



Portrayal of women in advertising: Reflection or Creation of society?

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ABSTRACT

The roles which women portray in advertisements have been the subject of much public criticism and some empirical research. It leads towards the thinking about 'Media and its effects to the society and role of women in the society and its effect to the media'. This research paper describes that nowadays idealistic women, highly attractive model represented in media is because of society or it's creating a new image to society. In recent years, Indian advertising has witnessed a significant transformation in the manner in which women are portrayed. The way women are depicted in advertising changes with times. Marketer wisely utilized this transformation process to launch their product and advertisement strategically.

KEYWORDS : Advertisements, Society, Idealistic Women

I Introduction

Communicating to the masses has evolved over time. What began as limited and basic exposure has developed into a complex stream of messages that surrounds us in every aspect of our daily lives.

Studies have shown that the mass communications people are constantly exposed to play an important part in shaping our attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and expectations of the world around us.

As researchers attempt to study and explain how mass communication affects our society, advertising becomes a popular source for study. Although its messages may be short, they are often powerful, persuasive, and influential in shaping the attitude and behavior of consumers.

As women have crossed the boundary from the domestic sphere to the professional arena, expectations and representations of women have changed as well. Further, in some discourses, the stereotypical character traits attributed to women have shifted from weak and dependent to strong and autonomous. Through the years, advertising has changed its themes to 'move with the times.'

This research paper focuses on the portrayal of women in advertisements and whether or The advertising industry seems to have taken a giant leap from portraying women submissive homemakers to independent and business savvy career women.

II Theoretical Linkage

The topic of the portrayal of women in advertising is significant in the social realm. The dominance of advertising in our lives and its ability to persuade and shape our beliefs give it power over our society and the influence of our basic thoughts. Advertising attempts to put forth an image of ideals to be obtained by society. The ideals they portray do not necessarily reflect society but may influence people's beliefs about the world outside of their immediate environment.

This concept is discussed in Cultivation Theory. This theory states that what is repeatedly seen in the mass media shapes perceptions of social reality. This is significant to society because mass communication leads its receivers to believe what is untrue and true.

III Gender Role and Society

At this point it must be explained why the representation of gender roles in the media is relevant for society. Feminine having characteristics associated with the cultural role of women. Many researcher states that people are classified at first sight. The basis of this classification is stereotypes that control how people perceive things. They assume that people identify a person as male female, and then suppositions about relevant characteristics of the respective group are activated.

The world is changing and should always change accordingly culture wise in the society and society's ideology thinking as well as individual behavior also changes with the existing atmosphere.

Women are thought of as passive, sociable, and emotional, men are rather considered active, assertive and striving for power. These presumed characteristics lead people to expect corresponding behavior. That is why people generally perceive men as more active and stronger than women.

Gender stereotypes are part of our everyday knowledge; they are acquired in the early childhood years of our socialization. Parents, teachers, and the media act as important agents of socialization.

IV Feminism in television advertisements

Advertisements are playing a significant role as radar for the society. Many advertisers are portraying women in different ways like commodity, personality, home maker, stereo types and liberate women etc.

Women are depicted as a wife, mother, and girl friend sister and as working in traditionally female jobs like secretary, nurse, receptionist, etc or as sex object.

Many research articles have focused on how depictions of women in advertising reflect their changing roles in business, politics and society. Many of these research studies use content analysis to reveal the transition in social roles. Some researchers are not confident that this latest evolution is positive for women and their self-images.

IV Research Methodology

IV.1 Research Problem

Advertising is frequently studied to explain portrayal of women and its effect on society but rarely examines whether the media portray the role of women for society or society becomes key drivers for media to portray the role.

IV.2 Objectives

To study whether portrayal of women in advertisements is a reflection of image of women in the society or it creates new image for women in the society.

IV.3 Hypothesis

H₀: Society is not playing a role of key drivers for media to portray women in advertisement.

H₁: Society is playing a role of key drivers for media to portray women in advertisement.

IV.4 Methodology

This research has employed survey geographically in Gujarat region and a quantitative method of content analysis to discover findings. The research is descriptive. A survey has conducted among young population and it has created and distributed to 400 random samples between the ages 18 to 40.

The participants have answered basic demographic questions and participate in research oriented questions through structured questionnaire in Survey.

Data testing methods like Chi-square, Frequency and Cross tabulation method are used by researcher.

