

Words and images for the Nigerian woman – back or forth?

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Abstract

This study delves into the impact of language and imagery featuring women in print media, billboards, and electronic advertisements on Nigerian women. The theoretical foundations for this research are the standpoint theory and visual semiotic theory. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study utilized textual analysis. A deliberate selection of seven magazines and newspapers published from January to June 2019 (January-June), formed the basis of the analysis. Additionally, the research incorporated five billboards and semi- interviews conducted with adult men and women; male and female market vendors from the streets of Onitsha and Awka. The findings exposed the potential for advertising to perpetuate the subordination of women. This is achieved by reinforcing male dominance over women, eroding women's self-assurance, and reinforcing the societal mechanisms that marginalize women within the confines of a patriarchal structure.

Keywords: Sociolinguistic, sexism, advertisement, women, language (315 words)

Introduction

Advertisement serves as an integral component of successful business endeavors, wielding substantial influence over business growth and expansion. Business proprietors diligently harness advertising, recognizing its pivotal role in disseminating information and catalyzing the sales of marketable goods and

services (Kannan & Tyagi, 23). This form of communication informs individuals about product availability, purchasing venues, and product attributes (Ayoola & Akin Odeunmi 18), signifying its social significance and function. Essentially, advertising functions as a conduit for social interaction, facilitating awareness of product effectiveness and availability. Notably, advertisements also shape consumer attitudes in tandem with contemporary trends, shaping commercial decisions and consumption choices. Nevertheless, the concern is the surreptitious and potentially perilous manner in which advertising conveys messages, allowing a range of concepts, including stereotypes and sexism, to elude the discerning viewer.

In a competitive marketing landscape, enterprises and service providers vie for customer attention and patronage, employing both verbal and non-verbal tactics in advertising. While advertising historically encompassed oral transmission between individuals, families, and groups, it has evolved into intricate mechanisms designed to influence target audiences. Advertisers adopt diverse appeals to engage their audience, ranging from emotional and rational appeals to sexual, scarcity, and other types of appeals (Popoola 4). Notably, sexual appeals have attracted significant criticism, often deemed unethical due to their capacity to offend and their questionable relevance to the advertised products (Belch et al, 30).

Recognizing advertising as an omnipresent societal fixture, advertisers vigorously pursue their target audience, employing tactics ranging from street carnivals to media partnerships to convey their offerings. Media's influential role extends beyond information, education, and entertainment, shaping public opinion and attitudes through thorough analysis and interpretation of news events (Aghadiegwu 13). This understanding prompts advertisers to invest

heavily in media advertisements to enhance their market presence. In this pursuit, media and advertisers have embraced captivating techniques that transcend linguistic manipulation, incorporating imagery to convey messages.

Nonetheless, while media boasts strengths and potential for uniting women globally and amplifying their voices in gender equality and feminist movements, advertisements frequently depict women as stereotyped, vulnerable, submissive, and sexualized entities, reinforcing patriarchal norms. Instances of companies and products utilizing sexual objectification, subjugation, and stereotypes within their advertisements are apparent in media. However, the detrimental effects of such advertisements on consumers, particularly women, are often underestimated. This study aims to unearth these effects.

Globally, diverse portrayals of women grace print, billboard, and electronic media. The pursuit of consumer engagement through visual allure has occasionally compromised decency and morality in advertisements. However, the most significant concern is the objectification of women, yielding detrimental outcomes such as diminished self-esteem and substance abuse among young women. Despite substantial research on women's representation in media, scant attention has been directed towards the linguistic components accompanying visual depictions of women in print and billboard ads, as well as societal attitudes towards such portrayals, especially in Nigeria.

Research questions

How are women depicted in roles of subjugation and sexism in billboard, print, and electronic media?

To what degree do the symbols utilized in these advertisements interact with the societal perception of women?

What are the implications of linguistic features employed in advertisements on women's self-perception within society?

How does the representation of women in media advertisements influence their societal status?

What is the stance of marketers and advertisers toward the advertised products and their consumers?

