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Diversity in Advertisements and Brand Perception

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Abstract

This research project examines the relationship between representation of diversity in marketing and brand perception. The debate about whether diversity in advertisements impacts how consumers perceive and purchase from brands is ongoing. Thus, this study examines whether companies are rewarded for representing diversity in their advertisements and punished for representation that is inappropriate or insensitive. We conducted an online survey among Gettysburg College students and elicited their beliefs about the importance of diversity in marketing campaigns. We found that consumers are more likely to buy from companies that represent more racial diversity in their advertisements. The same was found for companies that represent more diversity of body types in their advertisements. The appropriateness of advertisements was also found to have an impact on the likelihood of consumers to purchase from companies, with consumers being less likely to buy from companies that have racially inappropriate or insensitive advertisements.

Keywords

Diversity, advertisements, brand perception, purchasing habits, marketing

Disciplines

Advertising and Promotion Management | Marketing | Race and Ethnicity

Comments

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We affirm that we have upheld the highest principles of honesty and integrity in our academic

work and have not witnessed a violation of the Honor Code.

Abstract

This research project examines the relationship between representation of diversity in marketing and brand perception. The debate about whether diversity in advertisements impacts how consumers perceive and purchase from brands is ongoing. Thus, this study examines whether companies are rewarded for representing diversity in their advertisements and punished for representation that is inappropriate or insensitive. We conducted an online survey among Gettysburg College students and elicited their beliefs about the importance of diversity in marketing campaigns. We found that consumers are more likely to buy from companies that represent more racial diversity in their advertisements. The same was found for companies that represent more diversity of body types in their advertisements. The appropriateness of advertisements was also found to have an impact on the likelihood of consumers to purchase from companies, with consumers being less likely to buy from companies that have racially inappropriate or insensitive advertisements.

Diversity in Advertisements and Brand Perception

Have you ever seen an advertisement that has left you wondering who thought that was the best way to market a product? Or, maybe you have come across a media campaign and felt there was a lack of representation of certain individuals? If so, you are not alone. Recently, more brands are struggling to represent diversity in advertising and marketing without it being deemed problematic. However, in many ways, the lack of and misrepresentation of diversity in advertisements and marketing is not a new problem. Vinjamuri (2017) highlights the issue of diversity in marketing as he explains that some individuals believe that diversity in advertisements has no impact on how consumers perceive and purchase from brands, so it is not necessary to use diversity as a marketing strategy. On the other hand, having diverse people in advertisements could boost public perception of brands and ultimately their sales, so representing diversity in marketing techniques could be deemed necessary. Since there are two sides of the argument, this study examines whether companies are rewarded for having diversity in their advertisements and punished for a lack of diversity.

The study of diversity in advertisements relates to Organization and Management studies because from a financial standpoint, it is important for organizations to reach and maintain a strong consumer base. In an increasingly diverse world, it is expected that an organization markets their products in a way that highlights that diversity in a positive light. If organizations do not understand the importance of having diversity in marketing, they are at risk of losing potential customers. However, if an organization is able to represent diversity, they will likely be able to reach a larger audience, and the organization's sales should increase.

Marketing Techniques in the Fashion Industry

In many ways, the role of diversity in marketing and advertising can be seen in a variety of industries, but in 2019, fashion and retail industries were continuously under fire for the products they were selling and how they were being marketed. According to Stone's (2005) encyclopedia chapter on fashion marketing and merchandising, fashion marketing is the process of creating a product until it reaches the final customer. In the fashion world, it is critical that consumers view the product as something they want to purchase, and potential consumers' tastes are targeted early in the creation process. Because meeting consumer desires is so crucial, fashion marketers follow the patterns of population growth and diversity to make sure they are reaching as many potential customers as possible.

To achieve this goal of reaching a larger consumer base, social media has become one of the main ways that fashion marketers are tracking what consumers want from the fashion industry and how they perceive certain brands. Mohr (2013) conducted a study of the impact of social media on the fashion industry during one of the biggest fashion events in the world. Tracking how fashion professionals used social media during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York City, it was found that the fashion week attendees use social media sites often to discuss what they are seeing on the runway. These individuals are considered experts in highlighting what constitutes quality fashion, so they have a large impact on consumers' views. Moreover, if these fashion week attendees post a bad review of a brand on social media, the product that the brand was trying to sell is less likely to get support from the general consumer. Ultimately, what people were saying on social media was either hurting or helping a brand's reputation. In turn, this would either increase or decrease the likelihood that people will still purchase from them.

