

PERCEPTION OF CONSUMERS ON THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN DEODORANT ADVERTISEMENTS IN TELEVISION

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ABSTRACT

This research is to find out the perception of consumers on the portrayal of women in deodorant advertisements, especially in television. Advertisers implement different sorts of marketing strategies to get individuals' attention and to purchase their items. They use humor, self-esteem, peer pressure, etc. The one that is thought to be the most well-known and the best is the utilization of sex in promoting their product. For the convenience of doing research, three deodorants were taken into consideration. Advertisements of Fogg, Axe and Wildstone sprays have been analyzed on the basis of the opinions of the samples. Participatory observation is used as a research method. Two groups consist of 7 and 8 members respectively on each group were observed for this research. Convenient samples have been used for the research. Advertisements were screened to the participants and 12 questions were asked based on these advertisements. The study shows that women are objectified in advertisements, and they were used in advertisements for increasing the market value of the product. The consumers were also attracted to this marketing strategy.

Key words – advertisements, women, objectification, consumer, television.

INTRODUCTION

Advertisements are the most powerful tool used to market a product. Advertisements are promotion of a particular product or services. It helps the consumers to get information about the product, its benefits, its selling price and how the product differs from other products. The consumers can choose from various brands according to their needs. Advertisements grab people's attention and thereby control the buying behaviour of people. Thomas J. Barrat is considered as the father of modern advertisement. They brought slogans, phrases and images for marketing a product. Television ads are the most effective and common way of advertising. Since it is a mass media, a large number of people can hear and watch the advertisements. Each and every product people use are advertised through television. Television has the advantage of targeting a particular audience at a particular period of time. Advertisements have an amazing influence over society and consumers through its impact on media. Sex appeal is used by some companies to promote the product in the market to increase its need. Nudity in advertisements comes under this classification.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To find out the consumer perceptions on portrayal of women in deodorant advertisements in Television.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Women are always an inevitable factor in every advertisement. Even if it is a product for men, women will be there in the advertisement as an integral part. According to Tamanna Towhid (2017), “Female representation in advertisement is based on some criteria, such as childlike/maternal, jobless, seductive/provocative, dependent upon a man, unintelligent/ditzy and manipulative. The advertisers focus on body image, inadequacy and subservience of female model. Therefore women become more conscious about their weight and beauty”. She also states that, “The audience think that the advertisements always present the right images in front of them therefore it plays the powerful role in portraying the images of women”. Television is considered as one of the best way to influence mass audiences. It entertains people and thereby giving awareness about the product among people. According to Kotwal (2008), advertisements are timesavers during shopping. She states that, “through advertisements consumers will be aware of price quality and quantity of the product”. Advertisements help to establish a brand among people. Women are used as objects to portray wrong concepts and sell their products in every advertisement. According to Paul Suggett (2019), men are programmed to desire the Barbie Doll woman. By analyzing these literatures, understanding of existing researches were made possible. This helps in conducting further research studies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research method is used in this research. Participatory observation methodology is used under qualitative research method. Participatory Observation allows the researcher to pick up the sample’s behavior by closely observing them. By observing those as the researcher can understand their behavior, views, qualities and ideas. It gives legitimate information. Two groups consist of 7 and 8 members respectively on each groups were analyzed for this research. Convenient samples were used for the research. There were 6 girls and 9 boys. Advertisements were screened for participants and 12 questions were asked based on these advertisements. All the process during participatory observation has been recorded using camera. The questions were asked after the screening session. Each response was noted. The behaviors of the participants are also analyzed during the session.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The participants were curious when the advertisements just began. The first advertisement that was played was the advertisement of Wildstone, which was released on 2017. The advertisement was of 1 minute duration. When they identified that first video was advertisement of Wildstone, they started discussing about the brand. Most of them had already seen this advertisement in television as the brand was leading one in market.

The participants started to giggle by looking at others when they saw the facial expression of women in the advertisement. Second advertisement that had screened was advertisement of Axe body spray, which was released in 2015. The advertisement was 30 seconds of duration. The reactions of samples given for Axe advertisements were quite interesting. Some of them gave a facial expression as if they saw something vulgar. Some people stated to laugh by closing mouth with their hands. At the end of the advertisement, when the dress was unbuttoned, they started to laugh out loudly. The third advertisement was Fogg which was released in 2012. It was a 30 seconds advertisement. When this advertisement was screened, they watched the whole advertisement peacefully and when the man in the advertisement blew up on the air, some of them started to laugh.

First question for them was, “Can you recall the advertisements that you have watched?”. Everyone nodded their heads and said yes. The second question was which advertisement do they like the most and why. Two participants from Group 1 and 1 participant from Group 2 liked the advertisement of Wildstone the most. It was because of the ambience that they create through the advertisement, their costumes and the romantic scenes between the characters in the advertisement. 1 participant from Group 2 liked the advertisement of Axe because the ad seemed to be more erotic. Others like Fogg because that particular advertisement has less vulgarity in their content. And there were humor elements in the advertisement which attracted the participants.

“Most of the people sitting here would like Axe advertisement, the most. They are not saying it because they think that people will judge them. In other advertisements vulgarity and nudity is comparatively less. But in Axe spray, more sexual appeal is used and it can attract people like us. So I liked the advertisement of Axe the most”.

