

IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE OF SEX IN ADVERTISING

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Importance of the role of sex in advertising has become an interesting subject for feminists and researchers since early 70's. Actually an advertiser in 1880's pointed out that generally the buyer, the effector of the buying decision and the orientor of the buyers had been the women of the society. Since early 1979's, feminists and researchers, expressed concern about the roles portrayed by women in advertising.

Advertisers assume that women are always in the subconscious of the individuals of society (1). This assumption leads them to use women as much as possible in advertising. Although this point is arguable because attitudes toward appropriate roles for women differ among cultures. Therefore the role of women in advertisements should be defined sensitively in each culture. In literature generally authors state that advertising simply mirrors what is already present in the minds of the individuals in society.

Many studies has been done especially in U.S.A. on the subject of women's roles, but limited amount of literature is available in Turkey. "The notion that women are stereotyped in the media has been given ample empiricial support in the U.S.A. However the frequent use of women image in ads. and the meaning of these stereotypes have been subject to frequent and considerable debate. Growing from these debates have been attempts by several research studies to substantiate clearly the extend to which women are partrayed stereotypically in the media. Most of these studies employed content analysis to examine the portrayal of women's roles in commercial advertising (Table 2)" (2).

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Table 1: Studies on Female Role Streotyping on Magazine Advertising in U.S.A.

Researchers	Time periods examined	Results
Courtney and Lockertz	1970	Streotypes of dependency, domestic, sex objects, and unimportant decisions.
Wagner and Banos	1972	Moderation in streotypes identified by Courtney and Lockertz
Sexton and Haberman	1950-51; 1960-61; 1970-71;	No significant changes some Moderation in housewife or mother streotype
Belkaoui and Belkaoui	1958, 1970 1972	No significant changes in streotyping
Venkatesan and Losco	1959 - 1971	No significant changes in streotyping
Poe	1928, 1956 1972	Women depicted less in competitive sports and more in recreational situation from 1928 to 1972
Pingree et al.	1973 - 1974	No significant changes in streotyping
Lysonski	1974 - 75; 1979 - 80	Women shown less frequently as dependent upon men and more frequently as careeroriented; men depicted less over women and as authority figures.
Lysonski	1983	As career - oriented
Lysonski	1985	Some matemorphoses.

Source: Steven Lysonski: "Role Portrayals in British Magazine Advertisements", European Journal of Marketing, 19, 7, s. 39.

One of the earliest of such studies has been conducted in the 70's by Courtney and Lockertz. The major roles of women in advertisements in general - interest magazines have been defined by them as follows (3):

- i. a woman's place is in the home,
- ii. women do not make important decision or do important things,
- iii. women are dependent and need's protection,
- iv. men regard women primarily as sexual object, they are not interested in women as people.

New roles of women in society have changed the roles women in advertisements. Recently, roles have been perceived as:

- i. modern, more intellectual,
- ii. working women even politician or entrepreneur, etc.
- iii. socially, economically independent, respectable well organized,
- iv. who can utilize her free time efficiently.

Therefore more recent studies comparing sex roles in advertisements (appearing in 1974 - 75 and 1979 - 80) found women to be shown less frequently as dependent on men and more frequently as career oriented in the latter years (4).

Methodology:

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the sex role and the women image in advertisements. The data has been gathered from the prints and TV ads.

All advertisements in April issue of economical - political and women magazines and noticable advertisements of top 5 best seller newspapers have been examined. In addition the first eight days of April, second track a.m. and third track p.m. advertisement programmes of TV (videotaped by Deniz Advertising Agency), have been watched and evaluated. The number of advertisements in the selected media is shown below (Table 2):

Table 2: Distribution of Ads. As Media

Media	Number of Ads. observed	%
Newspapers	1343	62.52
Magazines	483	22.48
TV ₁	322	15.00
Total	2148	100

Advertisements have been evaluated regardless of the product advertised, and the percentages are as they appear and show the concentration in relation to the type of media used as resource in the same time period tracks are chosen based on the greatest number of audience. As listed in a total of 2148 advertisements 1343 (62.52 %) come from newspapers, 483 (22.48 %) from magazines and 322 (15%) from TV.

Findings:

Cross tabulation of print media and sex reported in Table 3, revealed several differences between the print media in terms of sex used. In prints women is used in ads (16.9 %) two times more than the male (8.9 %). Besides there were significant differences between the media which were examined. Percentage of female used ads. (9.4 %) were approximately equal to man used (8.2 %) ads. in newspapers. But in magazines the percentage of female used ads. (37.7 %) were 3.4 times more than the male used ads. (11 %). Besides, most of the ads. in newspapers were not picturing any human beings (73.8 %).

Table 3: Distribution of Ads. As Media and Sex

Sex Media	Female		Male		Female male		Children		Without people		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Newspapers	126	9.4	110	8.2	58	4.3	58	4.3	991	73.8	1343
Magazines	182	37.7	53	11.0	58	12.0	15	3.1	175	36.2	483
Total	308	16.9	163	8.9	116	6.4	73	4.0	1166	63.8	1826

This Meant that only 16.9 % of the ads. had the women image. Although this looks like an unimportant percentage 16.9 gains importance when compared to the percentage of men image (8.9 %) within the total ads.

The sex role and women image in TV commercials were studied according to the certain characteristics of ads. Following characteristics have been taken for this purpose.

- i. In tremns of voiceovers spokelerson, or dubbing used in commercials.
- ii. In tremns of sex used in commerials.
- iii. Women roles in observed commerials,

In the dubbing process of the ads., the male voice was dominant (43.48 %). Women accounted for only 13.7 %. Because, the advertisers believe that the male voice more convincing and authoritative than the female voice. This is coherent with the literature surveyed.

Table 4: Sex used in Commercials

n	Dubbing / Voiceover / spokesperson				Screen					
	F	M	F + M	C	F	M	F + M	Cd.	Fa.	Others
%	44	140	90	48	45	44	90	27	46	70
	13.66	43.48	27.95	14.91	13.98	13.66	27.95	8.39	14.28	21.74

F: female; M: male; C: Chorus; Cd: Children; Fa: Family

The order of concentration starting with the greatest percentage of shared "female and male" (27.95 %) image follows with the "others" (21.74 %) being the second (where various images like space, sketch, meaningless and without figures etc.), and "family" (14.28 %) and "female" (13.98 %), "male" images (13.66 %) being the fourth, and "children" (8.39 %) the last.

The order of frequency according to percentages roles is as follows:

- i. as a housewife 34.16 %
- ii. as a mother plus wife 24.8 %
- iii. women as a sexual object 15.8 %
- iv. as a girl friend 14.59 %
- v. as a business woman 6.21 %
- vi. as a grand mother (old or 3rd. generation) 4.34 %

ENDNOTES AND SOURCES:

1. Medya, Mart, 1989.
2. Steven Lysonski, "role Portrayals in British Magazine Advertisements", *European Journal of Marketing*, 19, 7.
3. Ahmed Belkaoui and Janice M. Belkaoui, "A Comparative Analysis of the Roles Portrayed by Women in Print Advertisements: 1958, 1970, 1972", *JMR*, V. 13 May 1976.
4. Roger A.Kekin, William J. Lundstrom and Donald Sciglimpaglia, "Women in Advertisements Retrospect and Prospect", *JR*, 1978
5. Mary C. Gilly, "Sex Roles in Advertising: A Comparison of Television Advertisements in Australia, Mexico, and The United States", *JM*, V. 52, April 1988.