Attitudes Towards Diversity in Advertisements

Though the above research focused specifically on the fashion industry, the impact of marketing and social media on brand perceptions can be looked at more broadly. There are several studies that show how marketing is a technique that can make or break any organization. Additionally, there are studies that focus on how people are chosen by marketers to be included in different advertisements. According to a study by Morimoto and Chang (2009), it was seen that different models around the world are used for various advertisements depending on their origin as well as the origin's brand. Results from this study showed that Western models were used for beauty, clothing, and accessories, while Asian models were used for health, automobile, and travel. There was a distinct relationship between the advertiser's origin and the model's race within each advertisement. This shows that marketers tend to choose models that represent their own race. This relates back to the organization itself and its members within.

Griffiths (2016) talks about how the CEO of Hoseasons was attracted to the firm by its branding and focus on different ethnicities and sexual orientations. The CEO has made sure that the company has recently held photoshoots that portray the diversity of our present day. This shows diversity in the marketplace and advertising which attracts new employees and for people to want to buy their products. By doing this it can influence other companies that in order to have success they must portray diversity in a positive light. Kotcher (1995) believes increasing diversity in the workplace helps with marketing techniques especially to minorities. In this modern-day companies are trying to provide advertising diversity, so that all consumers will be interested in buying their products not just racial minorities. In Shaban's (2016) study on some of the main challenges in a workplace, she discussed that more companies are realizing that the best way to meet customer satisfaction, higher sales, and an overall better business has much to do with diversity in the workplace.

Taking the results of these studies into account, we wanted to test if the same could be said for consumers or if it was the opposite. In other words, just how willing are consumers to purchase items that are advertised with more racial diversity? Based on prior research, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1A: Consumers are more likely to buy from companies that represent more racial diversity in their advertisements.

Wanting to take the study of diversity in advertisements a step further, we expanded our research question to include different body types. Would college students be more drawn to the advertisements that represent one body type, or have college students opened up and accepted different body types? In Shepherd, Kay, Chartrand, and Fitzsimons' study (2015), they discuss how "attractiveness", which some define by looking at a persons' health and fitness levels, as well as their beauty and appearances, is mostly determined by genetics. These features that one cannot change are still often used as an indicator of a person's true self. The authors of this study suggest that, considering the high pressures women face to match beauty standards seen across all platforms of social media, substantial amounts of "beauty work" are often done in efforts to hide one's true self and are a misrepresentation of a person. To some, advertisements are seen as culturally affirming messages of what people or the world "should" look like, so by showing advertisements which lack diversity or show unrealistic goals, it can often lead to people conforming to society and hiding their "best self", (Shepherd, Kay, Chartrand, & Fitzsimons, 2015). Thus, based on the prior research, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1B: Consumers are more likely to buy from companies that represent more diversity of body types in their advertisements.

The Response to Inappropriate Advertisements

Often, a company might experience a social media backlash because of a poorly thought out product or marketing strategy. As the world becomes more aware of cultural appropriation and problematic behavior, it is less socially acceptable for outside groups to profit off or steal from specific cultures that they do not belong to. According to Young (2005) cultural appropriation is seen as a moral issue, but the severity of cultural appropriation can depend on the context in which it took place. Most often, those guilty of cultural appropriation are at fault because as outsiders they do not know the importance of certain cultural aspects which leads to the offense. For example, Kim Kardashian released a line of shapewear with the name 'Kimono.' According to Frank (2019), many potential consumers were outraged by her decision to name her shapewear after the culturally significant kimono, as the name was deemed insensitive and cultural appropriation. Following the intense backlash on Twitter and Instagram, both from Japan and the whole world, Kim Kardashian was forced to change the name of her shapewear line to 'Skims.'

