



Consumer Perception on Portrayal of Women in media with reference to Rajasthan

Dr. Deepika Taparia, Faculty of Management, Jagannath University, Jaipur
Surbhi Sheoran, Pedagogue, Commerce & Management

ABSTRACT- Advertisement is a very powerful tool for mass media and the whole television industry. In today's world, the representation of women in the media become a serious issue. Many women in advertisements are used as an object to sell their products. Such types of unethical advertisements give a negative effect on the image of women in society. This research paper aims to find out the perception of a consumer on the portrayal of women in advertisements.

The attitude of the respondents was collected and analyzed through a well-structured questionnaire. Responses were collected and analyzed through the Chi-square test. This paper also includes a hypothesis that takes into consideration consumer perceptions towards the use of women in advertisements.

This study helps in analyzing the real image of women in advertisements. Women play an important role in society. So, advertisers should try to portray the changing role of women in advertisements. It would change the perception of men towards women.

Keywords: Advertisement, Ethics, Consumer Perception, Women

I. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is basically a device that grabs attention and induces the viewer to purchase a particular product. Advertising is an important component of promotion and it's widely used for encouraging customers and persuading them to purchase a product. According to Kotler and Keller (2008)¹ "Advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor". In today's world, advertising uses every possible media to spread the message to their target audience i.e. via television, newspapers, magazines, journals, radio, press, internet, direct selling, etc.

Marketers now a day, often use advertising for promoting a sale of their products and services and for influencing the psychology of consumers. Traditionally, the print was the most important media. With the growth of technology and innovations, TV advertising was introduced which continues to be the favourite choice of consumers. But currently, digital advertising is growing at a very fast pace.

In the advertisement, to grab the attention of the audience, advertisers often use women to sell their products and services. Many a time, women are being used in the advertisements for such a product which is not being used by them. Quite often, it is found that women are not used in a decent way in the advertisement. Advertisers many a time violate the code of conduct of ASCI while portraying women in the advertisement. A woman is often used as a sex object rather than a celebrity in an advertisement. Such type of advertisement deteriorates the image of women in society.

Consumers are exposed to an enormous number of deceiving advertisements frequently making claims that are doubtful or untrustworthy. So, the Department of Consumer Affairs has stepped up with regards to set up a committed portal that will empower the customers to enroll their Grievances Against Misleading Advertisements (GAMA). Customers can complain about misleading ads through this portal and ASCI will practice moral influence to prevent such advertisements.

There are some of the examples of the depiction of women in the advertisement-

(1) Household Products (Surf Excel and Vim)



Advertisement most of the time represents the stereotype image of women. Generally, for household products like soaps, washing powder, etc.

(2) Axe Chocolate Temptation Deo



The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting banned the ad after receiving a complaint from an audience who found a shot vulgar which showed a woman biting the chocolate man's bottom.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study was based on consumer perception on the portrayal of women in electronic media with reference to Rajasthan. To identify the problem based on the subject a detailed review of the existing literature about advertising, consumer behavior, and women in advertising was made.

West (2018) focused on consumer behavior and gender inequality shown in the advertisements. In this study, the researcher examined the unintended consequences that advertising and marketing communication have on consumers and society at large. The study had highlighted the role portrayal of women in advertisements. According to the study, some brands portray women using realistic mirror images, whereas others have continued in the more traditional mode of idealized beauty as extremely thin models.

Ford (2018) pointed out that endorsing celebrity in advertisements enhances the brand image, awareness and purchase behavior of the buyer. It also increases the credibility of the content of the advertisements. The researcher stated that to some extent the effect of celebrity endorsements on consumers might be generalizable whereas the final result i.e. brand attitude might be dependent on the celebrity's profession and brand novelty.

Paswan (2017) stated that to reduce the numbers of misleading advertisements, various laws are being proposed in the cabinet for further process. The parliamentary standing committee had also recommended certain changes to the Consumer Protection Bill, 2015. He also added that strict punishment will be given in the involvement of misleading and unethical advertisements. This punishment will include sponsors, manufacturer and celebrities who played a different role in that particular advertisement.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the perception of the consumer about the effect of advertisements in society.

2. To analyze the perception of the consumer about the depiction of women in advertisements.

To achieve the desired objectives, the data is being analyzed and interpreted by using the chi square test through SPSS 23.0.

HYPOTHESIS

Keeping in consideration two objectives of the study, the following hypotheses have been drafted:

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference in the perception of the respondents about the use of women in advertisements.

