CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0   Introduction

This chapter looks into what is entailed in the creation of advertisements, and the related studies that have studied the stereotypes that are used to help create them. It is divided into the following headings :

2.1   What do advertisements entail?

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2.1 What do advertisements entail?

Advertisement is a long process and requires tremendous research. Hall (1921) states that advertisements require extensive research that can extend over to about a year. The reason for what may appear as a long duration for a research is that the planners of advertisements need answers to a variety of questions. Both Hall (1921) and Davis (1963) have identified the areas where advertisement research is normally done. Generally the research focusses on the following area:

(1)   Research would be done to find out more on the origin, the raw materials used and even the method of manufacturing. In addition, the researchers would look into previous advertisements as well.

(2)   the market conditions for the possible sale of the product, the competition available and the best method of marketing.

(3)   Consumers, both men and women, who must be targeted.

The research done is carried out in many forms. It can be in the form of questionnaires or interviews. It is in this category that motivational research has its relevance.

2.2 What is motivational research?

Packard (1957) states that motivational research aims to find out "what motivates people in making choices." As such, motivational research is closely related to psychology because it is designed usually to reach the subconscious mind.

According to Gill (1954), advertisers recognise that there are motives that make people buy and motives are not usually the result of man's conscious mind. In other words, consumers may find a product or service appealing not because of their rational or logical thoughts but possibly because of their subconscious level. Martineau (1971) echoes this when he states that "people are highly dynamic organisms that are highly non-rational and motivated far more by emotions, habits and unconscious reason than by reason and logic."

Packard (1957) has identified three levels of human consciousness. The first level is the rational level. At this level, people know what is going on and they can in turn explain what is happening or taking place. The preconscious and subconscious level is the second level. This is where the person may know vaguely what is going on with his feelings and emotions but is not willing to provide an explanation. The third level is where the individual's true feelings and attitudes lie. However, he or she may not be willing to discuss them even if he or she could.

So when motivational researchers carry out their tasks, they aim to discover the attitudes or preferences that exist at the subconscious level. Once this information is derived, the advertisers, which includes the advertisement planners and the manufacturers of the product, would plan their advertisement such that the message will be able to reach the subconscious level of the potential consumers. According to Gill (1954), the proper advertisement then can trigger off a message that will stimulate sensation in the reader's mind, thus evoking attention, interest, desire and anticipation. In other words, the advertisements deal with potential consumer's mental and emotional reaction to the things he or she sees, tastes, feels, hears and smells with the aim of ultimately making a potential purchaser favour the product or service.

As advertisement appears to be related to psychology, there have been instances where psychologists have been called in to analyze why an advertisement did not meet its intended target. Packard (1957) has illustrated this situation through case studies. One of the case studies was on the failure of an advertisement for American Airlines, when the advertisement did not reach its targetted potential consumers. The Airlines found that men were shunning away from flying because of fear. So psychologists were called in to find out the root of this fear. Their research showed that men feared flying not because of merely dying in a crash, instead, they were afraid that in the event of their deaths, their wives would blame them for their sudden deaths. Once the finding of this research was made known to the relevant parties, the advertisers had to change their advertisement.

This time, the advertisement was aimed at the women. In the new advertisement, the women were encouraged to promote the idea of flying to their husbands.

Hence, a vast amount of work and expertise has to go into motivational research before the advertisers can produce an effective and appealing advertisement.

2.2.1 Associations

Once research is done and enough data is available, advertisers work on the advertisements. Here again, psychology plays an important role because the advertisements work around the association of ideas. Hall (1921) sees thoughts to run along like a current passing from one topic to another. This means that when something is mentioned, another image may be envisaged in the mind. He illustrates his view by giving the example of the name "Wilbur Wright". When the name "Wilbur Wright" is mentioned, the picture of an aeroplane comes to one's mind. This is because that name is associated with aeroplanes since he was the founder. To further illustrate this idea of association is the name "Bill Gates". Once the name "Bill Gates" is mentioned, IBM comes to mind.

Martineau (1971) states that advertisers use suggested associations which carry "all sorts of meanings with powerful motivations". By doing so, the image that they create has a rich load of "esthetic imagery, emotive meanings and even other

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logical uses". So when a consumer is in a situation of buying a product, these suggested associations come to mind.

2.2.2 Stereotypes

Stereotypes are "pictures" in our "heads" of people and events in the world (Lippmann, 1922). These pictures might be "made" by the person or "given" by *their* culture.