The response to Kim Kardashian's shapewear led us to conduct more research on the role of marketing, representation, and brand perception or reputation. According to a study from Hassan and Yazdanifard (2019), another example that highlights brand perception and representation comes from an Audi car commercial in China. They had a marketing mishap that created a lot of controversy and received consumer backlash. Within this commercial, a woman at the altar was being compared to "finding the perfect car." The groom's mother was seen thoroughly inspecting the bride's physical appearance. According to Bomey (2017), she pulled on her nose, ears, and lips before she got the approval and met the mother's standards. Similar to how people inspect cars to make sure there are no flaws, the bride was looked at the same. Audi became accused of objectifying women, resulting in taking the commercial down completely and

apologizing for the sexist advertisement.   In line with the literature, we expect that companies

will experience consumer backlash for having advertisements that are inappropriate or

insensitive along racial lines. Thus, our second hypothesis (Hypothesis 2) is as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Consumers are less likely to buy from companies that have racially

inappropriate or insensitive advertisements.

Methods

Research Design and Participants

An online survey was conducted to explore how college students viewed the importance

of diversity in advertisements and how it correlated to the way these students purchased from

brands. 65 Gettysburg College students were recruited to the study. The responses were

primarily from white students (78%), most of the students sampled identified as female (80%),

and most of the responses came from students in their junior year (58%), followed by those in

their sophomore year of college (29%). Out of the 65 students sampled, 64 participants (98%)

reported having a social media platform. Participants were selected through voluntary sampling

as researchers had no control over who responded once the survey was sent out to the college

student subject pool. This study was done through the online survey website, *Google Surveys*.

Materials

This study was sent through GroupMe and email to different Greek life organizations,

along with sports teams, clubs, and classmates across the Gettysburg Campus. The survey

responses were primarily from white female students in their junior year, followed by those in

their sophomore year of college. The message sent along with the survey link stated that the

study is voluntary, anonymous, and solely examining the students at Gettysburg College, and not

faculty or students on other college campuses.

Procedure and Measures

In this online survey participants were asked multiple questions about their internet and social media usage and how they felt about diversity or representation in advertisements. At the end of the survey participants were also asked to clarify what year they are currently in at Gettysburg College, their race/ethnicity, and their gender. For this online surveying procedure, a link was sent out through GroupMe and email once and then later it was sent out again as a reminder for participants to respond to the survey in order to increase our response rate. In the GroupMe message or email sent, participants were told that the survey responses were voluntary, and would be completely anonymous. The answers to these questions were received in multiple ways.

For descriptive purposes, subjects were asked a series of four questions at the beginning of the survey. The first, was a yes or no question about whether subjects have a social media platform, where yes answers were coded as 1 and no answers were coded as 0. Subjects were then asked how likely the appropriateness of advertisements is to impact their purchases. Responses were given on a Likert scale with answers ranging from very likely (5), likely (4), neutral (3), unlikely (2), and very unlikely (1). Though the question was asked for descriptive purposes, it relates to our second hypothesis: Consumers are less likely to buy from companies that have racially inappropriate or insensitive advertisements.

Subjects were also asked how often they see advertisements that express racial diversity and a separate question was asked for how often they see advertisements that show various body types. Both questions were asked for descriptive or correlative purposes but relate to Hypothesis 1A and Hypothesis 1B, respectively. The questions used a Likert scale where subjects could answer never (0), sometimes (5), or always (10).

After asking how often subjects saw racial diversity in advertisements, we asked how likely subjects were to buy from companies that have more racial diversity in advertisements. This question was used to study Hypothesis 1A: Consumers are more likely to buy from companies that represent more racial diversity in their advertisements. A Likert scale was used where participants answered the questions by choosing from very likely (5), likely (4), neutral (3), unlikely (2), and very unlikely (1).

After asking how often subjects saw racial diversity in advertisements, we asked how likely subjects were to buy from companies that have more diversity of body types in advertisements. This question was used to study Hypothesis 1B: Consumers are more likely to buy from companies that represent more diversity of body types in their advertisements. A Likert scale was used where participants answered the questions by choosing from very likely (5), likely (4), neutral (3), unlikely (2), and very unlikely (1). To further study Hypothesis 1B, subjects were shown advertisements for lingerie. The photo on the left was from Rihanna's lingerie collection, Savage x Fenty, which expressed more diversity of body types and "size-inclusive lingerie styles" (Elven, 2020). The photo on the right was from a Victoria's Secret Fashion Show and expressed only thin models with "sculpted bodies" (Laureti, 2019). Based on the advertisements, participants were asked which of these two companies are you more likely to buy products from. There were three potential responses: I would buy the product from picture #1, I would buy the product from picture #2, and an indifferent option, I'm equally likely to buy these products. Again, the goal was to test if consumers are more likely to buy from companies that represent more diversity of body types in their advertisements.

