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# **Lather, Rinse, Repeat – The Stereotyping of Women in Magazine Grooming Advertisements**

Master's Thesis

By

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Jaritza Ortega



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# Abstract

This study investigates how magazine grooming advertisements currently portray and stereotype women. By examining women's portrayal and stereotyping, this research aims to uncover whether advertising depicts women fairly based on their changing role in society from a rather traditional, domestic and dependent role to a more non-traditional, professional and independent one. With this purpose, this study analyzed 92 unique grooming advertisements found in the 2017 issues of the U.S. women's lifestyle magazines *Seventeen*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Good Housekeeping*. The grooming advertisements were analyzed through a qualitative semiotic discourse analysis and in conjunction with established theories on the attributes of stereotypes, Goffman's gender display framework and grooming rituals to uncover the underlying meanings communicated by grooming advertisements. The results show that magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women predominantly in traditional feminine and submissive poses while being dependent and concerned with reaching beauty ideals. However, the results further indicate that some advertisements undertake a more empowering approach and stereotype women as being powerful, independent and capable of breaking down traditional female gender roles and beauty expectations, hence showing that advertisements are slowly adapting to women's changing role in society.

Keywords: Gender advertising, gender stereotypes, female portrayals, grooming advertisements, magazines, women's role

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# 1 Chapter 1 – Introduction

Want to look younger longer? Take the right steps now” (Aveeno, 2017) – This caption is presented in a magazine advertisement portraying celebrity Jennifer Aniston gleefully smiling and promoting the concept of youth through Aveeno’s “Absolutely Ageless” night cream. It is advertising messages like these that women see themselves confronted with every day. Advertising communicates messages and meaning through the form of textual and visual elements that put pressure on women to look and behave in a certain way that is considered acceptable by society’s standards (Goffman, 1979; Heath, 2012). By portraying these images, it is said by sociologists that advertising does not only put a strain on people but that it also depicts social reality inaccurately (Baker, 2005; Knoll, Eisend & Steinhagen, 2011). Instead, according to Knoll, Eisend and Steinhagen (2011), advertising categorizes and restrains people to certain stereotypes, hence showing a limited and contradicting depiction of society. In regard to the power advertising has to portray and communicate a certain image of society, especially the role of women represents an interesting topic of investigation (Åkestam, Rosengren & Dahlen, 2017). According to Zotos and Tsihla (2014), the media continues to communicate a limited opinion of women by portraying them through traditional stereotypes in dependent or housewife roles or through decorative stereotypes concerned with physical attractiveness and beauty. However, in reality, women are more independent than ever, taking on executive roles and deciding against the traditional and domestic societal expectations of marriage and starting a family (Sheehan, 2004). Advertising has the ability to utilize certain stereotypes to portray society in a limited way ultimately presenting an issue as it creates a narrow-minded and contradicting image of society. With this in mind, it is pivotal to research the contemporary portrayal and stereotyping of women in advertising to investigate whether advertising is portraying women according to their current evolving role in society.

Stereotypes are oversimplified ideas about certain social groups of people that distinguish them from other social groups (Grau & Zotos, 2016). Similarly, Augoustinos and Walker (1998) describe stereotyping as the formation of ideas and assumptions of certain groups of people to simplify the order of social relations. According to the authors, stereotypes are also collectively and socially constructed by society through active discursive communication. Relating to the use of stereotypes in communication, advertising is said to convey certain messages and meaning to consumers through the depiction of specific stereotypes (Sheehan, 2004). Due to limited space and time constraints, advertisers rely on presenting familiar images of certain categories of people and stereotypes to establish rapport with consumers and facilitate the understanding of the advertising message. By using these familiar images, advertising communicates for whom a certain product is aimed for and how it is intended to be used (Sheehan, 2004). Hence, according to Knoll, Eisend and Steinhagen (2011), stereotypes provide consumers with guidance in their everyday life. However, creating stereotypes can also become problematic especially when it restrains people in their development, such as when it restricts

people in using certain products or holding specific jobs that are usually associated with other stereotypes (Knoll, Eisend & Steinhagen, 2011). An example of these restricting stereotypes is especially evident in the gender stereotyping of men and women based on their differentiating masculine and feminine characteristics composed of personality traits, physical characteristics, gender roles, and occupational roles (Döring & Pöschl, 2006; Zotos & Tsihla, 2014).

Advertising's use of female stereotypes, in particular, represents a current topic of interest discussed by society, feminists and scholars (Åkestam, Rosengren & Dahlen, 2017; Döring & Pöschl, 2006). Most attention lies on the media's use of traditional female stereotypes, depicting women as slender, emotional, having the role of a housewife and sex-object, or being interested in beauty and fashion (Döring & Pöschl, 2006). Female occupational roles are the most susceptible to stereotyping despite the educational and career-oriented advances women have achieved in society (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014). In spite of women's achievement, women are seldom depicted in professional or career-oriented roles and are instead portrayed in female associated occupational positions such as nurses and secretaries rather than entrepreneurs or managers (Grau & Zotos, 2016). Nevertheless, although women are still commonly depicted by the media through traditional female gender stereotypes, some advertisements are recently taking on a more feminist approach as part of the femvertising initiative. The trend of femvertising was established in 2014 with the aim to challenge traditional female stereotypes in advertising and encourage the portrayal of women in a more empowering role (Åkestam, Rosengren & Dahlen, 2017). However, as these empowered messages represent a recent initiative they still constitute a minority. The trend of communicating more empowered advertising messages of women was encouraged by women's changing role in society (Åkestam, Rosengren & Dahlen, 2017). Today, women are said to hold the power to make their own decisions in and outside the household, choosing to take on more professional occupations rather than traditional roles constraining them to familial structures focused on marriage and children (Sheehan, 2004).

The women's role in society is not the only one evolving, the men's role is also experiencing a change. Men's role in society has shifted from being the dominant breadwinner to a domesticated less authoritarian figure, which has been recently reflected onto advertisements (Grau & Zotos, 2016). With this in mind, advertising has begun to progressively adapt to the changing role of men by portraying them as more familial, emotional, and sensitive. Furthermore, men have also become more concerned with their physical appearance and are more embrave of personal-care and grooming, a segment previously considered feminine and reserved just for women. The shift in the portrayal of men is especially prevalent in grooming advertisements (Scheibling, 2014).

Although, grooming advertising has become increasingly targeted towards men, women are still the dominant target audience of grooming advertisements due to the high degree of purchasing power they employ (Rajagopal & Castano 2015; Sarpila, 2013). Grooming in general serves various purposes from cleansing the body to promoting a positive self-esteem and image (Rook & Levy, 1983). More precisely, grooming includes the use of actions and

products to treat the skin, manage the hair on the head and body, and eliminate odor (Rook & Levy, 1983; Wax, 1957). To communicate these grooming aspects to specific audiences, advertisements convey messages about grooming products. Grooming advertisements also communicate certain grooming rituals to illustrate which products to use and how to use them. The ritualistic aspect of grooming is used in advertisements to portray social situations and constructions such as gender stereotypes through dramatized communicated behaviors (Goffman, 1979).

Recognizing that advertising, particularly grooming advertisements, possess the power to communicate certain stereotypes, including the potential to portray a limited picture of society, and the fact that women's role is progressively changing in society, it is pivotal to investigate how women are currently stereotyped in grooming advertisements. Therefore, this thesis aims to investigate the central question of:

*“How do magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women?”*

This study takes focus on the investigation of women due to their changing role in society, which has yet to be investigated within grooming advertisements. Furthermore, focus is being directed on the study of magazine advertisements considering that magazines play an important role for women when it comes to grooming and personal appearance. Women seek beauty and personal-care advice, particularly in magazines, seeing these as how-to guides (Sheehan, 2004). Moreover, although the readership of printed magazines is decreasing, editorials and magazines continue to be coveted through adapted online platforms (McIntosh, 2017) and thus still represent a popular medium suitable for this research. Grooming advertisements within the scope of this thesis are defined as advertisements promoting products such as soaps, body washes, cleansers, creams, razors and wax, and deodorants. This thesis does not investigate advertisements related to women's personal-hygiene or cosmetics.

By investigating the current portrayal and stereotyping of women in magazine grooming advertisements this study aims to contribute to the understanding of the manner in which women are depicted in advertisements and whether they are being portrayed fairly based on their changing role within society. By doing so, the knowledge gained will create awareness about the use of female stereotypes in advertising which can benefit consumers and organizations. Consumers can become more self-aware of the use of stereotypes in advertising and the influence it may have on them. While organizations can become more aware of how their advertisements can be interpreted by society. Lastly, besides its practical contributions this study aims to add knowledge to the literature on gender stereotypes, gender marketing and advertising, and sociology, by investigating of the current portrayal and stereotypes of women specifically in the area of grooming and personal care.

In order to answer the defined research question of this thesis, in the following a broader understanding of the context of the research problem is provided by reviewing existing literature on the topics of advertising and gender stereotypes. Following, a theoretical framework is constructed to act as the basis for the empirical analysis. Further, grooming



advertisements found in magazines are analyzed to investigate how women are stereotyped. Subsequently, the empirical findings of the analysis are presented and concluded. Finally, a research tool that can be utilized by organizations and consumers alike is presented.

## 2 Chapter 2 – Literature Review

In relation to this thesis's purpose of investigating how magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women, the following chapter aims at providing a broader understanding and overview of the field of study. In order to understand the larger context of the research problem presented, existing literature and the most significant studies on the topics of advertising, gender stereotypes in advertising and the portrayal of women in advertising will be reviewed and presented. More precisely, the first part of the literature review focuses on providing an overview of the role of gender stereotypes in advertising, including its purpose and possible effects, and existing studies that have investigated the depiction of gender stereotypes in advertising in different contexts. The second part of the literature review focuses on the use of stereotypes in magazines and the portrayal of women during the past years within magazine advertisements. By providing an overview on the aforementioned topics, a better and broader understanding of the research problem being studied and its contribution to the field is given below.

### 2.1 Advertising and Gender Stereotypes

The role of advertising and its influence on society has been of interest for the past years for researchers in the field of social science (Berger, 2011; Jackson, Nielsen & Hsu, 2011; Kilbourne, 2000; Soar, 2000). It is stated that through the use of text and images advertising conveys messages and meanings that influence society (Hall, 1982). Relating to these communicated messages and meanings, the field of advertising experiences an enduring debate between advertisers and sociologists whether advertising takes the role to “mirror” or “mold” society. Advertisers argue that advertising acts as a ‘mirror’ and can thus be interpreted as reflecting dominant values that exist in society. Hence, advertising is seen as a lens that depicts social phenomenon (Grau & Zotos, 2016). Sociologists however critique this view and argue that advertising ‘molds’ society, which implies that the media shapes people’s perception and interpretation of social reality. In relation to the molding role of advertising, especially the use of gender stereotypes in advertising and its influence on society has been critiqued within social science (Grau & Zotos, 2016).

