

## **Critical Analysis on Gender Discrimination in Advertising**

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**Abstract:** Women's image and manifestation in advertising has been an area which attracts great attention in women's development. In present advertising, the discrimination of women is very popular and taken for granted, which lead to the harmfulness of both women's personality and rights. We are basically still in a male-dominated social and value systems, gender discrimination often lack the necessary sensitivity. Most of the advertising is really sexist, but more often in more implied ways. The purpose of this paper is analysis and criticize on the phenomenon of gender discrimination in advertising, with the aim to help the audience learn to read critically and the whole society be more conscious of gender ideology in discourse.

**Keywords:** female; sexual; discrimination; advertising.

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### **GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN ADVERTISING**

Living in a modern city, you can-not escape from the force of advertising that surrounds you. Wherever you go in the street and look around, or sit on the sofa at home, watching television, unsolicited-ads invade your line of sight. A colorful, lustrous and dazzling picture of women undoubtedly play a leading part in this. When girls in front of the camera show their graceful posture, you as a member of the audience, are probably remain unaware of the constant, discrimination against women within a male discourse that dominates the advertising lens. The image of women is associated with sex, often playing the role of male appendage. Women in advertising often assume simple roles such as wife and mother.

#### **Case 1**

To tell the truth, nothing can replace strong, rounded, graceful breasts. After all is said and done, the fullness of your breasts is out of the ordinary. You know, plump breasts will add much more charm to a woman. You may also know, a full chest is alight, triumphant, near your heart.

#### **Case 2**

Changsha newspaper also published a very blatant advertising. A girl dressed in sexy lingerie girl allotted 'I only sell 239 - 2890 yuan / sq m,' the ad also included the sentence "position, different prices, enjoy the difference" and other terms of ambiguous expression, with the possession of women as a clear selling point.

This ad shows the unequal relationship between the sexes in patriarchal consciousness whereby women

are forcibly occupied, to the detriment of the female gender in the minds of the audience, with obvious sex discrimination tendencies. The result of analysis indicate that ideology is latent in the advertising discourse and sexism still exists, but more often in more subtle ways. To a certain extent, these advertisements reflect the gender discrimination that exists generally within society.

### **AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN ADVERTISING**

#### ***Tradition and the stereotyping of women***

Influenced by historical tradition, many traditional characters exist in our subconscious. Most of advertising limits the space of women with in the domestic sphere, and this is because of the audience's potential psychological need to conform to traditional gender roles of "male, female master". Therefore, stereotypes of female characters are often found in television advertisements. One foreign kitchen advertising advices women to "Choose a pot like you choose a husband." The ad puts the pot and the husband together, suggesting that women who work for a long time in the kitchen as part of their role as housewives.

#### ***Exaggerating the differences between the sexes, rendering women more vulnerable***

Women's value is greatly restricted in many advertisements. The image of men is often the cause of the type, and the woman is often a consumer, in a subordinate position in society. In the advertisement, the difference between men and women in professional life is exaggerated, and the role and contribution made by women in social life remains unconscious. For example "These spacious and elegant flats are tastefully

decorated, fully furnished and equipped with lift, color TV telephone and maid service..." This is taken from an advertisement for Luxury Apartments in order to promote sales, advertising promises customers that they can enjoy the taste of decoration, full set of furniture, elevators, TV, telephone and maid services. Obviously the copywriter did not mention the fact that service is provided by men, but rather the cleaning is done by women, showing a clear discrimination against women.

### ***Objectifying women***

British artist John Berg mentioned in the book "watching the way" that men look at women, women watch themselves being looked at. This does not only determine the relationship between men and women, but it also determines the relationship between women themselves. So that women become a visual object, a landscape. The female image in advertising is often regarded as a visual symbol, which reflects a male's perspective and demand, satisfying men's desires. For example an ad for Citizen Watch reads "What's on your arm should be as beautiful as who's on it." This can be translated into "The belt on your arm and things should be on your arm as beautiful people". Another ad reads "Sophisticated, Pink Lady. sweet-to-drink" translated into "delicate, sweet, let a person coveted pink girl". The bodies of both men and women are equal, but the ad above suggests that women are just men's foil. Such ads are targeted at male consumers, their special appeal lies in the product and the sexy image of women and the usage of women's sexy image to sell products. Such advertisements are attractive to men and women, as some men perceive women as the plaything.