Subjects were then asked two more questions that relate to our Hypothesis 2: Consumers are less likely to buy from companies that have racially inappropriate or insensitive

advertisements. The first question presented an advertisement for a Gucci sweater released

during Black History Month that received a lot of social media backlash for representing

blackface and being racially insensitive (O'Kane, 2019). There was no identifying information

on the photo to prevent any biases from responders. The question asked, based on the

advertisement below, how likely are you to buy a sweater from this company? Following a

Likert scale, the options were very likely (5), likely (4), neutral (3), unlikely (2), and very

unlikely (1).

      The second question presented another advertisement for Dove Body Wash that received

a lot of backlash for being racially insensitive or inappropriate. The image shows three women

standing side by side, each has lighter skin than the woman next to her. Behind them are

"before" and "after" signs; the "before" sign, positioned behind the darkest skinned model,

showed cracked skin, while the "after" sign, behind a white woman, showed smooth skin. The

advertisement read, "Visibly more beautiful skin" (Astor, 2017). Testing whether college

students would be equally outraged by the advertisement as the larger public, the image was

presented in this survey. However, there was no identifying information or words on the photo

to prevent any biases from responders. The question asked, based on the advertisement below,

how likely are you to buy body wash from this company? Following a Likert scale, the options

were very likely (5), likely (4), neutral (3), unlikely (2), and very unlikely (1).

      For descriptive purposes, at the end of the survey, we asked demographic questions

which consisted of asking participants their class year, gender, and race/ethnicity. Class year

was coded by freshman (1), sophomore (2), junior (3), and senior (4). Gender was coded by

male (1), female (2), non-binary (3), and other (4). Race/ethnicity was coded by Caucasian (1),

African American (2), Hispanic/Latino (3), Asian (4), and other (5).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to measure the demographics of the participants along with whether they have a social media platform. One sample t-tests were used to measure the likelihood that the appropriateness of advertisements impacts purchases, the likelihood to buy from companies that have more racial diversity in advertisements, and the likelihood to buy from companies with more diversity of body types in advertisements. One sample t-tests were also used to measure which two companies participants were likely to buy products from based on two images, the likelihood of participants to buy a sweater based on an image, and the likelihood of participants to buy body wash based on an image. Correlation tests were conducted to see how often participants saw advertisements that express racial diversity and how often participants bought from companies that express racial diversity in advertisements. The same was done for diversity of body types, respectively.

Results

Racial Diversity in Advertisements

Seeing different racially diverse advertisements and buying from those companies were weakly negatively correlated $r(63) = -.112$, $p < .001$. Our subjects had a mean likelihood of buying from companies with more racial diversity advertisements of 3.48($SD = .77$) and they were significantly higher than the neutral likelihood of 3, $t(64) = 4.98$, $p < .001$.

Diversity of Body Types in Advertisements

The results from the different tests of body type diversity were conducted through a correlation study as well as two one sample t-tests. Seeing various body types in different advertisements and buying from those companies were weakly negatively correlated $r(63) = -.13$, $p < .001$. Our subjects had a mean likelihood of buying from companies with more diverse body

type ads of 3.63 (*SD* = .76) and they were significantly higher than the neutral likelihood of 3,

$t(64) = 6.68, p < .001$.

Another one sample t-test was conducted to analyze our survey question regarding which company survey respondents would buy a product from based on two different advertisements representing varying body types. The 65 subjects in our study had a mean likelihood of buying from two different companies of 1.62 (*SD*=.63) and indicate a significant preference for more diverse body types in picture #1, $t(64)=-4.92, p<.001$).

