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Female role portrayal in South African magazine advertisements

ABSTRACT

Even though women actually fulfil many roles in real life, advertisements targeting female consumers are often accused of depicting women in traditionally stereotypical roles. The purpose of this article is to analyse the visual elements of the roles portrayed by female models in South African magazine advertisements. The study on which this article is based has made a unique contribution by investigating not only the relationship between the roles portrayed and the ethnicity of the female models, but also the relationship between the product categories advertised and the ethnicity of the female models. A total of 258 full-page and double-page advertisements were sampled from two issues of nine consumer magazines published in South Africa. The research, using content analysis, found that female models were predominantly portrayed as consumers and as the decorative focal points in advertisements advertising apparel, accessories and personal care products. A significant relationship was moreover identified between the product categories advertised and the ethnicity of the female models.

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INTRODUCTION

Marketing communications depends largely on visual elements to create meaning, brand images and associations in the minds of consumers. The visual elements in advertisements are largely made up of images of people – whether they be models, spokespersons, everyday consumers or employees (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2002:570–571). This article specifically deals with the images of women as part of the visual element in magazine advertisements.

Investigations into the changing roles of women in mass media have been prevalent since the establishment of organised women's movements and increased concern over the depiction of women (Hung & Li, 2006:9). Over the years, advertisers have been accused of portraying women in narrow, outdated, unfavourable roles – such as the homemaker and the sex object – whereas the career-oriented woman has been underrepresented (Leigh, Rethans & Whitney, 1987:54; Razzouk, Seitz & Vacharante, 2003:120). In addition, the role of women as decorative focal points used so as to show off the advertised product has been widely used in advertisements from across the globe (Holtzhausen, 2010:217; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009:1423; Razzouk et al., 2003:124; Wiles, Wiles & Tjernlund, 1995:44; Zhang, Srisupandit & Cartwright, 2009:696). These images certainly do not reflect the diverse and progressive responsibilities held in society by modern-day women (Zhang et al., 2009:684).

This study used content analysis to analyse female role portrayal in South African magazine advertisements. Although female role portrayal in advertisements has received much attention from academics around the world, very few studies have to date been conducted in South Africa (Holtzhausen, 2010; Rudansky, 1991). The dearth of research on female role portrayal in South African magazine advertisements therefore served as impetus for this study.

Academically, this study adds to the limited knowledge on female role portrayal in South African magazine advertisements and determines to what extent South African magazine advertisements represent female models from different ethnic groups. A unique contribution is made by investigating the roles in which female models from different ethnic groups are portrayed in magazine advertisements. Peterson (2007:200) states that the representation of models from different ethnic groups in advertisements can influence the efficacy of an organisation's promotional endeavours and carries with it social responsibility implications.

The findings illustrate the roles in which South African advertisers portray women and highlight the importance of female role portrayals that coincide with the roles South African women fulfil in society. Should advertisers portray women in traditionally stereotypical roles, they run the risk of alienating female consumers and of affecting sales negatively (Pollay & Lysonski, 1993:39). Because female consumers are an important target market for any organisation, advertisers need to ensure that advertisements reflect the important and changing roles of women in South African society.

The main purpose of this study was to identify the roles that female models portray in South African consumer-magazine advertisements to determine the extent to which these models appear in these roles. More specifically, the aim of the study was to:

- Investigate the ethnic representation of female models in magazine advertisements.
- Determine the extent to which individual advertisements featured multi-ethnic female models.
- Identify the product and/or service categories advertised using female models.
- Investigate the relationship between the roles portrayed by female models and the ethnicity of the female models.
- Investigate the relationship between the product and/or service categories advertised and the ethnicity of the female models.