IV.5 Findings and Analysis

Table 1

Gender of Respondents	Male	Female
	50%	50%

Table 2 Chi-Square Test Statistics

Table 2.1

	Portrayal of women in TV ad is a reflection of society.	Women like to see as highly attractive models in Advertisements as per their own personality.	The digital media seems to exploit women and display vulgarity which is actually not prevailing in society.
Chi-Square	517.800 ^a	335.700 ^b	312.200 ^b
Degree of freedom	4	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000

(Source: Prepared by Researcher)

Table 2.2

	Some women are depicted in Advertisements only in traditional roles such as a housewife, nurse, teacher secretary in most commercials as actual role of women in the society.	Some women are also shown in advertisements as successful top level executives or leaders as actual role of liberate women in the society.	Women compare themselves with highly attractive models who are showing in the advertisements
Chi-Square	441.200 ^b	523.540 ^b	135.020 ^b
Degree of freedom	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000

(Source: Prepared by Researcher)

Table 2.3

	Unethical marketing communication has been responsible for creating ethos of vulgarity, lust and passion in the society.	Most advertisements use unethical appeals with the abuse of women in TV ad has been a very bad influence for Adults in the society.	Advertisements show women in ideal role through thinness, youth decision maker and perfection is a creation of new image of women in society.
Chi-Square	201.975 ^a	59.225 ^a	345.625 ^a
Degree of freedom	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000

(Source: Prepared by Researcher)

Table 2.4

	There are some advertisements which are degrading and harm dignity of women in the society.
Chi-Square	286.340 ^b
Degree of freedom	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

(Source: Prepared by Researcher)

Table 2.5

	Comparison with highly attractive models gives negative feelings of inferiority to women.	Most advertisements engage beautiful women models inappropriately when it is actually not essential.	As compared to western countries the use of sex/nudity in advertisements in India is less.
Chi-Square	398.900 ^a	420.040 ^b	656.675 ^a
Degree of freedom	4	3	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000

(Source: Prepared by Researcher)

Table 2.6

	Depiction of women as sex objects in advertisements is an influence of advertisements appearing in western countries.	Advertisements use women only as decorative objects or instruments for diverting the mindset of People.	There is a need for regulation of the content and intent of portraying women in advertisements
Chi-Square	526.300 ^a	321.420 ^b	421.300 ^a
Degree of freedom	4	3	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000

(Source: Prepared by Researcher)

Interpretation

The table chi-square test statistics shows that all cells have expected frequency less than 5. It means all statements have significant difference in expected frequency and observed frequency. It shows that it is too great to be attributed. So that researcher rejects null hypothesis and accept alternate hypothesis.

Columns 1 to 5 are focusing on the factor which tries to discover the role of society trends as a reflection of the media. These column consist Asymp. Sig. value which is less than .5, it means respondents support hypothesis of difference.

Column 6 to 10 are focusing on the factor which is used to find out the society is playing a role of key drivers for media. These column consist Asymp. Sig. value which is less than .5. So that researcher rejects null hypothesis. It reveals "**Society is playing a role of key drivers for media to portray women in advertisement**".

Columns 11 to 16 are focusing on general parameters just like impact of national as well as international television advertisements on the mind of viewers. These column consist Asymp. Sig. value which is less than .5, it is examined that respondents support alternate hypothesis. So that researcher rejects null hypothesis.

Table 3 Gender Cross Tabulation Analysis		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Regulatory body should be for portraying women in media	Disagree	15	14	29
	Agree	185	186	371
	Total	200	200	200
Act should be followed to portray women in media	Disagree	7	7	14
	Agree	193	193	286
	Total	200	200	200
Punishment & penalties should be imposed to media for negative portrayal of women	Disagree	16	13	29
	Agree	184	187	371
	Total	200	200	200

(Source: Prepared by Researcher)

Interpretation

The table 3 reveals that out of all male and female respondents; more female respondents observed to be agreed that there should be regulatory body and impose of punishment for indecent portrayal of women. Here, the male respondents also observed to be agreed that there should regulatory body to monitor portrayal of women. It shows that both men and female are agreed on the same view that there should be a decent portrayal of women.

VI Conclusion

This research employed survey in Gujarat region. Researcher found that portrayal of women in the advertisement is a reflection of a women’s image in the society. Before few decades women were depicting in the media in role of home maker, dumb not much educated and women were not showing in important decision making because the trend was like that in the society. Women were not much educated; they were engaged more in household activities rather than professional activities. Afterwards trend of liberal women came, Number of women in the society opened up and their numbers increased at different work place in different work field. People show women as working lady, taking decisions in their personal as well as profession-

al life. Moreover here in this research, researcher concludes as per the research that many advertisers still portray women in indecent way not as per the indecent representation women act 1986, so that both men and women want punishment and penalties are to be imposed on media at the time of negative representation of women.

Nowadays women are playing two dimensional roles in the society as women are depicted as good care taker of their family members at home and on the other side they are very good decision maker in their different work fields.

Here researcher concludes that nowadays, women like to see them in a role as highly attractive, talented, decision maker, leaders, open-minded etc. in the advertisement and their inappropriate role affects to their dignity. So, media is adopting role of women as per their depiction in the society.

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