

# The Effect of Hero Archetype in Advertising on Perceived Product Efficacy

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## Abstract

This study aimed to examine the effect of the hero archetype in advertising on perceived product efficacy and purchase intention. The hero character was tough and brave to overcome a great trial; he was fighting to achieve a noble goal, and successfully demonstrated the pride's superiority. The use of archetype in advertising attempts to convey meaning to products ; the universal archetype characters can help tell the story of a brand in an easier way. The results of this study suggested that the use of hero archetype in an ad can trigger anthropomorphism, and had a positive effect on perceived product efficacy and purchase intention. Further, the results indicated that the warrior character in a hero had positive effects on perceived product efficacy for male consumers and for consumers with less power.

**Keywords:** hero archetype, anthropomorphism, perceived product efficacy, advertising

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One of the advertising strategies that can be used to attract the attention of consumers and to convey the message of the benefits of a product is to use a story. The story makes communication simple, easy to understand, and more appealing than listening to someone else talking (Woodside, 2010). This simplification is needed in advertising communication to convey the message of problem solving (Rossiter, Percy, & Donovan, 1991). Marketers today need a way to convince consumers that the products offered can be effective to solve their problems. The story of an archetype enables customers to understand about product efficiency when the efficacy of a product is abstract and difficult to comprehend. The purpose of this study is to examine the use of hero archetype as a symbol of a product in advertising, which facilitates consumer understanding, thus portraying a positive message regarding the perceived product's efficacy.

Archetypes, as defined by Carl Jung, are universal and repetitive imageries, patterns, or motifs that represent ordinary human experience (Jung, 1975). Archetypes are the collective unconscious of people all over the world, which are thoughtful presentation of human characteristics, which basically describe the universal human motivation. Archetypes are the patterns that shape our perceptions of the world, and they are automatically inherited by humans (Jung, 1975). Humans fill archetypes with a variety of experiences, attach meaning to them, and use them to assess the outside world (Jung, 1975). In marketing, archetypes are used as brands' symbolic meaning, and help brands to become a consistent and enduring expression of meaning (Mark & Pearson, 2001). Based on Jung, Mark and Pearson (2001) recognized that there are 12 archetypes, which serve as a template of advertising: the explorer, the innocent, the sage, the hero, the outlaw, the magician, the regular guy, the caregiver, the lover, the ruler, the jester, and the creator.

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In Indonesian advertisements, products are symbolized in various archetypal stories. Companies in the field of entertainment make an accentuation of pleasure and fun in their advertising (jester), beauty products using the story of Cinderella (lover), a milk product showing healthy children figures exploring the world (explorer), the figure of a mother in her role of caring for family members (caregiver), the product's ability to instantly change skin color (magician), and finally the story about a product that bravely saves consumers from experienced problems (hero). Lover, jester, hero, magician, caregiver, and explorer are symbolic stories that have been known to humans for a long time, the stories, which have been passed on from generation to generation to children and grandchildren. This research is primarily focused on the hero archetype that presents the product efficacy in human terms.

The hero is the man of self-achieved submission (Campbell, 2004). He is a figure of protector that provides adventurers with supernatural assistance against the dragon forces, survives a succession of trials, and surely wins the battle. The hero attempts to rescue victims or defend the oppressed (Mark & Pearson, 2001), undergoes a supreme ordeal, and gains his reward (Campbell, 2004). The battlefield symbolizes the field of life, where every creature lives (wins) on the death (defeat) of another (Campbell, 2004) such as sporting events, streets, workplaces, politics, forests, or places where trouble or challenge awaits brave and energetic actions (Mark & Pearson, 2001). The hero is a champion of things. In advertising, a hero acts as a symbol of a product or a brand. Many brands today try explicitly or implicitly to become a hero.

According to Campbell (2004), the hero archetype is manifested in many forms, such as a fighter (warrior). A warrior fights against the enemy for the triumph of good over evil, and then the enemy dies and he wins. The warrior beats the powerful, violent, and deadly opponents of evil. In advertising, the heroic story of the warrior illustrates how powerful a product is to overcome consumer problems. For example, in some Indonesian ads, Baygon beats mosquitos until they bounce off surfaces and die, Komix kills cough, and Dettol kills germs. Products are illustrated like a human, like a warrior who fights and defeats the evil.

Previous studies more extensively covered spokes - characters and their effect on consumer behavior. Spokes - characters create an identity for a brand, creating a positive feeling, and making the brand more memorable, so that the purchase intention is positive (Pierce, 2002). The beautiful shapes and behavior of a spokes - character brings excitement, and the uniqueness of this spokes - character increases consumer recognition of a product and purchase intention (Lin & Wang, 2012). Research has also showed that spokes - characters have a positive influence on consumers' attitudes toward the brand, brand trust, and the willingness of consumers to pay a premium price (Folse, Netemeyer, & Burton, 2012). Similarly, in children, although spokes - characters do not affect the selection of products and intentions, they help them identify the products (Neeley & Schumann, 2004).

