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# The Effects Of Social Changes On The Way Advertising Agencies Market To Women

This paper will attempt to answer the research question, “What affects do Social Changes have on the way Advertising Agencies Market to Women?” through the compilation and use of various, academic and non-academic, secondary sources. This topic was chosen as gender portrayals have been an important and extensive subject for analysis over the last five decades, continuing to be important even today. The two genders were often portrayed in stereotypical molds, in advertisements throughout the 1900’s, with the change in family structures and more women entering the workplace beginning to affect not only wider society but the advertisements that reflect their audience as well.

How stereotypes may have changed over time and what movements and campaigns have affected these changes in advertisements will all be discussed. In recent years, more advertisements are being marketed towards the modern woman, often being referred to as “Advertising” (Grau L. and Zotos C., 2016). This shows the importance of investigating how and why wider society affects marketing strategies, and how marketers can use this knowledge to their advantage to make attractive advertisements and increase attention to their brand or product. In this digital age, failing to make advertisements that adhere to social rules will be met with consumers holding the organization accountable via social media mediums.

Advertising typically is a reflection of wider society and is often thought to be the footing for the negative stereotyping of women (Grau, S. L., Roselli, G. & Taylor, C.R., 2007). Researching how societal changes have affected how advertisers market to women is an important topic as the majority of products are marketed to the female population as they make up more than 50% of total segmentation in the UK; exceeding the male population by “roughly 893 thousand,” by the end of 2016 (Statista, 2017).

In the past and in, albeit fewer, advertisements recently, both sexes are shown in advertisements’ in more traditional roles; women cleaning or cooking and men in the workplace or fixing the car. As women have been entering the workplace, with a 53% increase from 1971 to 2013, (Ons.gov.uk, 2013) the feminist movement being brought to the forefront, as well as changes in the structure of the family, advertisements’ have also had to adapt, (Grau L. and Zotos C., 2016). Increasingly advertisements’ show women in empowered roles, sexually liberated and with more freedom. Although, the sexually liberated role is also seen as another stereotype of women, the “seductress”, (Holtzhausen, Jordaan and North, 2011) used by advertisements to garner attention via the use of sexual imagery of women.

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The largest movement to bring about the change in attitudes towards women was the feminist, or suffrage, movement. The first wave began with the suffrage in the late 19th to early 20th century, bringing the view that women were able to work and vote alongside men. However, this was at first only reserved for the upper-class women who owned their own property or wealth. The second wave began in the 1960's, this is when they began advocating for the social rights of women being made equal to men, (Kroløkke and Sørensen, 2006).

Of course, even though there were social changes, advertising agencies were still behind in the method they used to attract the female consumers. Stereotypical or even downright degrading advertisements, such as the 1963 advert for a juicer with the caption "Does everything but clean, that's what the wife's for," were still continued to be made until the year 1982. Rena Bartos, a woman who worked at the J. Walter Thompson Company as a Senior Vice President, was one of the first and most influential advocates for better marketing directed at the female consumer. Bartos published 'The Moving Target' in 1982, which brought to the forefront women's changing economic as well as social status in society. Bartos outlined the fact that women were not one hivemind and "should not be thought of, approached or appealed to as an undifferentiated mass," (Bartos, 1982). (Figure 1. Dyer, 2014)

In 1970, the Equal Pay Act (Legislation.gov.uk, n.d.) was legislated in the UK, due to the collective efforts of everyone involved in trying to bring about the equal treatment of women in the workplace. To continue, since more women were working and were liberated, there was a shift in the roles of the family and changes in family dynamics. There were more same-sex couples and single-parent households, instead of the traditional nuclear family, which all had an effect on society as a whole (McRae, 1999). Advertisements had to adapt to the changing roles of women and shift away from the submissive roles where women only cleaned, prepared meals for the family or were subservient to their husbands.

To continue, the new bout of advertisers marketing directly to women is being referred to as "advertising", (Grau and Zotos, 2016). With more organizations adopting the image of being behind the equality of both sexes, they are held accountable for their actions. Making a mistake in an advertisement, by having sexist imagery for example, in this digital age will end up with the company having to face the consequences. A recent advert from Co-op regarding their Fairtrade chocolate egg, emblazoned with the words "Be a good egg. Treat your daughter for doing the washing up," (Dray, 2017); resulted in a massive backlash. The overbearing pressure from Twitter and other social media platforms, caused the Co-op to retract the ad and apologize for using stereotypical, sexist language.

Finally, campaigns like Dove's "Real Beauty," (Dove UK, 2004) and Always' "Like a Girl," (Always.co.uk, 2014) were marketed directly to women and have been leading the way for other advertisers to follow suit in the manner in which they handled the advertising. The Dove

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campaign was a major breakthrough in marketing to women from all types of backgrounds, including all types of body types and skin color in their advertising. Not only have they improved women's confidence, but they boosted their approval rate and sales figures by a large margin, (Word-of-Mouth and Referral Marketing Blog, 2015), illustrating that advertising to women if done correctly, pays off.