Advertisement Appropriateness

The results from the advertisement appropriateness were tested through one sample t-tests. Subjects stated that they were very unlikely to buy a product from a company with inappropriate advertisements. The mean likelihood of appropriateness to impact purchasing was at 3.42 (*SD* = .85), significantly higher than the neutral likelihood of 3, $t(64) = -13.2, p < .001$. When presented with the two images of racially inappropriate advertisements, the subjects did not show the same levels of sensitivity. The mean likelihood of buying from an inappropriate body wash advertisement was at 3.23 (*SD* = 1.13), marginally significantly higher than the neutral likelihood of 3, $t(64) = 1.64, p = .104$ (Figure 3). On the other hand, their likelihood of buying from an inappropriate sweater advertisement averaged 1.66 (*SD* = 1.13), significantly lower the neutral likelihood of 3, $t(64) = -13.23, p < .001$ (Figure 2).

Discussion

The findings supported Hypothesis 1A as our subjects were more likely to buy from companies that have more racially diverse advertisements. The subjects also expressed higher likelihood of buying from companies that represent more diversity of body types in their advertisements, supporting Hypothesis 1B. The appropriateness of advertisements was likely to

affect the subjects' purchasing decisions as the subjects, on average, stated that they would be less likely to buy from companies that have racially inappropriate or insensitive advertisements in accordance with our Hypothesis 2. However, while the appropriateness of advertisements nominally impacts purchasing, those advertisements that are more subtly inappropriate (such as the Dove Body Wash example) might go unnoticed. In contrast, companies will and have received backlash from the public if their advertisements are more noticeably inappropriate or insensitive (as the Gucci sweater example).

Implications for OMS and Business World

The research presented here is not the first of its kind as there are other studies to look at diversity in advertisements and its impact on brand perception. The well-known digital marketing organization Adobe created their own survey of over 2,000 global participants to see if consumer demand for greater personalization and tailored advertisements was as high as it was in 1994. The company studied different generations, genders, ethnicities, and sexual orientations in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States to see if the ways in which diversity is delivered and targeted, correspond to brand advocacy and consumer engagement. Adobe (2019) found that most Americans (61%) find diversity in advertising important, 38% said they are more likely to trust brands that show more diversity in their advertisements, and 34% said they have boycotted a brand if their identity was not represented in its advertising. According to Adobe (2019), "to put that into perspective, consider that over one-third of LGBTQ+, African Americans, and Millennial consumers said [that showing more diversity in advertisements] has an impact on their likelihood to purchase products/services from a brand." In short, an organization's sales can be impacted by its willingness to include diversity within its marketing campaigns.

The results of Adobe's study were in line with our Hypotheses 1A and 1B. Though different aspects of diversity (race and body type) were studied in our research, we expected to see that representation of diversity can determine how an organization functions in a society. As students of Organization and Management Studies, we are frequently studying how organizations behave within the context of societal issues, how members of organizations behave, and how organizations are managed. Thus, the decision to study the growing societal issue of diversity and representation in organizations seemed relevant to the real world. Because our results are in line with existing research, our findings should not raise significant questions about diversity in advertisements, brand reputation, and purchasing habits. Overall, as the literature and other research suggests, our results suggest that we should maintain the stance that organizations that aim to represent diversity of race, gender, body type, and sexual orientation will receive more sales and be more successful financially.

The results for the second hypothesis are also largely in line with what the literature suggests. In this study it was found that the appropriateness of advertisements also impacts purchasing and consumers were less likely to buy from companies with racially inappropriate or insensitive advertisements. This result was like the reactions that consumers had toward Kim Kardashian shapewear when it had the name 'Kimono.' As Frank (2019) explains, many potential consumers were upset about her decision to name her shapewear after the culturally significant kimono, as the name was insensitive and a form of cultural appropriation. Many were threatening to not buy the product and following the intense backlash on Twitter and Instagram, both from Japan and the whole world, Kim Kardashian was forced to change the name of her shapewear line to 'Skims.' If not, she risked losing out on sales from the public. A similar consumer backlash was shown in a study by Hassan and Yazdanifard (2019), in which Audi was

accused of objectifying women in a car commercial. The consumer reaction caused Audi to take

the commercial down completely and apologize for the sexist advertisement. In these cases, the

racial insensitivity was very explicit to consumers, so the backlash was also very explicit.

