

Gender stereotypes on television analytical essay



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Television advertisement perpetuates gender stereotypes through their advertising. This is through reinforcing the traditional gender roles assigned by the society. The traditional stereotypes about being a man is being business minded, tough, independent while being a woman means being passive, sensitive, and submissive, having beauty, elegance a good homemaker.

Television commercials are most likely to be run at the time when the advertisers think the target audience is watching television to sell their products. For instance, during daytime advertisers will run commercials about food, beauty products cleaning agents and so on in soap operas or dramas that have more women viewers than men viewers have.

On the other hand, in sports programs commercials for things such as beer, vehicles and property are run because the audience for such programs are mostly men. Gender stereotyping in television commercials is a topic that has generated a huge debate and it is an important topic to explore to find out how gender roles in voice-overs TV commercials and the type of products they are selling to the public are related. From many findings, it is clear that advertisers use gender to sell different products during different times in broadcasting.

Many studies in content analysis have been done on television commercials. The studies have focused on gender stereotyping but many have ignored the economic motivation behind the stereotyping in commercials. Advertisers want to make most of their advertisement and run the ads when the target

audience is likely to be watching certain television programs. For example during soap operas advertisers will run ads on things like diapers.

This product is hardly seen during programs watched mostly by men for instance sporting programs. While some advertisers may not consider the age and sex of the audience some do so because it is cost effective as they are able to reach most people in the target group using one commercial (Craig 1).

Gender roles stereotyping comes in when advertisers choose to run ads on products aimed at women during daytime. This is considered the best time to reach this target group, as most women are likely to be at home taking care of their children or just housekeeping. These young women are more likely to buy the products advertised than the older women who are largely ignored by the advertisements, as they are not considered as big buyers.

During prime time, the advertisements changed and target women who usually work. To make the advertisement more economical; advertisers run ads that target a wider audience of both men and women. Thus during this time products that appeal to both gender are more likely to be advertised. During the weekend most television stations run sporting events, they are mainly targeted at men, and thus products aimed at men are advertised during these programs. Products such as cars, beer are advertised (Craig 1).

It is also important to note that television programs are also gendered. There are programs created primarily with a specific gender in mind. During these programs, the advertisers get a good opportunity to sell their products to

their target audience. The programs are made in such a way that they help to sell the products being advertised.

This is achieved by portraying the characters in the programs with traits that are desirable to the target audience. This in turn makes the target audience desire those traits and thus are more likely to buy products advertised during such times (Craig 3).

For example, men are portrayed as dominant, autonomous; in occupations that are prestigious on the other hand, women are shown as caring, compliant or in domestic settings. Therefore, women will be shown in ads about domestic products while men will often advertise outdoor products or business related products (Chandler 1).

In voice-overs, the gender stereotypes are reinforced and maintained. The program or advertisements makers use voice-overs that represent the products they are advertising and that fit the society's stereotype of gender roles. In voice-overs, regarding authority male voice-overs are used.

The males do voice-overs for products that are masculine in nature. The male voice-overs are also used in various product advertisements unlike their female counterparts who are mostly used in doing voice-overs for domestic products such as food, cleaning agents or female beauty products.

The female voice-overs are often gentle, sensitive, and dependent or even submissive (Chandler 1). If men are used in advertising home products, they are often shown as being unable to handle the task. For example, a man

may be unable to operate a washing machine and a woman comes over and shows him how to use it with so much ease.

This advertisement although not breaking from tradition and having a man advertise at the end a woman comes and she is the one who is able to run the washing machine successfully thus reinforcing the traditional gender roles that homes are best run by women as men cannot be good homemakers. On the contrary, advertisements about men have male figures that work very hard. These males are often rewarded with a beer at the end of a day's hard work.

The stereotype type being propagated in such an ad is that men work very hard outdoors or in businesses and thus need a reward at the end of the day. Some ads may also show a man who is successful as having many women and thus reinforces the notion that a man can have a woman as long as he works hard. This kind of ads objectify women (Limpinnian 1).

We are in the 21st century and even though the role of women has shifted drastically from that of being care givers to professionals the stereotypes still persist in television advertisement. This may be attributed to the patriarchal society in which males dominant every aspect of life.

Interesting enough children tend to learn these stereotypes from the advertisement they see on television. Girls are often used in fewer ads than boys are and in those advertisements that are used to portray the traditional roles of women.

For example, the girls will be used in doll ads or in cooking fat ads to show that their role is in the home. Conversely, boys are portrayed in ads as being care free with toys cars and tough. This means that the boys and girls grow up to fit into gender behaviors shown in the advertisements (Bradway 1).

Finally, the gender roles in voice-overs in television commercials and the type of products advertised by different genders all seem to reinforce the traditional stereotypes. The advertisers do not want to shift from gendered advertising because they would not want to upset the status quo in the society as the products they produce are produced with a target market in mind.

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Chandler, Daniel. Television and Gender Roles. Web.

Craig, Steve. Men's men and Women's Women: How TV Commercials Portray Gender to Different Audiences. Web.

Limpinnian, Danielle. The Portrayal of Men and Women in TV Ads. Web.