The research question that will be explored in this paper is "what effects do Social Changes have on the way Advertising Agencies Market to Women?". This was chosen due to the volatile nature of the advertisement industry that change the basic content of their advertisements to reflect wider society, depending on which country they are marketing in. This topic has and is still being analyzed throughout the world, as typically advertisements reflect society and the values they hold, and now due to the digital age, every country is able to view the advertisements and holds Organisations accountable for close to all their marketing exploits.

The following four objectives have been determined to provide a baseline to attempt to answer the abovementioned research question:

1. To investigate the different ways advertisers market to women
2. To evaluate the evolution of how advertisers have been and are still marketing to women
3. To explore how stereotypes of women in advertisements may have changed
4. To ascertain what movements and campaigns may have affected the change in how women are marketed to

The data collection for this paper was all secondary research compiled from various different academic and non-academic sources. The paper will include a compilation of various qualitative data to best relay the information to attempt to answer the research question. The information was collected from sources including statistical and government databases, journal articles, and non-academic literature such as news articles. The research is descriptive to describe the changes in society and the effect these changes have had, and continue to have, on advertising agencies and the way they market to women. To make sure the research was reliable, the majority of works used were published works, with any other information relayed being facts, figures or ideas that may have pushed forward the research.

Discussed in this paper are the various ways advertisers are marketing to women and how they often portray them in their advertisements. The major changes in society throughout the past few decades that have influenced the way advertisers market have also been investigated, to highlight the evolution of advertising agencies marketing strategies. Also, Stereotyping is a common theme for all demographics within advertisements, with the stereotypes of women and how they have changed or stayed quite similar over the years being discussed in greater depth.

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Lastly, the major movements and campaigns that have generated a change in society and paved the way for more modern advertisements have been deliberated over.

To gain accurate figures for the rising numbers of female workers and the number of female consumers, and other necessary figures, the two sites Statista and Office for National Statistics (ONS) were used. Since they are a Governmental source and use market report research, amongst other invaluable data, updated almost daily; to collect the information for individual statistics, the data used in this paper are both reliable and valid.

As mentioned, there has been a 53% increase in women in the workplace from the years 1971-2013 (Ons.gov.uk, 2013). This was mainly due to the second wave of feminism in the 1960's which pushed for equal treatment of both genders within the workplace. The Equal Pay Act 1970 (Legislation.gov.uk, n.d.) also paved the way for women to feel more liberated within the workplace as they were getting the same pay for the same work as their male counterparts.

One literature discussed in this paper was taken from the International Journal of Advertising under the title, 'Gender Stereotypes in Advertising: A Review of Current Research,' (Grau and Zotos, 2016). This secondary literature has the most similar research to the content discussed in this paper, with details and research conducted on the stereotypes of how women are portrayed in advertisements over the last five decades. The research was conducted in the US, so comparisons to other countries such as the UK could be made. The information was used to compare how the stereotypes have slowly been changing due to external factors within wider society and how in recent years advertising agencies have been directly appealing to all different types of women.

Another literature source used in this paper was under the title 'The Portrayal of Women in South African Television Commercials,' (Holtzhausen, Jordaan and North, 2011). This was used to highlight the statement that women in advertisements are not just stereotyped as housewives or childminders, but also placed in sexual roles to attract consumers and sell products at higher numbers. This research paper compared roles from Western countries such as the USA and Europe, and Eastern countries such as China and Thailand, to the roles of women in South African advertisements. It was found that one of the most prevalent role women played in advertisements was as the "seductress," (Holtzhausen, Jordaan and North, 2011), after the housewife and childminding role. No previous research was conducted specifically in South Africa for the portrayals of women in advertisements, so this was a big breakthrough in finding out and comparing to how other countries advertising agencies operate.

To discuss what movements have affected society and their treatment of women, the suffrage and feminist movement have to be discussed. From 'Three Waves of Feminism,' (Kroløkke and Sørensen, 2006), a thorough summary of the effects feminism has had on the advertising

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industry, and society as a whole, have been detailed. From the early moments of the suffrage all the way to the modern feminism of 2006, all have had an impact on how society views and treats women. And advertising agencies have had to adapt to these changes or risk losing potential consumers, and now in the digital age, risk their image and brand as they are held accountable for all sexist or demeaning advertisements.

The book titled 'The Moving Target' (Bartos, 1982) brought to the forefront the fact that women were individuals with completely distinct thoughts, wants and needs. Before the publishing of this book advertisement agencies were behind wider society in accepting that the roles of both women and men were changing. After the book was published they began to change their methods to keep up with the younger generations, as they were rejecting companies that were set in their old ways, and instead of turning to more modern companies.

Throughout the 1980's and 1990's, there was a change from an economy based on manufacturing to one that was based on providing services, which resulted in more women able to get work and reduced the number of men in employment, (McRae, 1999). McRae (1999) Discusses these changes in his book "Changing Britain. Families and Households in the 1990s," which also contains details of the shift in the roles of the family and changes in family dynamics. An example is that there were more same-sex couples and single-parent households, instead of the traditional nuclear family, as there was much less stigma against it than previously; which all had an effect on society as a whole. Since more women were in the workplace, including in advertising agencies, they had more influence over how the advertisements that were directed at women were being marketed. Although they still did not have a lot of authority to direct individual advertisements, it was a step in the right direction towards equality.