The aim of marketing and advertising is to sell brands and products. To fulfill this aim, advertising uses text and images that often represent certain gender stereotypes that invoke identity (Schroeder & Zwick, 2004). Stereotypes are ideas about a certain social category that distinguishes them from other categories, such as making the distinction between genders (Grau & Zotos, 2016). More specifically, gender stereotypes describe the belief that certain attributes, such as traits, physical characteristics, role behaviors, and occupational status can be either related to femininity or masculinity (Knoll, Eisend & Steinhagen, 2011). Advertising uses stereotypes to communicate messages and meanings to its audience, facilitating the

understanding and interpretation of advertisements. Sheehan (2004) points out that the media uses stereotyped images of people due to their familiarity. Advertisers portray a limited representation of women's and men's roles that seem to have become familiar and even accepted within society and among consumers, such as images of the busy homemaker, the buttoned-down executive or the brawny construction worker. As advertisers are working within limited space and time constraints, they rely on these familiar images of certain categories of people to establish rapport with consumers and move on to more important information, such as product information. By using these familiar images, advertising communicates for instance for whom a certain product is aimed for and how it is intended to be used (Sheehan, 2004).

According to Knoll, Eisend and Steinhagen (2011), stereotypes can be seen as providing consumers helpful orientations in everyday life. However, the authors also state that stereotypes can be interpreted as oversimplified conceptions that can also be misleading and do not necessarily respond to the images found in society. Creating stereotypes becomes problematic especially when it restricts people in their development, such as when it confines people to using certain products or holding specific jobs that are usually identified by other stereotypes (Knoll, Eisend & Steinhagen, 2011). Similarly, Döring and Pöschl (2006) state that by communicating specific images of men and women, such as through gestures, roles and colors, advertising is said to shape what shall be interpreted as masculinity and femininity by society. Creating a differentiation between genders through stereotypes can, according to the authors, be seen as restricting the options for men's and women's development as they may feel the need to meet the communicated gender images presented in the media. According to Döring and Pöschl (2006), the representation of gender in advertising thus presents an important and critical research field.

The use of gender stereotypes in advertising has been critiqued and researched within different areas. Gender stereotyping in advertising has, for instance, been studied in different media such as print media (e.g. Courtney & Wernick Lockeretz, 1971), television (e.g. Knoll, Eisend & Steinhagen, 2011), music videos (e.g. Wallis 2011), film (e.g. Neuendorf et al. 2009), video games (e.g. Miller & Summers, 2007), and social media such as blogs (e.g. Tortajada, Aranüna & Martínez, 2013). It has generally been investigated what kinds of stereotypes are being portrayed in advertising, why advertising is making use of stereotypes and lastly how advertising impacts society by promoting certain stereotypes (Grau & Zotos, 2016). As an example, Caterall and Maclaran (2001) have studied consumers' perception of gender depictions in advertising and its influence on consumer behavior and have found that the depiction of different gender stereotypes influences people's gender identity and consequently their purchase behavior. Other studies, have for instance focussed on advertising's influence on people's self-image and self-esteem. In this regard, Topolinski, Lindner and Freudenberg (2014) claim that the permanent exposure of consumers to idealized pictures that are portrayed in advertising, such as when advertising depicts thin models, results in body dissatisfaction, self-objectification, lowered self-esteem and depression among consumers. Advertising within social research has often been criticized for creating inaccurate images of reality that puts

pressure on people to act and behave in a certain way that is socially acceptable, and for creating ideal pictures and images, that can negatively impact consumers (Jung & Lennon, 2003).

Most research however has focused on understanding the role of gender stereotypes in regards to femininity or masculinity. Ervin Goffman's (1979) study on gender advertisements, in which he analyzed the portrayal of gender stereotypes in advertisements, is known to be one of the first and most influential studies on understanding advertisement's role on socially constructed ideals of masculinity and femininity (Baker, 2005). The research revealed that women were most often portrayed in family roles, submissively, or being in a physically and socially lower positioned as opposed to men (Goffman, 1979). In his study, Goffman developed a framing analysis, concerned with the investigation of hand postures, positioning, facial expressions and the aversion of gaze (Döring & Pöschl, 2006; Goffman, 1979). Goffman's model has acted as the basis for further research. As an example, Döring and Pöschl (2006) studied gender stereotypes in advertisements for mobile communication systems that could be found in popular men's magazines, based on Goffman's framework to conduct a content analysis. The research found out that although society has changed since Goffman's study in 1979, similar depictions of male and female stereotypes could still be found in advertising (Döring & Pöschl, 2006). Similarly, Massé and Rosenblum (1988) studied the depiction of male and female stereotypes in women's and men's magazines and found differences in the portrayal of men and women. Women were most often depicted in subordinating and in sexy poses, especially in men's magazines (Massé & Rosenblum, 1988). In line with these findings, Paek, Nelson and Viella (2011) state that women are likelier to be depicted in family-oriented roles, concerned with beauty and in sexualized or decorative postures in advertising as opposed to men. In addition, they are also likely to be depicted as being dependent, domesticated, subordinated in comparison to men. Hence, researchers in the field of social science claim that gender stereotypes in advertising still exist, especially when it comes to the depiction of women in traditional gender roles (Döring & Pöschl, 2006; Grau & Zotos, 2016).

Women are said to still be presented in a subordinated manner, in traditional roles. Women rather take decorative roles, such as being interested in their outer appearance and beauty, in more domestic and family-oriented roles and less in career oriented roles (Grau & Zotos, 2016). However, contradicting these arguments, Åkestam, Rosengren & Dahlen, (2017), state that some companies take a more empowering approach, called femvertising, and show women in advertising in less traditional and more empowering roles, although these seem to be still rare.

Recent research (Grau & Zotos, 2016; Scheibling, 2014; Schroeder & Zwick, 2004) on gender advertising however has taken a larger focus on the depiction of men rather than on women. The depiction of male stereotypes in advertising has especially caught researcher's attention due to the changing role of men in society from a strong and independent image to more softer roles, including men taking the position as the stay-home father or being interested in personal care (Grau & Zotos, 2016). As an example, Schroeder and Zwick (2004) investigated the portrayal of male stereotypes and masculinity in advertising and its influence on male consumption choices. Similarly, Scheibling (2014), studies the representation of masculinities in grooming product advertising, stating that the role of men is changing. The author mentions

that cosmetics and beauty has been targeted towards women in the past, but it has recently become more progressively advertised towards men. By means of discourse analysis Scheibling (2014) found that male stereotypes can be found in the field of grooming and although grooming has traditionally been associated with femininity, men depicted in grooming advertisements can be interpreted in a masculine manner.

The review on current literature regarding advertising and gender stereotypes shows that the depiction of gender stereotypes in advertising still seems to be an important topic, seeing its influence on consumers such as their self-image and self-esteem. The literature assumes that gender stereotypes still exist in advertising, especially among women who seem to be portrayed in traditional, submissive, decorative and domestic roles, even though some companies may take a more empowering approach towards women in advertising. Recent literature however has rather focused on the depiction of male stereotypes in advertising, such as in grooming advertisements, due to the changing gender roles in society. However, it seems that recent research has neglected the portrayal of women through stereotypes in advertising, seeing that the roles in society are changing, especially in the area of grooming, which has traditionally been associated with femininity, but has in the recent years been more and more advertised towards men.

## 2.2 The Representation of Women in Magazine Advertisements

Mass media constitutes a nonpersonal form of advertising communication that includes television and print advertising used to promote products and services to a large audience (Belch & Belch, 2003). Print advertising, specifically, is an aspect of marketing that consists of magazines, newspapers, direct mail, or posters (Clow & Baack, 2012). Concerning magazines, advertising agencies produce creative and visually appealing material for companies and brands that are then displayed in the pages of consumer magazines (Belch & Belch, 2003). Along with being available on newsstands, magazines are also now attainable online. The presence of digital magazines has increased due to facilitated online accessibility made available through mobile phone and tablet applications (McIntosh, 2017). Magazine advertising is aimed at targeting a segmented audience of readers (Clow & Baack, 2012). Consequently, what is communicated to an audience of readers is dependent on demographics such as gender and associated lifestyles. Moreover, magazines provide consumers with valuable information and advice based on their needs and wants along with what is of interest to them and their corresponding lifestyles (Clow & Baack, 2012). According to Belch and Belch (2003) over half of the material in magazines are advertisements while for some magazines it may be even more, hence advertising content presented in magazines tends to overpower that of editorials and articles. Thus, readers are exposed to a significant amount of advertisements that communicate visual reproductions of social situations particularly in relation to gender.

The representation and portrayal of women in print advertising and magazines has been extensively investigated for the past decades (Baker, 2005; Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976; Courtney & Wernick Lockeretz, 1971; Döring & Pöschl, 2006; Goffman, 1979; Kang, 1997; Mager & Helgeson, 2011; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009; Wiles, Wiles & Tjernlund, 2009; Zotos & Tsihla, 2014). In 1971 Courtney and Wernick Lockeretz contributed to the understanding of gender portrayals in media by shedding light on the inaccurate depiction of women by conducting a content analysis of over 700 magazine advertisements. Courtney and Wernick Lockeretz (1971) found that women were portrayed far less in occupational roles in comparison to men. The small percentage of women appearing in working roles were not engaged in professional careers such as business executives but rather feminine roles often associated with women such as entertainers and nurturing positions. When women were shown alone or in the presence of other women they were portrayed in non-working or decorative roles. The authors uncovered a variety of prevalent stereotypes in the survey of the selected advertisements consisting of women as dependent of men, women as sex-objects to men, women as homemakers, and women as subordinates. For instance, “women do not make important decisions or do important things” (Courtney & Wernick Lockeretz, 1971, p. 94) depicts women as unintelligent and incapable of making individualistic decisions by constraining her role in decision-making and limiting it to inexpensive household and appearance related personal-care purchases. Thus, a connection between the products being advertised and the manner in which gender was portrayed was also identified. The relationship reinforces the concept of stereotypical gender roles by implying that men and women are categorized into making certain consumption decisions based on preconceived gender stereotypes. Courtney and Wernick Lockeretz’s (1971) study is one of the most impactful contributions to understanding how women are portrayed in print media. Its impact influenced Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) to delve into the complex topic of gender portrayal. Through a content analysis of magazine advertisements from 1958, 1970, and 1972 Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) extend Courtney and Wernick Lockeretz’s (1971) findings by exploring the changes of gender portrayal between this timespan. Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) corroborate Courtney and Wernick Lockeretz’s (1971) study by reinforcing the claim that women are portrayed in traditional or decorative roles as opposed to professional roles. Thus, the portrayal of women communicated in the advertisements did not reflect the social changes of women of that time.