1. ADVERTISING, THE NOT-SO-SILENT PARTNER

Wilson and Gutiérrez (1995:109) refer to advertising as "the media's not-so-silent partner". Media, such as magazine advertisements, are designed to influence brand awareness and recall (Brassington & Pettitt, 2007:72), change attitudes, contribute to knowledge and towards understanding (Ehrenberg, in Blythe, 2008:427), and assist consumers in making purchase decisions (Dahlen, Lange & Smith, 2010:9). Ultimately, the challenge for marketing communication is to influence target markets' behaviour (Shimp, 2010:50). However, as most marketing communication efforts, such as advertising, have a very short time in which to make a distinct impact on the consumer, the ultimate message that is communicated to the public is an important factor in enhancing the effectiveness of the marketing-communication strategy (Romaniuk, 2003:73).

Advertisements are customarily designed to target a specific market segment by taking into account the particular demographic, psychographic and geographic characteristics of the segments (Orr, Van Rheede van Oudtshoorn & Kotzé, 2005:51). Adult women are one segment of the market that marketing managers target because they are the primary purchasers of many products. Advertisements targeting women usually contain a female model with whom the target market can identify. Rudansky (1991:1) asserts that the model can be regarded as the most important illustrative component of a print advertisement and is thus responsible for the effectiveness of the advertised message. Pollay and Lysonski (1993:39) echo this sentiment by stating that "a lack of identification with the roles portrayed may reduce the attention, credibility, retention and subsequent recall of any advertisement".

In the period between August 2011 and July 2012, advertisements placed in South African consumer magazines amounted to R2 098.2 million (Nielsen Media Research Multimedia, in OMD, 2013:11). Given the large amount of money spent on magazine advertising and also the importance of the model as a component of a print advertisement, it is essential for advertisers to portray the model in a role that positively resonates with and attracts the attention of the targeted audience with a view to ensuring that this money is well spent. Moreover, the existence of a

suitable fit between the role portrayed by the female model and the product being advertised is crucial (Holtzhausen, Jordaan & North, 2011:173).

Failure of advertisers to reflect women in the roles they fulfil in society may have negative consequences for an organisation. Inconsistency between female role portrayals in advertisements and the orientation of the target audience influences both the effectiveness of advertisements and consumers' attitudes towards advertisements. These attitudes may influence purchasing behaviour in respect of the advertised product or service (Leigh et al., 1987:59). In addition, negative images of women may adversely affect the image of the advertising organisation (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009:1429). It therefore makes business sense to discard stereotypical representations of women (Cohan, 2001:323).

2. FEMALE ROLE PORTRAYALS IN MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENTS

One of the earliest published evaluations of the portrayal of women in magazine advertisements was in the early 1970s (Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971). The past 40 years have seen a steady contribution of published research in this field from across the world. However, only two such studies have been completed on South African magazine advertisements (Holtzhausen, 2010; Rudansky, 1991).

Previous studies on this topic reveal numerous roles in which women have been – and still are – portrayed in magazine advertisements. A summary of the roles identified by previous researchers is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of roles identified by previous researchers