For our research, looking at the Dove Body Wash advertisement and the sweater from

Gucci, the negative consumer reactions were stronger for the sweater because it was clear to

most people that it was reminiscent of blackface. The Dove advertisement, however, was more

implicit and many consumers said they would purchase the product. As can be seen in Fig. 1 and

Fig. 2, there is less of a disconnect between the reported likelihood of the appropriateness of

advertisements to impact purchases and the actual likelihood upon seeing a racially inappropriate

advertisement. Meaning that if advertisement appropriateness was said to impact the likelihood

of purchasing, it did. Whereas Fig. 1 compared to Fig. 3, reveals that when advertisements are

less explicitly racially inappropriate there is a disconnect between the reported likelihood of the

appropriateness of advertisements to impact purchases and the actual likelihood. Thus, for

marketers in the business industry, our results suggest that advertisements that are not visibly

inappropriate at first glance could potentially go unnoticed and might not negatively impact a

consumer's likelihood to purchase a product.

Limitations and Future Directions

There were several limitations in the current study. An online surveying strategy resulted

in low response rates as it is easier to refuse participation online compared to other modes of

survey collection. Even though we had 65 students from Gettysburg College participate in the

study, we would have gotten a wider range of results if we had a larger sample size. In addition

to this, the gender composition of the participants in our survey was very imbalanced as only 13

of our 65 survey participants identified as males. Moreover, we had 51 participants who

identified as Caucasian. These are results of sampling bias, which give systematically different results because of short falls in the sampling process, from what would be obtained by studying the whole population. At a predominantly white college like Gettysburg, it is harder to get a diverse sample of participants, so our results are primarily highlighting one racial sub-group of consumers. This could have impacted the results if participants responded to the questions in the same way marketers in the study by Morimoto and Chang (2009) did. In Morimoto and Chang's study, marketers tend to use models of their own race in their advertisements, so some participants may have chosen their answers based on their race. In the future, it would be better to get a wider range of races and genders to participate in the study to get a better understanding of how different people react. Moreover, in future research, other identities could be studied including, sexualities, age, and body type to get an even greater representation of the population.

Another limitation in the study stems from the nature of surveys themselves, that is, people may not always tell the truth when they are answering survey questions. In general, people tend to give the "appropriate" or "socially acceptable" answer even if it does not reflect their actual beliefs. Even though responders were not influenced by the presence of the researchers and the survey was anonymous, participants might have answered the questions in a way that projects a favorable image of themselves to avoid being a social deviant or an outlier. Known as social desirability bias, the participants might have answered in ways that they felt were appropriate and over reported socially desirable behaviors or attitudes and under reported undesirable behaviors or attitudes. As a result, the validity of the survey is potentially impacted as our measures might not be accurately reflecting subjects' actual beliefs or purchasing decisions.

When thinking about other routes for potential research, researchers could study the impacts of having advertisements that are explicitly inappropriate i.e. sexist, racist, homophobic etc. compared to those that are implicit. One of the limitations of our study deals with the questions of advertisement appropriateness. When answering the survey, participants stated that they would buy products from companies with appropriate advertisements, but when it came down to purchasing a product from an inappropriate advertisement, a surprisingly large percentage of subjects said they would. This may have been the result of not being able to explicitly see what was wrong with the advertisement. For example, the Dove Body Wash advertisement had more implicit racism being that the "before" picture had a darker skinned woman and the "after" picture was a white woman. The change in skin tones after using the body wash was not as obvious as the blackface of the Gucci sweater advertisement. Thus, future research could explore the impact of overt versus covert inappropriateness in advertisements with the addition of more images and scenario questions in the survey itself.

Conclusion

Overall, the research presented here is in line with the literature and existing studies on the question of diversity and its impacts on brand perception. The implications of this study reveal that people's decisions on whether to purchase from companies are swayed by the display of more racial diversity in advertisements and the reflection of more diversity of body types in advertisements. Those organizations that reflect more racial diversity and those that reflect more diversity of body types are more likely to see consumers purchase their products. Moreover, it was revealed that the appropriateness of advertisements also impacts purchasing, but those advertisements that are more subtly inappropriate might go unnoticed. People are more likely to buy from companies that do present diverse advertisements but may not be fully aware of these

inappropriate advertisements and still purchase from the companies. Regardless of the subtlety of the inappropriate images or language in advertisements, the decisions of marketers play a significant role in consumers' likelihood to purchase from companies. Advertisements that are diverse do make a difference and draw people to buy their products.

