



ADVERTISEMENT: THE CAVE ART OF THE MODERN WORLD

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Abstract

Advertisement is the set of techniques and practices used to bring a product, services, opinions, or cause to public notice to earn money through it. To persuade people to do so, ads must first impose an impression on their minds and create a feeling among them to be desperate for not having it. For that purpose, ads try to reflect society, its norms, trends, and societal needs. While creating ads they use societal desires, traditions, norms, trends, and culture to captivate people's attraction, and to persuade them it is necessary to have what is displayed in ads. While portraying society gender stereotyping plays a vital role. Traditionally men, women, and others have their roles predefined such as women are only homemakers, and men are the dominant part of the society, who can acquire different professions. So, the present study it is described how gender stereotyping works in the advertisement as a reflection of societal norms as well as its changing role with time. As it is clear that the motto of advertisement is only to earn money. So even if reflecting societal standards morality rests apart in an advertisement. In the present study how advertising brags about the product and revokes false claims later, it has been demonstrated. Some claim ads are indeed influencing societal desires but ads can't sell anything without societal needs. Generally, ads study society's cultures, norms, social events, and target communities. These days ads on social media platforms are becoming personalized based on our internet activities and targeting individuals.

Keywords: Advertisement, Societal norms, Gender stereotyping, Morality, Surveillance.

Introduction

Advertisement has become a global phenomenon that plays a vital role in the sale of different products, and services by reflecting societal norms in it. Advertising is the set of techniques and practices used to bring products,

Advertisement as a mirror to societal standards:

"Ads are the cave art of twentieth-century" – Marshal McLuhan, Canadian philosopher

Likely so as aforementioned quote, ads are indeed the cave art of the modern world. As we know cave art was the reflection of contemporary society, their lifestyle, their societal norms, and standards; similarly ads play the same role in the modern world. Advertisement has become a global phenomenon that enhances sales of specific products by impressively presenting them. The sale of any product depends on the need of society. So to increase the sales advertisement companies must reflect societal norms, tendencies, and appetite in their advertisement. Advertisement companies are doing a remarkable job of portraying societal standards in the advertisement. We can see with the evolution in the advertisement, that many brands have emerged worldwide. If we take close look at their ads, they exhibit the desires and norms of society. Hence, it is crystal clear that mirroring societal standards and desires in ads is key to enhancing the sale of products.

Morality in the advertisement:

"Advertisement may be described as the science of arresting the human intelligence long enough to get money from it." – Stephen Leacock, Canadian Teacher, political scientist

Morality in the advertisement is a concerning issue. Moral principles of advertisement determine how a company should communicate with its target audience/consumers. The main motto of advertisement is to enhance the sale of products and to proliferate brand awareness among consumers. They do so by asserting assurance about quality and durability, they even claim that their product is better than others. But later when the truth is revealed they revoke what they claimed. Oftentimes companies brag about their products and give fake assurance to increase sales. For example, vehicle companies brag about the mileage of the vehicle, cosmetics companies lie about the effects, etc. Hence, it is clear that as in the aforementioned quote advertisement is just the science of arresting the human intelligence long enough to get money from it. They have nothing to with morality as long as they are earning money from it.

services, opinions, or causes to public notice to persuade the public to respond in a certain way to what is advertised. Besides promoting goods for sale, advertising methods are used to encourage people to drive safely, support various charities, and vote for political candidates, etc.¹³ The first-ever written ad was found in the ruins of Thebes in Egypt. It was a Papyrus created in 3000 BC by a slaveholder trying to find a runaway slave while also promoting their weaving shop. Modern advertising started with the development of printing in the 15th and 16th centuries. In the 17th century, weekly newspapers in London began to carry advertisements, and by the 18th century, such advertising was flourishing.¹² Traditional mediums used for advertising are newspapers, magazines, television and radio programs, direct mail, billboards, posters, transit advertising, and miscellaneous media. In the 21st century, advertisers have increasingly used digital technology to call greater attention to products and causes. Nowadays its social media and different mobile apps are playing a vital role in the advertisement. In the present paper how advertisement reflects societal norms, standards, and desires of consumers and does ads influence societal wants, points have been demonstrated. While talking about societal norms gender stereotyping comes forth. Traditionally different roles have been distributed according to gender. Hence gender stereotyping has also been reflected through ads as it is part of societal norms. But with time and evolution gender roles are changing, hence it is important for advertising to contemporaries with changing times and trends. So how ads contemporaries themselves, it has been described through this study. And other aspects such as morality in the advertisement, the impact of ads on society, and social media influence have also been explained through the present study.

Research Methodology

The present study aims to demonstrate the reflection of societal standards in the advertisement. For the study, different research papers, historical articles, analytical articles, psychological articles on the internet, and quotations from Google have been used.