Role	Researchers
Decorative/ physical attractiveness	Belkaoui & Belkaoui (1976:171); Courtney & Lockeretz (1971:94); Holtzhausen (2010: 17); Khairullah & Khairullah (2009:65); Plakoyiannaki & Zotos (2009:1423); Razzouk et al. (2003:123-124); Rudansky (1991:162); Sexton & Haberman (1974:44–45); Sullivan & O'Connor (1988:184); Wagner & Banos (1973:214); Wiles et al. (1995:44); Zhang et al. (2009:693)
Dependent	Belkaoui & Belkaoui (1976:170); Courtney & Lockeretz (1971:94–95); Mager & Helgeson (2011:248); Plakoyiannaki & Zotos (2009:1423); Razzouk et al. (2003:123–124); Sullivan & O'Connor (1988:187–188); Wagner & Banos (1973:213)
Homemaker	Holtzhausen (2010:217); Khairullah & Khairullah (2009:64); Plakoyiannaki & Zotos (2009:1423); Razzouk et al. (2003:123–124); Rudansky (1991:162); Sexton & Haberman (1974:44–45)
Mother	Belkaoui & Belkaoui (1976:171); Courtney & Lockeretz (1971:94); Holtzhausen (2010:217); Khairullah & Khairullah (2009:64); Rudansky (1991:162); Sullivan & O'Connor (1988:184); Wagner & Banos (1973:214); Wiles et al. (1995:44); Zhang et al. (2009:693)
Product user	Holtzhausen (2010:217, 242); Zhang et al. (2009:694)
Recreational	Belkaoui & Belkaoui (1976:171); Courtney & Lockeretz (1971:94); Holtzhausen (2010:242); Khairullah & Khairullah (2009:65); Sullivan & O'Connor (1988:184); Wagner & Banos (1973:214); Wiles et al. (1995:44); Zhang et al. (2009:693)
Romantic	Holtzhausen (2010:217); Khairullah & Khairullah (2009:64); Rudansky (1991:162); Sexton & Haberman (1974:44–45)
Sex object	Holtzhausen (2010:217); Khairullah & Khairullah (2009:65); Mager & Helgeson (2011:245); Plakoyiannaki & Zotos (2009:1423); Razzouk et al. (2003:123–124); Rudansky (1991:162); Sexton & Haberman (1974:44–45)
Social	Holtzhausen (2010:217); Rudansky (1991:162); Sexton & Haberman (1974:44)
Spokesperson	Holtzhausen (2010:242); Khairullah & Khairullah (2009:64)
Working	Belkaoui & Belkaoui (1976:170); Courtney & Lockeretz (1971:93); Holtzhausen (2010: 17); Khairullah & Khairullah (2009:64); Plakoyiannaki & Zotos (2009:1423); Razzouk et al. (2003:123–124); Rudansky (1991:162); Sexton & Haberman (1974:44–45); Sullivan & O'Connor (1988:184); Wagner & Banos (1973:214); Wiles et al. (1995:43); Zhang et al. (2009:692–693)
Neutral	Holtzhausen (2010:217); Plakoyiannaki & Zotos (2009:1423); Razzouk et al. (2003:123–124)

Women have multifaceted role orientations (Holtzhausen et al., 2011:179) and the list of roles in Table 1 would seem to portray them as such. However, several researchers conclude that female models are portrayed in stereotypical roles, contrary to the numerous and changing roles that women fulfil in reality (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009:1429; Razzouk et al., 2003:124; Rudansky, 1991:225).

Content analysis is the research method best suited to analysing this phenomenon. This particular methodology is next discussed.

3. METHODOLOGY

Content analysis, the research method that was employed with a view to collecting, analysing and interpreting the roles portrayed by female models from different ethnic groups in South African magazine advertisements. The use of content analysis to analyse the roles portrayed by models was advocated by Courtney and Lockeretz (1971:93). Content analysis systematically analyses documents and texts with the aim of quantifying content against a set of predetermined categories (Bryman & Bell, 2007:302). One of the earliest researchers in content analysis, Bernard Berelson (1952:18), defines content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication". According to Berelson (1952:13), *communication content* refers to the meaning behind the symbols that constitute the communication message. The symbols can be, inter alia, verbal or pictorial (illustrative). In this study, the female models in magazine advertisements are the symbols or illustrations that communicate a certain message to the readers.

3.1 Sample

This study employed purposive sampling, followed by convenience sampling. With regard to purposive sampling, magazines included in the sample were required to meet the following criteria: have circulation figures of 60 000 or more (average per month) and also have a high probability of containing advertisements with adult female models.

Circulation figures are the basis on which magazine publishers fix their advertising rates and also one of the key considerations on the part of the advertiser (or media planner) when selecting a publication in which to advertise. Audited and reliable circulation figures are useful in evaluating the worth of the media vehicle, which, in this case, is magazines (Belch & Belch, 2009:403). Therefore, one can assume that magazines with high circulation figures are popular advertising vehicles. In addition, this method of selecting magazines with high circulation figures has been used by previous researchers, for example Mager and Helgeson (2011:243), Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009:1420) and Zhang et al. (2009:688). However, it should be noted that the cut-off circulation figure of 60 000 or more was arbitrarily decided upon in that previous researchers had not stated an exact circulation figure, mentioning only that the circulation figures of selected magazines were high or among the highest.