However, research into the character of the hero in ads and the effect on consumers has not been explored. This study aims to examine the effects of the behavior of the hero character on perceived product efficacy and purchase intention. More specifically, we distinguish how the behavioral effects of the hero as a warrior and non-warrior affect product efficacy and purchase intention.

## Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

**(1) Hero Archetype and Consumer Behavior :** The term "archetype" is derived from the ancient Greek, *archein*, which means "original or old" ; and *typos*, which means "pattern, model, or type". The meaning of archetype is an "original pattern" of which all other similar persons, objects, or concepts are derived, copied, modeled, or emulated (Jung, 1975). According to Carl Jung (1975), an archetype is the collective unconsciousness of people all over the world, or the basic motive of human. He acknowledged that there is a universal pattern in all stories and mythology of cultures around the world, and the hypothesis of that part of the human mind contain the collective unconsciousness shared by all members of the human species, which are universal.

In myth stories, the force of soul is conveyed in so many ways. Sometimes, it is represented by such symbols such as a darling princess, a handsome prince, a tiny creature, or a hero (Campbell, 2004). People and ethnic groups

in the world are constantly maintaining a heroic myth, telling the others, and trying to bring him into their life experience. The same is given in our life's journey: to seek and follow the myth, to see the best and worst attributes in the story, then they are reflected back to us (Campbell, 2004).

In his book, Campbell (2004) describes the journey of a hero in several stages: In 'Departure,' the hero is called to adventure, although he is reluctant to accept. Something destabilizes the situation, either from external or internal pressure, so the hero must face these changes. In 'Initiation,' the hero crosses a threshold into a new, more dangerous world, and he gets a more mature perspective. The hero is given supernatural aid, endures tests of strength, intellect, and durability. Then, he descends into the deepest cave, an underworld, or any other place of great trial. Sometimes, this place can be in the mind of the hero himself. Because of this trial, the hero is reborn in some way, physically, emotionally, or spiritually. Through this experience, the hero changes internally. The hero commits to leave the ordinary world and enter a new region or condition with unfamiliar rules and values. In 'Return,' the hero returns home or continues the journey, bearing some element of the treasure that has the power to transform the world as the hero has been transformed.

Consumers have difficulty recognizing the personality features of the brand ; so, to be able to recognize the brand, consumers need to establish a relationship with the brand (Fournier, 1998). In order to become an actual partner in the relationship, the brand should be perceived as a complete human being, which means that a brand should have a variety of human qualities, emotions, mind, soul, and feeling (Fournier, 1998). An archetypal story in an advertisement serves to activate archetypal associations in the consumers' minds, thereby enables them to activate the brand personality (Mark & Pearson, 2001).

**(2) Anthropomorphism in Advertising :** Anthropomorphism is defined as “the tendency to imbue the real or imagined behavior of nonhuman agents with human like characteristics, motivations, intentions, or emotions” (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007, p. 864). The tendency for consumers to perceive brands as actual human beings has significant implications in the area of branding (Aggarwal & McGill, 2012). Anthropomorphism levels vary among individuals (Waytz, Cacioppo, & Epley, 2010), and vary across cultures (Epley et al., 2007; Hart & Jha, 2015). Anthropomorphized brand characters serve to transfer human qualities of emotionality, thought, and desire into the brand (Aggarwal & McGill, 2012). Some examples of brand anthropomorphic characters proved to build the brand and survive are Mickey Mouse and Hello Kitty (Hosany, Prayag, Martin, & Lee, 2013). We argue that the use of hero archetypal story in an ad is capable to trigger anthropomorphism and has a positive effect on product evaluation.

Anthropomorphism embedded in an advertisement may result in more positive emotions, more positive attributions of brand personality, and increases in brand liking (Delbaere, McQuarrie, & Phillips, 2011). Previous researchers found that presenting products with humanlike physical features led to consumers' positive response. The anthropomorphic appearance of a product, such as an apparent smile in the grill of a car, leads to increased liking of that product (Aggarwal & McGill, 2007; Landwehr, McGill, & Herrmann, 2011), reduces the desire to replace the product (Chandler & Schwarz, 2010), and affects consumers' risk perceptions (Kim & McGill, 2011). The brand affects consumers to behave according to the image of brand behavior (Aggarwal & McGill, 2012). Prior research also showed that the “time” illustrated to have properties like a human affects consumer purchasing decisions (May & Monga, 2014). In this study, we illustrate the benefits of products like the human behavior in the story of a hero.

**(3) The Hero Archetype in Advertising :** Advertising uses archetypal image of the product in order to look alive and have personality (Mark & Pearson, 2001). According to Campbell (2004), the hero archetype is manifested in many forms, such as a hero as a fighter (warrior), lover, tyrant, and saint. Similarly, Pearson (1989) found that the hero's value is contained in the six archetypes: warrior, martyr, magician, orphan, innocent, and wanderer. As illustrated by Mark and Pearson (2001), one of the most successful Marlboro advertising shows that the Marlboro

man is carrying a calf on a river, which illustrates the willingness of heroes to help anyone in need. Nike's slogan, "Just do it" promotes the virtues of heroic courage to act (Mark & Pearson, 2001). In Indonesia, the FedEx advert illustrated a FedEx employee sending a package by walking on water - crossing a river to overcome obstacles, road congestion, and of course, FedEx succeeds. FedEx employees are expected to have a heroic commitment to quality results, so the package is actually delivered intact and on time.