Perhaps one of the most prominent studies can be traced back to Goffman’s (1979) analysis of gender display and posture communicated in his collection of advertisements. The author conveys differences in gender behavior particularly that of women, by pinpointing a variety of themes based on “social situations” (Goffman, 1979, p.1) that are enacted in advertisements. The differences of gender communicated in advertisements thus conveys to consumers the construction of female oriented stereotypes such as the “ritualization of subordination” (Goffman, 1979, p. 40), which plays on the inferiority of women as opposed to men. Goffman’s framework of gender display is a commonly used analytic tool among researchers (Döring and Pöschl, 2006; Kang, 1997; Mager & Helgeson, 2011) as it provides a basis for analyzing gender behavior in print advertisements. The behavioral analytic tool has been utilized by researchers since its infancy and continues to be a popular choice in contemporary advertising and

marketing literature. Authors such as Kang (1997), Döring and Pöschl (2006), and Mager and Helgeson (2011) have applied the framework to their studies to explore the pervasiveness of the themes. Döring and Pöschl (2006) have debunked some of Goffman's themes by conducting a content analysis of gender stereotypes within German mobile communication advertisements. The study concluded that although some themes such as function ranking were no longer evident, others were still very much so. Similarly, Kang (1997) applied Goffman's framework to women's magazine advertisements between the years of 1979 and 1991 to illustrate the changes in the representation of women. The study discovered that while some of Goffman's stereotypes were no longer evident in the portrayal of women, others were still very much present. In contrast, Mager and Helgeson (2011) discovered that Goffman's gender behavior themes remained prevalent among women. The authors emphasized that women continue to be sexualized and portrayed in decorative roles within the themes of ritualization of subordination and licensed withdrawal. Despite this, Mager and Helgeson (2011) suggest that within the themes of function ranking and feminine touch, for instance, the manner in which women are portrayed is shifting towards a gender balanced and equal representation.

Contemporary empirical studies on the representation of women in print advertising continue to explore stereotypes and how women are currently being portrayed. Baker (2005) explored how women are portrayed to different audiences through the analysis of a variety of advertisements showcased in popular men's and women's magazines. The findings suggest that women are sexualized differently depending on the audience of magazines, despite this there continues to be an emphasis on women's appearance and preconceived functions. Interestingly so, a women's function varies depending on the audience it is targeted at. Baker (2005) suggests that a women's function or role when portrayed in men's magazines is that of a sex-object whereas when portrayed in women's magazines their function is focused on being the product user. In addition, the women portrayed serve a purpose to the products being advertised depending on the magazine's audience. When an advertisement in a magazine is targeted at women the women communicates how a certain product can help achieve beauty and physical attractiveness whereas in a men's magazine the product communicates how it will help the audience attract a woman. Regardless of how women are portrayed in different magazines, a profound emphasis on societal expectations concerning women's beauty and physical attractiveness continues to exist. In addition, Wiles, Wiles, and Tjernlund (2009) conducted a content analysis by analyzing magazine advertisements across the USA, the Netherlands, and Sweden and found that men are depicted in career-oriented roles more than women despite the professional and educational advancements women have achieved in these countries. Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009) contribute to the existing literature on the portrayal of women in print advertising through a content analysis of advertisements in the United Kingdom. Concerning the stereotypical portrayal of women, the study supports similar claims as it was concluded that women are seldom depicted in non-traditional or career-oriented occupational roles. Zotos and Tsihla (2014) corroborates previous claims by arguing that although there have been significant changes in society that have impacted gender roles, traditional stereotypes are still present in advertisements. The recent contributions of Wiles, Wiles, and Tjernlund (2009) and Zotos and Tsihla (2014) reinforce Courtney and Wernick Lockeretz's (1971)

findings and fortifies the argument that despite the advancements women have accomplished throughout the years, along with social gender changes, women are not portrayed in career-oriented or professional roles as accurately as men are. Thus, recent literary contributions confirm that traditional female stereotypes, such as the ones suggested by Courtney and Wernick Lockeretz (1971), Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976), and Goffman (1979), continue to be reoccurring themes in the current portrayal of women.

The interrelationship associated with gender stereotypes and the type of products being advertised has been indicated, but only a limited amount of literature has investigated the liaison (Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Courtney & Wernick Lockeretz, 1971; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009). Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009) contribute to the existing literature on the portrayal of women in print advertising through a content analysis of advertisements in the United Kingdom and discover that there is a connection between female gender stereotypes and products, a correlation previously acknowledged by other researchers (Courtney & Wernick Lockeretz, 1971; Baker, 2005). However, Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009) further develop this association between product categories and female stereotypes by investigating hedonic and utilitarian products. Hedonic products consist of sensory inducing characteristics that contributes to happiness and meeting consumer wants such as apparel and cosmetics while utilitarian products are associated with functionality and meeting consumer needs such as personal hygiene (Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009). The authors suggest that hedonic products are associated with women in decorative roles while utilitarian products are connected to the portrayal of women in a degree of varying roles from traditional, non-traditional, and decorative. The relation between product categories and female stereotypes expressed by past studies signifies that women are portrayed and stereotyped differently depending on the product being advertised. It has been argued, that the reason for this is due to stereotypical gender role associations made of women along with their limited decision making, including purchasing power (Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976; Courtney & Wernick Lockeretz, 1971). For instance, past literature emphasizes that the role of women in society is often linked to the household (Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976; Courtney & Wernick Lockeretz, 1971), thus inexpensive household products such as cleaning agents, food, and personal hygiene are the responsibility of women to purchase in order to reaffirm their role in society. Therefore, it would be of relevance to look into a specific product category to further examine how women are portrayed. Grooming and personal-care products, for instance, are largely consumed and purchased by women (Courtney & Wernick Lockeretz, 1971; Sarpila, 2013). The stream of literature within this field also emphasizes that women are met with societal expectations related to physical characteristics such as beauty and attractiveness, consequently purchasing beauty related products is essential in order to achieve an ideal image of beauty and femininity. Therefore, women are often the target of personal-care and grooming related advertisements (Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976; Sarpila, 2013). The portrayal and stereotyping of men in grooming advertisements has been delved into (Scheibling, 2014), but no study has investigated how female stereotypes are communicated and how women are portrayed in grooming and personal-care advertisements. Thus, it would be interesting to explore the interface of personal-care and



grooming product category and the portrayal of women as a product category may be associated with the reinforcement of a specific stereotype.

Although the portrayal and stereotyping of women in magazine advertisements is a topic that has been previously investigated from varying perspectives, it is evident that certain discrepancies remain uncharted. The past literary contributions prove that although the portrayal of women has changed, women's physical attractiveness and sexuality continue to be emphasized. Women's capabilities continue to be scrutinized by reinforcing old-fashioned masculine and feminine ideals into contemporary society by mirroring them onto advertisements. Thus, it is essential to extend the literature by considering current portrayals of women within a specific product category such as grooming and personal-care advertisements rather than a broad range of categories.

## 2.3 Literary Significance

The past literature, reviewed in this chapter, has focused on advertising, gender stereotypes, and the manner in which women are represented in magazine advertisements. Regardless, the representation of women within magazine grooming advertisements has not been considered by previous studies. The thesis aims to provide a literary contribution through the exploration of how women are portrayed in grooming advertisements within magazines. By exploring how magazine grooming advertisements portray women, the literature on varying schools of thought will be extended. Firstly, the knowledge on gender advertising particularly in relation to women will be extended as the focus is on the representation of women within the specific category of grooming advertisements. Secondly, the literature on the presence of female role stereotypes such as traditional and non-traditional stereotypes used in media will be extended by investigating how women are stereotyped in magazine grooming advertisements. Thirdly, looking into advertisements within the specific product category of grooming and personal-care will not only contribute to the knowledge of advertising but also to the phenomenon of women's grooming. Additionally, the thesis will also contribute to the intellect on the interrelation between female stereotypes and the grooming product category, an endeavor previously unexplored. Moreover, by contributing to these differing schools of thought, the thesis aims to provide new insights on the literature of women, advertising, stereotypes, and grooming in hopes of assisting other researchers within the field of advertising and marketing along with other relevant fields such as consumer culture theory and sociology by contributing to the existing knowledge of gender in media in relation to society.

## 3 Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the portrayal and stereotyping of women in magazine grooming advertisements. In order to explore how women are portrayed and stereotyped in advertisements it is essential to review established theories related to the context of the research question to gain a broader understanding. With this aim, theory on the attributes of gender stereotypes is reviewed in order to comprehend how stereotypical feminine components are expressed by advertisers. Furthermore, Goffman's gender display framework is considered to complement the composition of gender stereotypes by contributing to theory on how gender behavior is conveyed in advertisements. Moreover, since this thesis aims to investigate grooming advertisements, it is essential to better understand grooming and hence explore the grooming ritual behavior often communicated in advertising. Lastly, theory on social semiotics in advertising communications is assessed and provides knowledge on the semiotic elements that construct subliminal meaning through symbolic visual communication. The proposed theories and concepts are used as an interconnected tool to analyze how advertising communicates the portrayal and stereotyping of women.

### 3.1 The Attributes of Stereotypes

For the purpose of this thesis, it is essential to determine the elements that formulate gender stereotypes. In order to do so, the basic masculine and feminine components that help conceive gender stereotypes are investigated. The gender stereotypes framework comprises part of the proposed theoretical structure that aids in understanding the portrayal of female stereotypes by providing a guide that helps evaluate the elements in print grooming advertisements presented in women's magazines.

Stereotypes are beliefs about the differentiating attributes of a social group of people (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981). One of the most significant is that of gender stereotypes pertaining to men and women. In order to gain an adequate portrayal of women, an understanding of the attributes that compose gender stereotypes needs to be established. According to Deaux and Lewis (1984), these attributes consist of personality traits, physical characteristics, gender role behaviors, and occupational roles that can be attributed to both genders. Each attribute is associated with masculine components for men and feminine components for women.

#### **Personality Traits**

Firstly, personality traits are related to the masculine and feminine emotional factors showcased by men and women respectively (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). For instance, men are affiliated as being more assertive, rational, and independent while women are considered to be more nurturing, trustworthy, loving and sensitive compared to men (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Döring & Pöschl, 2006; Feingold, 1994).

### **Physical Characteristics**

Secondly, physical characteristics consists of the appearance and perceived attractiveness of men and women (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). Feminine physical characteristics include perceptual elements related to physical features of a woman that compose the perception of beauty and sex appeal (e.g. weight, height, skin, hair color and eye color).

