

Who cares? Gender Representation in Childcare Product Advertisements

Background

Caregiving 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, 2009). 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 childcare 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 childcare in advertisements, focusing on demographic aspects such as gender and race.

Next steps

- Begin collecting sample
- Test coding with both coders
- Finalize coding

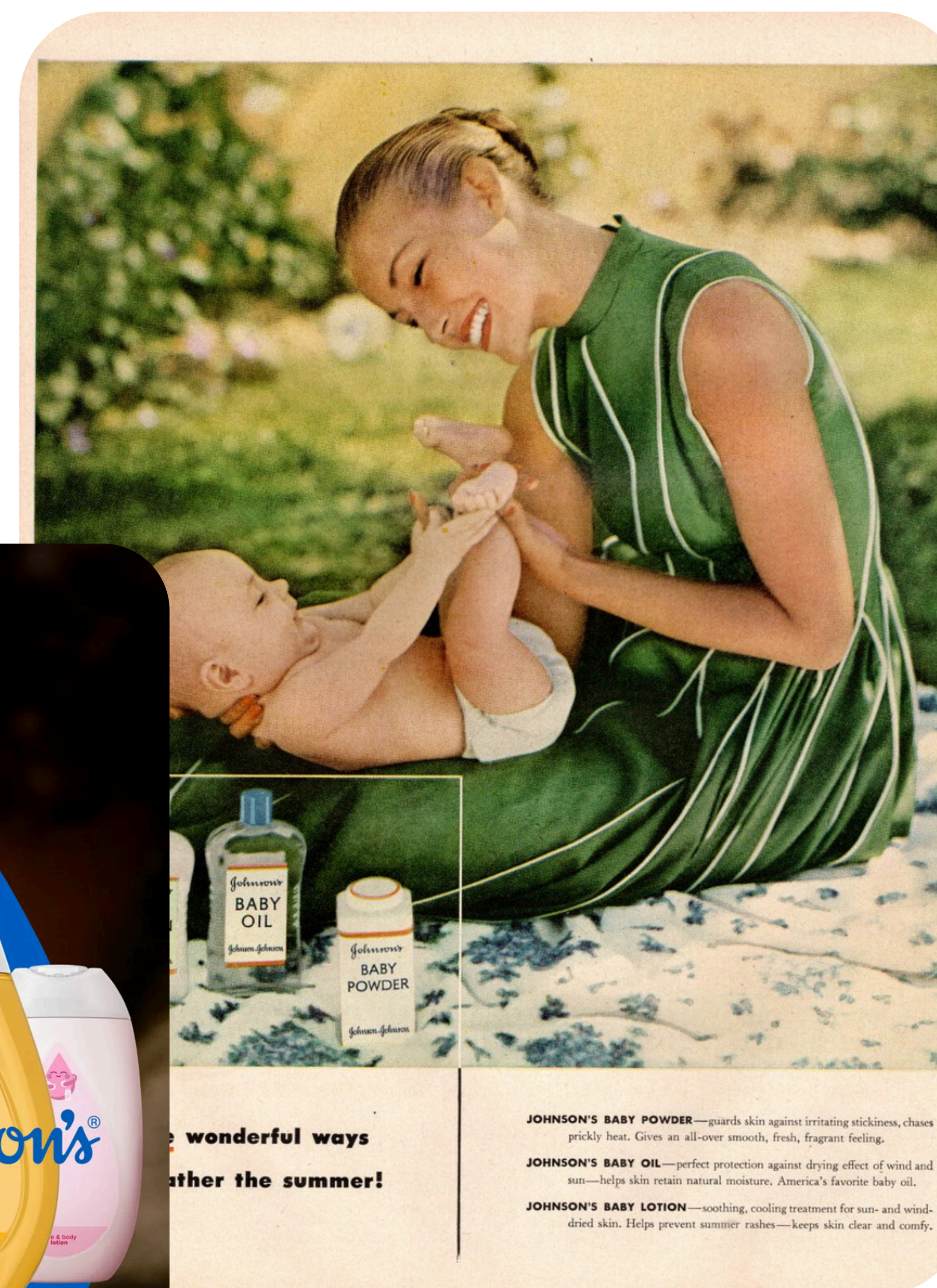
Literature Review

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). Society's understanding of gender norms has been evolving, there is no longer such strict adherence to traditional norms (Kacen, 2000). Yet, recent research on gendered portrayals of childcare in ads remains limited and in need of further exploration. Because media is often seen to portray the reality around us and teaches how the world works (Gamson et al., 1992), understanding how childcare is displayed in advertisements can lead to future research on the impacts of these portrayals on consumer attitudes and behaviors.



Research Questions

- RQ1: Who is represented in childcare advertisements in terms of gender?
- RQ2: Who is represented in childcare advertisements in terms of race?
- RQ3: What is the prevalence of female representation in childcare advertisements?
- RQ4: Is childcare represented as a shared responsibility?



Methods

- Quantitative content analysis
 - 2 coders
 - Original codebook adapted from
 - Reliability based on Krippendorff's (2004) alpha, variables under standard 0.667 removed
- Sample
 - Baby product advertisements from the advertisement database AdForum
 - Categories include: baby bottles & accessories, baby food, baby hygiene, baby toiletries
 - Timeline: 2000-2025

References and Acknowledgements

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