The hero character in a warrior archetype is very strong. Very often, the hero archetype is portrayed in the stories of war (Mark & Pearson, 2001). The value of the hero is embodied in the form of a battle. The warrior sees his opponent as an enemy. He is tough and brave enough to overcome obstacles and usually survives in difficult conditions. The warrior plunges into a great trial, and successfully demonstrates the pride's superiority. As a hero, the warrior is fighting to achieve a noble goal, is about to make the world a better place, and he wins.

A warrior's life is focused on power. The warrior is encouraged to have power over his life and power over others (Pearson, 1989). While men often internalize the warrior values in their lives, in which they compete with others using power (Pearson, 1989), women have a tendency to dislike warrior values and women's lives are usually dominated by the martyr archetype: serving and affiliating (Pearson, 1989; McPeck, 2008).

Consumers behave following their gender identity (Gould & Stem, 1989) and process ad information differently (Meyers-Levy, 1988 ; Meyers-Levy & Maheswaran, 1991 ; Wolin, 2003). With the issue of imagining products as warriors and portraying a fight with violence inside, findings from research on violence in advertising showed that the mothers paid more attention to the problem of violence and forbade children to watch ads that contained violence, while the fathers did not do so (Brocato, Gentile, Lacznia, Maier, & Ji-Song, 2010). Males prefer ads containing violence where figures who have power dominate the others because the ad creates more pleasure, enthusiasm, and passion for males than for females (Ashworth et al., 2010). In advertising with violence, males give a more positive attitude toward the advertised product as compared to females (Ashworth, Pyle & Pancer, 2010).

We argue that the demonstration of product efficacy using hero behavior could trigger anthropomorphism, therefore, it provides the ease of understanding of the advertising message. According to Guthrie (1995), anthropomorphism gives a familiar sense that makes it easier for people to understand. The ease becomes a positive experience, more attractive, and fun for consumers, thereby increasing consumer preference for products and purchase behavior (Kim & Labroo, 2011 ; Labroo, Dhar, & Schwarz, 2008). The ease is preferred by consumers, creates positive feelings, and then it is associated with the desired decision and familiarity (Kim & Labroo, 2011). Delivery of the product benefits messages that are familiar and easy to understand can lead to higher perceived product efficacy (Zhu, Billeter, & Inman, 2012). In the field of marketing, perceived product efficacy is one of the measures of product effectiveness (Cox, Cox, & Mantel, 2010 ; Shiv, Carmon, & Ariely, 2005). Thus, the delivery of the product benefits message can be easier to understand and leads to higher perceived product efficacy when it is presented with the help of a warrior behavior.

✎ **H1:** If the hero archetype uses warrior behavior, the perceived product efficacy will be more positive on males, and if it uses non-warrior behavior, the perceived product efficacy will be more positive on females.

✎ **H2:** The effect of hero archetypes with warrior and non-warrior behavior on perceived product efficacy is moderated by gender, and then the perceived product efficacy should have a positive effect on purchase intention as a result.

Research on anthropomorphism has showed that power moderates the effect of anthropomorphism. People with high power perceived a lower risk of anthropomorphic objects; conversely, people with low power perceived a higher risk of anthropomorphic objects, which affected the desire to use the product (Kim & McGill, 2011). Similarly, May and Monga (2014) showed that time anthropomorphism reduced the patience of people who had a

low power, thus preferring to receive less benefit in the near future. In consumer behavior, people with low power tried to eliminate the feelings of powerlessness by increasing the desire to get the product and the willingness to pay (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008). Anderson and Galinsky (2006) demonstrated that the power increased the feeling of having a sense of optimism about the risk, raised optimism about winning, and avoided the disease.

According to Fiske (1993), people paid attention to those who had power. People with low power paid attention to powerful people. Conversely, those with high power did not pay attention to less powerful people.

We hypothesize that power moderates the effects of hero archetype with warrior/non-warrior behavior. People with low power will reduce the feeling of powerless by inducing the powerful behavior, because they feel more optimistic about the efficacy of the product. Therefore:

✎ **H3:** The effect of hero archetypes with warrior and non-warrior behavior on perceived product efficacy is moderated by power, and then the perceived product efficacy should have a positive effect on purchase intention as the result.

## Main Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of hero archetype in ads on perceived product efficacy. Ads with the theme of "fight" against the flu symptoms (warrior) was compared to ads with the theme "drive out" the flu symptoms (non-warrior). Considering that women and men respond differently to warrior behavior, this study aims to examine the differences in the effects of the hero archetype in ads on the product perceived efficacy by gender perspective (H1 and H2). Because of the very powerful warrior, his perseverance and victory in battle shows power, this study also examines the effects of the hero archetype in ads on perceived product efficacy by different power level of participants (H3).

