



Role of Women in Promoting Products - With Reference to TV Ads

KEYWORDS

Advertising, women, ethics, positive portrayal.

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ABSTRACT *The role of women has always been very vital in promoting different products of different sponsors. The appeal of women on the society is more when compared to other techniques. In India way back in mid 80s 'Ms. Kavitha choudhary' became famous as 'Lalitaji' while endorsing for 'Surf' detergent in a TV commercial. Since then sky is the limit for women endorsing different products in electronic media. Women are portrayed in more diversified roles in advertisements ranging from homemaking and childcare to endorsing beauty products to utility products. This paper focuses on the increasing demand of women in endorsing the products of a particular brand or company and the important role played by women in enhancing the company's profits.*

INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a paid form of non-personal communication by an identified sponsor. Advertising is to persuade one to take action on a message to buy something. Advertising can be considered as one of the most important and sometimes, the most expensive choices to be made by marketing managers when planning for communication campaigns, as the expenditure on it requires justification. Television adverts have a main role to influence the audiences in their everyday life. They try to make their products seem important by linking it with real life.

The depiction of female roles in television advertising has raised a number of provocative research questions. Research in this area has been fostered by the observations made by media analysts regarding the inconsonance of female role portrayals relative to social norms. As they have different strategies of promoting their products; one of the strategies they focus is utilizing women in promoting the products. Companies frequently use women as spokespersons to deliver their advertising messages and convince consumers of their brands. The use of women is one of the most successful ways of gaining the consumer's attention and getting her to infer the right message in a limited amount of space and time. Women endorsement has indeed become an omnipresent characteristic of modern marketing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Paul Trowler cites a study of women in advertisements, which found that women were seven times more likely to appear in personal hygiene product adverts; 75% of all adverts using females were for products used in the bathroom or kitchen, 56% of women in adverts were shown as domestic housewives and only eighteen different occupations were shown for women, (Trowler, 1996). Behind these figures then, we can see how advertising is prescribing the role of a woman as being very much a family and home orientated one.

Women have always been considered an important target of advertisers. According to the Nielsen organization more than 60% of viewers are women (Sreberny and van Zoonen). However, the types of advertisements aimed at women sell products that are traditionally for women. These products are advertised during the same shows that promote hegemonic values. Just as women are often featured in the home during television shows and news features, they are featured selling home items in the home. Advertisers now focus their ads more heavily towards women.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This exploratory study aims at

1. The different roles played by women in promoting products.
2. Finding the difference between the earlier portrayal of women in ads and the current portrayal.
3. Studying the ethics in Women advertising

METHODOLOGY

Extensive literature survey on the subject has been done to get deeper insights into the research issue. This was further substantiated by collecting relevant data from published reports and articles and from the web, which have been analyzed qualitatively and findings are arrived at. Successful stories from business and the author's own experience in marketing field also have been considered.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN PROMOTING PRODUCTS

The psychological power of media to endorse women in ads in a role that it persuades both men and women to buy a product has enhanced a lot. The power of women advertising in changing, shaping and molding the public's opinion has had a major impact on the customers. Women are the main target for many advertisements and are used in many forms of advertising.

Since the advent of advertising on TV women have been featured and targeted by various companies as a key demographic. The goal has always been the same – motivating audience, though the methods of reaching the audience have changed drastically in the last century. The image of women in advertising has evolved from primarily a homemaker into the role of the liberated woman making her own way in the world.

POSITIVE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN ADS

The author has found a gap that the earlier theories focused only on negative aspects of women portrayal in media. The earlier theories of women in media have viewed women projection disapprovingly. They speak about women exploitation in media, women as show piece, women used as sex object in ads etc. Viewing the earlier theories the author has zeroed in on the optimistic study of the women projection. This part of paper highlights on the positive portrayal of women in ads by advertisers to promote and persuade audience to buy a product.

As the earlier studies where authors have focused the negative portrayal of women in ads one may tend to have the same perception till now as one might say to oneself that

women are projected just as sex objects. But what we probably fail to understand is that the way audience view themselves and understands the women ads have changed drastically. Audience now feels that the advertisers have realized the way to portray women in their ads to promote their products. But it's high time that we realize that woman is the most respectable personality in India than in any other country and the way they are projected in recent TV ads is different and has changed over the years. People still want to see women as homemakers neatly dressed in saris and salwars, this virtual thought of audience has been caught by advertisers and project women as how the audience expect and persuade them to buy their products. If we see the latest ads of this generation whether it's related to electronic items, home appliances, cosmetics or health drinks women are projected in a very positive light.

As far as showing women in advertisements is concerned, things seem to have changed and becoming healthier over time. In most of the advertisements of recent times, a woman is projected as confident, extrovert, dominant and having go getting attitude rather than just portraying them stereotypically as washing clothes and utensils, cooking, serving food to family members or trying to make her husband feel better who's at that time reading a newspaper or suffering from cold. Many ads even depict that a woman does all this even when she's having headache or backache. The advertisements which arguably encourage sexism or view women just as objects are slowly deteriorating. The old belief that a woman is supposed to forgo her own comfort and keep on doing household chores without getting tired is fading now.

ETHICS IN WOMEN ADVERTISING

Ethics plays a very important role in advertising and ethics in women's advertising is becoming a popular topic of the day. There is no clear view of what is ethical and what is unethical when it comes to advertising, but with careful consideration and planning it is possible for advertisers to find a common ground and utilize women in ads without offending people in the process. Adverts can also be successful in generating sales without portraying women as things or as mere sex objects, and without perpetuating various weakness stereotypes. It makes business sense for the advertising industry to adopt a new paradigm that emphasizes values which women hold to be important and to discard certain practices, such as stereotyping women as weak, in need of help or as sex objects. The advertising industry has a strong stake in producing arts which will get their message across to the audience. Women are responsible for about 80% of individual consumer spending. Women's advertising, I think,

can be successful while turning to more positive images that will serve to enhance, not denigrate, women's self-esteem. Advertisers certainly have focused on portraying positive female roles like female as housewife, female as subservient to male etc. in ads. Advertisers have to read the market and produce what the market will buy. Hence, they don't have any particular stake in portraying women as things.

SUGGESTIONS

- Advertisements play an important role in influencing and shaping values and attitudes, particularly of adolescents; hence advertisers should ensure that it depicts a positive portrayal of women in advertisements.
- Women should be projected in diverse roles such as educated, decision maker, independent, confident and self-reliant.
- Advertisements should depict average Indian women instead of focusing only the upper strata of the society.
- It is unnecessary to show women in advertisements related to male products such as men's underwear and vests.
- There is a need for special committee to scrutinize all advertisements carefully to ensure that advertisers do not portray women in derogatory and stereotype ways.

CONCLUSION

The question of women's portrayal on T.V has been a matter of debate for considerable time now, hence the present study entitled "the role of women in promoting products – with reference to TV ads" was conducted with the objectives, to ascertain the image of women in advertisements on T.V and study the impact of commercial advertisements on audience with special reference to the images and role portrayal of women. The results of the study revealed that advertisements left a great impact on audience. It affected the consumption pattern of the consumers. The presence of female model in the advertisement also influenced the liking of a particular product. After having done a deep study of theories, it was found that the audience wanted to see women in different kind of roles in the future advertisements. They were of the opinion that advertisements should be more educative, informative and product oriented, it should be family oriented and should contain a bit of humor in it. Further it was understood that audience want women should not be projected only as product user but also as product maker. In advertisement portrayal of women should not be vulgar and the product should be given more emphasis than the female model. In conclusion women should be shown as confident, independent and empowered individuals in future advertisements.

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