As this study explored the roles in which female models are generally portrayed in magazine advertisements, magazines with a high probability of containing advertisements with adult female models were selected. Magazines such as *Auto Trader* have a low propensity towards carrying such advertisements and were thus excluded from the sample. Once the sample frame had been 'cleaned', convenience sampling was used to select magazines that would appeal to a variety of cultural and ethnic audiences. Ultimately, nine South African consumer magazines were selected – two family-interest magazines (Bona and You) and seven women's general-interest magazines. Refer to Table 2 for a demographic profile of the readership of the nine selected magazines. The resultant sample comprised adult female models who appeared in 258 full-page and double-page advertisements (excluding duplicates) published in two issues of the selected magazines.

Table 2: Demographic profile of the readership of selected magazines

Publication	Demographic profile	
	Age	**Ethnic composition**
Bona	15–49	99% African 1% Coloured and Indian
Cosmopolitan	18–34	56% African 26% Caucasian 18% Coloured and Indian
Fair Lady	35+	51% African 29% Caucasian 20% Coloured and Indian
Glamour	20–49	62% African 21% Caucasian 17% Coloured and Indian
Rooi Rose	35+	14% African 55% Caucasian 31% Coloured and Indian
Sarie	35+	25% African 48% Caucasian 27% Coloured and Indian
True Love	15–49	95% African 1% Caucasian 4% Coloured and Indian
Woman and Home	35+	43% African 43% Caucasian 14% Coloured and Indian
You	15–49	51% African 27% Caucasian 22% Coloured and Indian

(Associated Media Publishing, 2010; Caxton Magazines, 2013; L. Bradley, personal communication, April 02 2013; C. Nicholson, personal communication, March 27 2013)

3.2 Data collection and analysis

Coding is a crucial stage of content analysis that involves assigning numbers or other symbols to responses to be grouped into limited categories (Cooper & Schindler, 2003:456). It requires two main elements: the development of both a coding form and a coding manual (Bryman & Bell, 2007:311) that correspond with each other (Neuendorf, 2002:132). The coding form stipulates the elements of the advertisements that need to be analysed; in the case of this study this refers to the roles portrayed by the female models, the ethnicity of the models, and the product categories advertised. The coding manual serves as a guideline that enables coders to code all elements in the advertisements consistently.

To code the data and allow for inter-coder reliability tests, this study employed two independent coders in addition to the researcher. Coder training, a common trait in content analyses (Krippendorff, 2004:129), was provided. The training was followed by a pretest.

For the final analysis, the researcher for this study coded all the sampled advertisements. The two independent coders coded 20 per cent of the final sample of advertisements to test for inter-coder reliability. Wimmer and Dominick (in Neuendorf, 2002:158) recommend a reliability subsample size of 10 per cent to 20 per cent of the total sample. The per cent agreement scores achieved for the variables investigated in this study were 1.0 or 100.0 per cent.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Roles portrayed

Figure 1 below identifies the various roles in which female models were portrayed and also the extent to which they were portrayed in these roles. Female models were mostly portrayed as using or consuming the advertised product or service (n = 157, 60.9%). The second most prevalent role portrayal was the decorative role (n = 134, 51.9%); thus female models were portrayed as passive, appeared as the decorative focal points in the advertisements and were used primarily for aesthetic purposes in order to display the advertised product and/ or service (Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976:71; Holtzhausen, 2010:324). The spokesperson role was also somewhat common at 20.9 per cent (n = 54). The model in this role appeared to be endorsing the advertised product or service. The remaining roles were portrayed less frequently. Notably, the homemaker role and the dependent role did not feature in the 258 analysed advertisements.
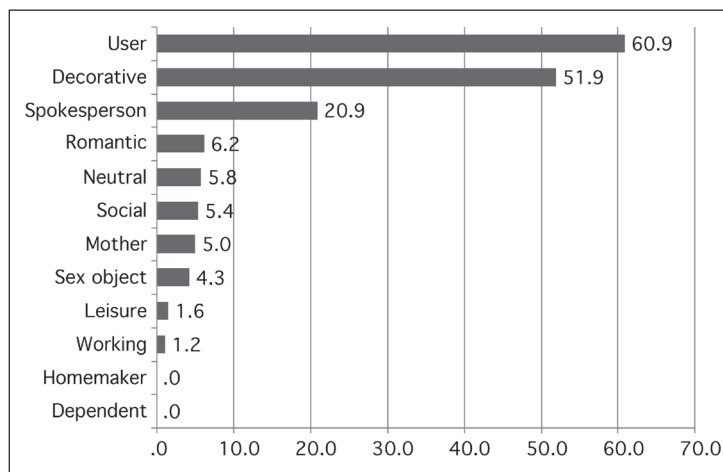