## Method

**(1) Design and Participants :** The design was a 2 (hero behavior : warrior versus non-warrior behavior)  $\times$  2 (gender: male versus female) between-participants. Undergraduate students consisting of 100 males and 100 females from Jakarta, Indonesia participated in the study and were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions. The study was conducted during June 2014 - June 2015.

**(2) Procedure :** The participants participated in the experiment in groups of 11 - 15 participants at a computer laboratory ; each computer played one of the two experimental conditions; the participants watched the ad on each monitor individually. Participants were told that the purpose of the study was to obtain their evaluation of a new product advertisement (a drug to relieve flu symptoms named : Antifluenza) that was being tested by a corporation and signed the informed consent. The participants had advertising exposure; a tv-ad was shown to the participants on the screen twice. After watching the ad, the participants completed the dependent measures, and finally responded to the anthropomorphism scale, attention to the ad, and standard demographic questions. Attention to the ad was measured by two statements: "I paid a lot of attention to the ad", and "My mind was somewhere else" (6-point scales, 1 = *strongly disagree* ; 6 = *strongly agree*). One week after the experiment, we performed the measurement of power. This was to ensure that the measurement was free from the effect of stimulus.

**(3) Dependent Measures :** The participants were asked to answer three questions measuring perceived product efficacy ( $\alpha=.737$ ): "Antifluenza is effective to overcome the flu symptoms," "Antifluenza works to eliminate the flu symptoms," and "Antifluenza relieves the flu." Next, the participants answered two questions measuring purchase intention ( $\alpha = .809$ ): "If I need a flu medicine, I intend to buy Antifluenza," and "If I need a flu medicine

and only Antifluenza is available, I intend to buy Antifluenza.” All items were answered on 6-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree* ; 6 = *strongly agree*).

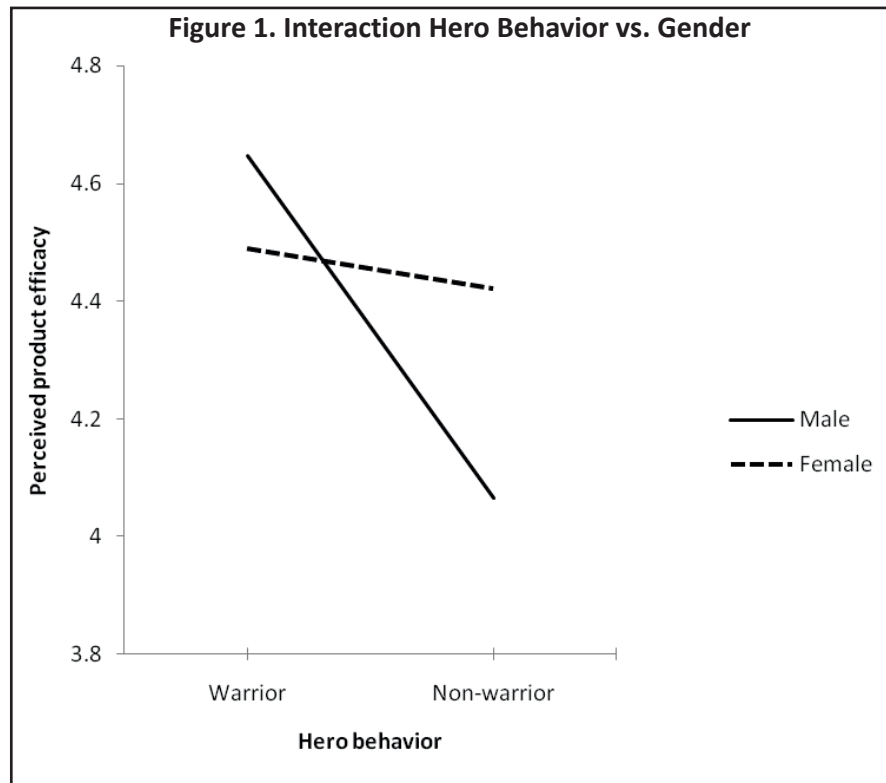
**(4) Stimulus :** In order to maintain the internal validity of this study, we conducted a series of pilot studies to determine the type of product to be advertised, the hero archetype compatibility with the product, brand fictitious, and the hero picture and his enemy. From the pilot studies, we also obtained how the hero defeated the enemy as a human that illustrates the efficacy of the product. Two different versions of the animated TV ad (warrior and non-warrior behavior) were used for both male and female participants (Appendix 1 & 2). In the warrior condition (Appendix 1), we designed a storyline to represent the product efficacy with a theme “fight against flu symptoms”. The storyline began with an overview of the flu symptoms, which were sneezing, nasal congestion, fever, and headache. When these symptoms were attacking, "Antifluenza" emerged from the packaging and there was a fierce battle between "Antifluenza" against the flu symptoms. The fight ended with the killing of the flu symptoms by "Antifluenza" sword attack. The flu symptoms died, smashed into pieces, disappeared, and "Antifluenza" was withdrawn to the packaging. In the non-warrior condition, we presented an ad with the theme "drive out the flu symptoms". Unlike the warrior condition, the behavior of non-warrior scenes did not have hitting, kicking, and killing (Appendix 2). Instead, the hero came to his enemies. The enemies looked at the incoming hero, became frightened, and finally ran. Each TV ad used the same narration, 30 seconds duration, and a 3D humanlike hero and monster characters.

