



Are Women in Ads Really Empowered? What Hair Tells Us

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Introduction

It is estimated that an average person is confronted with 6,000 to 10,000 advertisements a day and while it might not be outright influential, the portrayals of society through advertisements helps contribute to the lens that our world is viewed through. The women featured in advertisements and specifically their portrayals through these effects the way society views women. When taking a closer to look the woman's hair, thematic elements of advertisements can be conveyed, which leads us to believe that the styling of hair in advertisements is crucial to understanding the role that women play in different scenarios and how they are seen in society.

References



Abstract

This qualitative textual analysis questions the “empowered female” discourse suggested in “femvertising” specifically focusing on the development of hair representation amongst women of color in comparison to their White counterparts. Using Goffman’s Gender Advertisements as the theoretical framework for coding female adverts’ non-verbal communication cues over time, it can be inquired whether or not women are more empowered in the current state of contemporary commercialism in terms of their roles and non-verbal behaviors. Our preliminary findings show that there has been progress made in the depiction of females’ nonverbal behaviors that has revealed more independence than what Goffman did in 1988. However, the analysis found that black females’ hair portrayals still demonstrate stereotypes of black women’s natural hair and its negative connotations embedded in western culture.



Figure 1: Example of data used.

Method

- Collected data from the fsu.lib archives
 - Picked advertisements featuring women
 - Used online journals for primary collection
- Advertisements were organized by date.
- The images collected were then coded
 - Coding was conducted by assigning each piece of data according the “Licensed Withdrawal.”
 - Using Goffman’s framework, they were coded by issue, date, product, brand, ethnicity and hair texture into cross-tabulation through SPSS.
- The inter-reliability test was conducted to try and determine if there was a correlation.

Discussion and Findings

The coding of the images allowed for classification amongst the behavior in the image based on the Goffman framework. With this classification, relationships between the behavior and the way that hair was represented in the images could be found and patterns could be identified. While our results are currently inclusive, this analysis would allow for reoccurring themes to be identified. This research would serve as a cross-cultural analysis on the female empowerment discourse within the realm of “femvertising” specifically focusing on the development of hair representation amongst women of color in comparison to their White counterparts. Using Goffman's Gender Advertisements as the theoretical framework for coding female advertisements throughout several decades, it can be inquired whether or not women are more empowered in the current state of modern commercialism in terms of their roles and non-verbal behaviors.