Theoretical framework

This research delves into the visual portrayal of women in print, billboard, and electronic advertisements in Nigeria. The exploration is informed by theoretical frameworks and methods of data collection. The theoretical underpinnings for this study consist of Harding's Standpoint Theory and Saussure's Visual Semiotic Theory, encompassing the principles of "sign, signifier, and signified."

Standpoint theory

Coined by American Feminist Sandra Harding in 1983, Standpoint Theory asserts that an individual's perspective shapes their perception of the world. The theory posits that starting from marginalized viewpoints, such as those of women, yields deeper acknowledgment of differing standpoints. In a culturally diverse nation like Nigeria, with numerous ethnicities and traditions, cultural influences impact one's interpretation of messages. Standpoint Theory facilitates the examination of how gender, race, class, and sexual orientation inequalities lead distinct social groups to construct unique understandings of nature and societal relations.

Visual semiotic theory

Meaning and interpretation extend beyond words to encompass symbols, signs, and images that significantly influence the

comprehension of the world. (Messaris 16) underscores the multifaceted roles of visual images in advertising: evoking emotions through resemblance to reality, substantiating events, and establishing implicit links between products and other concepts. This perspective aligns with Visual Semiotic Theory, which views visual communication's fundamental attributes as integral to these functions.

Semiotics, a concept introduced by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in 1915, studies sign dynamics within societies. Charles Sanders Peirce further explored sign impacts on society. Semiotics, or "semiology" in Europe, serves as the study of signs, extending its reach from linguistics to various disciplines like communication, anthropology, and architecture. The evolution of semiotics encompasses three schools, with each applying linguistic principles to non-linguistic communication realms. The theoretical framework of semiotics in this study extends from the foundational work of these three schools.



In advertising, images offer a direct reflection of societal realities and interests. Barthes asserts that advertising images' signified stem from inherent product attributes. Visual Semiotic Theory strives to elucidate the process of meaning construction and interpretation by audiences, aligning with Barthes' perspective.



Empirical studies

Sexism

Sexism is a term that often eludes discussions in polite circles. It typically conveys a form of discrimination rooted in gender and seems to necessitate a conscious, deliberate action (Rhode 12). However, beneath the surface lies a more subtle manifestation of sexism—a complex web of social expectations and practices that reinforce inequalities based on gender. Ultimately, sexism in all its manifestations represents a detriment to society. This phenomenon encompasses two primary forms: overt and indirect sexism (Mills 24).



Overt sexism is characterized by its explicit and unequivocal nature, while indirect sexism operates within the realm of pragmatics and the interpretation of language. Indirect sexism, pervasive in our society, requires innovative approaches to challenge and analyze its prevalence in communication (Mills 32). Often intertwined with sexism is the employment of sexist humor, a strategy often utilized to secure favour. This type of humor is evident in advertisements like those depicting a product as "successfully defended in a panel of all male bosses" or where a woman is portrayed as capable of performing even the most basic tasks. Similarly, visual imagery might portray a human female's arms enveloping the body of a male 'driver' akin to a seat belt. The use of sexist humour serves to downplay the seriousness of sexism by disguising it as harmless entertainment (Mills 38).

Gender stereotyping

Another area of concern in media portrayal is gender stereotyping. Gender, a social construct shaped by different societies, assigns distinct roles to individuals of different sexes. This concept is culturally dependent, shaped by the beliefs and customs of specific communities or societies (Alade and Abiodun 30). Gender stereotyping refers to a set of commonly accepted beliefs or ideas regarding behaviors and activities deemed appropriate for males and females. Within traditional Nigerian culture, for instance, women are assigned roles primarily within the domestic sphere as wives, mothers, and homemakers (Alade and Abiodun 35).