**(5) Pilot Study :** We conducted a pilot study to obtain an assessment of the advertising stimulus, whether there was any warrior behavior or not, and whether the enemy was afraid of the figure flu symptoms. A number of 20 participants were asked to look at the ads that were played twice. After that, the participants were asked to fill out a check item manipulation and write down what they saw in the ad. As a result, the participants saw that in the non-warrior ads, the figure was feared by the enemy, and the enemy fled in fear seeing the figure.

## Analysis and Results

**(1) Manipulation Checks :** We checked anthropomorphism in the two conditions with three items, and as the result, both warrior and non-warrior condition is perceived to be like a real human, looks alive and seems brave. The two groups did not differ significantly ( $F(1,199) = 0.296$ ;  $p = 0.587$ ;  $M_{\text{warrior}} = 3.9467$ ;  $M_{\text{non-warrior}} = 3.8733$ ). To check the content of warrior in group conditions, we used four items ( $\alpha = .732$ ) : fighting with physical violence, killing enemies, looking ambitious, and being aggressive. As expected, “Antifluenza” in the conditions of warrior is perceived as warrior behavior, and it is likewise the condition of non-warrior behavior to be perceived as non-warrior behavior ; they are significantly different ( $M_{\text{warrior}} = 4.853$ ;  $M_{\text{non-warrior}} = 2.985$ ;  $F(1,199) = 261.340$ ,  $p = .000$ ), suggesting the manipulation was successful.

**(2) Perceived Product Efficacy :** The two-way ANOVA result on the perceived product efficacy shows a significant main effect of hero behavior ( $F(1,199) = 11.075$ ,  $p = .001$ ). This indicates that perceived product efficacy is more positive in the warrior condition ( $M = 4.568$ ) than in the non-warrior condition ( $M = 4.244$ ). There is a non-significant main effect of gender ( $F(1,199) = 1.054$ ,  $p = .306$ ). As expected, there is a significant interaction between behavior and gender ( $F(1,199) = 6.898$ ,  $p = .009$ ) (Figure 1). In the warrior behavior condition, the male participants perceived product efficacy ( $M = 4.646$ ) more positively than the female participants ( $M = 4.490$ ). Reversely, in the non-warrior behavior condition, the female participants perceived product efficacy ( $M = 4.422$ ) more positively than the male participants ( $M = 4.065$ ). Moreover, both male and female participants perceived product efficacy more positively in the warrior behavior condition rather than in the non-warrior behavior condition. This result indicates that H1 is supported. If the hero archetype uses warrior behavior, the perceived

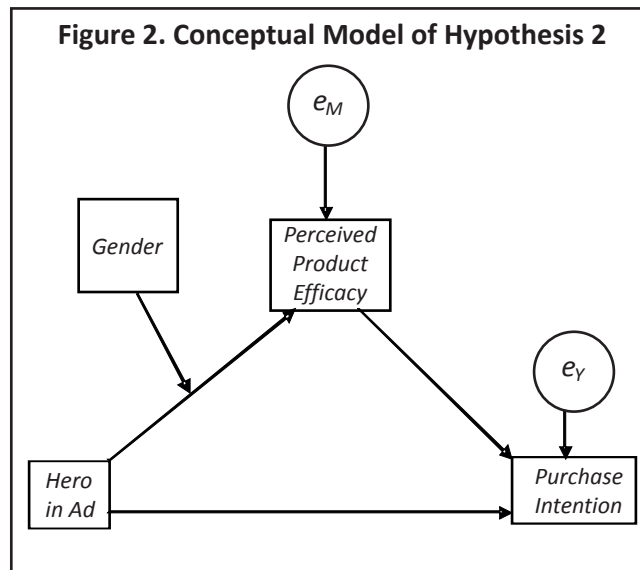


product efficacy will be more positive on males, and if it uses non-warrior behavior, the perceived product efficacy will be more positive on females. The fight between the Hero and the enemy builds the perception that the product (Hero) is more effective. Both male and female participants saw the victory of the hero just as powerful.

**(3) Conditional Indirect Effect Analysis :** To examine the moderating role of gender in the effect of perceived product efficacy on purchase intention (hypothesis 2), we performed a conditional indirect effect analysis with purchase intention as the dependent variable, hero behavior as the predictor, perceived product efficacy as the mediating variable, and gender as the moderator variable using the OLS regression PROCESS SPSS macro, model 7 (Hayes, 2013). The hypothesis 2 model (Figure 2) is a model of moderated mediation (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007), also known as model of conditional indirect effect (Preacher et al., 2007), in which the indirect effect of the warrior behavior on purchase intention (through mediation of perceived product efficacy) is moderated by gender (conditional).

