

The portrayal of womens imag in magazine advertisement



The Portrayal of Womens Images in Nari Magazine's

Advertisements This paper focuses on gender behavior pictured in the advertisement of an issue of Nari monthly (2068 Asar).

The study aims to see how gender images in print advertisements have been presented. What messages about women have been given to society through magazine advertisements. The paper will analysis all of the print advertisement and try to sort out the gender behavior portrayed on them and illuminate how advertising functions to display our notions of gender roles, making use of visual meanings. Since advertising reaches millions of individuals daily, it is obvious that advertising in women's magazines plays a major part in creating and maintaining the consumer culture in which we live. Advertising is an idea may be developed to give the sense of giving notice of something of telling someone about something (Barnard 27). It is a social practice, and it does not operate in a vacuum. The social role of advertising involves a number of interconnected relationships. Studying advertising, special emphasis needs to be put on visual images as nonverbal symbols. As a socializing agent, the visual imagery provided by the media can have a powerful impact on our attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors, since it can contribute meanings and associations entirely apart and of much greater significance.

The images conveyed by advertising have become so sophisticated and persuasive that they now organize our experiences and understanding in a significant way. Advertising occupies a special position within the economic organization of a modern society, and it is not just an economic entity.

Advertising deals with ideas, attitudes, and values, giving them cultural form through its signifying practices.

Advertising gives meaning to words and images. Through this process, advertising diffuses its meanings into the belief systems of the society. As Schudson puts, the promotional culture of advertising has worked its way into “ what we read, what we care about, the ways we raise our children, our ideas of right and wrong conduct, our attribution of significance to image in both public and private life” (p. 13). Modern advertising depends on images, and images are symbols which can convey meanings as efficiently as verbal symbols can. Like words, visual images also function as symbols that create multi-leveled meanings that have to be decoded to be understood. Visual images in advertising is especially important since, according to Bovee and Arens : “ most readers of advertisements (1) look at the illustration, (2) read the headline, and (3) read the body copy, in that order.” (p.

47) Visual images, therefore, carry a great deal of responsibility for the message decoding in an advertisement. A significant cultural and structural analysis of advertising is provided in *Decoding Advertisements* (1978) by Judith Williamson. She explains the ideological processes in advertising by which goods are given meaning. According to Williamson, advertising transforms the practical “ use value” of projects into the symbolic “ exchange value” of commodities.

She calls this the “ metastructure,” “ where meaning is not just decoded within one structure, but transferred to create another” (p. 43). Her central point is that meaning is created through the audience, rather than meaning

being directed at audiences. The exchange of meaning in the advertisement may depend upon the readers cultural knowledge. Thus, Williamson emphasizes that it is the structure of the advertisement itself which “positions” the reader in a certain knowledge context. In the issue of Nari, women are rarely shown in out-of-home working roles. They are depicted in the house hold activities as a beautiful girl with incredible smile has been presented as a model for indoor decoration. Most of the women models are shown as either household women or general worker in the office as a secretary.

No woman is shown as a professional or high-level business person. Women rarely ventured far from home by themselves or with other women. Women are shown as dependent on mens protection. They are presented as sex objects or as domestic assistants. Females are frequently shown in advertisements for cleaning products, food products, beauty products, drugs, clothing, and home appliances etc. In the other hands, males are most often shown in advertisements for cars, travel, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, banks, industrial products, entertainment media, and industrial companies (p. 1-104).

There are 36 advertises in the magazine which have woman model, among them only one model is shown out of home, rest of other are shown in either in the kitchen or as the model for cosmetic product. So what we can claim that the printed advertisements have been stereotyping images of women. Advertising messages about women are often stereotypical (e.

g., a womans place is in the home, women do not make important decisions or do important things, women are dependent and need mens protection, and men regard women primarily as sexual objects). Advertisements have consistently confined women to traditional mother-, home-, or beauty/sex-oriented roles that are not representative of womens diversity. The image of women that has predominated in magazine advertisements is of weak, childish, dependent, domestic, irrational, subordinate creatures, the producers of children and little else compared with men. Lucy Komisar suggests the audience of advertising could never know the reality of womens lives by looking at advertising, since “ A womans place is not only in the home, according to most advertising copywriters and art directors; it is in the kitchen or the laundry room” (p. 301). Komisar also refers to the image created by advertisers as a combination sex object, wife, and mother who achieves fulfillment by looking beautiful for men.

A woman is not depicted as intelligent, but submissive and subservient to men. If a woman has a job, it is as a secretary. In the Advertisement of Samsung household appliances, a woman model is shown in a corner of a kitchen where she is hugging a refrigerator. She looks as if the refrigerator is the one and only victory of her life (p. 113).

Among the stereotypes typically employed in advertising by the media are the ideas that women do unimportant things and a womans place is in the home. The nature and development of these role stereotypes appears to be a function of cultural norms and socialization. In the advertisements where women are portrayed in purely decorative roles, these advertisements look as if the womans role in advertising is sexy and alluring. These <https://assignbuster.com/the-portrayal-of-womens-imag-in-magazine-advertisement/>

advertisements present that exposure to advertisements employing stereotypical sex roles for women resulted in significantly lower perceptions of womens managerial abilities than exposure to advertisements depicting women in professional type roles requiring such abilities. In an advertise of National Life insurance, a woman model's size is smaller than that of men.(p.

27) And even the role given to the woman is the post of secretary. In another advertise of Samsung mobile, woman's size in the picture is shorter and smaller than that of man (p. 52). A height relationship between males and females in the advertisements is really stereotypical. In fact, advertisement are very strange creations, particularly as regards their portrayals of gender relations, and illustrated that the best way to understand the male-female relation is to compare it to the parent-child relation in which men take on the roles of parents while women behave as children normally would be expected to. It clears that gender differences in function and status not only carry over from the real world to the advertisement world but may find their purest expression there for decoding behavior concentrates on hands, eyes, knees, facial expressions, head postures, relative sizes, positioning and placing, head-eye aversion and finger biting and sucking. He felt the most simple gesture, familiar rituals or taken-for-granted forms of address were sources for understanding relations between the sexes and the social forces at work behind those relations. Having explored the ideals of femininity in advertising they can be revealed to be carefully constructed in each of their elements " layout, colour, packaging of the product and the product itself,

text, language used, and which model was photographed to represent the advertise ideology through the codes and conventions it uses.

In some advertise consumption of the product is implied to lead to being loved, cared for and protected by a man and this is portrayed as highly desirable. The cosmetics advertisements that I have looked at, do not show a female empowered to stand alone without masculine approval, and to consume the product as a luxury for her, to make her more attractive to a man. So what can we conclude that women are weakened by advertising portrayals via five categories: relative size(women shown smaller or lower, relative to men), feminine touch(women constantly touching themselves), function ranking(occupational), reutilization of subordination (proclivity for lying down at inappropriate times, etc.

), and licensed withdrawal(women never quite a part of the scene, possibly via far-off gazes). The results of this study are not very surprising, since magazine advertisements are not meant to serve as social primers enumerating the cultural rules of correct and proper behavior. They are merely designed to naturalize people and things in such a way as to maximize demand by defining social relations in terms of the consumption of goods and services. Using women in a sexist tone in advertisements has more profound social implications. If the media do mold expectations, opinions, and attitudes, then the audience of these ads may accept the way women are depicted as reality. What may be needed is the portrayal of women in roles that actually reflect their perceived attributes and their individuality.