Figure 1: Roles portrayed by female models in magazine advertisements

4.2 Ethnic representation and multi-ethnic advertisements

Of the 258 advertisements analysed, just under two-thirds featured Caucasian models (n = 167; 64.7%). The African race was represented in 22.1 per cent (n = 57) of the advertisements. Advertisements with coloured (n = 9; 3.5%), Indian (n = 2; 0.8%) and Asian (n = 1, 0.4%) models were much less frequently in evidence. The ethnicity of two models (0.8%) was difficult to determine and only one 'other' (0.4%) race was discernible, i.e. a drawing of an Arabic woman. One could conclude that women from ethnicities other than Caucasian are underrepresented in advertisements, though the sampled magazines included a large African audience (refer to Table 2).

Two hundred and thirty-nine advertisements (92.6%) contained a model or models from one ethnic group. This is mostly attributable to the fact that the majority of advertisements (n = 222, 86.0%) contained only one female model. Thus, 17 (6.6%) advertisements featured more than one female model from the same ethnic group. Consequently, only 19 (7.4%) advertisements featured multi-ethnic female models (models from different ethnic groups – not included in the statistical analyses that follow).

4.3 Product and/or service categories advertised

Figure 2 below identifies the various product and/or service categories advertised that used female models and also indicates the extent to which these products were advertised. Personal care products, which include cosmetics, toiletries, perfume, slimming products, health care products and medication, were advertised in just more than half of all the advertisements analysed (n = 136, 52.7%). Apparel and accessories accounted for 26.0 per cent (n = 67) of the advertised products or services. The remaining products and services were advertised less frequently. One may conclude from the results that advertisers encourage women to take care of their outward beauty, hence the emphasis of the decorative role.
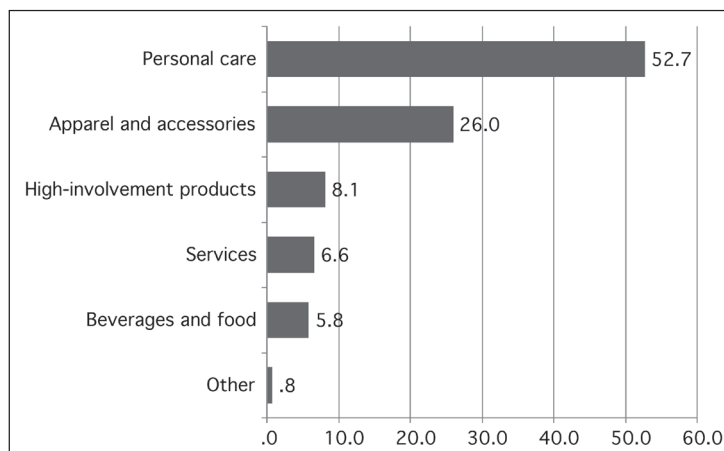

Figure 2: Product and/or service categories advertised using female models

4.4 Roles portrayed by ethnic groups

African and Caucasian models were used significantly more frequently than were models of other ethnicities. As such, attention will be drawn to the results pertaining to these two ethnic groups against the three most prominent roles: user, decorative and spokesperson. The results of Pearson's chi-square analyses are reported in Tables 3 to 5 below. A significance level of 0.05 was used.