### **Gender Role Behaviors**

Thirdly, men and women are characterized by certain behaviors, emotions and perceptions that are considered appropriate by society corresponding to their gender (Levesque, 2011). Role behaviors, also commonly known as gender roles, depict women in feminine, nurturing, and caretaking roles while men are depicted in masculine, dominant, and leading roles (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Grau & Zotos, 2016; Zotos & Tschla, 2014).

### **Occupational Roles**

Lastly, based on gender, there are female-dominated and male-dominated occupational roles (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). Men are often portrayed in professional career-oriented roles as they are considered to be the breadwinners of the family. Whereas women are depicted as homemakers, housewives or stay-at-home moms as their perceived responsibility is to cater to their family. However, Deaux and Lewis (1984) also express that the occupational status of women is not limited to housework or caretaking. Women are depicted at times in career-oriented roles usually associated with women that focus on nurture such as teachers and nurses.

Although the attributes presented above help facilitate the understanding of the attributes of stereotypes, giving insight into the attributes of female stereotypes, they in themselves are not sufficient enough to fully understand how stereotypes are portrayed in advertisements.

## **3.2 Goffman's Gender Display Framework**

For the basis of this study Goffman's (1979) gender typology presented in his book "Gender Advertisements" is utilized. The themes uncovered in gender commercials critique the visual content depicted in advertisements produced by advertisers and organizations. Goffman (1979) analyzed the behavior of men and women presented in the advertisements by decoding and categorizing them based on the portrayal of gender roles. Goffman's framework has been applied to various studies investigating the interrelationship between advertising, photography and gender (Bell & Milic, 2002; Butkowski & Tajima, 2017; Kang, 1997). The gender behavior illustrated in the selection Goffman's advertisements sheds light on how gender roles, particularly of women, are portrayed in society. Understanding the portrayal of women based on how behavior is depicted in advertisements shows how the relationship between gender and displays is constructed. The themes of gender stereotypes depicted by Goffman (1979) include "relative size" (p.28), "feminine touch" (p.29), "function ranking" (p.32), "the family" (p.37), "the ritualization of subordination" (p.40), and "licensed withdrawal" (p.57).

### **Relative Size**

According to Goffman (1979), social status consisting of power and rank is expressed in social situations through relative size. The most distinguishing characteristic is that of height. The literal and figurative aspect of height displays high social status and superiority especially of men. Therefore, the contrast in height of people depicts differences in social classes and dominance over a particular gender.

### **Feminine Touch**

Another theme depicted by Goffman (1979) is the feminine touch. The feminine touch entails women using their hands and fingers to delicately touch an object or person. In contrast, this subtle touch differs from the utilitarian kind that is hard and manipulative. The ritualistic touch also includes self-touching and the use of the face and body instead of the hands. Feminine touching is commonly enacted by women more than men and communicates the delicate nature of the female body.

### **Function Ranking**

Function ranking involves an individual, usually a man, taking on an executive role while the other individuals involved support them or comply. This theme described in *Gender Advertisements* (Goffman, 1979) is often attributed to occupations, authority and social hierarchy. However, it is not exclusive to occupations and can also be applied to other situations or activities. For instance, function ranking can be portrayed among adolescents as they take instruction and learn from the leading actor such as an adult male.

### **The Family**

Goffman (1979) describes a social unit of people comprised of members who share a relationship and activities as the family. The members of the family represent the differing roles of men and women in society. The male or the father in the family is often depicted a bit outside of the group as a way to reinforce the protector aspect of his role whereas women or mothers are seen closer to the children particularly daughters.

### **Ritualization of Subordination**

In addition, perhaps Goffman's (1979) biggest contribution to *Gender Advertisements* is the theme of the ritualization of subordination. The ritualization of subordination involves a variety of different acts of lowering oneself. This includes an individual being physically placed lower than someone else in a picture or advertisement such as a bed or floor. The floor signifies an unclean and impure area which can be transferred to the actors in recumbent positions. Being close to the ground also reinforces weakness and the need for defense. In contrast, elevation is often associated with social status and power. The body cant and the knee bend are other subordinating postures that includes the lowering of the body to illustrate submissiveness and conformity.

## **Licensed Withdrawal**

Lastly, Goffman (1979) describes the theme of licensed withdrawal which entails an individual psychologically removing themselves from a situation even though they may appear to be present. This leaves a person vulnerable and dependent on the aid or rescue of other people. The theme of licensed withdrawal includes postures such as covering the mouth, sucking or biting fingers, finger-to-finger fidgeting, removing one's gaze, head and eye aversion, anchored drifts, snuggling and nuzzling.

Goffman's framework is a relevant and useful tool for analyzing images and advertisements as it takes occupational and social status, gender roles and display, and ritualistic behavior into consideration. The framework has been used to investigate gender in advertising within different industries using varying methodologies (Bell & Milic, 2002; Butkowski & Tajima, 2017; Kang, 1997). It also delves into aspects of role behaviors and occupational status along with more complex aspects that compose gender stereotypes.

## **3.3 Grooming Ritual Behavior**

The purpose of this thesis is to understand the portrayal and stereotyping of women in grooming advertisements. With the aim to investigate grooming advertisements, it is essential to understand the role that grooming plays for women as well as within advertising. Relating to this, the following paragraphs focus on women's grooming as a ritualistic behavior, including its meaning, elements and the factors it is influenced by.

The commodity of rituals, ritualization, and ritual behavior has been extensively investigated from varying viewpoints (Park, 1998; Rook & Levy, 1983; Rook, 1985; Rook, 1984; Goffman, 1979; Cowan & Spielmann, 2017; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991). Rituals are symbolic and expressive actions consisting of multiple behaviors that are repeated over a period of time (Rook, 1985). Ritualized activities are also internalized behaviors that have become part of consumers' everyday routine or reserved for special occasions. Participating in rituals provides meaning to an individual by enhancing an everyday experience through a dramatized performance (Rook, 1985). It is also important to mention that culture influences the inheritance of ritualized behavior (Rook, 1985). Therefore, commodities such as advertising and consumption also influence ritualized behavior (Cowan & Spielmann, 2017; Otnes & Scott 1996; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991). Rituals are shaped by four components consisting of ritual artifacts, a script, performance roles, and an audience (Rook, 1985). Rook (1985) describes an artifact as a consumer product or a ritual symbol that communicates meaning to the ritualistic experience. The script provides guidance on casual or formal rituals including how to use the artifacts or products and who the product should be used by. Rook (1985) also mentions that the individuals involved in a ritual are assigned a ritual performance role in order to play a part in the corresponding script. While a ritual audience focuses on the individuals who gain from the experience apart from those who are directly involved in the ritual performance roles (Rook, 1985).

A ritualistic behavior that people engage in everyday are grooming rituals. Grooming can be defined as the behaviors inherited to take care of one's personal hygiene and appearance (Moeran, 2010; Wax, 1957). There are various elements often related to grooming and personal-care, however for the purpose of this thesis grooming consist of using certain products to alter the hair, skin, and body in order to enhance physical appearance (Rook, 1985, Moeran, 2010; Wax, 1957). Grooming behaviors may include cleansing or treating the skin and hair, waxing or shaving hair off the body, and eliminating body odor. Popular products may include soap, body wash, face wash, cleansers, razors, wax, body lotion, face cream, serums, and deodorant to name a few. Grooming is considered an individual and personal ritual that provides meaning to an average and everyday activity (Rook, 1985). Rook and Levy (1983) express that individuals partake in grooming rituals for personal reasons in order to transform the old self into the new self. Along with the individual desire to improve the self, grooming rituals are also influenced by social factors (Hur & Choo, 2016) and are enacted to meet the societal pressure of being clean and attractive. As mentioned above, ritual experiences are composed of ritual elements. This also applies to grooming rituals which are composed of an artifact, script, performance role, and an audience. Examining the attributes of grooming rituals in advertisements provides an understanding of how women are portrayed based on an everyday ritual.

In order to adequately analyze the grooming ritualistic behavior of women portrayed in advertisements the specifics of this ritualized behavior must be addressed below:

### **The Grooming Artifact**

Grooming artifacts are composed of the products or tools used in the grooming process. For instance, individuals use ritual artifacts such as shampoo or a hair brush in order to enhance their image to be confident and also to convey their personality to society (Hur & Choo, 2016). The artifact also facilitates the grooming ritual (Rook, 1984).

### **The Grooming Script**

The script used in grooming rituals consists of the grooming process and method (Park, 1998). For grooming rituals, the script is informal and based on individual internalized behaviors (Hur & Choo, 2016). Therefore, an individual's grooming script is unique and determined by their own preferences. For example, a woman gets up in the morning, rinses her face with water, applies a cleanser, washes her face, dries her face, and then applies a serum. The woman is enacting her ritual role by following her own script. A grooming script can also be influenced by unwritten social rules. For instance, gender might have an impact on who can partake in a certain grooming ritual and how the ritual should be performed. However, it should be noted that the script may not always be present or well-defined (Rook, 1985).

### **The Grooming Performance Role**

A grooming ritual outlines the performance role of an individual directly involved in the process. As with a script, the ritual role of grooming is informal and can be either active or passive (Rook, 1985). Usually a grooming ritual involves one person, however there are

instances when others may also play a role in the performance. For instance, a person may go to a hair salon every month to get their hair cut by a professional hairdresser. The individual and the hairdresser, therefore both play a role in the ritualistic behavior, reinforcing the active and passive role.

### **The Grooming Audience**

Besides those that have an explicit role, the audience to a grooming ritual also consists of those who witness the actual grooming performance or the outcome of the performance. An individual might groom for personal or social factors (Hur & Choo, 2016).

Grooming rituals are often displayed in grooming and personal-care advertisements in order to represent a realistic portrayal of shared societal activities. Rook (1985) acknowledges that grooming behavior communicates certain meanings to society related to the composition of an individual such as their personality and status while the visual images interpreted in advertisements construct meanings and influence society's understanding of constructs such as what is considered socially acceptable (Kang, 1997). Through the use of ritual symbols, advertisements convey to consumers how products should be used and who they should be used by (Otnes & Scott, 1996). The behavior depicted by the actors in advertisements is meant to mimic the reality of society. Although the ritualized grooming behavior of each individual is different and unique (Hur & Choo, 2016), advertisements have associated certain activities with either men or women (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014). Associating different ritualized behaviors with gender in advertisements implies that men and women need to be targeted differently due to the characteristics that compose their masculine and feminine attributes. Communicating ritualized behavior such as grooming rituals through advertisements may convey to consumers certain stereotypes especially pertaining to gender roles (Sheehan, 2014). For instance, women may be delegated to treat their skin in a manner in which an ideal of beauty can be met, ultimately referring to certain gender roles and physical characteristics associated with stereotypes. Thus, interpreting grooming rituals showcased in advertisements helps to better understand how female stereotypes are portrayed particularly in relation to the perceived behavior of women.

