

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ADVERTISING - MISUSE OF WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Advertisements are absolutely everywhere. They do exist in a huge quantity everywhere around us and many people do not notice them at all. But, it is very important to research them because they are very indicative and they represent, in a way, a system in which we live. They have an influence on the construction of our identities but also on the notion of social roles and on the difference between women and men. In this context, it is interesting to watch advertisements in terms of gender stereotypes as well as the use of women's bodies in the advertising industry. The aim of the analysis of advertising content is to determine the extent to which a woman's body is used in advertising but also the violation of a law on gender equality in advertising content.

KEYWORDS: advertising, advertisement, stereotype, sexism, women.

1 INTRODUCTION

We live in a time of advertising. It is now a very powerful industry that not only sells products, but also the value, status, and at the end – ideals. Marketing ad is the simplest way to reach the customer, and the ad certainly has to leave a striking impression. So, there are many videos those are packed into a joke, pun, caricature but unfortunately the provocation, stereotypes and sexist messages. Advertising, posing as questionable and timeless, sales notions of how the world should look like and how it should behave people and often played the wrong ideas about society, its values, but also on its individual segments and members. The difference in the presentation of women and men in advertising is undeniable. It is well known that the advertising industry through advertisements wants to attract attention and sell a product and because of these reasons, the physicality of a woman and the woman's body is only a function of images very often. The fact is that many brands in the region significantly play with the woman and her place in society, whether it is present as a sex object or housekeeper. Such

advertisements do negative effect on the position of women in society. Advertisements which show only physical attractiveness of women or sex create but also fix stereotype picture of woman. This can lead to the fact that the society begins to experience women in consistent with that notion. But also, which is maybe more important, this can lead to the fact that women begin to experience themselves with that notion. Advertisers have task creating of perfect world in which marketing agencies use women very often. These women, in this complete process, become „products and objects“. All this is a result of stereotyping and prejudices that exist in most societies and the role of women is most often found only on physical attraction or stereotype about joining feature successful women and motherhood.

2 STEREOTYPES IN ADVERTISING

2.1. WOMAN'S PLACE IN A COMMERCIAL

The issue of gender in advertising is the subject of scientific research for several decades. Although this issue is not sufficiently treated in our region, in the world has published numerous articles in magazines that deal with marketing, sociology and psychology. So, this subject can be polemicized through all of these aspects. There are several important reasons why this topic is interesting. First of all, knowledge of the cultural and social features related to gender, imposed by society, is an important factor in the creation of assuring commercials and effective marketing strategies (Alvesson, Billing, 1997). Also, it is important to mention that the sex of one of the basic criteria for market segmentation. Market segment based on this criterion is very easy to identify (Kotler, Keller, 2005). Women and men on different ways identify information which are sent by commercials. In the process of information processing women have significantly better access for their analysis, they use intuition and connect from multiple perspectives, and they take into account the interconnected elements. Men usually watch more elements without their permeation. They treat information independently one from others. Men are usually focused on the signals those are easily available over the information processing (Kim, Xinran, Morison, 2007). Perhaps, the previously mentioned matrix that we accept as the norm and as acceptable forms division even when the identifying information is questionable, a key problem arises when these matrices are associated with stereotypes and discrimination.

2.2.FROM STEREOTYPES TO DISCRIMINATION

The existence of stereotypes in advertising in the region confirmed to us the following phenomena:

1. Presence of sexism is huge. Sex in advertising actually existed since the late nineteenth century, while the mass "undressing" of women in advertising was used by the end of the First World War. The use of sex for propaganda purposes has made progress at an

incredible speed at the end of the last century, so in these days the woman is „one step to plastic dolls whose sole physical characteristics excessively exploited for marketing of different products“ (Pavlović, 2004;221). The fact is that the amount of sexism varies from country to country and this can be explained by cultural context and political culture of authoritarianism (Ibroscheva, 2007). The higher level of authoritarianism, lower the level of sexism, or vice versa.

2. In the advertising industry in the region, women are mostly naked, and such a phenomenon usually causes erotic allusions. Women, throughout this process, gets only a decorative function. This phenomenon will be linked with globalization and the phenomenon of copying the concept of US print and TV advertising (Wolin, 2003).
3. One of the big problems is the prejudice that there are so-called *primary customers*. In the case of most products (mainly those much financially cost) men are the primary buyers. The starting point for this view is the belief that men have a higher authority, expertise and competence, particularly in the field of cars and techniques. There are several reasons that can cause these attitudes:
 - Imbedded traditional view that women are dependent on men,
 - General progress for women starts to grow only in the last few years (it is a very complex and slow process),
 - Advertisements are indicators of the dominant social values and represent a kind of reflection of the distribution of of power in society.