Alternate Hypothesis (H_a): There is a significant difference in the perception of the respondents about the use of women in advertisements.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the primary research objective, exploratory work has been done. The population has been divided into non-probability sampling. The samples for the study were selected from five different cities of Rajasthan namely, Jaipur, Ajmer, Bikaner, Kota & Udaipur. The size of the sample was 500 (100 from each city).

With the help of a well-structured questionnaire, the viewpoint of the customers was recorded and then sorted, tabulated.

The research paper is divided into two parts. The first part is based on theoretical study and previous research conducted in this area. The second part is based on a research method which includes filling up of questionnaire. Finally, with the help of a questionnaire, data were collected. Based on this data, final findings and suggestions have been drafted.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

With a view to find out consumer perception on the portrayal of women in electronic media with reference to Rajasthan, the data was collected through a structured questionnaire which was distributed to 500 selected respondents in the 5 cities of Rajasthan. Out of 500 selected respondents, 419 respondents watch advertisements and the remaining 81 respondents do not watch advertisements. Thus, the responses collected from the 419 respondents have been analyzed.

The hypotheses were tested using the chi-square test. Chi-square test is a very popular non-parametric test.

The data was collected using the chi-square test to find out whether the result of the research study approves or rejects the hypothesis. The chi-square values were calculated by using the following formula:

$$X^2 = \sum \left(\frac{(f_o - F_e)^2}{F_e} \right)$$

- i. Chi-Square
- ii. Where: f_e = the expected frequency
- iii. F_o = the observed frequency. Summation is over the number of categories characterizing a given problem

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

With a view to find out the consumer perception on the Portrayal of Women in electronic media with reference to Rajasthan, the data was collected through a questionnaire. The responses were recorded and data collected were tabulated, edited, sorted and analyzed.

In this research an effort has been made to find out the perception of the respondents through the following statements: -

(1) Perception about use of Women in Advertisements

Table1 shows the perception of the respondents towards the use of women in advertisements.

Table 1: Perception about use of Women in Advertisements

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%
Advertisements often depict the women as preoccupied with household duties	180	43	152	36	14	3	45	11	28	7	419	100
Women are used in advertisements as decorative object only to divert the mindset of people	169	41	144	34	16	4	42	10	48	11	419	100
Most of the time, advertisements fail to recognize the changing role of women	101	25	132	31	41	10	98	23	47	11	419	100
Women are used as decorative figures in the advertisements of such a product which is not used by them	152	36	114	27	18	4	101	25	34	8	419	100
Many prominent advertisers use a vulgar and unethical theme in the name of creative or innovative advertising	168	40	112	27	14	3	79	19	46	11	419	100

An effort was made to find out the perception of the consumer about the use of women in advertisements. Table 1 shows that most of the respondents, 79% agreed or strongly agreed that women are often depicted in the advertisements as preoccupied with household duties. Only 18% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this. As many as 43% (180 out of 419) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that women are shown occupied with household duties in the advertisements.

It is also revealed that most of the respondents, 75% (313 out of 419), strongly agreed or agreed that women are used in the advertisements as a decorative object only to divert the mindset of the people. Only 21% (90 out of 419) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this. Only 4% (16 out of 419) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

As many as 41% (169 out of 419) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that women are shown as a decorative object in the advertisements.

In the third statement, 56% (233 out of 419) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that most of the time, advertisement fails to recognize the changing role of women. Only 10% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this. 34% of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement.

A large number of the respondents, 31% (132 out of 419), agreed with the statement that normally advertisement fails to recognize the changing role of women.

In the fourth statement, as many as 63% (266 out of 419) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that women are used as a decorative figure in the advertisements of such a product which is not used by them. Only 33% of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with this. Only 4% (18 out of 419) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this. The majority of the respondents 36% (152 out of 419) strongly agreed that women are shown in the advertisements of such a product which is not being used by them.

In the last statement, the majority of the respondents 67% (280 out of 419) agreed or strongly agreed that many prominent advertisers use the vulgar and unethical theme in the name of creative or innovative advertising. Only 30% of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with this. As many as 40% (168 out of 419) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that advertisers use a vulgar and unethical theme in the name of creative advertising.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Null Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference in the perception of the respondents about the use of women in advertisements.

Alternate Hypothesis

H_a: There is a significant difference in the perception of the respondents about the use of women in advertisements.

Results

1. Degree of Freedom

$$(R-1)*(C-1)$$

$$(5-1)*(5-1)$$

$$4*4=16$$

2. **Table Value** - At 5% level of significance the critical table value of chi-square for 16 degrees of freedom is 26.296.

