

Deconstructing and Constructing Women's Empowerment Advertising in Mass Media

Mei Tian

Sichuan University of Media and Communications, Chengdu 412006, China.

Abstract: The study of women's image has always been of great interest to the academic community. In recent years, the focus of advertising and marketing has gradually shifted to female empowerment from the original focus on gender role stereotyping. By analyzing the typical cases of "female empowermentism" in advertisements, this paper deconstructs "female empowerment advertisements" from three aspects: self-confidence, self-empowerment and self-worth. Finally, the paper constructs a structure for thinking about women's empowerment advertisements from the three aspects of advertisement role modeling, women's image, and advertisement supervision.

Keywords: Mass Media, Post-Feminism, Female-Empowering Advertisements, Deconstruction, Reconstruction

Introduction

"Women's empowerment advertising" conveys the idea of encouraging women's self-realization and self-empowerment. Under the influence of women's empowerment, corporations and advertising agencies are trying to keep up with the trend of the women's empowerment movement by incorporating the concept of women's empowerment into their advertising campaigns and strengthening the emotional connection with female consumers through advertising.

1. Images of Women in Advertising Communications

Women are often confined to domestic roles in advertisements, while professional women are more often portrayed as engaging in traditional female occupations, mostly showing the natural attributes of the female body under male power, and less on the social roles and values of women. In cutting-edge fields such as science and technology, most of them have nothing to do with women. Even if there is a female figure, it is only as a companion to the male role; women are endowed with the flexibility and sexiness of the body, which seems to have become the symbol of the female sex image, and has become an important point of appeal in most of the advertisements. The first worldwide advertisement to show the power of women appeared in 1943, when the Westinghouse Electric Company showed women accepting the jobs of enlisted men in the war effort to raise the morale of the masses. This was the rise of feminist advertising in the realization of women's freedom and emancipation as opposed to the image of women only being seen in the home or as a foil to the male role. But this does not mean that it is the power to oppress and enslave men, but just try to avoid the appearance of advertisements that distort the relationship between gender equality.

Nowadays, more and more domestic brands have started to plan marketing campaigns with the idea of female empowerment, focusing on topics that are closer to female consumers. The idea of "female empowerment" has become a buzzword in marketing. If "feminism" is to strive for cultural and spiritual equality between men and women, and to seek women's self-liberation through the liberation of the body, then "post-feminism" is to seek women's self-worth, self-realization and self-fulfillment to obtain or enjoy the rights and freedoms that women already have, so that women can enjoy the benefits and freedoms that they already have. Then "post-feminism" seeks women's self-worth, self-realization and self-fulfillment, so as to obtain or enjoy the rights and freedoms that women already have, and to enable women to become the ones who can lead their own lives. "Women's empowerment advertisements encourage women to show their self-confidence, self-empowerment and self-worth, and to be the masters of their own lives.

2. Deconstructing Female Empowerment Advertising

2.1 Self-confidence: body shape and appearance

In traditional advertisements, women often appear as ideal bodies, perfect skin, and angelic faces, while in women's empowerment ad-

vertisements, women appear as their own skin, their own bodies, and their own skin color, which is a strong contrast between the former and the latter.

In 1983, at the age of 31, Isabella became the first advertiser for Lancôme, but in 1996, the 14-year partnership was suspended by Lancôme. The reason was that you “looked too old” and “a woman’s dream is to be young forever”. Since then, she has chosen to live a quiet, idyllic life. Away from the 20 years of impatience, Iribella instead lived into the Lancôme advertisement in the likeness of the words, so she was re-invited by Lancôme back to endorsement, Lancôme, and apologized for the previous behavior, “Before cosmetics are considered to be a woman used to attract men’s tools, but now they do not see it that way, and the treatment of women’s aging, but also more tolerant.” Women who have weathered the storm like this are more beautiful than their younger selves, showing consumers that age does not define a woman’s beauty.

In 2004, Dove launched the “real beauty” campaign, one of the advertisements in the series of real me, a huge billboard photographed by a vegetarian woman kicked off the first stage of this global marketing campaign. The women in the ads don’t have delicate facial features or slim, toned bodies, but they do have heartfelt smiles and the ability to express themselves. 2020, Neiwai’s “To The True Body” featured vegetarian women of all ages and sizes, showcasing their unique charms. 2021, Neiwai’s “Slightly, but sufficiently, no matter what you do. Each person in the film has some “imperfections” in their body, which are magnified in order to reflect the recognition of the true diversity of the body’s beauty.

It is because of women’s prolonged exposure to the flawless image of women created by new media that they are basically in a state of low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence in their image of their body and appearance. The emergence of female empowerment advertisements is to encourage women’s independent self and self-confident character traits in terms of appearance, body shape, age, skin color, etc., and to evoke women’s emotional resonance.