The fate of mummy, teacher and taste master



Language use in advertising

Advertisers serve as intermediaries in communication between two parties—the consumers and themselves. They wield language to establish and maintain this communication link. Language, particularly English, is manipulated by advertisers in various ways to introduce the potential for interpreting sexist and offensive meanings within diverse contexts. It is imperative for scholars to analyze the semantic nuances of words employed in advertisements (Kannan and Tyagi 42). For instance, the term 'armchair' conveys a sense of comfort, whereas 'chair' does not evoke any specific emotion.

The inclusion of the word 'even' before the phrase 'a woman can' insinuates that the woman is considered inherently 'incapable'. This linguistic choice in advertising significantly impacts consumers' perceptions. Scholars have scrutinized additional tactics employed by advertisers to adapt English for conveying hidden messages, such as intensifying concepts through adjectives, utilizing concise sentences for emphasis, and employing weasel words that imply meaning without being explicit (Kannan and Tyagi 47). The interpretation of words within advertisements should be informed by the contextual backdrop. Language serves four key functions: expression, exposition, art, and persuasion

(Tarigan 56). Advertisers harness the English language for each of these functions, leading consumers to extract diverse meanings from the language.

Media's role and language's impact on gender disparity in advertising

Advertising surpasses mere product promotion, extending to the enhancement of groups or entire organizations associated with the advertised product. The language within advertisements must be tailored to capture audience interest and facilitate message comprehension. (Littlejohn et al. 67) suggest that a feminist lexicon crafted by Cheris Kramarae and Paula Treichler can serve as a feminist discourse universe. The way language is employed by different genders within advertisements often surfaces through subject matter and topic choices.

In a commercial, women are subjugated subtly



As much as the message here connotes unity and togetherness in the family as a result of the product, it also denotes the willing subjugated force on the woman as seen that the man is distant in the picture and the woman verily present to assist the children in getting their Coca-Cola product. Therefore, in a subtle way this

tells the society that the man is allowed to be distant from the family while the woman, even though she is working, must take care of the whole family.

Furthermore, in discussions, men are often perceived as engaging more in sports or physical pursuits, while women's conversations are often centered on romance and fantasy realms. Coates indicates that men's language is often considered frivolous and easy to dismiss. Women, on the other hand, tend to employ milder expletives like "oh dear" or "goodness" instead of stronger terms like profanity. Within advertising, women have consistently been depicted as objects of sexual attraction, contributing to their dehumanization. Over time, media advertising has fallen short in portraying women as capable of undertaking tasks traditionally associated with men.

Gender roles and portrayal of women in advertisement

This shows the existence of discriminatory roles in society. The representation of women in advertisements presents the attitude of demeaning womanhood and influences the perception of people about them. Some scholars argue that it is an issue of cross-cultural cum societal beliefs which reveal different cultural attachments on women. Although, recent studies have tried to argue that following the war on poor women representation in advertising, there is a change. (Morth & Anta 25) in their comparative study on women's representation in advertising from 1980 to 2010, indicate that there is a major difference in the portrayal of women. The study however concluded that some variables have not changed over the years.

Social communication of female pictures in media advertisement

Advertisement is an evident and seemingly contentious socialization agent. People's lives are influenced directly or indirectly as a result of their exposure to certain types of advertisements. The Department of Communication notes that "media affects our ideas of who we are and what we could be". There is a special attachment to the image of people in the public sphere which sends a message to the beholders. The exploration of women especially in the use of their pictures in media advertisements has been widely felt and has become an issue of concern to many individuals and scholars.

On billboards, Nivea uses gorgeous women with poses



Plate 7 is shown as a feminine product in two images, despite the fact that it is a body cream that is suitable for both men and women. The only person depicted on both billboards is a young woman. The little we can see of them in the billboards suggests that they are slim. They're also clean and fair, and they're suitable for young ladies. Furthermore, the expressions on the billboards 'for visibly fairer skin' and 'take care of my body always' and signifiers that

beauty is in the fairness of the female skin. This effect is heightened by their upper arms which are left exposed to convey to the audience that the product is genuine and reliable.