Table 3: Relationship between the decorative role and African and Caucasian models

| | | | Ethnicity | | Total |
			African	Caucasian	
Decorative	Non-decorative	Count	20	76	96
		% within race of model(s)	35.1%	45.5%	42.9%
	Decorative	Count	37	91	128
		% within race of model(s)	64.9%	54.5%	57.1%
Total		Count	57	167	224
		% within race of model(s)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 1.885$, df = 1, p = 0.170

Table 4: Relationship between the spokesperson role and African and Caucasian models

| | | | Ethnicity | | Total |
			African	Caucasian	
Spokesperson	Non-spokesperson	Count	44	135	179
		% within race of model(s)	77.2%	80.8%	79.9%
	Spokesperson	Count	13	32	45
		% within race of model(s)	22.8%	19.2%	20.1%
Total		Count	57	167	224
		% within race of model(s)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 0.352$, df = 1, p = 0.553

Table 5: Relationship between the user role and African and Caucasian models

| | | | Ethnicity | | Total |
			African	Caucasian	
User	Non-user	Count	23	63	86
		% within race of model(s)	40.4%	37.7%	38.4%
	User	Count	34	104	138
		% within race of model(s)	59.6%	62.3%	61.6%
Total		Count	57	167	224
		% within race of model(s)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 0.124$, df = 1, p = 0.725

The results in tables 3 to 5 indicate that there is no significant relationship in South African magazine advertisements between the three prominent roles portrayed by female models and their being African and Caucasian models.

4.5 Product and/or service categories per ethnic group

As highlighted in Figure 2 above, the most prominent products advertised included apparel and accessories and personal care products. Pearson's chi-square was calculated to test for a relationship between these two product categories and African and Caucasian models. A significance level of 0.05 was used. The results, as provided in Table 6, indicate that there is a significant association between the two most advertised product categories and African and Caucasian models.

Table 6: Relationship between the two most advertised product categories and African and Caucasian models

| | | | Ethnicity | | Total |
			African	Caucasian	
Product category	Apparel and accessories	Count	8	52	60
		% within race of model(s)	16.3%	39.4%	33.1%
	Personal care	Count	41	80	121
		% within race of model(s)	83.7%	60.6%	66.9%
Total		Count	49	132	181
		% within race of model(s)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 8.580$, df = 1, p = 0.003

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study revealed that women were predominantly portrayed as product and/or service users (60.9%) and as decorative (51.9%) in magazine advertisements. The product- or service-user role has only been identified by two previous researchers. Zhang et al. (2009:694) found that women in American advertisements were more frequently portrayed as product users (63.7%) than were women in both Thai advertisements (38.6%) and Chinese advertisements (40.0%). Holtzhausen (2010:217, 242) identified the product-user role in 10.0% of portrayals and identified incidences of women being portrayed as 'inferred users' (7%) and 'potential users' (13%) in the 'other' category.

With regard to the decorative role, similar results were identified in the two previous South African studies (Holtzhausen, 2010:217; Rudansky, 1991:162) and also by international researchers (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009:1423; Zhang et al., 2009:693). Belch and Belch (2009:190) maintain that it is common practice for advertisers to use attractive people portrayed as decorative models to attract attention to their advertisements. This advertising practice has positive and negative consequences. Previous research suggests that decorative models produce favourable evaluations of both the overall advertisements and also the advertised product (Joseph, in Belch & Belch, 2009:190). However, this implies that women's faces and bodies are exploited in advertisements to achieve recognition (Zhang et al., 2009:696). Decorative models may attract attention, but they do not encourage either the reading of the copy of the advertisement or the recall of the message (Reid & Soley, in Belch & Belch, 2009:190). In addition, frequently portraying women in the decorative role has been criticised as a result of its negative effects on women's self-esteem (Posavac, in Zhang et al., 2009:695). Some women compare themselves to physically attractive models, which results in negative feelings and decreased advertising effectiveness (Bower, in Belch & Belch, 2009:190).

