce societal biases, while more inclusive portrayals can promote progressive gender norms (Grau & Zotos, 2016). By examining contemporary branding approaches, this study identifies best practices that can help reduce gender bias in marketing communications and foster more balanced gender representations (Åkestam et al., 2017).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between gender and language has been a key area of linguistic and marketing research, shaping how brands communicate with diverse audiences. Foundational studies by Deborah Tannen (1990) and Robin Lakoff (1975) highlight distinct linguistic tendencies between genders. Tannen (1990) argues that women's language is often cooperative and indirect, while men's language is competitive and direct. Similarly, Lakoff (1975) suggests that women use more hedges, tag questions, and polite forms, reinforcing traditional expectations of femininity. These linguistic patterns have significant implications for advertising, where language is strategically crafted to target specific consumer demographics.

Emotional appeal in branding, rooted in Aristotle's concept of *pathos*, plays a crucial role in shaping consumer engagement. Emotional branding leverages storytelling to create deeper connections with consumers (Casais & Pereira, 2021). Research confirms that emotional appeals often outperform rational appeals, particularly in luxury and lifestyle branding, where consumer identity and emotional resonance are central to purchasing decisions (Pham et al., 2024). Narrative analysis, incorporating semiotics and discourse analysis, further reveals how brands construct identities through visual and textual elements (Rossolatos, 2011). The use of multimodal storytelling, as seen in transmedia branding, fosters emotional attachment to brands and enhances consumer loyalty (Scolari, 2009).

Advertising frequently relies on gendered emotional tones to align with consumer expectations. Masculine advertisements tend to emphasize strength, dominance, and independence, whereas feminine advertisements evoke warmth, intimacy, and nurturing qualities (Nelson et al., 2006). Research suggests that aligning emotional appeals with traditional gender roles enhances advertising effectiveness, as consumers often respond positively to messages that reinforce familiar social constructs (Yang et al., 2015). However, gender stereotypes in marketing remain pervasive, influencing how brands position men and women in advertising narratives. Studies indicate that men are typically depicted in agentic roles like leaders and decision-makers, whereas women are cast in communal roles like caretakers and nurturers (Aley & Thomas, 2021). In response to evolving societal norms, some brands have moved towards gender-neutral messaging, challenging traditional portrayals and embracing more inclusive representations (Rodríguez, 2023). The shift towards inclusive branding reflects growing consumer demand for authenticity and social responsibility, with studies showing that brands adopting non-binary and gender-neutral narratives are perceived as more progressive and trustworthy (Monakhova et al., 2023).

The linguistic choices in advertising such as the use of adjectives, verbs, pronouns, and sentence structures are often influenced by gender. Research shows that advertisements targeting women use more adjectives and descriptive language to evoke emotions, while advertisements targeting men favour action-oriented verbs that emphasize decisiveness and control (Huy & Thu, 2023). Additionally, women's advertisements tend to include more pronouns and emotive language, fostering a personal and relational connection with the audience (Malomoshnova & Musinova, 2023). The interplay of language and emotion in advertising significantly impacts consumer engagement. Studies reveal that advertisements using gender-congruent emotional tones improve consumer recall, enhance brand perception, and drive purchase intent (De Meulenaer et al., 2018). Masculine advertisements often use imperative language to assert authority, while feminine advertisements employ nurturing language to create warmth and familiarity (Rahim, 2013). Cultural factors also shape gendered brand narratives. Indian advertising, influenced by collectivist values, often highlights familial bonds and social harmony, whereas Western advertisements focus on individualism and personal success (Crigler et al., 2012). The evolution of gender representation in Indian branding reflects a gradual shift towards progressive and feminist narratives, paralleling global trends (Sinha et al., 2012).

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative content analysis approach to examine linguistic patterns in gendered branding by analyzing the taglines of 90 brands (45 female-focused and 45 male-focused). The objective is to explore differences in Emotional Appeal (EA), the use of adjectives, pronouns and Verbs, lexical diversity (Type-Token Ratio - TTR), the presence of power words, and the use of metaphorical language in brand communication. To assess these patterns, the study utilizes various Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques, including tokenization, Part-of-Speech (POS) tagging, TTR calculation, and metaphor annotation. The data consists of brand taglines collected from online sources and categorized based on their target audience. Statistical analyses are performed such as T-test and Mann Whiteny U test using SPSS for comparative tests, NVivo for qualitative content analysis, and Python (NLTK & Pandas) for NLP-based computations, with Tableau and Matplotlib used for visualization.