## **3.4 Semiotics in Advertising Communications**

In order to understand how female stereotypes are communicated in women's grooming advertisements, it is essential to understand how advertising creates communication messages and how these messages get interpreted by its audience, such as consumers, and thus become meaningful. When understanding how advertising communicates with its audience the communication model by Shannon and Weaver (1949) is often used by different literature (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005). The model illustrates how advertising construct messages through the means of pictures, symbols and languages. Relating to the communication model by Shannon and Weaver (1949), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) go more into detail, explaining how visual communication, such as in advertising, uses different semiotic resources to create meaningful messages and how these can

be interpreted by the viewer. These two theories are further explained in the following in order to understand the use of semiotics in advertising to communicate messages and meaning.

### **Advertising Communications**

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and Kotler et al. (2005), one of the most well-known models in understanding advertising communications is the communication model developed by Shannon and Weaver (1949). The model involves nine different elements, namely sender, encoding, message, media, decoding, receiver, feedback, and noise (Kotler et al. 2005). According to the model as described in Kotler et al. (2005), the sender represents the party sending the message, such as the advertiser or company. The sender then encodes the message, intended to be sent, by putting the message of thought into text and symbolic form. Hence, encoding leads to the message, which presents the collection of symbols and words that the sender transmits through a certain communication channel, called media, to reach the audience. The message then becomes decoded by the receiver, who represents the party receiving the message such as the consumer, through a process by which the receiver assigns meaning to the symbols and text encoded by the sender. Following the encoding of the message, the receiver shows some kind of response to the message and thus may send feedback back to the sender. The model of Shannon and Weaver also includes the element of noise and describes it as unplanned distortion that might interfere the communication process and leads to the receiver interpreting the message differently than intended by the sender. Thus, for an advertising message to be effective, advertisers attempt to involve language and symbols in their text that are familiar and easily interpreted by its audience (Kotler et al. 2005).

### **Social Semiotic Analysis**

Drawing on the communication model by Shannon and Weaver (1949), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) underline the fact that advertising communicates messages, ideas and information to its audience and becomes meaningful through visual communication. According to the authors, visual communication conveys meaning through the depiction of people, places and things. In more concrete terms, Kress and Leeuwen (2006) make the linkage to social semiotics, stating that visual communication further makes use of different semiotic resources that can be interpreted in a certain way and thus create specific meaning among its audience. According to van Leeuwen (2006), semiotics can be defined as “the actions and artefacts we use to communicate” (p. 3). In this relation, semiotics can be language, images, symbols, signs, gestures, text, sound, colour, and verbal and visual expressions that are used to communicate a certain message, idea or thought (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

One of the most important theories and models of social semiotics is the one by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) described in their seminal work “Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design” (Jewitt & Oyama, 2011; Stoian, 2015). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) based their model on Halliday’s theory of metafunctions, which states that semiotics within the field of language perform three metafunctions simultaneously to create meaning (Stoian, 2015). Halliday differentiates between three different metafunctions namely ideational, describing the function of creating representations; the inter-personal, relating to the role that language plays in creating interactions between writers and readers; and the textual metafunction, representing



the way how pieces of representation and interaction are combined to form texts or communicative events. Based on this knowledge, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) have extended this theory to images and adopted the terminology to ‘representational’ as opposed to ‘ideational’, ‘interactive’ instead of ‘inter-personal, and ‘compositional’ in place of ‘textual’ (Jewitt & Oyama, 2011).

### **Representational Metafunction**

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the representational metafunction describes the way experiences are visually encoded. This can be done by narrative and/or conceptual structures. Using narrative structures to encode experiences in images represents unfolding events, actions and change processes depicted in that picture. These always include certain elements that indicate imaginary lines and give directionality, making it possible for the reader to encode the narrative message behind the image (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). An example could be an image of a couple facing and looking at each other. A directionality line can be drawn between these two persons linking to their interaction as meaning behind this depiction (Stoian, 2015). Conceptual structures, on the contrary, concern the representation of individuals or objects in term of their structure, meaning how objects are arranged within the image; their class, representing whether they are shown as subordinate or superordinate meaning whether they have something in common or can be seen as different; and their meaning, relating to the actual and true meaning behind a certain object (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

### **Interactive Metafunction**

The interactive metafunction represents the function of creating meaning through the representation of interaction patterns between participants depicted in the image. Thereby, participants can be represented (depicted) and interactive (real), meaning that the interaction can take place between participants inside the depicted image but also between the viewer and the picture (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Three factors namely contact, social distance and point of view play a key role in encoding the meaning behind these interactions. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), many pictures and advertisements portray people who look directly at the viewer making direct contact with them. The authors call these demand pictures as the depicted person in the advertisement visual symbolically demands something from the viewer. If the direction of the gaze of the person portrayed in the image is not directed towards the viewer, but instead the viewer is addressed indirectly, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) define this interaction as offer pictures as the image offers the viewer some kind of information but does not actively encourage a demand. Whether an image calls for demand or offer affects the viewer’s interaction with the image the feeling of either being engaged or attached (Stoian, 2015). The element of social distance on the contrary is concerned with the use of different frames, including close-up, medium or long, which can be applied to people, objects, or landscapes. Using different frames and thereby creating different distances and relationships between the depicted images and the viewer encourages different meanings behind the visual (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Further, the dimension of perspective or point of view uses different angles in order to create power relationships. As an example, a viewer can be the same eye level as the participant or object depicted in the image, or the viewer might have to look up

or down to the viewer, each creating a different meaning of power relationship (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001). One further elements has been added to the interactive meaning by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), namely modality, which is concerned with the reliability of the message depicted through elements such as color saturation, contextualization, depth, representation, and illumination and brightness.

### **Compositional Metafunction**

The compositional metafunction focuses on the arrangement of semiotic artefacts like symbols, images or graphic elements in relation to text in order to create a certain meaning. Thereby, meaning is created by the elements of information value, salience and framing. Information value is related to different visual areas such as left and right, top and bottom and centre and margin, which each leads to different message interpretations (Stoian, 2015). As an example, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) describe that components structured on a horizontal axis lead to the assumption and interpretation among the viewer that components placed on the left side represent given and familiar information that represent the departure of the message, whereas components on the right side get interpreted as new and unknown information that require special attention. Another component of visual meaning is salience, signifying the viewer or reader which objects or information are the most important ones to be considered. Lastly, framing enables the reader to interpret if components depicted in the picture shall be read in relation to each other or whether they should be interpreted as separate information, such as through a more distant frame from other objects (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Understanding how visuals, such as advertisements, can be interpreted in terms of semiotics, Jewitt and Oyama (2011) as well as Stoian (2015) show how social-semiotics can be used to analyze the meaning behind pictures in regards to gender roles and stereotypes. As an example, Jewitt and Oyman (2011) used the semiotic analysis theory by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) to study sexual health promotion campaigns while investigating the construction of gender stereotypes within these promotion images. However, the authors also emphasize that while the social-semiotic analysis as described by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) represent a useful framework for analyzing meaning behind visual communication, it does not, on its own, offer a holistic interpretation of the meaning behind visuals as it for instance does not consider different cultural or societal views. Therefore, to use the method of social-semiotic analysis effectively and to bring out hidden meanings, it needs to be combined with other theories such as the understanding of gender (Jewitt & Oyman, 2001).

All in all, the communication model by Shannon and Weaver (1949) provides a good understanding of how advertising communicates messages to its audience through the depiction of people, places and things and how these become meaningful and get interpreted by its audience through social semiotics (Kotler et al. 2005; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Hence, every single communicated component depicted within visual advertisements has potential meaning, communicating a certain message intended by the advertiser. However, although these theories represent helpful tools for analyzing meaning behind advertising images, they do not consider the cultural and societal aspects behind these images and hence to analyze all

hidden meanings need to be combined with gender theories such as the one presented in Goffman's Gender Advertisements.

### 3.5 Conceptual Framework

With the aim to investigate how magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women, established theories related to the context of the research question were reviewed. The review provides significant insight into the attributes of gender stereotypes, Goffman's gender display framework, grooming rituals and semiotics in advertising communication.

The reviewed theories show that stereotypes are beliefs about a certain social group of people to differentiate these from other groups and are consequently socially constructed. Moreover, the reviewed theories further indicate that stereotypes use different attributes to differentiate certain social groups of people such as to make the distinction between men and women. These attributes of stereotypes more precisely include personality traits, physical characteristics, gender role behaviors, and occupational status (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). According to Deaux and Lewis (1984), with regards to personality traits, women are typically stereotyped as being more sensitive and nurturing than men. Physical characteristics involve physical elements that compose the perception of beauty and sex appeal. Additionally, gender role behavior sees women in feminine, nurturing and caretaking roles and lastly, occupational status typically describe women as homemakers, housewives or stay-at-home moms taking care of the family (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). Drawing on the attributes of stereotypes gives a basic understanding of the composition of stereotypes and which stereotype attributes are typically associated with women and femininity. However, the theory of the attributes of stereotypes alone is not sufficient in answering how magazine grooming advertisements portray women.

The theory of Goffman's gender display framework was reviewed giving insight into the techniques to analyze stereotypical gender behavior in print advertisements. The theory by Goffman (1979) provides insight into the displays and behaviors of women depicted in advertising. The themes of gender stereotypes described by Goffman (1979) include relative size, feminine touch, function ranking, the family, the ritualization of subordination, and licensed withdrawal. According to Goffman (1979) the height of people depicted in advertisements, known as the relative size, indicates their social class and power ranking. The feminine touch enacted by women communicates the delicate nature of the female body, whereas the function ranking gives insight into authority and social hierarchy, and the family usually depicts women as mothers close to their children (Goffman, 1979). Furthermore, the ritualization of subordination as described by Goffman (1979) describes a depicted person as being physically lowered down signifying weakness or need for dependency. Lastly, licensed withdrawal describes a person who is psychologically removing themselves from a situation even though they may appear to be present, which communicates vulnerability and the need of being rescued from a certain situation (Goffman, 1979). The review on Goffman's gender display framework shows that the theory provides a good insight into how to analyze behavior within advertising and the specific meaning behind certain behaviors depicted. Goffman's

gender display framework includes certain aspects of the attributes of stereotypes, such as occupational roles, but by further analyzing the behavior displayed in advertising provides additional meaning to a portrayal. Hence, combining the theory of attributes of stereotypes with Goffman's gender display framework enables the researchers of this paper to better understand stereotypes and stereotypical behavior depicted in advertisements in order to further interpret meaning.