Today, the advertisements in the modern media generally can be characterized according to their content and focus on those that address to the female population and on those which are turn to the male population.

2.3. CLASSIFICATION OF ADVERTISING IN RESPECT OF SEX

There are two types of advertising in which women appear: the first type of advertising is intended for women and it has many subtypes. In this category are advertisements with the woman who is shown in a socially imposed role: she is worth a housewife and caring wife and mother who chooses the best for her children and her family. Analyzing ads that promoting food products (in countries in the region), it is obvious allusion according to which is the fundamental task of women caring for family. Mothers are the ones who care for food, protecting their families, while men are portrayed in advertising but only as passive observers. In the "domestic" commercials, experts say that there are three kinds of women: "woman-child", "woman-woman" and "woman-mother". The first type of commercials are those where a little girl immensely enjoys the smell of fabric softener, or daughter who competes in the purchase of better laundry detergent, and mothers support their choice. In this group there are commercials for women concerning cosmetic products which will help her to seduce and conquer any man (Shauma, Garnier). The local media are full of commercials of cosmetic products. In these commercials are usually displayed world-famous singers, models, actresses,

which with their appearance confirm the effectiveness of a particular product. The messages that are sent by celebrities is that women can and deserve to look nice, groomed and desirable, just like them. Advertisements almost always show some innovation (all products operate from the first day). The industry of cosmetic products in its advertising emphasis put on beauty, stereotypes or the imperatives. The products through commercials, get symbolic, "the exchange" value on a human scale, if it is possible to create (and enforce) the connection between the product and the customer.

Another type of commercials is addressed to men, and in them women usually have a decorative function, they are shown through erotic allusions or as part of promotional goods. These are the various commercials for cars (an example of fashion model with her legs spread, advertises car Golf V, with the message "indecent proposal"). In those kind of commercials could be seen women with perfect proportions which send messages to men, "between the lines", that they will be more desirable after buying these products.

3 PRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN CROATIAN WAY

This article was created from a desire to show how female gender represented in advertisements in women's magazines in Croatia. Perhaps even more importantly, we wanted to show the ways in which women are presented. Because of these reasons, it was made one, albeit brief survey, but sufficient to notice potential problems when considering showing the woman's role in society. The research which was done, actually presents an analysis of the advertising content of two women's magazines in Croatia (*Glorija* and *Story*). These newspapers are considered as representative for this type of research and analysis. We analyzed samples of these newspapers in the period from July 27th to August 19th, 2016. A total of eight publications (publications are weekly newspapers) and the sample included the entire newspaper content. The methodology of this study included the techniques that can be classified into two categories:

1. The representation of female characters (how many women are represented in commercials in comparison with men);
2. The status of women (their identity, what they show, do the commercials confirm the stereotypes).

3.1. ANALYSIS OF STORY

Analysis of the Croatian women's magazine shows that women have an absolute advantage over men in the advertising presentation. Graph 1 shows a representation of female and male characters in the analyzed sample of newspapers, and points to the fact that women mainly participate in the advertising industry (there is a significant number of commercials in the category "Others" what indicates commercials in which neither women nor men have leading

roles). The presence of women and men in advertisements can be illustrated as follows (Graph 1.).

Graph 1. Advertisements in the magazine Story

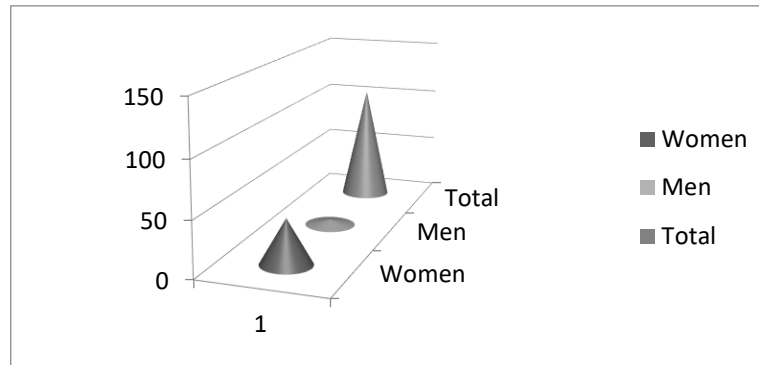


Table 1. The total representation of female and male characters in advertisements in the magazine Story