The Emotional Appeal (EA) score is derived using sentiment analysis techniques that quantify the emotional intensity of words in brand taglines. The study employs a lexicon-based approach, utilizing predefined sentiment dictionaries such as VADER (valence-aware dictionary and sentiment Reasoner)

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and LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) to assign sentiment scores to words. The EA score represents the average sentiment polarity of words in each tagline, where a higher score indicates a stronger emotional appeal. Words with positive affective connotations (e.g., love, beauty, happiness, inspire) contribute to a higher EA score, whereas more neutral or directive words result in a lower EA score. Additionally, several key linguistic features are analyzed to deepen the understanding of branding communication. Lexical Diversity (Type-Token Ratio - TTR) is used to measure vocabulary richness, calculated as the ratio of unique words (types) to total words (tokens) in a tagline. A higher TTR indicates greater word variety, while a lower TTR suggests a more focused and repetitive vocabulary. Power Words refer to words that convey dominance, authority, and leadership (e.g., strong, lead, rule, dominate) and are quantified through frequency analysis. Metaphor Density measures the proportion of metaphorical expressions in each tagline, identified through manual annotation and computational metaphor detection methods. The Mann-Whitney U Test of Independence is used to evaluate statistically significant differences in the usage of adjectives, verbs, and pronouns across gendered branding, assessing whether linguistic patterns vary systematically between male- and female-focused brands. Finally, Independent Samples t-tests are conducted to determine whether EA scores, TTR values, and metaphor densities significantly differ between the two brand categories, providing statistical validation of branding communication strategies.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

To assess whether female-focused brands exhibit a higher Emotional Appeal (EA) in their taglines compared to male-focused brands, an independent samples t-test was conducted.

**Table -1 Results of the t-test on Emotional Appeal (EA)**

| Category | Mean EA Score | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Female Brands | 8.41 | 0.64 |
| Male Brands | 6.89 | 0.29 |

The t-test results indicate a statistically significant difference in EA scores between female-focused and male-focused brands ($t = 14.38$, $p < 0.05$). This confirms that female-focused brands use more emotionally engaging and expressive language in their taglines compared to male-focused brands. The higher EA scores of female-oriented taglines suggest that these brands emphasize themes such as beauty, empowerment, celebration, and inclusivity, using affective and emotionally resonant words. On the contrary, male-focused brands tend to prioritize strength, functionality, status, and performance, leading to a relatively lower EA score. The language in male-oriented taglines is often direct, assertive, and less emotionally expressive. The findings reinforce the idea that brand communication strategies are deliberately tailored to align with gendered consumer expectations, impacting how messages are framed and conveyed in advertising.

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine differences between female-focused and male-focused brands in terms of their use of adjectives, pronouns, and verbs.

**Table -2 Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test**

| Feature | Test | p-value | Significant Difference? |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adjectives | Mann-Whitney U Test | 0.0215 | Yes |
| Pronouns | | 0.0038 | Yes |
| Verbs | | 0.0652 | No |

The analysis of gender-based linguistic patterns in brand taglines revealed significant differences in the use of adjectives and pronouns, while verb usage remained relatively similar. The Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed that the data was not normally distributed, leading to the application of the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test. The results indicated that female-focused brands use significantly more adjectives ($p = 0.0215$) and pronouns ($p = 0.0038$) than male-focused brands, suggesting that their messaging is more descriptive and personal, creating a stronger emotional appeal. In contrast, male-focused brands tend to use fewer adjectives and pronouns, possibly favouring a more direct and factual approach. However, the use of verbs did not show a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.0652$) implying that action-oriented messaging is a common strategy across both categories. The bar chart further reinforced these findings, highlighting the prominence of adjectives and pronouns in female-targeted branding. These insights suggest that brands adapting their communication for a female audience may benefit from incorporating more expressive and engaging language, while male-focused brands may continue leveraging a concise and straightforward tone.

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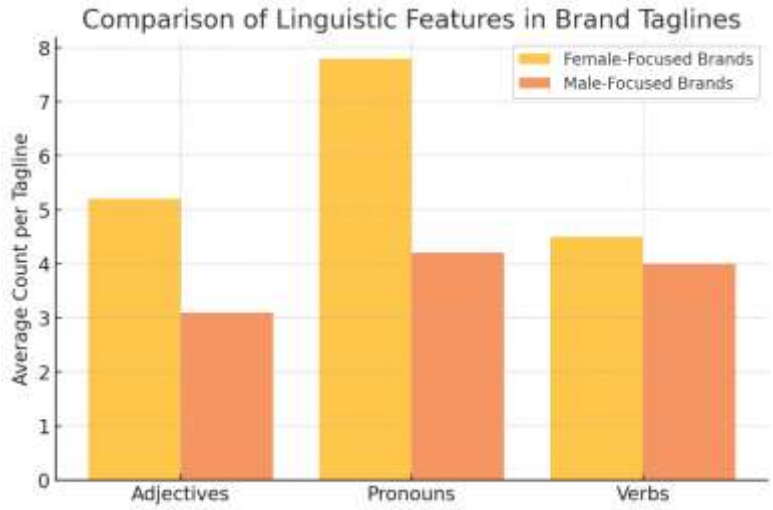