Moreover, theory on grooming rituals was reviewed. The review shows that rituals are shaped by four components consisting of ritual artifacts, the ritual script, the ritual performance roles, and the ritual audience (Rook, 1985). The ritual artifact is described as the product, whereas the ritual script provides guidance such as how to use the artifact (Rook, 1985). The ritual performance role indicates who is involved in the ritual, whereas the ritual audience is described as the individuals who gain from the experience apart from those who are directly involved in the ritual performance role (Rook, 1985). The review on grooming rituals shows that in order to fulfill the aim of this thesis to investigate grooming advertisements, it is essential to understand the ritualistic behavior of grooming, including the elements depicted in the advertisements.

The review on established theories further looked into the use of semiotics in advertising communications in order to understand how advertising conveys messages and meanings. The review shows that advertising communicates and creates meaning through the use of semiotics such as signs, symbols, images, or colors, whereby each and every element depicted in the advertisement has a certain meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Social semiotic analysis is hence a helpful tool in order to analyze the hidden meanings and messages communicated by advertisements. The social semiotic analysis more precisely includes the analysis of three metafunctions namely the representational metafunction, the interactive metafunction and the compositional metafunction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The theory on semiotics in advertising communications and social semiotic analysis in particular gives insight into how to interpret the different elements used by advertisements in order to uncover their meaning communicated. However, the theory provides a helpful structure on how to analyze the underlying meaning behind advertising images, but does not consider the cultural and societal aspects behind these images and hence needs to be combined with other theories that help to interpret and assign meaning to the analyzed metafunctions (Jewitt & Oyman, 2011). For this reason, to allocate meaning to the semiotics used in advertising, this thesis uses social semiotic analysis in combination with theories on the attributes of stereotypes, Goffman's gender display framework and grooming rituals.

The review of the established theories shows that the theories of the attributes of stereotypes, Goffman's gender display, grooming rituals and semiotics in advertising communications provides insight into understanding stereotypes, stereotypical behavior depicted in images, grooming rituals and how to analyze the meaning communicated by advertising. However, on their own these theories do not enable the researchers to fulfill the aim of this thesis to investigate how magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women and hence need to be combined. In order to understand the elements that define female stereotypes the theory of the attributes of stereotypes and Goffman's gender display framework are used. To

further understand the analyzed grooming advertisements, this thesis makes use of theory on grooming rituals. However, as these theories in itself do not create meaning, social semiotic analysis is used to construct and interpret the meaning behind the attributes of stereotypes, Goffman's gender display and the grooming rituals depicted in the advertisement. By considering the attributes of stereotypes, Goffman's gender display and grooming rituals through semiotic analysis the researchers of this paper are able to understand the latent meaning communicated by the advertisement. Additionally, it also provides an understanding towards the communicated purpose of each element depicted and hence can interpret and investigate how magazine grooming advertisements stereotype women. As previously described above, Figure 1 provides an overview of how the reviewed theories are used in order to answer the defined research question.

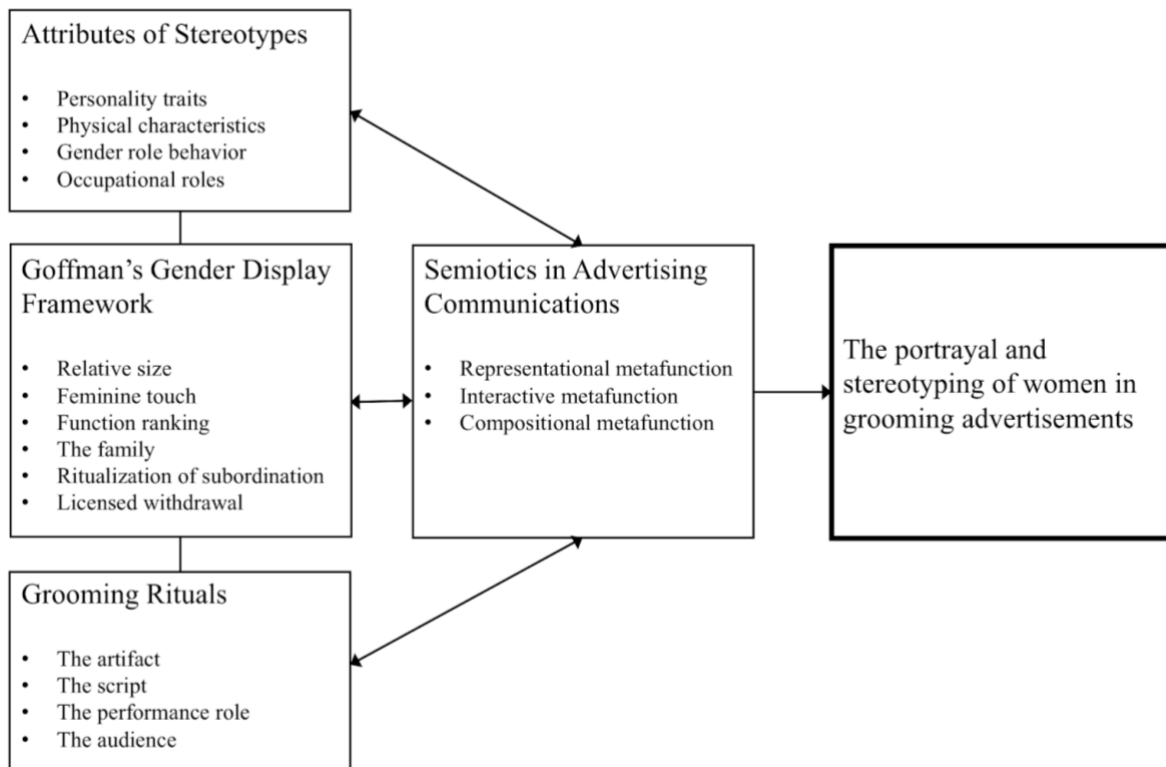


Figure 1: The Grooming Advertising Conceptual Model

## 4 Chapter 4 — Methodology

With the purpose to investigate and answer the question of *How do magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women?* suitable and trustworthy data needs to be collected and analyzed. In connection to this, the following methodology chapter provides an outline and justification of the chosen research paradigm. Following, the chapter describes how the most suitable data was collected and how the data was analyzed to draw an adequate conclusion to the defined research question. Lastly, considerations regarding the trustworthiness of the collected data and its analysis are discussed and reflected on.

### 4.1 Research Paradigm

To better understand the research background and context of the study, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012) recommend researchers to consider the different epistemological and ontological perspectives before developing the methodology to conduct research. In addition, paradigms guide the decisions of researchers by answering the basic ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions (Guba, 1990). For this reason, the consideration of the varying epistemological, ontological, and methodological assumptions allows the researchers to understand the different research designs and ultimately decide on the best method to address the research problem. Based on the researchers' response to the ontological, epistemological, and methodological inquiries, a constructionist paradigm is followed as what is interpreted is influenced by the phenomena under study (Levers, 2013). Due to the interpretivist nature of the constructionist paradigm the researchers acknowledge the need of being self-aware that what is being interpreted is influenced by the phenomena under study (Levers, 2013).

Adhering to the constructionist paradigm, adopting a relativist ontological viewpoint allows the researchers to consider the “many truths” (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012, p. 50) of the world in order to properly understand the manner in which women are portrayed and stereotyped in grooming and personal-care advertisements. The researchers acknowledge the nature of reality by embracing the assumption that there is no single truth to the reality of world, but rather there are many different perspectives that should be taken into consideration (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Therefore, from a relativist ontological perspective, the purpose of this study is to construct multiple truths associated with the manner in which women are represented in magazine advertisements to better understand the subjective reality of gender.

Continuing to adhere to the constructionist paradigm, the epistemological assumption of the researchers in this study is that of constructionism, as the authors believe that theory and knowledge can be interpreted differently (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012) depending on how the world is seen and experienced. Thus, the varying degrees of meaning formed through the knowledge gathered are constructed by the “interaction between the interpreter and

the interpreted as situated in society” (Levers, 2013, p. 4). This subjective epistemology recognizes knowledge as a way to develop understanding rather than utilizing knowledge as a way to discover objective truth (Levers, 2013). In relation to the study, social and behavioral science theory argue that gender is socially constructed (Goffman, 1979; Grau & Zotos, 2016; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009; Zotos & Tsihla, 2014). Consequently, the semiotics present in advertisements communicate aspects of gender identity, ultimately contributing to the social construction of gender stereotypes. Concepts such as femininity and masculinity, often associated with gender stereotypes, are also social constructions whereby meaning is assigned through interaction and developed with time (Bryman, 2012). The researchers agree with this theory and believe that gender stereotypes are a socially constructed phenomenon rather than a predefined entity. By analyzing how women are portrayed and stereotyped in grooming advertisements presented in magazines the authors aim to construct meaning by understanding reality through the observation of societal and gendered values constructed by society and mirrored onto advertisements.

## 4.2 Qualitative Research Design

Based on the nature of the research question the thesis calls for a qualitative abductive research approach. An abductive research approach is identified as most suitable as the aim is to understand the phenomenon of how magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women. According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016), “abduction refers to the process of moving from the everyday descriptions and meanings given by people, to categories and concepts that create the basis of an understanding or an explanation of the phenomenon described” (p.24). In relation to the definition described above, this research paper moves from investigating the phenomenon of how women are being portrayed in magazine grooming advertisements every day to understanding the underlying categories and concepts that create certain meanings and stereotypes of women. Furthermore, an abductive research approach is defined by using elements of an inductive and deductive approach combined, it focuses on theory development rather than theory generation. It is also based on developing a new theoretical framework through the amalgamation of existing theories and concepts derived from the confrontation with reality (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). With this in mind, as this study is the first one to investigate women’s stereotyping in advertising particularly in relation to grooming, this study uses an abductive approach in conjunction to a new theoretical framework that enables the researchers to investigate women’s stereotyping in relation to grooming. Hence, as no established theories related to female stereotypes in grooming advertisements exist, the researchers of this paper utilize related theories, such as attributes of stereotypes, gender display, grooming rituals, and semiotics and combine these in a unique way in order to be able to answer the research question. By developing this new theoretical framework, the researchers aim to extend existing theories on stereotypes, particularly in the area of grooming, than generating new theories. Thus, seeing that this study is based on a framework developed to particularly analyze female stereotypes in grooming advertisements and this study’s purpose to contribute knowledge and hence advance existing theories on gender stereotypes rather than generating a new theory, an abductive approach is chosen as most suitable to meet the objective

of this study. A deductive and inductive approach are considered inappropriate in answering the defined research question as a deductive approach is concerned with testing hypothesis. As this thesis is concerned with gaining new insights rather than testing ideas, a deductive approach is not being followed. An inductive approach focuses on generating new theories without considering established theories (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012), however this study is based on the consultation of established theories, which are being developed further and extended through the contribution of knowledge, thus determining induction as an unsuitable method for this paper.