3. **Calculated Value** - 885.7496 (Table 2)

Conclusion - The Calculated Value is higher than the Table Value. Hence, the Null Hypothesis is rejected and the Alternate Hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is a significant difference in the perception of the respondents about the use of women in advertisements.

Table 2: Testing of Hypothesis

Perception about use of Women in Advertisements

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
	No. of Respondents	No. of Respondents	No. of Respondents	No. of Respondents	No. of Respondents	No. of Respondents
Advertisements often depict the women as preoccupied with household duties	180 (84)	152 (84)	14 (83)	45 (84)	28 (84)	419
Women are used in advertisements as decorative object only to divert the mindset of people	169 (84)	144 (84)	16 (83)	42 (84)	48 (84)	419
Most of the time, advertisements fail to recognize the changing role of women	101 (84)	132 (84)	41 (83)	98 (84)	47 (84)	419
Women are used as decorative figures in the advertisements of such a product which is not used by them	152 (84)	114 (84)	18 (83)	101 (84)	34 (84)	419
Many prominent advertisers use a vulgar and unethical theme in the name of creative or innovative advertising	168 (84)	112 (84)	14 (83)	79 (84)	46 (84)	419

(*Expected frequencies are shown in brackets)

IV. FINDINGS

- (1) A majority of the consumers strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that advertisements often depict women as preoccupied with household duties.
- (2) A majority of the consumers strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that women are used as a decorative object in the advertisements, only to divert the mindset of the people.
- (3) A majority of the consumers agreed with the statement that most of the time, advertisements fail to recognize the changing role of women.
- (4) A majority of the consumers strongly agreed with the statement that women are used in the advertisements of such a product which is not used by them.
- (5) Most of the consumers strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that many of the advertisers use a vulgar and unethical theme in the name of creative or innovative advertising.
- (6) There is a significant difference in the perception of the respondents about the use of women in advertisements.

V. SUGGESTIONS

1. Advertisers should stop practices of displaying vulgar and unethical themes under the pretext of creativity.
2. Advertisers should stop using unethical means in advertisements as it directly affects the behavior of consumers in society. Such kind of unethical ads harms the social values and lifestyle of the individual.
3. Advertisers should strictly stop indecency related to women shown in their advertisements. Instead, they should portray women in a focused way in accordance with the culture and values of society.
4. Advertisers should try to portray the changing role of women in the advertisement which would enhance the real image of women in society. Women if shown as a decorative object or a dummy deteriorates the image of women in the mind of general masses.

VI. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that there is a tremendous use of women in advertisements, many times unethically. The improper and indecent use of women in advertising reflects the negative attitude of men about women and the wrong perception of men towards women in India. Undoubtedly, women play a crucial role in society and should not be abused or unduly used in advertising. A lot needs to be done to change the perception of men towards women.

REFERENCE

1. Kotler, P. (2005), Principles of Marketing, 11th edition, Prentice-Hall.
2. Belch, G., Belch, G. E., Belch, M. A., Gayle, K., & Irene, P. (2008), *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective*, Australia, McGraw-Hill.
3. Clow, K., & Baack, D. (2007), *Integrated Advertising Promotion & Marketing Communication*, 3rd edition, U.S.A, Prentice Hall Inc.
4. Mathur, N. (1984), *Advertising & Consumer Reaction in India*, Jaipur, Print well Publishers.
5. Kothari, C. R. (2004), *Research Methodology*, New Delhi, New Age International (P) Ltd.
6. West, C. D. (2018), Are Portrayals of Female Beauty in Advertising Finally Changing? *Journal of Advertising Research*, pp. 24-33.
7. Parulekar, A. (2018), Lack of Ethics in Corporate Governance Led to Nirav Modi Scandal: Goa B-school Director, *The Economic Times*.
8. PTI. (2018), Hero Motocorp Sacks Around 30 Employees for Ethics Code Violation, *The Economic Times*.
9. Ford, B. J. (2018), What Do We Know About Celebrity Endorsement in Advertising? *Journal of Advertising Research*, p. 15.
10. Paswan, V. R. (2017), Strict Punishment in the Offing for Misleading Advertisements, *The Economic Times*.

11. Ashraf, G., Younus, R., Shafiq, A., Khan, Z., Waseem, I., & Tanzila, S. (2016), Ethical Dilemmas of Advertising, *International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Scientific Emerging Research*, Vol. 4(2), p. 7.