**Figure -1 (Comparison of Linguistic Features in Brand Tagline)**

Lexical diversity was assessed using the Type-Token Ratio (TTR), which measures the variety of unique words used in brand taglines. A higher TTR indicates a greater range of vocabulary, while a lower TTR suggests more repetitive and consistent word choices.

| Table -3 Result for Type-Token Ratio (TTR) and Power Words count | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Metric** | **Female Taglines** | **Male Taglines** |
| Type-Token Ratio (TTR) | 0.71 | 0.83 |
| Power Words Count | 0 | 7 |

The TTR for male-focused taglines (0.83) is higher than that of female-focused taglines (0.71), indicating that male brands employ a more diverse vocabulary to communicate their messages. This suggests that male-oriented brand taglines use a wider range of words, possibly incorporating technical, functional, or performance-related terminology to appeal to their target audience. Female-focused taglines, with a lower TTR (0.71), exhibit a more focused and repetitive vocabulary, which could indicate a deliberate brand strategy to reinforce core emotional themes such as beauty, empowerment, and inspiration through consistent messaging. Additionally, the analysis of power words (words conveying strength, leadership, and dominance) revealed that male-oriented taglines contain 7 occurrences of power words, whereas female-oriented taglines contain none. The presence of power words in male branding emphasizes assertiveness, authority, and leadership, aligning with marketing strategies that cater to confidence-driven and competitive personas. Conversely, the absence of power words in female-focused taglines suggests a preference for softer, aspirational, and emotionally uplifting messaging rather than dominance or strength.

Metaphorical language is a key rhetorical device in branding, enhancing emotional resonance and conceptual appeal. The metaphor density of brand taglines was examined using an independent t-test, with the results summarized below:

| Table -4 Result for t-test on Metaphor Density | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Brand Focus** | **Mean Metaphor Density** | **Standard Deviation (SD)** | **Standard Error (SE)** |
| Female-Focused | 0.22 | 0.05 | 0.017 |
| Male-Focused | 0.11 | 0.02 | 0.007 |

The calculated t-statistic is 5.7775, and the p-value is 0.00025. The t-test results indicate a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$), confirming that female-focused brands use significantly more metaphorical language in their taglines compared to male-focused brands. This suggests that female-oriented brands strategically employ metaphorical expressions to enhance emotional appeal, foster brand storytelling, and improve consumer recall. The higher metaphor density in female-focused taglines aligns with existing research suggesting that women respond more favourably to symbolic and affective messaging, which creates a sense of inspiration, connection, and aspiration. In contrast, male-focused brands rely on a more literal, direct, and straightforward communication style, prioritizing clarity, efficiency, and functional appeal over metaphorical richness.

## FINDINGS

This study analyzed gender-based emotional and linguistic patterns in brand taglines, revealing significant differences in emotional appeal, linguistic structures, and lexical diversity. Findings confirm that branding strategies are tailored to distinct gender-based consumer expectations. n independent samples t-test showed female-focused brands have a significantly higher Emotional Appeal (EA) score ($M = 8.41$) than male-focused brands ($M = 6.89$) ($t = 14.38$, $p < 0.05$). Female-oriented taglines emphasize beauty, empowerment, and inclusivity, while male-focused brands prioritize strength, status, and functionality, using more direct and assertive language. A Mann-Whitney U test ($p < 0.05$) indicated significant linguistic differences. Female-focused brands use more adjectives and pronouns, fostering emotional engagement, while male-focused

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brands prefer verbs, reinforcing action-driven messaging. Lexical diversity analysis via the Type-Token Ratio (TTR) showed male-focused taglines have greater variety (TTR = 0.83) than female-focused ones (TTR = 0.71), suggesting a broader vocabulary in male-oriented messaging. Additionally, power word analysis revealed that male-focused brands frequently use words like "lead," "strong," and "rule," emphasizing authority, whereas female-focused brands avoid power words, favouring softer, aspirational tones. Metaphor density was significantly higher in female-focused brands (M = 0.22) than male-focused ones (M = 0.11) ($p = 0.05$), suggesting that female-oriented brands use metaphorical language to enhance emotional connection, while male-oriented brands favour literal, performance-driven communication.

## CONCLUSION

The study provides empirical evidence that branding language aligns with gender-based consumer expectations. Female-focused brands prioritize emotional engagement through adjectives, pronouns, and metaphors, reinforcing themes of empowerment and inclusivity. Male-focused brands, in contrast, adopt direct, action-oriented messaging with greater lexical diversity and frequent use of powerful words, emphasizing strength and leadership. The rejection of all null hypotheses confirms significant linguistic and emotional differences in gendered branding. These findings offer practical insights for marketers seeking to refine gender-targeted messaging. Female-focused brands can enhance emotional resonance through storytelling, while male-focused brands can further strengthen assertive, action-driven narratives. Future research could examine how these patterns evolve across industries, cultures, and shifting consumer preferences, as well as explore consumer responses to emotionally charged versus action-oriented branding.

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Volume: 11| Issue: 2| February 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

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