As previously mentioned, the South African woman has a multi-faceted role orientation (Holtzhausen et al., 2011:179). In the current study, it thus seems inept of advertisers to have underrepresented women in the following roles: romantic (6.2%), social (5.4%), mother (5.0%), leisure (1.6%), and working (1.2%). Holtzhausen (2010:217) similarly identified the low prevalence of these roles. However, Rudansky (1991:162) identified the mother role in 19.6 per cent of advertisements, the social role in 17.3 per cent, the romantic in 12.0 per cent, and only a single incidence of a working role. The working role continues to be underrepresented in South African magazine advertisements. It seems that present-day advertisers have moved away from the portrayal of a multifaceted woman in favour of a more limited approach.

An analysis of the ethnic representation of female models in the current study revealed that the majority were Caucasian (64.7%) followed by Africans (22.1%). Coloureds, Indians and Asians accounted for 4.7 per cent of the models identified. Holtzhausen (2010:224) identified a similar ethnic distribution. Sixty per cent of female models were Caucasian, 33.2 per cent were African, 4.2 per cent were coloured, and 1.5 per cent were Indian. The results are unexpected when one considers the South African adult population profile and the analysis of advertisements in

magazines that target a large African audience. The South African adult population is primarily African (76.7%), with Caucasians accounting for 12.0 per cent, and coloureds and Indians for 11.3 per cent (OMD, 2013:8). However, the findings may be explained by the extent to which different ethnic groups in South Africa have access to media. While 79 per cent of South Africa's Caucasian adult population can be reached by any AMPS (All Media and Products Survey) magazine, only 42.6 per cent of South Africa's African adult population can be reached in this way (OMD, 2013:10). Notably, coloureds and Indians (59.4%) have greater access to magazines than do Africans (57.6%). Yet, coloureds and Indians are severely underrepresented in advertisements in the magazines sampled, which can be attributed to the low coloured and Indian readership in respect of these magazines.

Furthermore, this study sought to determine whether individual magazine advertisements featured female models from multiple ethnicities. Only 19 advertisements featured multi-ethnic female models. This is similar to the 13 multi-ethnic advertisements identified by Holtzhausen (2010:225). The reason for this low incidence is not that South African advertisers disagree with having multi-ethnic advertisements; it is merely an implication of the nature of the construction of South African advertisements. In this study, most advertisers created advertisements that only featured one model (86.0%), hence the low occurrence of multi-ethnic advertisements.

As regards the product and/or service categories advertised using female models in the current study, personal care advertisements appeared in 52.7 per cent of the analysed advertisements, followed by apparel and accessories (26.0%). South African, British and Thai magazine advertisements that featured female models mostly advertised personal care products and apparel (Holtzhausen, 2010:229; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009:1427; Razzouk et al., 2003:121). In this regard, Holtzhausen (2010:271) suggests that women are seen as objects of beauty and are concerned about physical aspects and outward appearance, rather than about inner skills and abilities. Holtzhausen (2010:272) adds that, in applying the basic marketing principles of matching the advertised product with the target market, these factors are taken into account.

Lastly, no significant relationship was found between the dominant roles identified – namely user, decorative, and spokesperson – and African and Caucasian women. However, there was a significant relationship between the two dominant advertised product categories and African and Caucasian female models. Advertisers use Caucasian models more frequently when advertising apparel and accessories (83.9%) and personal care products (63.5%).

6. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

According to Ford, LaTour and Honeycutt (1997:418–419), consumers might not purchase the products of an organisation that uses role portrayals that are deemed 'offensive'. This then confirms the importance to marketers and advertising agencies of selecting appropriate female role portrayals in their advertisements. The results of this study have indicated that South African advertisers have not portrayed women in the wide variety of roles they actually fulfil in South African society, but have rather used a very narrow portrayal. Because South African women have

economic and social status, it is recommended that advertisers portray them as such. Therefore, the results of this study primarily identify the limited roles in which South African advertisers portray women in advertisements.