2.2 Self-empowerment: identity and perception

In 2014, the two advertisements of Always “Like a girl”, “Throw like a girl” and “Run like a girl”, the first part of the advertisements expresses the gender bias against women, while the second part is to empower women and encourage them to be brave. In the 2015 SK-II “She Ended Up in the Matchmaking Corner”, each female character expresses her independence, confidence and beauty, which is to let single women know what they really think about their current situation. These advertisements were created to express the idea that women should be respected, their value affirmed, and that they can control their own destiny. 2021 Proya joined forces with China Women’s News to launch a campaign entitled “Gender is not a borderline, but prejudice is” Proya continued the theme with a short film entitled “Wake up Lion Girls”, which featured the voice of women’s soccer player Wang Frost and special appearances by them. Proya has since continued the theme with the short film “Waking up the Lion Girls”, featuring the voice of female soccer player Wang Frost and a special appearance by the girls. So gender is not the borderline, prejudice is. Don’t stop shouting because of other people’s prejudice, believe that you can wake up the hidden lion in your heart and realize self-empowerment.

2.3 Self-worth: goals and dreams

In 2015, Sport England launched the “This Girl Can” advertising campaign, which pioneered a very different image of women in sports advertisements, breaking the stereotypical image of women in previous sports advertisements and encouraging women to participate in a variety of sports and find the right type of sport for them. In 2018, Chando launched the short advertisement “No man can pass the interview”, which shows the prejudice against women in the workplace through real interview scenes and pays tribute to all women who work hard in the workplace and calls for society to be more aware of and supportive of women in the workplace. Pass the Interview”, which demonstrates the prejudice against women in the workplace through real interview scenes, and pays tribute to all women who work hard in the workplace and calls for society to pay more attention to and respect them. 2021 Chando, a national skincare brand, collaborated with nine female athletes to launch the Olympic short film “Naturally Burning”. The film redefined the beauty of “unattractive female athletes” and conveyed the strong spiritual power of women. 2021, Chando’s 20th anniversary campaign in November 2021, changed the brand’s slogan “You’re already beau-

tiful” from the second person to the first person “I’m already beautiful”. In November 2021, Chando’s 20th anniversary campaign shifted the brand slogan “You are beautiful” from the second person to the first person “I am beautiful in the first place”, allowing women to break through with their own actions and live their own style. 2021, Huawei’s “Hello, Female Developer V” broke the gender label that “girls are less capable of developing technology compared to boys” and encouraged women to show their charms, conveying the power of diversified development. It encourages women to show their charms and convey diverse beauty and confidence. It also encourages women to show their charms and convey diverse beauty and self-confidence, allowing women to break through and live their own style through their own actions.

3. Construction: Reflections on Women’s Empowerment Advertising

As the effect of “her economy” continues to expand, the voice of women in mass media is increasing. Based on the perspective of post-modern women and the comparison with the image of women in traditional advertisements, the author thinks about and reconstructs women’s empowerment advertisements in mass media from the following three aspects.

3.1 Advertisement characterization: breaking gender stereotypes in advertisements

Do not overly emphasize gender characteristics in advertisements, or stereotypically associate one gender with a particular role or profession. Break the stereotype of women in ads that emphasize physical appearance, family, etc., while focusing on showcasing women in areas such as leadership and professional skills.

In 2019, Osm launched an advertisement which showcases the biases against women that exist in search engines, as well as the public’s perception of these biases. The four female characters in the ad responded to these biases with their actions and urged women not to be limited by outside consensus standards. The intention of this advertisement is to break the gender bias against women and call on women to live out their own answers and not to be bound by the public consensus. 2021, Tencent Map kicked off the campaign of “Be a woman driver” during Women’s Day. The purpose of the campaign is to break the public’s stereotype of “female drivers”, advocate people to eliminate gender bias, and show that the growth of female drivers is the same as that of male drivers, from youthful to skillful. Therefore, when presenting women’s images in advertisements, it is necessary to abandon gender opposites and develop a “human-centered” concept, thinking from the perspective of the individual rather than from the perspective of men and women.

3.2 Female image: enhancing self-identity

Through the advertisement narrative, it awakens female consumers’ sense of self-identity and discovers their own beauty, encourages women to accept their own emotions, including anxiety, anger, distress, etc., and manage their own emotions, so as not to be “emotionally disciplined”, breaks the stereotypical image of women in the mass media, and reveals the true face of women.

In 2013, Dove invited Gil Zamora, an American criminal portrait artist who has received special training from the FBI, to create two completely different portraits based on several women’s descriptions of their own appearance and the descriptions given to them by strangers. From their own point of view, they were self-absorbed, blemished, and fat. To strangers, they were friendly, sunny, and youthful, and in 2015, Dove released an advertisement called “Choose Beautiful”. In the ad, women were asked to choose between “normal” and “beautiful” doors leading to a department store, and everyone’s choices were filmed and recorded. Surprisingly, most of them chose “normal”. This experiment further proves that women do not identify themselves with their own selves. Therefore, in order to present women’s image through the narrative of an advertisement, it is necessary for women to empathize with the advertisement, so that they can identify themselves as the brightest spark in their own lives.

3.3 Advertising supervision: regulating women’s values in advertising

The State Administration for Market Supervision (SAMSA) stipulates that women’s images should be used reasonably in advertisements to promote a civilized and healthy image of women. With the rise of the “she-economy”, post-feminist advertisements encourage women to be able to take charge of their own lives. Although some advertisers have responded to the changes in the ideological field and have changed their own conception of women’s values, sometimes it is impossible to avoid some hidden stereotypes from being mixed into

the advertisements. This requires consumers to actively participate in the discussion of social issues and to realize the change of concepts through the means of publicity, so that the advertisements can play a greater social power.

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