STORY	<i>The total number of advertisements (1)</i>	<i>The number of impressions of women in advertisements (2)</i>	<i>The number of impressions of men in advertisements (3)</i>	<i>Percentage (Index 2/1)</i>
27.07.2016.	31	15	1	48,38%
03.08.2016.	32	11	2	34,37%
10.08.2016.	27	10	1	37,03%
17.08.2016.	16	5	1	31,25%
TOTAL	106	41	5	38,67%

Table 1 provides data on the overall representation of female and male characters in the advertising space of Croatian women's publications. It is interesting that women appear more than 8 times than men. Male characters in the commercials are indeed a rarity (in some editions appear even one time). Analyzing the the entire media content, it is evident that there are more recognizable identity-male characters are for serious, authoritative and credible role. On the other hand, women mainly creates a good visual scene, and in this context, commercials are ideal place for female characters.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF GLORIJA

The above-mentioned views are similar in the second magazine which is analyzed. Female characters are absolutely dominant in relation to the male characters.

Graph 2. Advertisements in the magazine Glorija

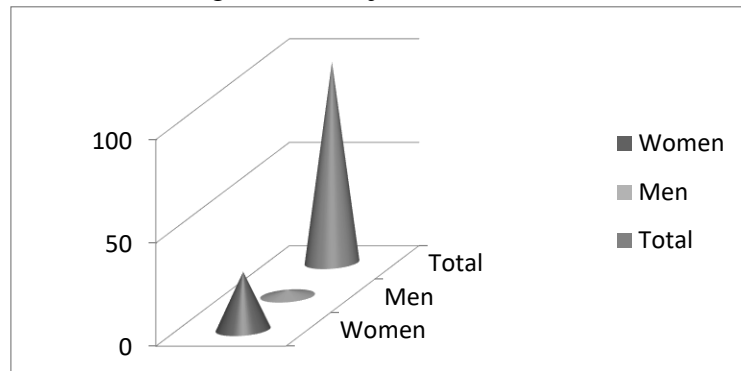
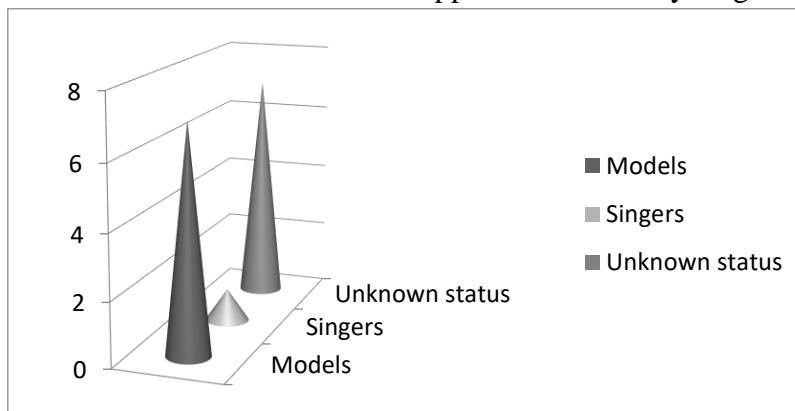


Table 2. The representation of female and male characters in Gloria

GLORIJA	<i>The total number of advertisements (1)</i>	<i>The number of impressions of women in advertisements (2)</i>	<i>The number of impressions of men in advertisements (3)</i>	<i>Percentage (Index 2/1)</i>
28.07.2016.	26	8	3	30,76%
04.08.2016.	31	8	-	25,80%
11.08.2016.	24	6	-	25%
18.08.2016.	16	6	-	37,5%
TOTAL	97	28	3	28,86%

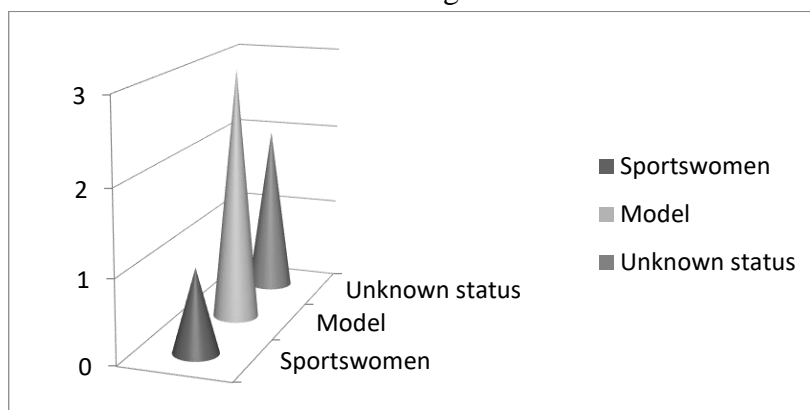
Very interesting data were appeared in this analysis. For example, women were appeared 28 times in a total of four time editions, and it is 28.86% of entire advertising content. The men in the commercials were present only 3% (there were no men in commercials in three editions in August). These data show that women in relation to men, in quantitative terms, scored significantly better role. However, in the distribution of social power and prestige, they are absolutely subordinate. In this context, it was very interesting to observe the categorization of the main protagonist in commercials by occupation and / or the position they occupy in society. The status of women and men in the advertising can be an indicator for the assessment of status of these characters, their identities and roles, as well as an indicator for the assessment of their importance and also of positioning in society. To realize what the professional status of women is in advertising, it will be displayed graph that shows what actually are the main occupations of women that advertise certain products.