According to Hinton (2000), stereotypes can be looked at from two ways; from a social cognitive perspective and cultural perspective. From a social cognitive perspective, stereotypes are believed to have developed as the "individual perceives his or her environment" (Hinton, 2000). On the other hand, from the cultural perspective, the individual is deemed to have inherited the stereotypes that exist in the "head of the society's perceivers and also in the fabric of the society itself" (Hinton, 2000). This would mean that the cultural forces suggest the kind of stereotype that should be encouraged and discouraged. Lippmann's (1922) quotation sums up how stereotypes are developed :

"In the blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world, we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture."

For the purpose of this study, the definition of stereotypes from the cultural perspective will be taken into consideration.. According to Martineau (1971), the important focus for the advertisers will be 'what will most appeal to the consumer as a human being". Thus the advertiser has to look at the product through the eyes of the potential buyer so that the product or service can fit into his or her life. However, Hall (1984) sees that there is no average person whom the advertiser can focus on. This causes the advertiser to take into account only the most common characteristics of the group that he or she is trying to impress and address. Consequently, the advertisers look to the stereotypes that are inherent in society.

When group stereotypes exist in a culture, patterns of behaviour for the group members follow. These expectations also determine both responses to group members and the behaviour of the group members themselves. However, group stereotypes do have their disadvantage. For example, if physical appearance frequently identifies minority groups, it thus contributes to the tendency to form negative extreme stereotypes about them, (Hinton, 2000). Advertisers are aware of this. They work on the assumption that "the individual is tremendously influenced by the attitudes and demands of the group that he or she belongs to because he or she has to consciously or subconsciously conform to the conduct and viewpoints of the larger society (Martineau, 1971). For example, the individual can be influenced on the role of women or notions of a family. So, when advertisers work on an advertisement, they try to create an appealing public

image. This is because taste and preference are assumed to be nurtured. That is, "the public likes what is familiar and what is familiar is what the media chooses to present, (Bogart, 1995). Brimm (1984) defines "public image" as an "image where essential characteristics are shared by the individuals participating in a group and is the basic bond of any society, subculture or organization". So, if the advertiser aims to create such an image, he has to know in great detail the culture or subculture that the individual is exposed to. He has to be fully aware of the values and stereotypes that are inherent in society. Only then can he create an image that appeals to the potential buyer because an image that possesses the essential stereotypical characteristics is very often appreciated by the majority in that particular society. Thus, in order to elicit this information on stereotypes, he will then turn to the motivational researchers who will conduct a detailed research on the values and stereotypes that exist.

2.3   Language and Interpretation

Advertisements use a host of ways to create a positive appeal. They use language, pictures of pleasant faces and music which appeal to the senses. Leech (1986) mentions an extreme view of advertisement planning, namely, that there is no need for words or written piece of advertisement, often referred to as the copy. The exponents of this view have claimed that what is said doesn't matter, as long as the brand name is hammered into the consumer's head. However, language has a part to play in advertisement. Martineau (1971) states that language "can

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create precision and exactness and yet be a symbolic art form, through sequencing of words which create an emotive quality that can create more powerful and richer meaning" (Martineau,1971). As such, advertisers have to carefully choose words which act as symbols to trigger off some other meaning. Gill (1954) views that such is the case with advertisements because individuals concentrate on the words than on the way they are inscribed and interpret them in terms of their past experience and knowledge. However, advertisers must be fully aware of the connotation of their choice of words before they put it into their copy.

2.3.1 Connotation

Martineau (1971) defines connotation as being the many associations that are stirred up in our minds when a particular word is used. Leech illustrates the meaning of connotation by giving examples of words that have desirable qualities. For example, the words like "delicious", "fresh" and "crisp" are collocates of food products which create desirable qualities. Other examples are words like "new", "free", "wonderful" and "lovely", which, when used in an advertisement, are meant to create desirable results. So these words bear the connotation of appealing qualities. Thus, when an advertiser plans his advertisement, he must carefully examine the connotation of the words he plans to use with regard to the culture or subculture that the individual is exposed to. He must be fully aware of the positive and negative connotations of the words that he intends to use.

2.3.1.1 Neutral Connotation

In Leech's (1986) definition, neutral connotation are the words that are denotational in their meaning. For the purpose of this study, such denotational words will be classified as words with neutral connotation or neutral connotative words. This is because it would be simpler to conduct the survey amongst women who are unfamiliar with the technical terms used in the study of linguistics.

Words that bear neutral connotation are words that generally describe the features of the product and the manner in which the product is applied to produce the desirable result. For example in a skincare product advertisement like Pond's, words like "face", "forehead" and "nose" merely give an unbiased information on the areas on which the product is to be applied. Another example is HiWhite Toothpaste. In this advertisement, words like "toothpaste", "removes", "Kaopolite" and "ingredient" inform the potential consumer of the nature of the product and its contents.