### ***Depriving women of their own role in understanding power and persistence of the value of judgment***

In the dissemination process, advertising seeks to deepen the gender stereotypes of women, not only putting women into super perfect incarnations, but also to turn women into aesthetic objects for men. 'Beauty is her only property. She has no wrinkles, scars and flaws. Indeed, she did not even pores. She is tall and slim, usually have a pair of legs, and the young. No matter who is the product or the audience, all the women in the advertisement follow this standard [1]. The shallow, superficial and stylized standard in ads shapes the image of women's customary role, describes women in a way that is ornamental, leading to a negative perception of the female body amongst women, prevents women from developing a full understanding of their power and contributes to the survival of value judgment.

### **THE INFLUENCE OF SEX DISCRIMINATION IN ADVERTISING**

Advertising, as an important reflection of modern culture, has a strong influence in strengthening people's behavior. Sociologist Daniel Bell said, "advertising is a very unusual place is its universal penetration", it is the

mark of goods, (also) a new way of life to show the new values of the notice [2]. On the issue of gender, the high exposure of advertising means that it occupies a large of people's memory space, we have to put on the construction of the advertising gender relations "values". It serves to demonstrate the division of gender roles. Women in advertising often make us think of the word: beautiful, tender, sexy, and fashionable, virtuous, hard-working, kind-hearted, anxiety, emotional dependence and family; while men are wise, strong, confident, authoritative, leadership, career, independent and rational.

The gender patterns in advertising have an impact on people's social gender identity. The so-called social gender is the basis of the social relationship, which is based on visible gender differences. It is a basic way to show the power relations. The understanding of the gender of women and men in advertising information, the role played by men and women in the community to play a certain normative role, which is an incorrect understanding of nature will have a negative impact. For example, advertising, as a kind of male culture perpetuates the media model, which shapes the image of women, it is inevitable therefore that it will reflect a men's view of women's role and expectations. And in order for women to meet this expectation, gender characteristics such as obedient, gentle, patient, will become increasingly prevalent. This kind of situation is only unproductive in trying to achieve a balanced development of both sexes, but also perpetuates the phenomenon of gender discrimination.

### **SUMMARY**

From a gender perspective, advertising serves to perpetuate gender discrimination in its utilization of sexist symbols and the commercialization of women as an object, which stems from a deep patriarchal bias against women. As Michel said "During my lifetime, I realized that discrimination was not accidental, that there were structural roots and causes to it [3]. Due to the social division between men and women in early society, men accounts for most of the rights in social material production, while women engage in natural reproductive activities. Since then, women had to retreat into the patriarchal family, and serve as properties of men, to satisfy men's physical desires and remain simply as child-bearing tools. This division means that men will always be in a dominant position, forcing women to accept a male dominated society. The conscious use this social norm to constrain women's consciousness and behavior means that women themselves have no value, status and dignity. Simon Povova in the preface of the "the second sex" pointed out that society is the male centered, in men own main relative concerned a woman, women are not the natural evolution of a human.....To a man, a woman is just a sexy animal in their eyes, she is "sex".....Man are the most important part of society, women are accessories

[2]. Even in modern society, women's images in advertising are mostly in accordance with the values of men.

Advertising reflects the continuation of male chauvinism in society and culture, and at the same time growing male supremacy within our culture means that women's living space are further limited and their living condition is suppressed. Therefore, gender discrimination in advertising greatly damages and distorts the image of women, hinders respect and equality between the sexes, and negatively affects the status of women, such an effect should not be underestimated. In order to eliminate hidden gender discrimination in advertising, readers need to learn to read advertisements from with the ability to reflect ethically to raise awareness for gender issues in society.

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