The use of Nivea reveals that, in the marketer's opinion, fairness is best defined by the quality of the represented participant's skin. Despite the fact that the women's words are muted, their feelings are transmitted through their body language. They're trying to persuade the audience that the cream is the source of their skin's purity and suppleness. Women are not only a better choice for the ad in the marketer's view, but only a woman with their unique characteristics would do a good job. As a result, even if it isn't stated in black and white, there is an implicit consensus on what beauty is and who qualifies as lovely. This forms a sexist role in the billboard.

Objectification of women is when women are reduced to a mere commodity, and judged by the attributes of their bodies rather than who they are, as a person. A woman's body can be used to push through any product in the market, starting from washing powder to shaving cream or iron and steel products. The presentation of female sexual images in advertisements, to a large extent, endangers them as they are made objects of men's sexual needs. This demeans women's morality in society and emphasizes sexism in media advertisements. The media's treatment of women is narrow and continually reinforces stereotypical gender roles and assumptions that women's functions are that of a wife, mother, and servants alone (Sharma 13).



Lovers on a toothpaste advert

There are so many ways to promote a great product. This publicity may be termed intolerable. This is because most commercials of close-up always show a young man and a lady displaying their affection for one another. Matured people and children are exposed to the same commercial on Billboards. It is impossible to tell small children to close their eyes when going past it. We cannot stop their minds from posing questions that need solutions, either. It clearly portrays a sexist position for women, and it leaves the mind to question, while purchasing the paste, how using it can entice the opposite sex to you.

Advertising is one of the most important ways of communication in society, and everybody is confronted by its ubiquitous nature in daily life. (Meghancorte 34) maintains that the images sometimes degrade the images of women which leads people to maintain stereotypes in real life. This study supports the opinion that good advertisements should portray the right blend of cultural meaning, and societal values, and reflect the personal dreams of individuals.

The role of female journalists in the media

The media have a very significant role in promoting or demoting personality as they are sometimes described as the image makers

of a society. Journalism globally used to be a men's domain, hence the common phrase '“gentlemen of the press' ' (Sanusi & Adelabu 76). Media however, have an indisputable role to play in the struggle for gender equality and social identity gaps between men and women. Scholars have investigated women representation in both print and television media channels and have come with different views.

(Jha) explains that women journalists, as part of women's networks like different women's study groups and NGOs, work as activists utilizing it as a platform (web). It offers the women the opportunity to speak out and stand for their quest to eliminate gender role stereotypes in society, especially for the fact that women have joined the media today compared to what it was in the past. (Jha) further adds that “sensitized women journalists extend the limit on women's issues by understanding development issues being women's issues and inevitably linked with political issues” (web).

Some scholarly findings show gender discrimination and role denial on women in media discourse. The study of (Pande 14) reveals a clear instance of discrimination of status of female journalists which manifests in language divide between Hindi and English print media. (Pande 16) wrote that:

Unlike women in the English media, women workers in the Hindi media have traditionally remained largely desk-bound. Most of them come from small towns and have studied in Hindi medium colleges... The media organisations they work in, with very few exceptions, are owner driven, preoccupied with profit margins and political ambitions at all levels.

There is a preferential treatment given to women journalists in English which those of Hindi don't get. This indicates discrimination within women and women's roles in the media. Although this is not language based it will create room for division among women journalists. Again, equality is not just a women's issue; everyone benefits from eliminating discrimination (UNESCO).

There is also some discrimination in the kind of task allocated for male and female journalists to do the reporting. Female journalists are generally asked to do soft news and male journalists, hard news. Now, looking at the words 'soft' and 'hard' the synonyms weak and strong readily come to mind. According to (Lama 7) media owners and male editors have a kind of perception towards female journalists which acts as a barrier to provide equal responsibility among male and female journalists. She further said that:

They think women journalists can't walk alone in night, can't travel anywhere, scared to fight with challenges, understand very little about political issues, has to be involved in household works and thus don't readily adopt journalism profession and even after they become journalist, they do not wish to continue it for many years or sustain within this profession (Lama 13).