2.3.1.2 Positive Connotation

According to Leech (1986), positive connotative words will be words that are commendatory and which highlight or suggest the desirable results that the product or service can bring. Again to make the questions in the survey simpler, such commendatory words will be classified as words with positive connotation.

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Thus words like "quicker" "easier", "unique", "superior" and "smart" from a Nokia Mobile Phone advertisements are collocates of something good. Another example is Bausch and Lomb's Disposable Lens. In that advertisement, words like "beauty", "sparkle", 'shine", "healthy", "supreme" and "comfort" are collocates which bear favourable results.

2.3.1.3 Negative Connotations

According to Leech (1986), words with negative connotation will be words that have derogatory reference. Thus, negative connotations are words which implicate undesirable qualities and which the product or service promises to get rid of. For example, in a hair product advertisement like Philips hairdryer, the words which describe undesirable features are : "dull" "frizzy", "coarse", "oily". Another example will be the Ribena advertisement. Words like "deplete", "infections", diseases", "cold" "bites", "cuts" and "bruises" are collocates which predict undesirable outcome.

Therefore for an advertiser to choose the proper words bearing the correct connotations, he has to first and foremost look at stereotypes that govern society so that he can get his message across effectively to the potential consumer.

2.4   Related Themes

In her essay, 'Significant Flesh: Cosmetic Surgery, Physiognomy, and the Erasure of Visual Difference, Padmore observed that Australian magazines' stereotypical beauty was wide-eyed and pale-skinned and blonde. She gave the example of Cleo magazines published in the year 1972. She observed that the magazine did not have any dark-skinned models on the cover pages.

She also discussed the effects of "saturating one type of face with the removal of another from the visual realm" (Padmore, 1998) in the media. One of the effects was that it causes one to mould one's physical appearance into the prevalent look.

She concluded that if one is different from "established culturally specific norms" (Padmore, 1998), one may develop a sense of reduced self-esteem. She suggested two solutions to the effects of stereotyping. One way was to actively register complaints to the media that constructs "commercial visual images" (Padmore, 1998) which are actually racist stereotypes. The other way, was to change the definition of beauty such that it does not reflect only the predominant group in Australia.

In Kerbes' essay, 'Different Perception of Black Women in Advertising, she concluded that though there are more Black models in American magazines, "racism and sexism still exists, (Kerbes, 1999). This is because for one, Black

models have been used to promote items like cigarettes and alcohol. She also pointed out that there have been a number of Black women who have been looking for ways of lightening their skin. Moreover, Black models who appeared as models, more than often, were lighter-skinned ones.

In Kaw's study (1997), "Opening Faces : The politics of cosmetic surgery and Asian American women, she attempted to look into the reasons that influence Asian American women to seek cosmetic surgery.

She concluded that the Asian American women's decision to have wider eyes and more prominent noses is very much influenced by society's stereotyping of Asians in America. They became influenced by the dominant culture that they "loathe themselves in such a manner as to begin mutilating and revising parts of their body" (Kaw, 1997). She predicted that this influence may also have tremendous impact on artificial genetic selection and in everyday ritual of courtship.

Kyoung-Ah Nam (1998), in her essay, 'Confucian-Based Cultural Values and Influences on Portrayal of Women in Korean Television Commercials', discussed the effects of transnational advertising. She defined transnational advertising as advertising that "imposes foreign ways and alien values by exporting consumer culture" (Kyoung, 1998). She mentioned that this transnational advertising had influenced even industrialized countries in Asia like Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong,

South Korea and Singapore. She quoted Golding's (1977) reason for such a trend, that is, "many managers and creative people employed in advertising agencies received their training in western countries".

She also pointed out that the images portrayed in advertisements were the results of the influences of culture and society. She concluded that Korea was one example where the women portrayed in Korean advertisements were also influenced by the traditional concepts of Confucianism. That is, the male being the superior and the female having to "serve him with reverence". (Kyoung, 1998)

In her essay, 'The Relationship Between Culture, Advertising and Eating Disorder', Chia-Yuan Chiang (2000) discusses the interaction between culture and advertising and how they influence each other. She also looked into advertising portrayal of the female body image and the cause of eating disorders.

She concluded that advertising emphasis on female body demonstrates the existence of gender stereotyping and that society has continued to "devalue the inner ability of women by focussing on the outside appearance of women" (Chia, 2000). She also concluded that advertising does encourage the diet trend and eating disorder in American society.