More precisely, this paper follows a qualitative research design applying the method of social semiotic discourse analysis. A qualitative design is chosen based on the open and interpretative nature of the research question that focuses on gaining new insights and understanding the meanings behind the portrayal of women. According to Baarda (2004), in qualitative studies the researchers are open for any insights that might emerge during the research process and interested particularly in understanding the meaning behind a certain phenomenon. As this thesis is the first to investigate the portrayal and stereotyping of women in grooming advertisements, the researchers aim to be open to any new insights and are interested in the interpretative meaning of the portrayal of women in a stereotypical way. In order to investigate how magazine grooming advertisements stereotype women more concretely, the qualitative method of a social semiotic discourse analysis is chosen. According to Jewitt and Oyama (2011), social semiotic discourse analysis is an effective method for investigating the meaning behind visuals, such as advertising pictures. Furthermore, Kress (2010) states that through the use of different elements, such as signs, text, or colors in combination with their arrangement and interaction, visuals do not only portray the world but also convey meaning. Hence, only by analyzing all elements in relation to one another while considering the context, the hidden meaning of visuals can be decoded. In relation to the holistic picture of the visual, the authors further state that every sign or element depicted communicates a certain meaning and should thus be considered. Additionally, Kress (2010) states that “the focus on sign-making rather than sign use is one of several features which distinguish social-semiotic theory from other forms of semiotics” (p. 54). Based on the fact that this research is concerned with investigating women’s stereotypical depiction in grooming advertisements, which has not yet been investigated, social semiotics represents a suitable method as it through the analysis of all advertising elements combined and its context uncovers the hidden meaning, hence forming the stereotypes depicted in grooming advertisements. Prior studies (Döring & Pöschl, 2006; Zotos & Tsihla, 2014; Grau & Zotos, 2016), investigating the portrayal of gender stereotypes, have applied the method of content analysis which is concerned with quantifying specific elements, such as if the advertisement portrays a model in a sitting position, but ignores other elements of the advertisement (Bell, 2011). However, as this thesis aims to identify how and with which meaning women are being stereotyped in grooming advertisements, a semiotic discourse analysis is more suitable as it considers all elements of the advertisement and hence reveals the true hidden meaning.

Additionally, to support the qualitative analysis to investigate how magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women, quantitative elements will support the findings. The researchers of this paper decided to not only qualitatively analyze the depicted stereotypes



of women in grooming advertisements and give them meaning, but in order to provide a holistic picture of the representation and distribution of these stereotypes in advertisements, to add quantitative data and in more precise percentages of the occurrence of each stereotype. By supporting the qualitative analysis through quantitative percentages of the frequency of each stereotype, the researchers aim to provide the whole picture of how women are being stereotyped in advertisements and also how often each stereotype is being communicated in order to give a better understanding of advertising's portrayal of women.

### 4.3 Sampling and Data Collection

Based on this thesis' aim to investigate how magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women, data in the form of grooming and personal-care advertisements found in women's lifestyle magazines were collected. When conducting a study within the field of advertising research, non-probability sampling methods such as purposive or theoretical sampling is a common choice (Sarstedt, Bengart, Shaltoni & Lehmann, 2017). Based on the research question, purposive sampling was considered the most suitable for the study. Purposive sampling entails collecting a sample that meets the predefined key characteristics that are relevant to the research question (Bryman, 2012). Based on the purpose to investigate how magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women the sample of advertisements needed to fulfill the following criteria: grooming advertisements found in magazines that also physically depict a woman. The physical or symbolic representation of a woman was deemed necessary to analyze how women are portrayed in advertisements as described by the theoretical framework. To determine the sample of grooming advertisements, grooming in the scope of this thesis is defined as grooming and personal-care products categories related to hair care and skincare such as shampoo, conditioner, hair dye, hair treatments, hair tools, body wash, beauty bars, cleansers, facial cream, body oil, face masks, cleansing wipes, deodorant, shaving cream, razors, waxing products and services, and other products or tools used to manipulate and alter the appearance (Moeran, 2010; Rook & Levy, 1984; Wax, 1957). Although, products such as makeup, nail polish, perfume and women's personal hygiene products (e.g. tampons and pads) fall under personal-care, these items were excluded as they are considered to be subsector product categories separate from the grooming and personal-care of the skin, hair, and body (Cosmetics Europe, 2017). Guba (1981) also recommends researchers to apply purposive sampling to their studies in order to increase the transferability criterion. Probability sampling methods such as random sampling would not have been an appropriate choice as the research question has determined the scope of the study - the inclusion of women in grooming advertisements - and not a random selection of advertisements belonging to different product categories. Purposive sampling was considered an appropriate choice as it highlights the importance of the study's research question, placing the focus on how magazine grooming and personal-care advertisements, in particular, portray and stereotype women.

Based on the purpose to investigate how magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women, relevant data needed to be gathered. Therefore, the sample selected for the

study consisted of grooming print advertisements found in American women's lifestyle magazines. U.S. magazines were selected due to the need to understand the English language proficiently to evaluate analogical, rhetorical, and metaphorical text in advertisements. On account of this, it can be argued that U.S. magazines were an appropriate choice, as it is essential for researchers to be fluent in a language to be capable of deciphering metaphors and analogies used in discourse (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Moreover, women's lifestyle magazines were an appropriate choice because they include diverse advertisements targeted at women, including grooming related advertisements whereas specific-interests magazines may not. A substantial amount of consumer magazines are focused on special-interests or niches, rather than an array of general topics (Clow & Baack, 2012; Danesi, 2008). For instance, topic laden magazines such as Vogue or Harper's Bazaar are heavily concentrated on high fashion. Magazines such as Health and Women's Health include editorials saturated with nutrition and exercise. These interest magazines allow advertisers to advertise to a specific audience ultimately appealing to the target audience's interests (Clow & Baack, 2012; Danesi, 2008). Although these types of magazines include a wide selection of advertisements, they are heavily focused on a specific topic of interest rather than a selection of different advertisements advertising different kinds of products (Clow & Baack, 2012). Thus, the inclusion of grooming and personal-care advertisements might be limited in these types of magazines. In comparison, women's lifestyle magazines include different topics that might be of interest to women. They often include editorials on fashion, health, pop culture, wellbeing and beauty such as grooming and personal-care (Danesi, 2008). Since the articles and editorials presented in these types of magazines are diverse, so are the advertisements. The advertisements selected for women's lifestyle magazines concentrate on different product segments related to the magazine content presented (Danesi, 2008). Thus, the advertisements showcased in women's lifestyle magazines are also comprised of personal-care and grooming products as beauty and personal-care is an integral component of women's lifestyle magazines.

The researchers of this thesis investigated different women's lifestyle magazines targeted at different age groups as the types of advertisements presented differ depending on the magazine's target audience (Baker, 2005). As the thesis aims to investigate the portrayal and stereotyping of women, women of different age groups shall be considered to answer the research question adequately. Hence, it is pivotal to include magazines that target different age groups as the advertisements should be representative of women of different ages. Including advertisements targeted at women of different age groups, provides the study with diverse sample of advertisements. Focusing on one specific magazine or target audience would thus limit the types of advertisements used in magazines to portray women. Therefore, in order to select a sample that is truly representative of women of different age groups, different magazines were evaluated to ensure that the sample would include a large enough amount of grooming and personal-care advertisements. Firstly, magazines targeted at teenagers were examined. The most popular teen magazines in the U.S. were considered, this consisted of Teen Vogue and Seventeen with the average reader being a part of generation Z or millennials with an average age of 24 (Condé Nast, 2017; Seventeen, 2017). Secondly, magazines targeted at young adults were examined. The most popular women's lifestyle magazines pertaining to this age group consisted of Cosmopolitan and Elle with the average reader being a millennial woman with an average age of 35 (Cosmopolitan, 2017; Elle, 2017). Thirdly, magazines

targeted at mature women were examined. These magazines consisted of *Woman's Day* and *Good Housekeeping* with the average reader being middle-aged or 56 (*Good Housekeeping*, 2017; *Woman's Day*, 2017). To facilitate the decision-making process, all magazines mentioned above were tested by evaluating the advertising content showcased in the February 2017 issue of each magazine. As a result, much consideration in the selection of magazines was undertaken based on popularity or circulation, inclusion of grooming and personal-care advertisements, and target audience. After evaluating different women's lifestyle magazines *Seventeen*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Good Housekeeping* were selected as they are popular consumer magazines primarily focused on women's lifestyle within different target audiences. *Seventeen*, available in print and digitally online, is the most popular teen magazine in the U.S. providing young women with advice on relationships, education, fashion, beauty and boosting confidence (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2018; *Hearst*, 2018a). *Cosmopolitan*, coined the "bible for fun", is one of the most popular magazines in the U.S. focused on providing young modern women with editorials on love, fashion, beauty, health, careers, and finance (*Hearst*, 2018b). In comparison, *Good Housekeeping* is also a very popular consumer lifestyle magazine educating readers on different topics such as innovative products, health, fashion, and family life (*Hearst*, 2018c). Although the magazines employ a different target audience of women, the content displayed share similarities as they are all focused on lifestyle.

Once the need of acquiring different target audiences for women's lifestyle magazines was established, the question of which specific issues to evaluate was contemplated. As the aim of this study is to investigate how magazine advertising currently portrays and stereotype women in grooming and personal-care advertisements, it was salient to select a magazine sample that was considered current and up to date. Consequently, it was decided that the selection of magazines must have been published in 2017 as it was the most current and accurate representation of women available for the researchers to examine at the time. Magazines published in 2018 were excluded as during the conduction of this study all issues of *Seventeen*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Good Housekeeping* were not yet published. Due to the available time allocated to the researchers, only a certain number of advertisements were analyzed. For this reason, the researchers decided to evaluate every other monthly issue of *Cosmopolitan* and *Good Housekeeping*, with the exception of *Seventeen*, as only five issues of *Seventeen* are released a year. Based on our initial investigation into the different magazines, selecting magazine issues on a bimonthly basis rather than a monthly basis provided the study with a sufficient amount of advertisements to ensure an adequate and trustworthy analysis that would assist in answering the research question. In total the sample was comprised of 17 magazine issues, five from *Seventeen*, six from *Cosmopolitan*, and six from *Good Housekeeping*. Thus, the sample of advertisements in *Cosmopolitan* and *Good Housekeeping* consisted of those found in the February, April, June, August, October, and December 2017 issues while the sample for *Seventeen* includes every issue released in 2017 consisting of March/ April, May/ June, July/ August, October/ November, and December/ January as released by the magazine.