“Advertising is a legalized lying” – H.G. Wells, Writer

Gender stereotyping in the advertisement

Social role theory suggests that gender role stereotypes stem from the traditional distribution of women and men into social roles, especially men's roles as breadwinners who hold higher status and women's occupancy of the role of homemaker, with lower status (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000). Considering this theory if we take a look at ads we find that the social role theory has precisely been reflected in ads. We have seen in the past women were portrayed as homemakers only and the men play professional roles as doctors, engineering, police, etc. In the ads for the Cooking product, only women are displayed as a cook which is their traditional role. Men are portrayed as masculine typically to convey virility, athleticism, power, strength, and competitiveness. Whereas women are portrayed as feminine to show beauty, submissiveness, nurturance, and cooperation. Often women are used as a piece of attraction in the advertisement. If we assume that ads reflect societal norms then it is evident that women are considered just pieces of attraction in society, which is immoral by the way. Nowadays we are witnessing that women's role has been changed they are now working in almost every sector where they have been prohibited traditionally. So advertisements of this generation are somewhat showing them in different roles except for stereotyping as housewives. And stereotyping women as a piece of attraction in different ads like deodorants ads, and wines ads doesn't seem much objectionable to women, that's concerning.

Do ads generate desires in society?

Advertisement is the promotion of a product, brand, service, opinion, or agenda to create attraction, and awareness among people to increase sales. Although ads are used to create attraction among consumers, it is preposterous to claim that ads indeed generate desires among consumers. Because the sale of any product depends on the desires of consumers and demand in society. No products can be sold without a demand. Advertisement just uses such desires to create attraction towards the product of specific brands. *Advertisements heavily reflect what society desires because it plays on human desires to market their product. - Jolyne IT37, 2012*

To tempt society towards a certain product; advertisements must first reflect what society desires. For example, what a sports person desires, are sports products, beauty products, and jewelry appeal to women's desires, and masculinity appeals to men's desires. To appeal to men's desires different ads use masculinity in the promotion of the product such as heavy vehicles promotion, deodorants promotion, clothing promotions, wine promotions, cigarettes, tobacco promotions, etc. Hence, it is clear that one can't generate desire among society but just can reflect what society desires in the advertisement. But on the other hand, the endorsement is a kind of advertisement that in a real sense puts an impact on different sectors of society. Endorsement is a kind of advertising which uses exquisitely famous personalities the promotion of the product. Such famous personalities have an enormous fan following. Fans usually follow what their role model wears, does, how he lives, and what he uses. So, endorsement imposes a mass impact on fan following of respective personality. *Advertising reflects the mores of society but it does not influence them.* ~ David Ogily If it is supposed that some kind of ad influences societal desires, then how could ads appeal to consumers without even reflecting societal wants? Therefore the advertisement will be segregated from societal needs. Advertisements attract attention and interest in the product in the first place through an existing desire and use that to develop desire in the advertised product when consumers see it as the only thing that can quench their desire. Hence as per the aforementioned quote advertising just reflects the mores of the society but it doesn't influence them.

Advertisement contemporaries with time and societal trends

The times change, and if you don't change with them, you get left behind. - Bradley Walsh Advertising agencies constantly study to understand the consumer's motivations and triggers. They are always on the lookout for large societal shifts or trends that can be reflected, or better still, capitalized in advertising. Advertising must stay relevant with constantly evolving societal standards, norms, and trends. Hence, we notice how an ad for Moti soap has kept contemporariness. In the old ad, it was who used to wake up society for a morning bath with Moti soap on Diwali, and in the new ad, it's a kid who follows

his legacy in his old age by waking him and reminding him of the same he used to do. Another example is Coca-Cola in past advertised as a family beverage served at the dinner table, and now they are advertising it as a youth beverage.

Surveillance of social media over our personal life for an advertisement

Social media has become an inevitable part of the modern world. So, the advertisement agencies have targeted it for advertisement. Different mobile applications earn a lot of money by displaying ads for various companies and their products. But it turned out to be hazardous for our privacy. Different social media apps such as Facebook (rebranded as Meta), TikTok, and even Google are keeping surveillance on our activities on the internet. They are observing which products we search for or we are interested in, and displaying ads depending on our recent searches and activities on the internet. It is a concerning issue regarding our privacy. Restrictions should be imposed on such apps.

Conclusion

Concluding the present study it is unfurled that ads indeed do reflect society because it is necessary to use societal desires and wants to convey to people how the product or anything that is being displayed in ads can indeed fulfill their desires and needs. Ads do not generate new desires among society but it uses the existing desires and wants of society to advertise the use of their product. As the primary motive of advertising is to enhance the sale of the product and to earn money, they lack morality. Product manufacturing companies and their advertising agencies just brag about the product, they never stay on what they claimed, assured, or promised in ads. While reflecting society ads do reflect traditional stereotyping of gender. As traditionally men, women, and others have their roles predefined, ads in past did reflect the same thing. World changes with time. Revolution changes the world, shapes the world, and so do the societal norms. In the modern world, the traditional stereotyping of gender has been changed. Women are working in almost every field. Therefore, ads are also reflecting the same change. Thus, this example and other mentioned in the above discussion indicates the sense of contemporariness of ads. In the modern world, social media has become the biggest platform for advertisement due to its worldwide popularity. But their surveillance over our social media and

other internet activities to understand our interests in showing personalised ads is seriously concerning. Generally, ads study society's cultures, norms, social events, and target communities. These days ads on social media platforms are becoming personalised based on our internet activities and targeting individuals.

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