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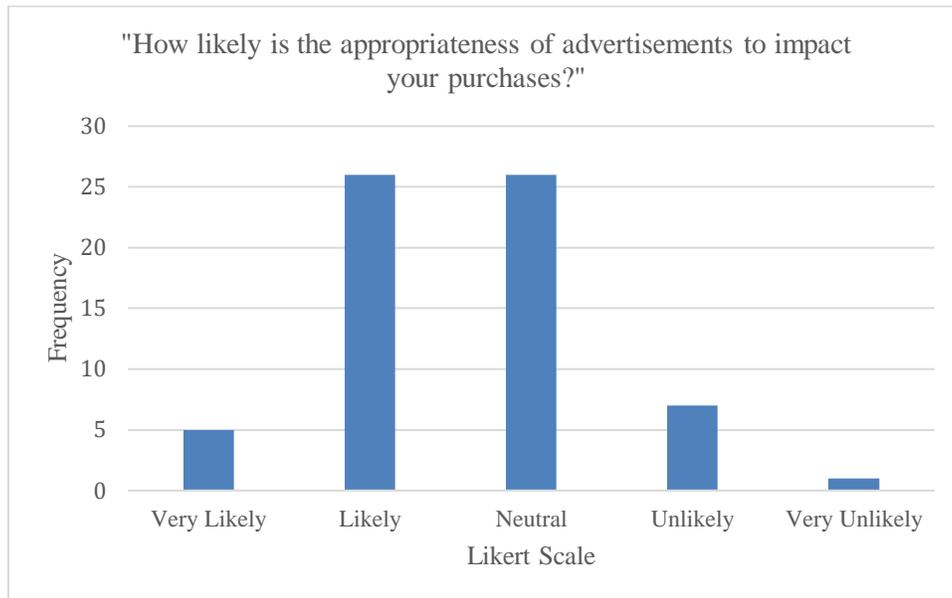
Figures

"How likely is the appropriateness of advertisements to impact your purchases?"

Figure 1. Frequency of reported likelihood of the appropriateness of advertisements to impact consumer purchases.
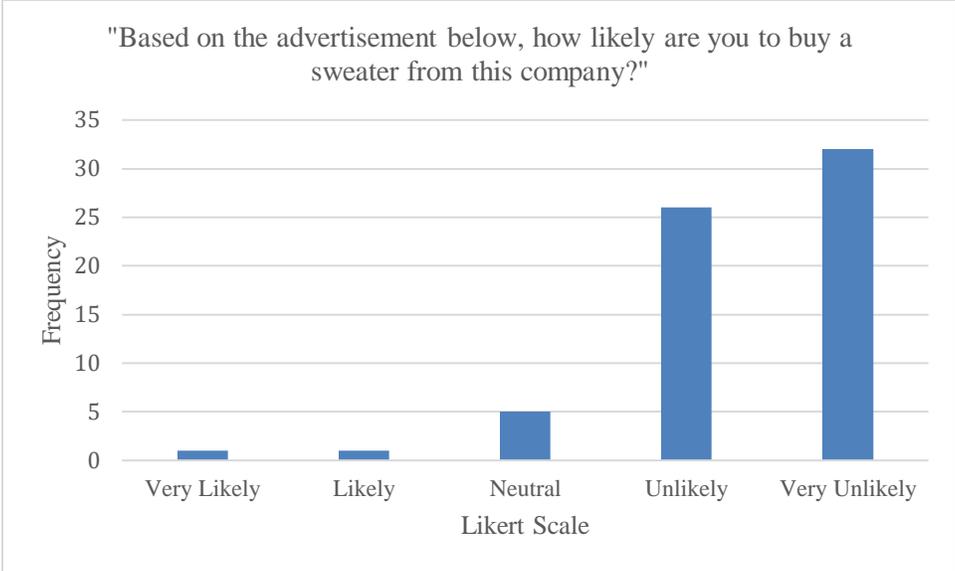
Figure 2. Frequency of reported likelihood to buy a sweater from Gucci based on the advertisement image.
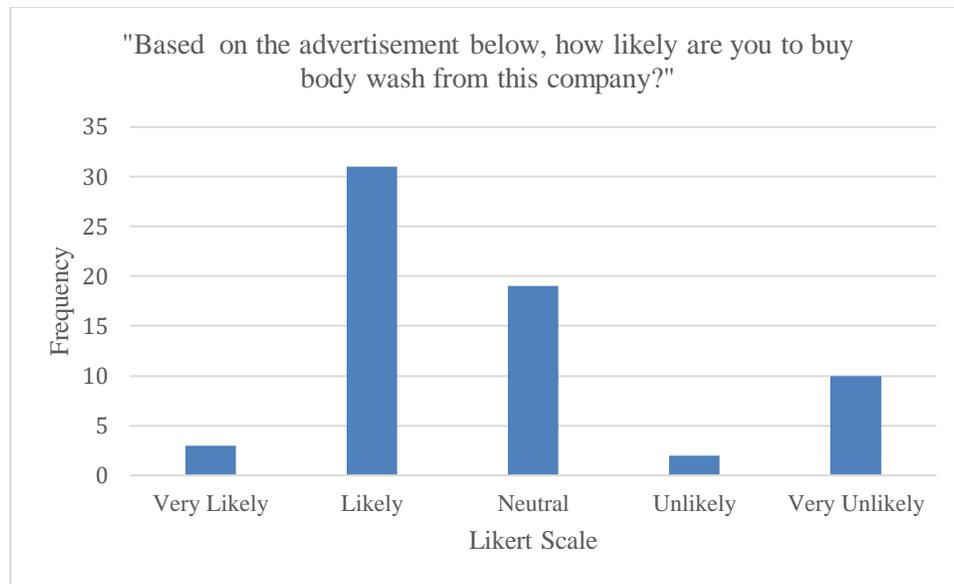
Figure 3. Frequency of reported likelihood to buy body wash from Dove based on the advertisement image.