Graph 3. The professional status of women that appear in the weekly magazines*



* Graphic indicates the professional status of women in a single edition of the weekly magazine Story, number 30, July 27th 2016.

Graph 4. The professional status of women in magazine Gloria**



** The graph indicates the professional status of women in the edition of magazine Gloria (August, 11th, 2016).

Analyzing data from the graph 3, it is evident that women, generally, have a role whose references are reduced to beauty, physicality and entertainment. Thus, 46% of women were in the role of the model, 6% of them were in the role of the singer, and the other 46% of women had anonymous status (women with no known professional status). Women in Gloria are sportswomen (16%), models (50%) and women of unknown status (33%).

3.3. INEVITABLY MOTHERHOOD

Advertisements in Croatia (in women's newspapers) are very interesting. At first sight, it seems that the commercials that show and link women with beauty, cosmetics and fashion are very interesting. However, more detailed analysis reveals that of "inevitable" nature of motherhood as part of the life of a woman which is not only essential, but also a natural expectation of the role of women in society. In this sense, in advertisements, motherhood is inevitable, and very

often implies that a woman is not and can not be happy unless she is part of the traditional family and if she does not take care of her family.

Figure 1. An example of advertisements published in Gloria



Figure 2. Precedent advertising that alludes that motherhood is the most important for woman (a commercial of Podravka)



Author Rebranović (Kultura komuniciranja, 2013.) states that the first role of women in advertising is motherhood, and then, the deceitfulness, perfection, manipulation and dependence on men. Unfortunately, all these facts are present in the Croatian advertising industry.

3.4. BRIEF ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH

In Croatia, there is the Law on Advertising in the framework of the Media Act in which, in Article 20, it is clearly stated that it is not permissible advertising in which women and men in an insulting manner. Indeed, there were not found advertisements which woman shows in an insulting and degrading manner (in terms of sexuality), and also in women's newspapers was not found sexist advertising (it does not mean they do not exist: it mustn't be forgotten advertisements such as those of the Croatian Tourist Board which is prohibited in order to sexist message, advertisements for beer's industry and many others that have occurred and which are broadcasted on Croatian territory), but of course there are those commercials that promote

stereotypes and promote wrongly acquired the role of women in which she is reduced mainly to physical attraction and visual sensation. This study found that ads in Croatian women's magazines still more promote stereotypical roles of men and women, but they are also harmful and they are not at all, harmless social problem. Sexism, prejudices and gender discrimination in the media and in the advertising industry, are mostly related to negative objectification and presentation of women, and as such they have very harmful effects. Presentation of women in advertising and the media in general, shows clearly the position of women in contemporary society: it is still strongly patriarchal and it is under the influence of stereotypes.

4 CONCLUSION

It is necessary to make extensive research and analysis of media content to more accurately could analyze the manner of representation of women in the advertising industry. This work suggests that media companies in the region (mainly commercial) prefer male gender, assigning them all the roles that determine the fate of a large number of people, and even the whole society. A woman comes to the fore when it should be showed attributes of physicality and attractiveness - she becomes a natural attraction and visual sensations. In general, the systematic exploration of advertisements throughout the region are missing, and the study of these issues could lead to the identification of key relationships in the society and serve as an indicator for the assessment of elements of the overall cultural matrix.

The media have great influence in promoting social values so it is important that media is showing both sex. It must be changed attitudes and awareness of the roles and functions of women and men. It must be stoped showing woman through stereotypes, and thus, equality, which is guaranteed by the law, will not be just a phrase. The correct presentation of women and their roles in the society is one of the key factors in strengthening the social awareness about equality between men and women and eliminating discrimination based on sex.

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