

Sexual Stereotypes In Advertising

This assignment is about sexual stereotyping in advertising.

A stereotype is a standardized character, of appearance or lifestyle which people expect. For example most people if asked to describe a 'Super Hero' would reply with, 'strong, tall, brave and good looking,' but is this always the case?

Therefore sexual stereotypes are about how people expect a person to look or act because of their gender.

Men are thought of as successful businessmen in suits and striped shirts, which is a sign of wealth. In some cases the male is seen as the father figure in a family of four, but in both of these cases his is attractive to the opposite sex.

Young boys are often cheeky and mischievous, they tend to wear blue as it is thought of as a 'boy's' colour. In the majority of cases they are portrayed as being sporty and even from this early age show a keen interest in cars.

In advertising, a woman is seen as the mother of a family who does all of the housework and cooking for the other members of the family. They wear purple or pastel blue, which brings across the message that they are soft and feminine.

If they are acting the housewife they are usually slim, attractive and extremely good-looking. The reason for this is that the company will try and sell the product using a 'sex appeal' method which can be very effective. If this is the case, bright, bold colours such as red and pink are used so that the model stands out.

Little girls are often portrayed as cute and gentle, so that viewers get emotional when they are watching. In most cases they are dressed in a pink dress, with a doll and their hair is styled into little curls.

I have decided to use three 'OXO' advertisements, which are advertising gravy to show how different sexes are addressed in different circumstances.

In the first advertisement a woman is cooking in a kitchen with a big grin on her face, this suggests that she is happy with what she is doing and feels at 'home' with cooking.

She is wearing a light purple top, the reason for this is that it helps the bright colours of the 'OXO' logo to stand out.

The young girl who is most probably the lady's daughter is helping her mother happily and brings across the message that she will one day become the mother and cook for her own family.

Finally the little boy is watching his mother but not taking any part in the cooking. He has a big smile on his face, as he waits for his lunch to be made. The fact that he is not helping is significant because this is the case in most advertisements that include males and cooking.

On the whole this is a stereotypical advertisement with the mother cooking the dinner and the male not taking part.

The text in the advert is emboldened and bright, this is so that the logo stands out and if someone has a quick glance at the poster the logo is the image that will stay in their mind.

The second advertisement is different from the first for the simple fact that this time it is the father in the kitchen not the mother. The father has done the cooking for his two sons but he has made a mess, this shows that most people have the idea then men can not cook but women can and this is another stereotypical idea which is obviously not true at all.

The two sons are looking at their father in disgust and as most likely thinking, 'What will mum do?'

The advertisement shows that even though the father does not know how to cook he still knows that 'OXO' is the best and if a man who can not cook knows this, its obvious to a woman who can cook that 'OXO' is the best gravy to use.

There is no 'OXO' logo on this advertisement and I think that is because it is a 'still' from a television advertisement unlike the first which was a poster.

The third and final 'OXO' advertisement uses both male and female characters.

It contains a stereotypical image of a women who has done the cooking and serving the food to the other three family members two of which are male and are sitting at the table waiting for their dinner.

The father figure, in the scene is just reading his newspaper and the fact that he is doing nothing else is a stereotypical idea of a father waiting for his dinner.

All of the family is smiling as they receive their dinner and this is because they are about to receive 'OXO' gravy, which brings across the message that it is good.

The way in which the advertisement uses both male and female characters in a stereotypical form is important because it sets a common family scene and people think that it also applies to their family.

On the whole all three of the advertisements used both male and female characters and I think that is because the product is for both sexes but I also think that even though this is the case women are still portrayed as the cook.

There are some adverts, which use only male models, and these usually advertise products such as cars, aftershave, DIY products and shaving equipment. One example of an advert, which uses just a male character, is advertising Hugo Boss Aftershave.

The man in the advert is brought across as a successful businessman and we can tell this by the way he dresses. I think that the striped shirt, which he is wearing, is a sign of wealth and success.

The man's hands are clean and his nails have been professionally manicured which suggests to me that he has a surplus of money. He is holding a file-fax in his hands, which would mean that he, is heading for a meeting and therefore adding to the 'Businessman Image'.

The advert contains a typical stereotype image of a man and I think that he dresses like this so that a man will buy the aftershave because he will think that it will make him rich and successful. If this is not the case and the mans wife or girlfriend is buying him a present she may buy this because her sub-conscious will tell her that her man will end up looking like the model in the advert.

In the same way that men are used solely in advertisements, women are also used in order to sell products to males using sex appeal or to sell products to women through a sub-conscious method.

In an advert for 'Hot Choc Drinks' an attractive woman is dressed in red and has a slim figure and this is another example of stereotyping.

The reason that the woman is dressed in red is to attract the customers' attention and the colour red is good at doing this. The attractive face and slim figure suggests to other women that if they drink 'Hot Choc' they too will get a body like the model, which unfortunately is untrue.

To a male buyer it suggests to his sub-conscious that he will be likely to encounter girls like the model.

The cup in the model's hand is the same shape as her body to remind the customer of what's in store in the unlikely event that they will forget.

After looking at the five different adverts I have decided that companies use different types of models and stereotype these models to grab the customers attention or to act on their sub-conscious, which will hopefully result in an increase in sales.

Nowadays most advertisements are shown on television and here are two examples showing how television also uses stereotyping.

The Yorkie advert has a slogan, which states, 'Yorkie; it's not for girls.'

This shows that the chocolate is so big and chunky that it is only for men.

The idea of the big chunks of chocolate suggests that women are too small and weak to handle this. It may be also portraying the same message as in the 'Hot Chocs' advertisement meaning that women are not allowed it because it will cause them to become fat and unattractive. During the adverts a woman dresses as a man in order to purchase the chocolate, she wears male clothing and a fake beard as it would be extraordinary for a woman to have so much facial hair. The woman also speaks in a deep voice so that the shop owner does not realise because women are expected to talk in a soft voice and doing so would give her game away. This is an example of sexual stereotyping saying that men have facial hair and speak in deep voices, which may not always be the case.

Towards the end of the advertisement the woman's real identity is revealed which is another example of sexual stereotypes.

The second television advertisement that I have chosen is advertising an insurance company, which is just for women. The company says the if you chance your insurance to them it could be cheaper because it is just for women.

This brings across a stereotypical image that males, young and old, are dangerous drivers who push their car to its limits. This of course is untrue and there, as just as many bad female drivers as there are bad male drivers.

In the advertisement there is a woman who is presenting the information and the company logo contains the colour pink, these two points are significant if the company wants to keep with the idea that women are better drivers. The reason for this is that the people who are watching the advertisement will be getting the information from another woman, which they will probably value more. Pink is a stereotypical colour which has always been associated with females of every age.

Both of these advertisements express stereotypical images of men and women in completely different ways, but these are just a small selection of the many ways men and women are portrayed.

The roles of men and women have changed considerably over time, but in people's sub-conscious they appear to have stayed the same and therefore have also not changed in advertising.

For example most males are portrayed most successful businessmen and nowadays women go to work rather than staying at home doing the housework.