Appendix

Disclaimer: Participation in this study is voluntary. All survey responses will remain completely

anonymous. Thank you!

1. Do you have a social media platform?

    a. Yes (1)

    b. No (0)

2. How likely is the appropriateness of advertisements to impact your purchases?

    a. Very Likely (5)

    b. Likely (4)

    c. Neutral (3)

    d. Unlikely (2)

    e. Very Unlikely (1)

3. How often do you see advertisements that express racial diversity?

    a. Never (0)

    b. Sometimes (5)

    c. Always (10)

4. How often do you see advertisements showing various body types?

    a. Never (0)

    b. Sometimes (5)

    c. Always (10)

5. How likely are you to buy from companies that have more racial diversity in

    advertisements?

    a. Very Likely (5)

      b. Likely (4)

      c. Neutral (3)

      d. Unlikely (2)

      e. Very Unlikely (1)

6. How likely are you to buy from companies that have more diversity of body types in advertisements?

      a. Very Likely (5)

      b. Likely (4)

      c. Neutral (3)

      d. Unlikely (2)

      e. Very Unlikely (1)

7. Based on the advertisements below, which of these two companies are you more likely to buy products from?

[*Figure 4.* Savage x Fenty by Rihanna (Elven, 2020).]   [*Figure 5.* Victoria's Secret Fashion Show (Laureti, 2019).]

      a. I would buy the product from picture #1 (left)

      b. I would buy the product from picture #2 (right)

      c. I'm equally likely to buy these products

8. Based on the advertisement below, how likely are you to buy a sweater from this

    company?

[*Figure 6.* Advertisement for Gucci "blackface" sweater (O'Kane, 2019).]

       a. Very Likely (5)

       b. Likely (4)

       c. Neutral (3)

       d. Unlikely (2)

       e. Very Unlikely (1)

9. Based on the advertisement below, how likely are you to buy body wash from this

    company?

[*Figure 7.* Dove advertisement for Visible Care body wash (Astor, 2017).]

  a. Very Likely (5)

  b. Likely (4)

  c. Neutral (3)

  d. Unlikely (2)

  e. Very Unlikely (1)

10. What class year are you?

  a. Freshman (1)

  b. Sophomore (2)

  c. Junior (3)

  d. Senior (4)

11. What gender do you identify with?

  a. Male (1)

  b. Female (2)

  c. Non-binary (3)

  d. Other (4)

12. What race/ethnicity do you identify with?

  a. Caucasian (1)

  b. African American (2)

  c. Hispanic/Latino (3)

  d. Asian (4)

  e. Other (5)