PROCESS results with bootstrap,  $n = 1000$  shows that the hero behavior has a significant effect on the perceived product efficacy ( $a = 0.3267$ ;  $SE = 0.0990$ ;  $t = 3.2999$ ;  $95\% \text{ CI } (0.1314; 0.5219)$ ;  $p = 0.0011$ ). Perceived product efficacy has a significant effect on purchase intention ( $b = 0.5264$ ;  $SE = 0.0730$ ;  $t = 7.2135$ ;  $95\% \text{ CI } (0.3825; 0.6704)$ ,  $p = 0.0000$ ). There is no direct effect between hero behavior on the purchase intention ( $c' = 0.0630$ ;  $SE = 0.1044$ ;  $t = 0.6037$ ;  $95\% \text{ CI } (-0.1429; 0.2689)$ ;  $p = 0.5468$ ); indirect effect is positive and significant ( $ab = 0.1720$ ;  $SE = 0.0524$ ;  $95\% \text{ CI } (0.0719; 0.2777)$ ). Thus, there was a full mediation (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010). These results indicate that the hero behavior has a significant effect on purchase intention, which is mediated by perceived product efficacy.

Furthermore, the results show that conditional indirect effect of hero behavior on purchase intention mediated by perceived product efficacy is significant for males [ $b = .306$ ,  $95\% \text{ CI } (.181, .476)$ ]; whereas, for females, it is not significant [ $b = 0.036$ ;  $95\% \text{ CI } (-.133, 0.177)$ ] (Table 1). Hence, H2 is supported. The effect of hero archetypes with warrior and non-warrior behavior on perceived product efficacy is moderated by gender, and then the perceived



**Table 1. Conditional Indirect Effect of Hero Archetype on Purchase Intention at Values of Gender**

Mediator	Gender	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Perceived product efficacy	Male*	0.3058	0.0720	0.1808	0.4759
	Female	0.0360	0.0778	-0.1327	0.1767

\*significant at 95% confidence limit excluded 0

product efficacy should have a positive effect on purchase intention as a result. Although there is an interaction between hero behavior and gender, the hero archetype using warrior or non-warrior behavior results in no significant difference for the female participants. In contrast, for the male participants, the product efficacy is perceived more positively when the hero archetype uses warrior behavior, and the perceived product efficacy has a positive effect on purchase intention as a result.

To test hypothesis 3, the moderating role of power in the effect of perceived product efficacy on purchase intention, we conducted a conditional indirect effect analysis using the OLS regression PROCESS SPSS macro, model 7 (Hayes, 2013) with power as the moderator variable, purchase intention as the dependent variable, hero behavior as the predictor, and perceived product efficacy as the mediating variable. Consistent with the ANOVA results, there is a significant effect of hero behavior on perceived product efficacy ( $b = 2.2454$ ,  $t = 2.5172$ ,  $SE = .8920$ , 95% CI (.4862, 4.0046),  $p = .0126$ ). There is a significant main effect of power ( $b = .3081$ ,  $SE = .1520$ ,  $t = 2.0266$ , 95% CI (.0083, .6079),  $p = .0441$ ), and there is a significant interaction of anthropomorphic behavior and power ( $b = -.4392$ ,  $SE = .2068$ ;  $t = -2.1238$ , 95% CI (-.8471, -.0314),  $p = .0349$ ).

To probe the interaction, we conducted a spotlight analysis at the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentiles (Hayes, 2013 ; Spiller, Fitzsimons, & Lynch, 2013) of power (Table 2). The conditional indirect effect of hero behavior on purchase intention mediated by perceived product efficacy is significant for very low  $b = .373$ , 95% CI (.139, .623), low  $b = .285$ , 95% CI (.119, .462), and moderate power  $b = .199$ , 95% CI (.062, .314). However, when participant power is high  $b = .113$ , 95% CI (-.0216, .266) and very high  $b = .026$ , 95% CI (-.153, .245), indirect effect hero behavior on purchase intention is not significant. Furthermore, the result of floodlight analysis (Hayes, 2013 ; Spiller et al., 2013) shows that conditional effect of hero behavior on perceived product efficacy is significant when power  $\leq 4.5437$ . For the low power participants, perceived product efficacy is more positive if the demonstration of product efficacy used warrior behavior. Meanwhile, in the higher power participants, there is no

**Table 2. Conditional Indirect Effect of Hero Archetype on Purchase Intention at Values of Power**

<i>Power</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
3.5000	0.3728*	0.1180	0.1392	0.6227
3.8800	0.2849*	0.0838	0.1189	0.4622
4.2500	0.1994*	0.0646	0.0621	0.3140
4.6250	0.1127	0.0718	-0.0216	0.2662
5.0000	0.0260	0.1004	-0.1529	0.2451

\*significant 95% confidence limit excluded 0

difference between warrior or non-warrior behavior. Therefore, H3 is supported. The effect of hero archetypes with warrior and non-warrior behavior on perceived product efficacy is moderated by power, and then the perceived product efficacy should have a positive effect on purchase intention as the result. Hero as a symbol of the product, fighting against the enemy, affects the perception of the product efficacy only to consumers who have low or medium power, not to consumers with high power.

