

Gendered Depictions of Household Care Responsibilities in Advertisements: A Quantitative Content Analysis

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Introduction

Household care responsibilities have traditionally been portrayed through a gendered lens in media, with women often depicted as primary caretakers and experts in domestic tasks (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2019). Advertisements have long been studied as vehicles for reinforcing or challenging societal norms (Eisend, 2010). Yet, despite shifts in social attitudes due to feminist and social justice movements, limited research has examined how household care product advertisements currently depict gender and race in their portrayals of domestic roles. Our study aims to bridge this gap by exploring who is represented as responsible for household care in advertisements, focusing on demographic aspects such as gender and race.



Nine of the twenty ads included in analysis.

Literature Review

Advertising research shows that, historically, women tend to be depicted in subordinate roles (Eisend, 2010). Women are more likely to be depicted as the expert informants on home and family care (Humphreys, 2015). They are also more likely to be seen using the product in household care ads (Mamay & Simpson, 1981), while men, if they appear, are shown as humorously inept (Scharrer et al., 2006). A thematic shift to more empowering imaging for women has been observed since 2010s (More, 2023). Yet, research on gendered portrayals of household care in ads remains minimal and in need of further exploration. Because media is often seen to both reflect and inspire social norms (Gamson et al., 1992), understanding how household care is displayed in advertisements can lead to future research on the impacts of these portrayals on consumer attitudes and behaviors.



This is an example of a coded advertisement. The characters are highlighted and will be analyzed for their gender, race, and social role/product use in the advertisement

Anticipated Findings

- Overall, women will be displayed more often and in a more traditional housekeeping role.
- In the wake of recent social justice movements, more diversity will be featured in advertisements released in the later part of our sample date (closer to 2023 than 2013).
- As more attention was drawn during the pandemic to the domestic label placed on women, we expect that more men will be featured as using household products in advertisements published after 2020.

If women are disproportionately represented as responsible for household duties in these advertisements, the goal is to highlight those trends and bring them to the attention of the advertising industry, with hopes they might diversify future representations. Further research could explore the effects of different forms of representation on public perception of gender/racial stereotypes.

Methods

Quantitative Content Analysis

- 3 coders.
- 2-5 rounds of practice coding.
- 1 round of reliability coding with 10% of sample.
- Level of reliability will be based on Krippendorff's (2004) alpha, and any variable under the standard 0.667 will be removed.

Sample

- Top 20 leading home care brands identified using Statista (Petruzzi, 2023).
- Collected over 200 television ads for each brand on YouTube, AdForum, and iSpot.tv.
- Use stratified random sampling based on release year to create a final sample.
- **Ads excluded if:** not in time range, not in English, contains animated characters, not at least one person in the ad with 50% of their body visible, shorter than the longest iteration of the same advertisement.

- **Limitations:** We cannot make claims on the effects that any patterns we observe may have on the viewer population. Additionally, reaching agreement between coders may be a challenge.



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