When the researcher asked about which portion of the advertisement they liked the most, most of them said they loved romantic scenes in the advertisement of Wildstone. Two participants said that they loved the seducing scenes of Axe body sprays and three of the sample said they liked the way the man floats in the balloon in the air in Fogg advertisement. The participants had different opinions about the portrayal of women in these three advertisements.

“This kind of portrayal of women is necessary for attracting male audience”

“But I have a different opinion. Sexually portraying women in advertisement are not a good idea for the promotion of a product. This kinds of advertisements creates offensive thoughts in people’s mind

“What if the product needs such Kind of advertisement? In my view point it is perfectly ok that women can be a bit exposing if it helps to sell their product”.

“Being explosive doesn’t help to sell the product. Only if the product is worth for buying, customer will buy it”.

“That’s true, here the women is portrayed as an object to sell their product. In Axe advertisement, girls are very exposing and they try to seduce them. It gives a bad impression about girls. They try to more sexualize the advertisement other than portraying women in decent manner”.

When the researcher asked the portrayal of women in advertisements, most of them answered that it is “ok” up to an extend that women can be portrayed in this way. But in Axe advertisement they can be portrayed in more decent and less exposing.

“The advertising companies select these kind of advertisement strategy to attract men. Here we can see that girls were trying to seduce man even in public. But in real life it is not true. This creates misconceptions. So advertisers should develop an alternate advertisement strategy”.

The next question was, “do you think that these kind of portrayal of women in advertisements affects our culture?” some of them responded that these kinds of advertisements definitely affect our culture.

“Indians always have a tendency to adopt western culture. In western countries, it is ok to wear minimal clothes, kiss in public places and it is even ok to have sex in public places. But in Indian culture, we value our privacy. And by adopting western culture we lose our own culture”.

“Our society is in a transformation period. It is changing People has started to do what they like. It is not about adopting western culture. People have changed their mindset. As we can see it is not offensive to hug a girl in public. Girls can wear what they like to. If they like to wear as bit exposing, it is totally fine. So these kinds of advertisements don’t affect our culture anymore”.

“These kinds of advertisements only affects old generations. Because, it is hard for them to accept new changes in societies and culture. But for younger generations, these kinds of things were totally normal”.

From participatory observation, the researcher came to understand that Axe body spray have more publicity among the consumers. 7 out of 15 samples use Axe body spray. Fogg perfume was used by 4 samples. Wildstone was used by 1 sample. Others – 2. These samples never choose a product just because celebrities endorse the product. Mostly, they look for fragrance, long lasting and quality of the product, they give preference to the quality and effectiveness of the product rather than brand value. Most of them give importance to the price of the product. Most of the people don’t like to watch these kind of advertisements when they are with their family. Most of them change the channel when family is around. Because they were ashamed of watching such advertisements in front of them. It is also advised that the amount of sexuality and objectification of women should be reduced in television advertisements.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Women are portrayed as sexual objects in most of the advertisements. Even in the advertisement of men body spray, women are objectified. In spray advertisements, when a sexy woman tries to seduce a man the audience get a feeling if they would use the product they can become as attractive as the men on the screen and they will also get the woman they want. Advertisers exploit the desires of audience the advertisement suggests that the man can satisfy their desire by purchasing the product. The advertisers gradually penetrate the idea that women are objects that should be obtained. People often believe that when a woman wear less clothes or smile at random people, it shows her sexual readiness. If women try to react against such beliefs, she is sexually and mentally harassed in public. Major findings of this research are as follows:

- Advertisements portray women as an object for lust and desire.
- The media itself had created certain criteria for women. As we can see, there are no wrinkles or scars on their face. They have perfect shaped body, fully waxed arms and legs, zero sized waste, beautiful hair, bright and sharp eyes & whiten teeth. They have created a type of women that actually doesn't exist in the world.
- Objectifying women in advertisement will loses the confidence of other women.
- Axe body spray has more publicity among the consumers.
- 7 out of 15 samples use Axe body spray.
- Fogg perfume was used by 4 samples.
- Wildstone was used by 1 sample. Others – 2.
- Most of the people never choose a product just because celebrities endorse the product.
- Mostly, consumers look for fragrance, long lasting and quality of the product.
- Consumers give preference to the quality and effectiveness of the product rather than brand value. Most of them give importance to the price of the product.
- Audience doesn't feel comfortable to watch hyper sexualized advertisements when they are with their family. Most of them change the channel when family is around. Because they were ashamed of watching such advertisements in front of them.

By analyzing the contents of Fogg, Wildstone and Axe advertisements, it is clear that women have been used for marketing their product. Objectification and stereotyping images of women can be observed in these advertisements. Advertisers ignore that women have a dignity and respect in the society. They didn't respect the personality of women. This leads to the violence and sexual harassment against women. It is also advised that the amount of sexuality and objectification of women should be reduced in television advertisements. While planning contents for advertisements, advertisers need to consider the social conviction, traditions, standards and cultural values in a particular society, on the grounds that the strict conviction that involve in the general public is basic part in framing the buying behavior of clients.

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