

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of this study. Some limitations are identified and recommendations for further research in this area are also suggested.

5.2 Summary of the Study

This section will summarise the findings of this study according to three main analysis which are gender influence, propaganda devices and non-linguistic elements found in the local advertisements of mobile phone service providers.

5.2.1 Gender Influence

The data showed that the advertisements rely heavily on the prescribed gender stereotypes to attract targeted consumers. Same sex and opposite sex role-models are used to 'talk to' and convince the public. They are shown as users of the network and they explain how the services have facilitated their lives whether privately or professionally. Gender based topic and language used by the female models are more emotive and relational based lexicon, while male models make more reference to physical or professional activities. These reflect the stereotypes of the expected norms prescribed for the male and female gender.

Despite the changes in the roles of women in society, stereotypical roles are still being used in portraying the male and female populace in the advertisements. This was reiterated in several studies conducted on advertisements (Huang, 1995; Klassen *et al.*, 1993; Sengupta, 1995; Cejka & Eagly, 1999; Rudman & Kiliansi, 2000). Doring & Poschl (2006) in their study on mobile phone advertisements in magazines concluded similar findings in that gender stereotyping is still present in today's advertisements.

5.2.2 Propaganda Devices

From the examples identified, it is noted that the local television advertisements of the mobile service providers in the Malaysian context do employ the basic propaganda strategies but in varying degrees. The most popular propaganda device used is the tactic of Plain Folks. The next two most popular tactics used were Bandwagon and Testimonial. The propagandists employ these devices to attract the audience and through them, they can send their messages and propagate their suggestions with the intention of influencing the public to act in the manner which is beneficial to the advertisers and manufacturers namely, the mobile phone service providers. It is noted that for the device of Bandwagon, more advertisements were targeted at male audience while for the device of Plain Folks, the opposite was noticed. As for Glittering Generalities, all the advertisements using this device are targeted at the female audience. The idea of participation and competition, to be part of a majority, draws the attention of the male audience while the concept of sharing experiences and discussions of relationships and emotions cater specifically to the female consumers. This distinction in the application of gender stereotypes and gender based elements found in the advertisements could be explained in that for greater impact and to ensure the effectiveness of their investments, propagandists employ the generally accepted social

and cultural norms via stereotypes closely attached to each gender of targeted consumers. These stereotypes are gender biased in that they are portrayals of the acceptable norms and habits for each gender of the society. However, two propaganda devices were not found in the local television ads analysed, and they are: Name Calling and Card Stacking.

5.2.3 Other Non-linguistic Features

Other non-linguistic features employed by the advertisers generally reflect the prescribed labels for the male and female behaviour and preferences and this was observed in the use of the spokespersons and the portrayal of stereotypical activities and norms. As for the element of voice over, the analysis of this study shows that more than two thirds namely, 76.6 % of the television advertisements for Telcos analysed use the male voice, similar to findings in past studies conducted in the western and eastern countries.

5.3 Conclusion

Gender stereotypes are one of the prescribed notions of how a community or an individual should be, behave and respond in any interactional situations. The use of expected and accepted behaviours makes the identification process between audience and the promoters in advertisements happen without much confusion. The audience today are either indifferent or sceptical to the promises or claims made by advertisers due to the enormous quantity surrounding them on a daily basis. Furthermore, the need to process the information the quickest way possible makes it essential for the

advertisers to provide shortcuts in order to have their messages ‘received’ and to influence the audience/viewers to act in an expected manner. As a result, propagandists employ these stereotypical norms and representations when targeting a specific gender audience. Once they have the attention of the audience, the propagandists deliver the message that appeal to the audience whether through identification to the personalities of the advertisements in that they are similar to the audience or to join the bandwagon or to believe the endorsement or testimonials of celebrities or public figures. In other words, the portrayals of the personalities in all the accompanying representations conform to the social and cultural norms of the public. In conclusion, although the product namely, the service offered is gender neutral, there is a tendency to use gender specific representations in the television advertisements for Telcos when targeting a particular gender audience.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

With globalization and disappearance of borders and time differences, it is important that consumers be equipped with the necessary tools to breakthrough the frivolities or manipulative images sent to them with intentions of changing their behavioural habits or opinions.

5.4.1 Consumers’ Feedback

To understand the effects of advertisements on the viewers/audience, studies could be carried out by getting the consumers’ feedback. Feedback such as:

- a) what they think of advertisements;

- b) what roles they think that advertisements have in a/our society;
- c) would the consumers believe the advertisements;
- d) would the consumers be tempted by the advertisements.

This study may be used to identify which of the propaganda devices is used in relation to specific gender target audience and the feedback will help to indicate the effectiveness of the individual devices.

5.4.2 Target Audience

Future research can be conducted by focusing on the specific target audience for example, from the perspective of age and genders of the audience.

- a) age or gender based groups:

Another interesting study would be to gather the interpretations of a particular group (age group, mixed sex groups) on still images or advertisements. In other words, investigate how the respondents interpret the iconic and symbolic messages or metaphors. Respondents of different sex would possibly give an indication whether there are influences based on gender and the results may help to identify the stereotypical perceptions of the different gender or age group.

- b) Same gender based groups:

While a similar study using same sex respondents may divulge differences within a gender group, namely, plurality within the gender. The possible differences may be

further analysed to identify the social, psychological or economical differences of the respondents which could be factors which explain the differences. Furthermore, in line with the current perspectives and direction of research on language and gender, studies can be conducted to analyse the plurality and diversity amongst in particular, Malaysian men and women portrayed in local advertisements.

5.4.3 Time Progression

The study of advertisements in progression such as during a 10 year period may result in interesting observations. The changes in styles and emphasis of the past and present advertisements may be reflective of the changing society and social and cultural norms within it. This study may give indications whether long term exposure to advertisements or propaganda could have influenced behaviour or opinions of the public.

5.4.4 Other Elements Used in Advertisements

Another area of interest would be to study the use of music and to analyse the lyrics whether modified or not. The types of music used may be reflective of the targeted group of the consumers. The lyrics of the songs could be a source to link behaviours and the expectations of a specific age or gender group.

In conclusion, the study of advertisements is an important tool for studying the different minds and perceptions of different people involved in that it is a study of the social and cultural values. Although advertisements are usually short-lived, their impact can be noticed years later. As some believe the advertisements are the reflections of a society while others believe that it is society which influences the advertisements. Therefore, in-

depth studies of the advertisements and all the converging elements would not be unappreciated. Consequently, ongoing research should be carried out as the effects of environment and expectations of all interlocking parties involved in any and all communications change and modify behaviour of their participants.