All mentioned movements brought us to the current age where direct marketing advertisements to women are being referred to as "Advertising," (Grau and Zotos, 2016). Grau and Zotos compare how both genders are portrayed in advertisements now to those in the past. They have found men are portrayed in more softer roles and taking care of the kids, for example. And in contrast, more women are shown in empowering and sexually liberating roles. This research gave insight for this paper on how it was not just women whose stereotypes were slowly changing but men's as well. Grau and Zotos stressed the importance of having advertisements be diverse and pay attention to other segments that may have been ignored in the past. This may include for example LGBT individuals, which will bring attention to different types of people within society, in effect; normalizing all different types of individuals.

Dray (2017) was used in this paper to illustrate what kind of consequences could befall an organization that uses sexist imagery or words in this digital age. They used the Co-op example for their Fairtrade chocolate egg advertisement to show that consumers are not going to take to degrading or sexist language. There was an overbearing amount of pressure on Twitter and

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other social media platforms, which did reach the Co-op as they were forced to retract their ad or face further consequences. Since all consumers are able to communicate and view all a company offers, in terms of marketing, online and share their thoughts across countries, organizations need to make sure that their bad marketing choices are not what is being spread. This can lead to a lowered respect for the organization's name and will decrease the quality of the brand image.

In direct contrast to this are two companies that marketed to women so well their brand image increased tremendously and they are one of the most trusted organizations within their industry. The two organizations are Dove and Always, which paved the way for excellent advertisements that were inclusive of women of all types and empowered them at the same time. The Word-of-Mouth and Referral Marketing Blog (2015) was used to demonstrate that marketing directly to women if done well, will boost the approval rate of an organization. It was found that after the release of the Dove and Always advertisements women's overall confidence has improved and their sales figures have widened by a large margin compared to before the release of the adverts.

Through the investigation of the different ways advertising agencies market to women, it is clear that women look more favorably on advertisements that do not categorize all women as exactly the same, who like and use the same products. The Dove campaign is an excellent example of a company including all types of body shapes and skin color, uplifting all women instead of a select few.

More organizations should take this into account when marketing directly to women. Clothing advertisers, for example, should include more body types and diverse models, to show what clothing looks good on them. This is due to the fact that having only one type of model will not accurately portray all the clothing they have to offer but also, they are not being inclusive of their core consumer base.

Advertising agencies should also make an effort to not place the women in their advertisements in subservient or typically stereotypical roles constantly, such as in the kitchen or taking care of the children. Instead, they should include more men sharing those same responsibilities or have some same-sex couples to be more inclusive. To continue, advertisers should not resort to selling their products through the use of overtly sexual undertones with the women in their advertisements, especially in cases where they are not targeting the female consumers, as this could also have a risk of consumers taking to social media to push forward their complaints due to the objectifying of women.

To summarise, since the founding of the suffrage movement, many more movements and campaigns have all collectively made a change in the treatment of women in society. Due to

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these changes, women were entering the workplace at much higher rates and family structures were changing from the traditional nuclear family. Advertising agencies, however, took a long time to start reflecting these changes and had to drastically change the way they marketed to women or risk losing out in a lot of attention and sales.

Gone were the times of subservient women who only needed cleaning products or other such items, and instead were empowered and liberated women who rejected and continue to reject sexist imagery in advertisements. With advertisements such as the aforementioned Dove and Always, gaining notoriety amongst women and receiving high praises and increased spending due to excellent advertising choices.

There were a few limitations when conducting this research, the first of which is the fact that the research relied solely on secondary data collection, without any use of primary data, which could have improved the validity of the research. Having primary research also could have answered other questions surrounding this topic, one of which being if the modern advertisements are a positive influence for girls and women or if organizations should do more to keep up with society, especially a Western society like in the UK and USA.

Another limitation was the access restrictions to a few reliable sources, which had a pay-to-view access, which could have been used to further answer the research question and objectives. Online resources also did not have complete studies or only had part of the necessary information needed to forward the research.

The last limitation was that there was not enough data concerning the impact of the change in familial roles on advertisements, or information was outdated and therefore, not valid material to use. Some data dated back to the early 1970's and 1980's, which while they did outline the effects of society on advertisements during that decade, was insufficient to use for this paper.

For further research, conducting primary research will be an excellent way to collect direct answers to whether the advertisements produced today are objectifying or portraying women in degrading, stereotypical ways or not. This will make for a more reliable paper, as solely relying on secondary data did not provide all sufficient information for this particular topic.

To take the secondary information collected further, information and theories from countries not in the West, such as the UK, USA, and Europe, can be used to compare the different methods they advertise to women. The stereotypes of the different countries can be compared and the rate at which they may have changed over the years can also be discussed. This can be valuable information as Western countries are ahead in the way they portray women in media, and so the comparison will provide data on how other countries are improving as well.

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