

# Evaluation Essay on Gender in Advertising

Gender differences and biases have been a part of the normal lives of humans ever since anyone can remember. Anthropological evidence has revealed that even the humans and the hominids of ancient times had separate roles for men and women in their societies, and this relates to the concepts of epistemology. There were certain things that women were forbidden to do and similarly men could not partake in some of the activities that were traditionally reserved for women. This has given birth to the gender role stereotypes that we find today. These differences have been passed on to our current times; although many differences occur now that have caused a lot of debate amongst the people as to their appropriateness and have made it possible for us to have a stereotyping threat by which we sometimes assign certain qualities to certain people without thinking. For example, many men are blamed for undermining women and stereotyping them for traditional roles, and this could be said to be the same for men; men are also stereotyped in many of their roles. This leads to social constructionism since the reality is not always depicted by what we see by our eyes. These ideas have also carried on in the world of advertising and the differences shown between the males and the females are apparent in many advertisements we see today. This can have some serious impacts on the society as people begin to stereotype the gender roles in reality.

There has been a lot of attention given to the portrayal of gender in advertising by both practitioners as well as academics and much of this has been done regarding the portrayal of women in advertising (Ferguson, Kreshel, & Tinkham 40-51; Bellizzi & Milner 71-79). This has led many to believe that most of the advertisements and their contents are sexist in nature. It has been noted by viewing various ads that women are shown as being more concerned about their beauty and figure rather than being shown as authority figures in the ads; they are usually shown as the product users. Also, there is a tendency in many countries, including the United States, to portray women as being subordinate to men, as alluring sex objects, or as decorative objects. This is not right as it portrays women as the weaker sex, being only good as objects.

At the same time, many of the ads do not show gender biases in the pictures or the graphics, but some bias does turn up in the language of the ad. "Within language, bias is more evident in songs and dialogue than in formal speech or when popular culture is involved. For example, bias sneaks in through the use of idiomatic expressions (man's best friend) and when the language refer to characters that depict traditional sex roles. One's normative interpretation of these results depends on one's ideological perspective and tolerance for the pace of change. It is encouraging that the limited study of language in advertising indicates that the use of gender-neutrality is commonplace. Advertisers can still reduce the stereotyping in ad pictures, and increase the amount of female speech relative to male speech, even though progress is evidenced. To the extent that advertisers prefer to speak to people in their own language, the bias present in popular culture will likely continue to be reflected in advertisements" (Artz et al 20).

Advertisements are greatly responsible for eliciting such views for the people of our society. The children also see these pictures and they are also the ones who create stereotypes in their minds about the different roles of men and women. All these facts combine to give result to the different public opinion that becomes fact for many of the members of the society. Their opinion and views are based more on the interpretation they conclude from the images that are projected in the media than by their observations of the males and females in real life. This continues in a vicious circle as the media tries to pick up and project what the society thinks and the people in the society make their opinions based upon the images shown by the media. People, therefore, should not base too much importance about how the media is trying to portray the members of the society; rather they should base their opinions on their own observation of how people interact together in the real world.

## Work Cited

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