**(4) Test for Alternative Models :** According to Lutz, MacKenzie, and Belch (1983), the effectiveness of an ad can be measured by how it affects consumer purchase intention. He proved a model that links advertising exposure with purchase intention. When receiving the exposure of an ad, the consumer will build attitudes toward the ad ( $A_{ad}$ ), and then  $A_{ad}$  affects his attitude toward the brand and purchase intention.  $A_{ad}$  is a tendency to respond to pleasant or unpleasant stimulus particular advertising for certain exposures (Lutz et al., 1983). We conducted additional tests to demonstrate whether the effect of the hero archetype on purchase intention was more powerful through perceived product efficacy or because the participants liked the advert. MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) showed that the effect of ad exposure on purchase intention was mediated by attitude toward the ad ( $A_{ad}$ ) and mood. To get a better understanding of the overall indirect effect of perceived product efficacy, we tested the indirect effect by including perceived product efficacy,  $A_{ad}$  and mood in a model. Perceived product efficacy became a significant mediator ( $ab = 0.1045$  ; 95% CI [0.0379 ; 0.1920]), but the other two did not.  $A_{ad}$  indirect effect was not significant ( $ab = 0.0399$  ; 95% CI [-0.0307;0.1315]) and so did the indirect effect of mood ( $ab = -0.0070$  ; 95% CI [-0,0477; 0,0258]). Hence, it can be argued that the perceived product efficacy was claimed to be the most powerful mediator in the hero archetype effect on purchase intention.

## Discussion

According to this study, warrior behavior in hero archetype advertising, which is shown by domination of others by using physical violence causing the death of others, has been proven to have a positive effect on the perceived product efficacy. In line with Pearson (1989) that males were more in warrior archetype value than the females, the results of this study also show that males responded more positively to advertising with warrior behavior. As for the male participants, the perceived product efficacy against warrior behavior is higher than non-warrior behavior. In the condition of non-warrior behavior, the female participants had a more positive perceived product efficacy than the male participants. However, the comparative results between warrior and non-warrior behavior show that perceived product efficacy of female participants did not differ significantly. Overall, both the male and female participants perceived the efficacy of the product more positively to the ad with warrior behavior. These results show that although there were differences in responses of men and women against warrior and non-warrior behavior, the hero archetype using warrior behavior was able to effectively generate perceived product efficacy. The implication for marketers is that the hero archetype using warrior behavior can be used on advertising with a

target audience of both men and women.

However, for products with a male target audience to affect the purchase intention, the use of warrior behavior in advertising provides a positive effect, because the hero archetype's influence on purchase intention through the mediation of perceived product efficacy is significant in male participants. Otherwise, for products with a female target audience, there is no significant effect on purchase intention between the uses of warrior or non-warrior behavior.

Nevertheless, previous studies showed that gender did not play a role in the effects of advertising. As stated by Delbaere et al. (2011), the effect of advertising with an anthropomorphic metaphor to the product evaluation was not moderated by gender. Similarly, Verma and Saranya (2014) observed that the effect of online advertising on consumers' purchasing decisions was not influenced by gender, but was rather driven by price and animation. We found it necessary to examine the role of gender in this study, because we focused on how the efficacy message in the advertising is delivered through the animated hero. Men and women judge hero characters differently (McPeck, 2008 ; Pearson, 1989), therefore, the hero attractions in an ad certainly create a different impression for male and female viewers.

As mentioned in previous studies (Kim & McGill, 2011; May & Monga, 2014) that power moderates the effect of anthropomorphism, this study specifically found that the effect of hero behavior using warrior or non-warrior behavior in ads on perceived product efficacy was significant when the power of a person was low or moderate. These results support the results of Fiske (1993) that people with low power will give more attention to powerful people because they will be more confident of the results to be obtained. Participants with low power gave a positive response to the ad with a powerful character (warrior behavior). Rucker and Galinsky (2008) observed that people with low power will try relieving powerlessness, and the power makes people more optimistic (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006). To eliminate the feeling of powerlessness, participants with low power responded more positively to a powerful figure, which could give a sense of optimism about the efficacy of the product. The interpretation of these results is that the hero archetypes with warrior behavior can be chosen for the target audience with low or moderate power because power triggers a sense of optimism ; optimism regarding the product being powerful.

Interestingly, this study also reveals that triggering aggressive and warrior behavior is proven to be more effective for the purpose of demonstrating the efficacy of the product despite the wide debate on violence behavior in ads due to their negative effect on the viewers (Jones, Cunningham & Gallagher, 2010). It can be argued that demonstration of product efficacy which is not performed by a real human (hero character) creates a positive impact of violence behavior. This supports previous research that the scenes of violence in the form of animation are not considered a problem (Brocato et al., 2010). Similarly, the opponents' death scene in animated form, as in this study, shown in the form of destruction of the monsters' bodies to pieces, showed no bloodshed.

An important finding of this study is that the use of the hero archetype in ads affects consumer perception of product efficacy. Bechter, Farinelli, Daniel, and Frey (2016) found that archetypes in advertising are able to create a personality, and eventually build brand personality. For example, an archetype of a hero who has adventurous, genuine, and tough personality traits is able to create excitement, sincerity, and ruggedness of brand personality (Bechter et al., 2016). Advertisers want to convince consumers that the product is powerful to overcome their problems using the archetypal hero in an effective way. Therefore, to broaden the study of the use of archetypes in advertising, we examined the effect of the archetype on the perception of product efficacy.