(Tomar 11) reported that the role of women in media-decision making is reflected in the poor representation of women issues and concerns. Other scholars have discovered that there is a professional inequality embedded in media which is strongly based on social differences that exist between men and women spaces. Tomar (13) stressed that the exclusion and oppression of women

by transnational corporations is translated into media representation and employment. Gallagher remarks that the review of UNESCO worldwide on women and media was targeted to address the issue of women's poor representation. She discovered from the review that there is a remarkably constant picture of women's representation when compared from country to country. She presents a summary of women representation in media as carried out by UNESCO thus:

Representation of women can best be described as narrow. On film, press and broadcast media, women's activities and interests typically go no further than the confines of home and family. Characterised as essentially dependent and romantic, women are rarely portrayed as rational, active or decisive. Both as characters in fictional media material and as newsmakers in the press and broadcasting, women are numerically under representation-an absence which underlines their marginal and inferior status in many spheres of social, economic and cultural life. Prevalent news values define most women and most women's problems as un-newsworthy, admitting women to coverage primarily as wives, mothers or daughters of men in the news: in their own right, they make the headlines usually only as fashionable or entertainment figures (Tomar, 14).

In Nigeria, the participation of women in the journalism profession was evident in recent times. (Ikem 6) captures the beginning of female participation in Nigeria media thus:

The first breakthrough for women in this male dominated profession was in feature writing with the establishment of the Nigeria Daily Times, when lively feature articles began to appear with boxed title-heads (Ikem 6).

Although female participation in the Nigerian broadcasting and journalism profession as a whole has recorded positive growth in female employment in areas such as programming; the status of women in Nigerian media still indicates that there is a great level of subordination. The study of (Pate 32) on Women in Nigerian Broadcasting Media makes this indication practical. The study reveals that for every one (1) woman employed in the state radio stations and state, and federal television and radio stations represented in the survey there were seven (7) male employees (Pate 34).

(Ikem 6) study also shows that there is an improved status of female journalists in Nigeria but with some gaps and restrictions. (Ikem 7) opines that “while line-editor remains one of the most remarkable positions women in journalism have made great progress, as women editors, observations show that the content of the pages they edit are yet to be drastically dynamic to address wider issues of development” (Ikem 9).

(Global Media Monitoring Project 15) carried out by an international NGO; World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) reveals that there is a slight change in the female status in media. This study which was conducted in seventy-six (76) countries across the globe found the following. Female reporters predominate in only two topics: weather reports on television and

radio (52%) and stories on poverty, housing and welfare (51%). There is a 50-50 gender balance among reporters in celebrity news, and in stories on consumer issues. Although many 'soft' new stories are important, they are not always perceived as such in the hierarchy of new values.

The study of the Global Media Monitoring Project concludes that women have made great strides in the news media over the past decade but they still struggle to achieve equal treatment. Fair gender portrayal demands a highly intellectual and professional value with passion, respect and honesty to human happiness and survival. This fight cannot be achieved by women alone but with men and women of honesty and fairness in judgment.

From the foregoing it is deducible that the media are not away from the dominant patriarchal norms, assumptions and practices of the society. This dominance appears to have existed for a long time. There are always the stories of struggle, challenges and discrimination of women journalists. Regrettably, this discrimination also exists among women themselves such that they have little or nothing to do about it. None of the literature reviewed here showed women's actions and movement for female journalists' discrimination and status in the media. This study becomes very important as it has investigated the attitude of women even journalists in the representation of women in media advertisements.

