A Mother's Love: A Narrative Analysis of Food Advertisements in an African American Targeted Women's Magazine

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Abstract
This thesis examines how food advertisers contributed to the cultural identity of the "good mother" in the 1990s and 2000s. It expands on previous research that investigated traditional gender ideologies in food advertisements by narrowing in on the specific stories presented to African American women. It highlights a time when advertisers were responding to the demands of African American activists to recognize the African American consumer, and depict African American characters in a positive light. A narrative method of inquiry is utilized to deconstruct the stories in 117 food advertisements running in Essence magazine (an African American targeted women's magazine) in the 1990s and 2000s. Analyses suggest that the most frequent narrative in both decades was the story of the "good mother." Food advertisers primarily constructed this story with characters of mothers, fathers, and their children in the 1990s, and children alone in the 2000s. Other characters that recurred less frequently were the "good woman," "expert advisors," and "activists and innovators." Yet, these characters made minimal appearances compared to those in the "good mother" category. This study suggests that in the 1990s and 2000s food advertisers were portraying African American characters in a positive manner, but that these positive portrayals reinforced hegemonic ideologies about family life that ignored the experiences of mothers living outside of heteronormative nuclear families.

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Her content analysis of 381 advertisements reveals that while White and African American children are overrepresented in relationship to their percentage of the U.S. population, other minority group children are rarely portrayed. In only one instance were children of color shown alone, not accompanied by at least one White child. Until a more mature understanding of commercials develops, "children are at a psychological disadvantage in an advertising world that presumes the rationality of its receivers" (Haefner 83).

Social expectancy theory suggests the media contribute to expectations (or lack thereof) of other people in the world (see Jussim). Analysis of an Advertisement Every woman wants diamonds because they are beautiful, rare, and are a symbol of success. There is something about diamonds that make every woman want one. Diamonds make a woman feel bold, sophisticated, and powerful. Something magazine recently published a diamond ad for A Diamond Is Forever. Com. Their story begins with them first catching each other's eye, to the two falling in love and becoming high school sweethearts, and then continues to show their relationship progress as it goes on for. There is an interesting print advertisement found in an issue of Time magazine. It was an advertisement of noise cancelling headphones by Bose. Bose is known to make high quality products for music such as...
headphones and speakers.