## **Managerial Implications**

This research offers a creative form to marketers about delivering a message of product efficacy to consumers through verification using empirical data by taking advantages of anthropomorphism and the hero archetype. Warrior behavior within the hero archetype is one option of how the efficacy of the product can be demonstrated in

an ad. Although the fight scenes in the ad are much debated because these are considered to have a negative effect on the viewers, such as triggering aggressive behavior and violence (Jones et al., 2010), in this study, it is proved to be quite effective for the purpose of demonstrating the efficacy of the product. These results support the use of hero characters in the ads, such as ads of health care products, household care products, and other products that have the benefits to eliminate consumers' problems, bacteria, insects, etc. Animations can be selected to smooth the impression of violence used by the hero character as product demonstrations by animated media are exhibited by anthropomorphic characters, not by real humans.

Moderating variables (gender, power) tested in this study are intended to consider the ad's suitability to the consumers' character. For ads targeting a male audience, hero archetypal ads can be considered to have a proven positive effect on purchase intention, as shown by the figure of the hero who kills the problems with the setting of the battle story. The hero mercilessly and successfully eliminates the problems. To the female target audience, whatever is carried by the hero, the archetypal will generate the same effect upon the product efficacy perception, no matter if the hero battles his enemy or whether it is a spokes - character.

The threat of diseases and the possibility of health problems make a person feel powerless. Hero characters appear as a saviour for the consumer to eliminate their problems. As shown from the results of this research, consumers with low and moderate power gave a positive response to the fighting-hero-themed ad. This indicates that the theme of this ad is suitable to advertise a product that wants to highlight the message of problem solving. The hero's victory in the battle creates an optimistic feeling about the efficacy of the product.

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that using the hero archetype to demonstrate the efficacy of the product has proven to have a positive effect on the perception of the efficacy of the product, which then affects the purchase intention. Anthropomorphism benefits created by looking at the products that look like humans and behave like humans can generate a positive perception of product efficacy. Unlike the previous studies in which individual difference variables had no significant effect (Delbaere et al., 2011), the variables of gender and power in this study have a significant effect because they are related to the warrior content in advertising. This means that the role of individual difference variables on the anthropomorphism effect depends upon the stimulus manipulation performed by marketers.

This study contributes to the theory of anthropomorphism in the context of the effect of hero behavior in advertising to trigger consumers' anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism is conceived as having more than just physical similarities like humans, but also has attributes of mental conditions like humans (Epley et al., 2007). This study contributes in investigating the effects of anthropomorphic objects (products) which do not only have similar physical appearance such as human beings (a hero), but also have motion (behavior) and have mental conditions similar to humans (hero archetype). The use of stimulus material in the form of TV ads allows anthropomorphic products to move and behave like humans. The appearance and movement of products in TV ads that are like humans also allows participants to be able to feel the mental conditions of products such as a human, specifically like a hero. Illustration of a human in the hero story generates the feeling that the product is brave, aggressive, and has a strong intention to treat diseases, which leads to a positive perception of product efficacy.

Marketers serve a diverse consumer character ; moderating variables tested in this study are intended to notice compliance with consumers' gender and power. Warrior characters have a significant positive effect for male consumers, and has no different effect for females. Moreover, the study finds that using a warrior character in advertising has a significant effect for consumers with low or moderate power.

## Limitations of the Study and the Way Forward

This study focuses on proving the hypothesis which states that the anthropomorphic explanation can create a message of efficacy in ads. Product selections of flu medicine, as the stimulus of experiment, limit the generalizability of this study as well as the use of students as participants. Because anthropomorphism is associated with the perception of risk (Kim & McGill, 2011) and perception of uncertainty (May & Monga, 2014), future research may consider the risk of the product, product-consumer involvement, or expand the applications of this research to other segments of participants.

Consumers' attitude toward advertising has a role in product evaluation and buying decisions (Raina & Khajuria, 2012). We did not use the variable - attitudes toward advertising ( $A_{ad}$ ) in our research model. Future studies would need to examine whether  $A_{ad}$  affects the results of hero themed ad exposure, affects the perception of product efficacy, which then affects the intention to buy. In other words,  $A_{ad}$  can become the predecessor of perceived product efficacy. So, it can answer whether the perceived product efficacy is built because consumers like the ads, or because of the content of the message.

According Waytz et al. (2010), each individual anthropomorphizes at different levels, influenced by cultural factors (Epley et al., 2007). Furthermore, research by Hart and Jha (2015) showed that Indian consumers' anthropomorphism was different from those of American consumers. Therefore, the perception of the hero figures may differ across cultures. Our study used Indonesian participants, therefore, in the future, this study can be replicated with different cultural settings.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1. Sample of Storyboard Warrior Behavior Condition



Source: Animated film created by the Authors

### APPENDIX 2. Sample of Storyboard Non - Warrior Behavior Condition



Source: Animated film created by the Authors