She was of the opinion that advertising should not be solely blamed for the ultimate consequences . Women should be blamed as well. This is because she

sees women as having fallen into the "trap of dieting to attain the unrealistic body" that advertisements create. She pointed out that if women can accept and appreciate their own bodies, they might be able to decrease the number of skinny models in advertisements.

Thus, the essays above share several main ideas. One of them is that advertisements are influenced by the beauty stereotypes that are prevalent in a society. In addition, positive beauty stereotypes are reflective of the dominant group. As a result, those who belong to the minority group attempt to change themselves either cosmetically or surgically so that they too can possess that stereotypical beauty.

2.5   Related Studies

There have been many related studies which look at the stereotypes that are present in advertisements. Many, however, have looked more at the graphics than the linguistic aspect. Nonetheless, all of them have acknowledged in their studies the presence of stereotypes in advertisements. While some of them have examined the stereotypes that exist in advertisements, others have studied the effects of the advertisements on the readers. The stereotypes, identified in these studies, have important consequences for this research.

2.5.1 The Portrayal of Women's Images

In her study, The Portrayal of Women's Image in Magazine Advertisements: Goffman's Gender Analysis Revisited, Kang (1997) aimed to answer the question "What messages about women have been given to society through magazine advertisements?" She conducted her research using Goffman's model for decoding behaviour pattern. The behaviour patterns that she looked at are of seven categories. They are as follows :

(1)   Relative Size. In this category, the male superiority over the female is expressed through greater girth and height. "It is assumed that the differences in size correlate with differences in social weight." (Kang).

(2)   Feminine Touch. In this category, women are portrayed, more than men, to touch, cradle or caress an object.

(3)   Function Ranking. In this category, in a face-to-face collaboration, the man is likely to be portrayed in an executive role while the woman is in a subordinate role.

(4)   Ritualization of Subordination. In this category, the act of holding the body erect and head high is a symbol of superiority and disdain

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while the opposite will be an expression of submission and appeasement.

(5)   Licensed Withdrawal. Women, more than men, are pictured in situations that psychologically remove them from the social situation. In this way, they become disoriented and dependent and protected by the others present in the environment. Some examples of such licensed withdrawals are turning one's gaze away and maintaining a telephone conversation.

(6)   Body Display. Body-revealing clothes and nudity was identified as another way of stereotyping. Body-revealing clothes were defined as "mini-skirts", "tight skirts", or "bathing suits". Nudity was defined as unclothed models, models wearing translucent undergarments and lingerie and only a towel.

(7)   Independence and Self-Assertiveness. Here it was looking at the whole picture to obtain the overall message of an advertisement.

For the purpose of her research, Kang's sample was popular women's magazines collected from the years 1979 and 1991.

Her research showed that there were few significant changes made in the images of women in the magazines from the years 1979 and 1991. She concludes that the "process of change in advertising images is a slow one" (Kang, 1997). This is because advertisements, she says, "are conservative and tied to the prevailing ideology of the culture." So women are stereotyped as such in advertisements because advertisements do not depict women the way they actually behave. Instead they depict women they way we think woman should behave. In other words, although "superficial cultural alterations are transferred to advertisements, the underlying ideological foundation remains untouched" (Kang, 1997).

She concludes that advertisements exploit stereotypes because their main aim is to maximize demand for the consumption of goods and services. In order to do this, advertisers find it appropriate to naturalize people and things. However, she fears that if the media continues to have a sexist tone in its advertisements, then the audience of these advertisements may accept the portrayal as a reality. Thus, she views it as being necessary to portray women in roles that actually reflect perceived attributes and individuality and not cling on to sexist stereotypes.

2.5.2 Female Attractiveness and Concern with Body Weight

In the study, 'Exposure to Media Images of Female Attractiveness and Concern with Body Weight Among Young Women', Posavac (1998), attempted to investigate how exposure to media images of female attractiveness affect

women's concern about their weight. They accomplished this research by using the Body Dissatisfaction subscale of Eating Disorder. They hypothesized that females with high body dissatisfaction would report to have more weight concern after exposure to media images.

In their experiment, they identified the media to portray a "narrowly defined, exaggerated" (Posavac, 1998) ideal female beauty. In addition, the media also perfected an ideal image of feminine beauty as being one that portrayed the slim image.

The research showed that the exposure to media bearing images of the media's ideal beauty increased the respondents' concern about their body weight. Posavac felt that this was a disturbing trend because since the respondents reported increased weight concern after viewing ten images for a brief interval, "a lifetime exposure to such images may produce much more severe consequences" (Posavac, 1998).