Study population, data and methodology

The study was carried out in Onitsha and Awka Metropolis of Anambra State to represent Nigeria since all these adverts are to be found equally in other parts of Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of old adults that are individuals who are mature and

discerning enough to understand the connotations of billboard and newspaper advertisements. This qualitative study used textual analysis because they focus on text and visual codes. To study women in billboard ads, five Onitsha and Awka billboards were chosen. Mtn, Nivea, Magi Star, Coca-Cola, and Close-Up billboards. Furthermore, The Guardian, Punch, Daily Sun, Genevieve Nigeria Magazine, Pleasure Magazine, and This Day Style Extra Magazine were chosen for print media advertising analysis. Data relevant to this study were intentionally selected and examined. This study structured and textually analysed semi-interviews to collect real-life attitudes and perceptions of women's advertising. Regular women and men in Onitsha and Awka were interviewed with ten semi-structured questions. Twenty out of the forty participants that were interviewed were selected for textual analysis in this study. Forty people in the Anambra metro area were interviewed over the phone for the study, and 20 of those interviews were analysed for their semi-oral content.

Method of data analysis

The data was textually analysed to discover evidence that answers the research questions developed for this study utilising Harding's principle of viewpoint (Harding 42) to examine the effects of advertising on Nigerian women. Ad images were analysed for their semiotic relevance and social communication ramifications using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic principle of sign, signifier, and signified (Culler & Bailey 32).

Profile of participants

The use of semi-structured interviews to gather data suggests that different realities exist, each of which is socially generated based on people's backgrounds and socioeconomic classes.

Advertisement impressions may change while carrying out research in a different part of the country (Hussain et al., 2020). In addition, the individuals' assessments of the advertisements obtained through interviews could differ.

The participants were 40 regular men and women between the ages of 18 and 65 who are exposed to advertisements on billboards, newspapers, and magazines. 31 females (77.5 percent) and 9 men (22.5 percent) took part in the semi-structured interview. The majority of the respondents (63%) were from the Igbo tribe, while others (20%) were Yoruba and others (17%) were from Hausa, and other minor tribes across the country. By approaching each of them and simply seeking permission to communicate with them, they were enrolled. Participants' demographic characteristics were confirmed before the interview, and any surveys that were unfinished or does not meet the criteria for selection were removed from the study.

The result of the semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview is a data collection method used in qualitative language education research. In contrast to an unstructured conversation, the researcher has more control over the topic, but the informants' response possibilities are unrestricted. The semi-structured interview is a typical technique for reconstructing a person's subjective theory about a subject. As a result, it can be useful for acquiring subjective, first-hand information about the issue under investigation (such as impressions, perspectives, attitudes, opinions, and so on). It's especially well-suited to study settings where one feature of the language education phenomenon under consideration is defined in the interview guideline while the second is identified based on the informants' personal knowledge. Semi-standardized interviews, on

the other hand, may be used when the researcher's purpose is to collect data (Datko, 142).

Table Analysis of answers from semi-structured interview

S/ N	Themes of question	% of those who strongly agreed	% of those who simply agreed	% of responde nts who simply disagreed	% of responde nts who strongly disagreed
1.	Advertisements that show women usually focus on their appearance and sexual availability.	30	40	20	10
2.	It is likely to reflect other women's needs and perspective	20	22.5	37.5	20
3	It is more likely to provide positive role models for women and girls	10	40	20	30
4	It is just passing message about the behaviour of women	15	22.5	27.5	35

5	It influences the ideas of the customers	35	32.5	22.5	10
6	There is negative psychological impact to women	55	30	10	5
7	It makes the women feel celebrated in the society	15	22.5	27.5	35
8	It makes the products look sinful	30	40	20	10
9	It makes the customers happy to buy the products	50	30	15	5
10	Some customers see it as unacceptable	10	40	20	30

Discussion of interview findings

Research question 1: To what extent do women portrayed in subjugated and sexist roles in bill board, print and electronic media?

From table 4.1, the first three items address this question. It could be seen that a greater percentage (70%) of respondents agreed that

advertisements that show women usually focus on their appearance and sexual availability. This proves that the thematic analysis of the magazines and billboards are relatively accurate about the appearance of women on billboards, magazines and electronic media. More than half of the respondents (57.5%) disagreed that the messages and pictures on media platforms are likely to reflect other women's needs and perspective. This means more respondent think that this should not be the norm in the society. Fifty percent of the respondents agreed that it is more likely to provide positive role models for women and girls. This is a signal that the messages passed in the media platforms chosen are accepted by some of the members of the society.