The organisational benefits of accurate role portrayal are numerous. Rudansky (1991:216) maintains that carefully considered role portrayals ensure that the marketing message is effectively communicated. As explained by Belch and Belch (2009:183), the receivers of a message are more likely to pay attention to and identify with people whom they consider to be similar to themselves. It is therefore imperative that advertisers understand their target market – in this case the adult female consumer – and portray models in such a way as to enable their audience to identify with them. Consistency between female role portrayals and women's role orientations has the benefit of enhanced advertising effectiveness (Leigh et al., 1987:59–60). Rudansky (1991:216) goes on to add that a differential and competitive advantage can be had by portraying females in modern, realistic roles with which women can identify.

Modern-day consumers are more knowledgeable about marketing and advertising practices and strategies and, as such, will criticise strategies deemed to be to the detriment of the community (North, 2003:61). The consequences of negative, traditional or stereotypical female role portrayals in advertisements are significant. Pollay and Lysonski (1993:39) indicate that offensive and simplistic stereotypes may negatively affect sales and are therefore likely to be less effective. The researchers further contend that should consumers not identify with the roles portrayed, it may "reduce the attention, credibility, retention and subsequent recall of any advertisement". Moreover, inappropriate roles may negate consumers' attitudes, images and loyalty towards the advertised brand and may even result in boycott intentions.

As a final implication, this study established Africans, coloureds, Indians and Asians to have been underrepresented in the advertisements analysed. Though there may be various reasons for this, advertisers should, however, be alerted to the importance of targeting and featuring what seem to be ethnic minority models in advertisements. Peterson (2007:209) asserts that minority groups tend to have more positive attitudes towards advertisements than do Caucasians. They find advertisements "more acceptable, informative, and enjoyable" and these feelings can lead to favourable attitudes towards the advertised brand and thus also encourage purchases.

In summary, it is important that advertisers acknowledge that the 21st century-woman is a multifaceted being and that organisations would do well to portray women in a variety of roles consistent with their role orientations.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The magazines sampled for this study were two family-interest magazines and seven women's general-interest magazines. The magazines were sampled based on their high circulation figures and the high propensity towards using advertisements that feature adult female models. However, the magazines in the sample targeted a limited audience, namely women. Future research should

expand on the categories of magazines included in studies of this nature in order to identify potential new female role portrayals and analyse these against a potentially broader range of advertised products and/or services. As women have multiple interests, one could consider the following consumer magazine categories for future research: arts, culture and heritage; business and news; entertainment; health; home; male general interest; parenting; sports and hobbies; and travel (refer to Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa, 2012). Wiles et al. (1995:41) and Zhang et al. (2009:688) conducted studies on gender-role portrayals in advertisements featured in news and general-interest magazines, and in sports, entertainment, women's and business magazines. It is recommended that a similar study be conducted in South Africa. In the absence of strict guidelines on sampling procedures, it is advisable to sample magazines with the highest circulation figures within each category so as to obtain magazines with large numbers of advertisements.

The current study employed non-probability sampling methods, namely convenience and purposive sampling, which implies that it was not possible to generalise the findings. However, should future researchers include consumer magazines from all categories in the sample frame, irrespective of their circulation figures, it would be preferable to use probability sampling.

This study focused exclusively on female role portrayals in magazine advertisements. It is recommended that future researchers analyse female role portrayals in other South African media vehicles. While Holtzhausen et al. (2011:167) analysed free-to-air television commercials, very little research on specifically female role portrayals in television commercials has been conducted in South Africa. The Internet is fast becoming an indispensable integrated marketing communication tool (Wang & Sun, 2010:333) and online advertising – much like advertising on television – has visual, audio and video capabilities (Kerin, Hartley, Berkowitz & Rudelius, 2006:508) and thus provides scope for analysis of female role portrayals.

A number of managerial implications were given of the possible consequences of negative, traditional or stereotypical female role portrayals. It is recommended that such research be undertaken in a South African context. Possible focus areas include surveys and/or focus groups to determine female consumers' perceptions and attitudes regarding female role portrayals in advertisements. This may be augmented by comparing the perceptions and attitudes of different ethnic groups. One could also conduct interviews with advertising agencies in an attempt to understand the process that is followed when deciding on a female model's role portrayal.

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