They concluded that one way to alleviate women's concern about their weight after exposure to these images is by educating the women on the effects of cosmetics, lighting and photographic retouching in producing images. In this way, they feel that "the media's contribution to young women's feelings of inadequacy with respect to their own bodies may be attenuated." (Posavac)

2.5.3   Gender Role Attitudes

In Garst and Bodenhausen's (1997) study of 'Advertising Effects on Men's Gender Role Attitudes', they looked into the effects of media images on man's response to gender role attitudes soon after exposure to the images. The respondents, who were all men, were shown images of three kinds of male images. They are : highly androgynous, mildly androgynous and traditionally masculine. The respondents were divided into two groups. They are traditional and non-traditional men. The traditional men were those who accepted traditional masculinity as the norm in society while the non-traditional men who did not see male attractiveness as being traditionally masculine.

Their research showed that traditional men were less susceptible to the media images of men. In fact, they appeared to react against the media models who "did not fit into their rather narrow pre-established gender role representations." (Garst and Bodenhausen, 1997). On the other hand, the less traditional men were, "at least in the short- term," (Garst and Bodenhausen, 1997) influenced by the images that the media represented. However, they were more influenced by the images of traditionally masculine images.

Garst and Bodenhausen viewed the responses of the men, especially the less traditional men, was such because they belong to a culture that places a value on such attributes. Therefore, the media carries the images of such masculine

characters because they are encouraged by the strong cultural norms that exist in a society. Moreover since the traditional men appeared "to reject or respond defensively to images that did not fit their definitions of what are appropriate role behaviours and interests for men," they felt that this response help explain why there was the "prevalence of largely stereotypic media images in our daily lives." (Garst and Bodenhausen, 1997).

They concluded that the continual exposure for a long period to such images may reinforce traditional masculine behaviour. They speculated that this may result in even the less traditional men reverting to "more dominating, sexist reactions toward women."

2.5.4 Gender Role Stereotyping

Hurtz and Durkin's study (1997), 'Gender Role Stereotyping in Australian Radio Commericals', looked at radio commercials. They looked into the traditional stereotyping of male and female roles and attributes. They wanted to see whether such stereotyping still existed in recent years where there was "contemporary sensitivities to matters of gender equity and to audience criticism." (Hurtz and Durkin).

The results of their study indicated that males and females were represented differently in the Western radio commercials. They saw the differences as

reflections of traditional gender role stereotypes. This was because 78% of the men are represented as central characters and are more likely to be presented as product authorities. On the other hand, females are portrayed as users of products and female characters in dependent roles like customers and girlfriends.

They concluded that the media continues to portray stereotypic traditional gender behaviours. They feel that advertisers, in transmitting such traditional stereotypic gender behaviours, may invariably promote traditional beliefs and attitudes among the audience.

2.5.5 Ageing Stereotype

In their research, 'The Ageing Woman in Popular Film : Underrepresented, Unattractive, Unfriendly and Unintelligent, Bazzini et. al attempted to investigate the following :

1   whether ageing women were portrayed to have more negative personality than ageing men,

2   whether the women being involved in less romantic and sexual activities than the men,

3   whether men were portrayed to be associated with the positive

quality of wealth and age.

The results of the study showed that in Hollywood, women, in comparison to men, were underrepresented in movies. Thus, they concluded that this was consistent with the media's attitude of ageing women. That is, when a female shows signs of age, she "cannot successfully endorse and ultimately sell a product – be it lingerie, cosmetics or a feature film" (Bazzini, 1997).

They also concluded that women faced "increasing problematic dilemma" (Bazzini, 1997). That is, as women traditionally have learnt that physical beauty is the quality that affords them the "most power and esteem" in the American culture, they will not be able to accept the ageing problems. Thus, they pointed out that the media's failure to portray ageing female characters "reinforces an unattainable cultural standard that perpetuates women's struggle to fight ageing at all cost" (Bazzini, 1997)

2.6   Conclusion

Hence, planning an advertisement is not a day's event. It takes days or even months of preparation. This is because advertisements do not only entail pictures, sounds and words. To make an advertisement effective, the advertiser has to look into the motivational factors that govern the potential consumer. These would

include psychology and the stereotypes that exist in the society that the individual lives in.

Many studies on stereotypes used in advertisements have been carried out. However many of these studies are foreign ones.. Generally, most of these studies have looked at the gender stereotypes that have been used in creating the advertisement and the effects that they have had on the potential consumers.

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