Research question 2: To what extent is there interaction between the symbols used in these adverts and the women in the society?

From table 4.1, items 4 and 5 addressed this research question. A greater percentage disagreed that it is just passing a message about the behaviour of women. This implies that not all people in the society thinks that women do like they were being portrayed in the advertisements. More people (67.5%) signified that it influences the ideas of the customers. With this, it could be deduced that customers, despite the fact that many do not agree with contents, are still being influenced by the messages passed in the advertisement labels and symbols in Anambra state.

Research question 3: To what extent do the implications of these linguistic features employed play a role in the women's psychological perception of themselves in the society?

Item 6 on table 4.1 addressed this research question. It could be seen that a greater percentage (85%) of respondents agreed that there is a negative psychological impact on women based on the messages, symbols and pictures on the various advertisement labels and symbols in Anambra state.

Research question 4: To what extent do the women representation in the media advertisements project their status in society?

Item 7 in the semi-structured interview addressed this question. A greater percentage of respondents (62.5%) did not agree that the messages passed though the linguistic and pictorial representations make women feel celebrated in the society. From this, it can be deduced that majority of people in Anambra state believed that most of the messages and pictures demean women in the society.

Research question 5: To what extent do the attitude of the marketers of the advertised products project a positive attitude towards the products and their customers?

Items 8, 9 and 10 in the interview result summary addressed this question. A greater percentage of respondents who are also marketers of many of the products believed that the messages and pictures on the advertisement labels and symbols make the product look sinful. This must have been from their experience that some consumers likely rejected some of the products because of perceptions about them from the way they were advertised. On the other way, a greater percentage (80%) also believed that the customers that buy the product are happy to buy them because of the representation and beauty particularly on the billboards and magazines. This means that consumers of the products are happy when buying them due to their love for the product derived from the

way they are being advertised in both pictures and messages. Moreover, fifty percent of the respondents agreed some customers see it as unacceptable while the other half agreed that customers accept those pictures and messages on the advertisement labels and symbols in Anambra state. This may be due to the imbalance in the way consumer and marketers view the products. Marketers will want their product being sold while consumers will want a great product for a good price. These perspectives are influenced by the pictorial and linguistic representation of women in advertisement labels and symbols.

Summary of findings

The advertising industry prefers to represent women in sleepwear, underwear, and lingerie. Women feature in advertisements for personal hygiene and cooking items at a higher rate than males. This is due to the fact that many of the respondents felt that when women's sensitive parts are revealed, they are only depicted as ornamental non-functioning objects. Female characters in commercial and professional jobs are few and few between, since women are seen as the weakest of creatures, lacking in strength, power, and effectiveness. They are underrepresented in the fields of finance, management, leadership positions, and professions such as law, engineering, and medical professions. The negative consequences of female portrayal in advertisements, labels, and symbols on women include a decrease in self-esteem and health problems such as eating disorders, insecurity, and anxiety, excessive spending, sexual objectification, and a degradation of the feminine role. The ramifications for society include emotional appeal, materialistic enforcement, and the establishment of false wants, economic waste, and an increase in unethical behavior. The positive implications of the employment of women are

educational, instructive, amusing, increase the attractiveness of communication, increase sales, and increase public interest.

Conclusion

Advertising is a marketing strategy used by marketers to raise customer awareness of and interest in products, services, or ideas. In Anambra State and by extension in Nigeria, it has been discovered that the depiction of women in advertising labels and symbols is quite poor. This is capable of severely impacting the perception of women among the big audience of advertising. It can be concluded that advertising is counter-productive and harmful to the advancement of women.

Recommendations

Advertisers should pre-test their advertising for sex and decency responses, and they should consult with the media, self-regulatory organizations, and other appropriate experts before releasing them. There is a need for proper orientation of the advertising industry in this part of the world to imbibe in them the spirit of moral norms and respect for the dignity of womanhood. Policies should be made against nudity in advertisements.

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