

## **Gender Depiction Through Advertising Lens**

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Advertisements speak to consumers in many ways. They tell us what is for sale, featured or trending. Sometimes, advertisements go further by showing us their intended audiences, which can include racial, religious, and gender groups. Advertisements can influence consumer decision making processes both subliminally and consciously. Advertisements have more power than what consumers realize.

I gathered three pictures that are advertisements in North America (see Appendix A). For the first picture, I searched children toy ads in North America. Immediately, I saw a Walmart sales paper for toys (see Figure A1). It depicted 3 children in the advertisement. It showed 2 girls holding girl dolls while wearing pink tops. While, on the other hand it displayed 1 boy showcasing an electronic device and wearing a plaid shirt. Ultimately, this advertisement depicts the stereotype that girls should play with dolls and toys that are deemed pretty and feminine. While boys should play with toys that are deemed adventurous and actioned-theme. And if boys were to play with dolls, they would be called action figures.

For my next internet search, I searched cologne ads in North America. An advertisement for a Gucci cologne quickly caught my eye for its misrepresentation of genders in the ad (see Figure A2). It showed a shirtless man trying to appeal sexy and a woman who is supposedly “smitten” by his scent.

For my last online search, I searched make up ads in America. I stumbled upon a Cover Girl ad depicting Katy Perry in their cosmetics (see Figure A3). Most of the search results showed women in the advertisements. Once again, this advertisement conformed to the stereotype that only women wear cosmetics. Other people besides women wear makeup.

I became curious about the way advertisements in North America depicted people. I wondered if I would find the same or differing gender representation in advertisements from countries outside of North America. For my next online search, I collected 3 pictures that were advertisements from non-North American countries (see Appendix B).

First, I searched children toys ads in U.K. The ad I selected to discuss, depicted a girl playing with a Frozen-themed doll (see Figure B1). The girl looked incredibly happy and amused with the doll. I also noticed that girl was not wearing pink. Nonetheless, this image fitted the stereotype that girls should play with dolls.

Next, I surfed the web for cologne ads in China. I came across a Calvin Klein advertisement that showed a man smelling the cologne alongside the picture of the fragrance (see figure B2). I noticed that there were no accompanying women in the ad unlike some advertisements. Nonetheless, this add still depicted the stereotype that only men like and wear cologne.

For my last search, I typed into the search engine make up ads in China. I saw a Giorgio Armani ad featuring a woman wearing cosmetics. Although the woman looked beautiful, the ad continued to spur the stereotype that only women are interested in makeup.

After conducting my research, based on the pictures provided, both North America and countries outside of it are remarkably similar when depicting gender in advertisements. Both the U.K. and North America conformed to the stereotype that young girls should play with dolls. Both advertisements failed to depict gender neutral toys. In addition, both North America and China failed to show the inclusiveness of consumers who wear cosmetics. Their ads both showed only women wearing cosmetics.

Regarding the cologne advertisements, North America and China visually contrasted. However, they ultimately shared the same subliminal message that only men like and wear cologne. And further asserts that only women wear perfume. Both advertisements conformed to gender stereotypes.

Not conforming to gender stereotypes can make one self-conscious. This can be harmful to self-imagery. Gender stereotypes can make one feel like they do not belong to a particular group in society. In the pictures, the girls were playing with dolls. Other young girls might see similar advertisements which may influence their decisions in toy selection.

Gender stereotypes influence cultures and cultures influence gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes ingrain gender roles. Thus, making cultures resistant to changes in established gender roles.

## Appendix A

### North American Ads

Figure A1



Figure A2

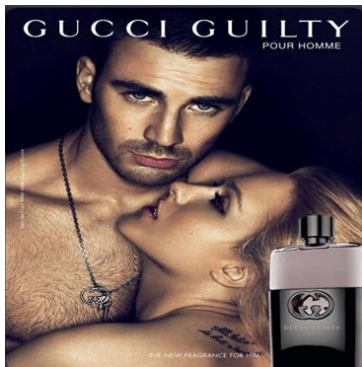


Figure A3



## Appendix B

### Non- North American Ads

Figure B1



Figure B2



Figure B3



## References

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