In order for the researchers to organize the data and facilitate the coding process later on, categories were created through the use of spreadsheets based on general information including: magazine, volume, issue, product segment, caption, and description. This procedure was necessary as it helped sort the data and facilitate the coding process. Subsequently, three

separate spreadsheets were created, one for each magazine, in order to keep the data organized and easy to sort through. The researchers then sorted through the magazines chronologically to identify the grooming and personal-care advertisements for each magazine issue. Once the grooming and personal-care advertisements were identified, general information was written down. Firstly, the magazine volume, issue, and date were jotted down on the spreadsheets for each corresponding magazine. Secondly, the product category or segment for each advertisement was identified in order to sort through the data later on. Thirdly, the captions, headlines, or slogans used in each advertisement were inserted into the spreadsheets to keep track of any repeating advertisements. Lastly, a concise yet detailed description of each advertisement was included. The description consisted of the researchers' first impression and initial interpretation of the advertisement. It included aspects concerning visual imagery such as background and symbols, discourse, ambience, and the overall execution of the advertisement (Danesi, Bryers & Gudinskas, 2010; van Leeuwen, 2008).

To reiterate, the advertisements that were analyzed were found in the selection of women's lifestyle magazines comprised of *Seventeen*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Good Housekeeping*. Although these magazines contained a variety of advertisements, only those that consisted of grooming and personal-care products or services were used. Of the five issues of *Seventeen* evaluated, 79 grooming and personal-care advertisements were identified. In addition, of the six issues of *Cosmopolitan* evaluated, 135 grooming and personal-care advertisements were identified. Furthermore, 49 grooming and personal-care advertisements were identified in the six issues of *Good Housekeeping* evaluated. As a result, 263 grooming and personal-care advertisements were found in total. As previously mentioned, the physical portrayal of a woman or women had to be evident in the advertisements. Therefore, advertisements that only depicted the product were not evaluated. Consequently, 158 advertisements included the representation of a woman or women. In spite of that, some of the advertisements were recurring within different issues of the same magazine or among the others. Accordingly, the advertisements that were repeated were thus excluded. This resulted in 92 unique grooming advertisements that included the portrayal of a woman or women. On account of this, the 92 advertisements that were identified were then chosen to be analyzed in depth.

The sample of the U.S. women's lifestyle magazines used in this study were accessed with permission through a smartphone and tablet application known as *Texture*. By purchasing a monthly subscription of the application, *Texture* gave the researchers unlimited online access to hundreds of magazines from the U.S. including *Seventeen*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Good Housekeeping*. The advertisements comprising the sample were then downloaded with permission directly from the online application.

## 4.4 Data Analysis

To transform the gathered data into meaningful findings, the collected magazine grooming advertisements needed to be analyzed and interpreted. Hence, a total of 92 unique grooming advertisements depicting a woman were examined over a timeframe of two weeks. An overview

of the gathered advertisements that were analyzed can be found in Appendix A. The analysis followed the principle of a social semiotic discourse analysis as previously described. In this relation, Braun and Clarke (2006) propose general steps that can be followed when investigating discourses and visual communications, which have been followed by this study. More precisely, the authors suggest the following steps: (1) “familiarizing yourself with your data” (p. 87), (2) “generating initial codes” (p. 88), (3) “searching for themes” (p. 89), (4) “reviewing themes” (p.91), (5) “defining and naming themes” (p. 92), (6) “producing the report” (p. 93). The analysis of the gathered grooming advertisements were guided by the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) in order to organize the data strategically and hence being able to interpret these accordingly.

Following these suggested phases, in the first step, the analysis began with becoming familiar with the collected grooming advertisements. Every advertisement was read and re-read multiple times and initial ideas and impressions were noted down. In this way, an overall understanding and sense of the collected advertisements as a whole was gained.

In a second step, the advertisements were re-read in more depth with the aim to create initial codes. Each advertisement was organized and sorted in a spreadsheet according to the following categories: Magazine, month of publication including the number of volume and issue, brand, product, caption, and grooming category such as skin care, hair care or shaving. Thus, the advertisements could be organized strategically and also an overview was provided. Additionally, all 92 advertisements were analyzed based on the conceptual framework. Drawing on the conceptual framework provided in Chapter 3, the depicted grooming rituals, including the grooming artifact, the script, the performance role, and the audience, depicted in each advertisement were analyzed and noted down. Similarly, every advertisement was examined based on Goffman’s gender display framework, including themes such as relative size, feminine touch, function ranking, the family, the ritualization of subordination, and licensed withdrawal. Moreover, every advertisement was investigated according to the attributes of stereotypes, such as personality traits, physical characteristics, gender role behaviors, and occupational roles. Following the identification and coding of the grooming rituals, Goffman’s elements of gender display and the attributes of stereotypes, each advertisement was analyzed according to the principles of social semiotic analysis as described in Chapter 3. Relating to social semiotic analysis, each advertisement was examined in more depth according to the representational metafunctions, including for instance narratives and conceptual structures, the interactive metafunctions, involving for instance the point of view and angles used in the visual picture of the advertisement, and the compositional metafunctions, focusing on elements such as symbols, images and text. While examining each advertisement according to social semiotic analysis, including the different metafunctions, a connection has been made to the observed grooming rituals, Goffman’s framework of gender display and the attributes of stereotypes. By combining social semiotic analysis with the theories of grooming rituals, gender display and stereotypes the hidden meaning behind the advertising visuals could be interpreted. These interpretations were noted down and coded in the spreadsheets. Following, based on the interpretation and analysis of each advertisement, according to the theoretical framework, a number of three to five key words were written down for each advertisement to facilitate the next step of developing overall themes. The key words were

based on the most obvious and important interpretations made as well as the central theme of the advertisement. As an example, key words that were used included “subordination”, “strength”, “fun”, or “beauty”. To come up with these key words, each advertisement was re-read in depth with great care, placing great attention to details. These keywords could be interpreted as the initial codes as described by Braun and Clarke (2006).

To ensure that the collected material and the analysis would deliver adequate results that answer the defined research question of how magazine grooming advertisements stereotype women, a pilot study was conducted. During this pilot study, three different magazines from the sample, namely the February issue of Seventeen, Cosmopolitan and Good Housekeeping, were chosen. The authors picked one issue of each magazine to further test the suitability of the advertisements found in these magazines. Following, one grooming advertisement depicting a woman has been chosen from each magazine to be analyzed in depth according to the conceptual framework, drawing on the theories of grooming rituals, Goffman’s framework on gender display, the attributes of stereotypes, and social semiotic analysis. Next, based on the steps suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), the authors have coded and written down the results of the analysis in the previously described spreadsheets in order to test the file’s accuracy and completeness. Following, the researchers re-read the advertisements in order to determine key words and possible themes. The pilot study indicated that the theories presented in the conceptual framework enable the chosen advertisements to be interpreted and to yield differences and similarities in the portrayal of women as stereotypes and hence allows the research question to be answered adequately. Furthermore, it showed that the spreadsheet contained all categories needed to analyze and structure the analysis accurately as well as that the chosen sample magazines provide suitable grooming advertisements in order to answer the defined research question for this study.

In a third step, themes were formed based on the keywords and interpretations noted down for each advertisement. To find these themes, advertisements that were coded with the same keywords, such as for instance “subordination” were grouped together. The purpose of this step was to determine similarities and differences between the advertisements and their depiction and stereotyping of women. Within this stage, the sample of 92 grooming advertisements were grouped into ten different themes presented in Figure 2.

<b>Major Codes and Keywords</b>	<b>Initial Themes</b>	<b>Major Themes</b>
Subordination Social pressure Weak and vulnerable Longing for acceptance Two-faced	The Sensitive Woman The Masked Woman The Ageless Woman	The Lost Subordinate
Concern for beauty Boring and dull Sexualized Physical appearance Superficiality	The Pretty Face The Sexy Body	The Dull Beauty
Everyday settings Embracing their beauty Carefree and natural Childish fun Immature and irresponsible	Women in Everyday Life Women at Play	The Authentic Free-Spirit
Hard working Strong and tough Bold and confident Fearless Actively fighting	The Aware Woman The Fighting Woman The Empowered Woman	The Powerful Maverick

Figure 2: Thematic Codes and Themes

Following, the ten different themes (see Figure 2) were carefully reviewed. In this phase, all advertisements were again re-read with attention. The aim of reviewing the themes was to evaluate them as well as to group them together, ultimately narrowing them down as all themes and their characteristics should be clear and distinctive. Hence, each theme was systematically evaluated and it was noted that some themes could be combined into broader themes. In the end, four different and unique themes were identified.

Subsequently, having defined the final themes, each theme was labelled with a precise name that accurately describes the concept of stereotypes they are representing. Thereby, the names were chosen based on the keywords that were grouped together to form each theme. During this step, attention was laid to the fact that each theme name should be easily understood and distinctive from each other. The final theme names chosen were: “The Lost Subordinate,” “The Dull Beauty,” “The Authentic Free-Spirit,” and “The Powerful Maverick.”

Finally, the last step as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) is producing the report, meaning the presentation of the analysis and its findings. Regarding this final step, the following Chapter 5 presents the analysis and the findings of the final themes. Each theme is presented, including its meaning and interpretation. Furthermore, to support the presentation of the findings the most vivid and useful examples representing each theme are depicted and analyzed in depth in order to support the justification of each theme. Lastly, frequencies of the occurrence of each theme were added. By adding the frequency of each theme, the aim is to provide a realistic and holistic overview of how often a specific theme has been represented within the chosen sample.

## 4.5 Qualitative Trustworthiness Criteria

In order to ensure that the quality of the research being conducted meets the expectations enlisted of qualitative research, the researchers adopted the qualitative trustworthiness criteria rather than the quantitative criteria composed of validity and reliability belonging to the positivist paradigm (Bryman, 2012; Guba, 1981). The trustworthiness criteria consist of credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability as situated by Guba (1981).

### **Credibility**

As the researchers of the study are two females with a Western perspective, they recognized the potential influence their background could have on the study. Therefore, it is of essence to increase the trustworthiness of the study by providing a credible account. To affirm that the credibility criterion of this study was met, the researchers immersed themselves in the context of the study by engaging within the field of research by acquiring knowledge related to advertising and stereotyping, particularly pertaining to women's studies. The confidence in the truth of the study was increased by interpreting the advertisements multiple times for a prolonged period of time (Anney, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) express that prolonged engagement with the research is necessary in order to fully understand the data and minimize distortions. Another strategy utilized by the researchers to increase the credibility of the study was to apply triangulation by making use of investigator triangulation and methodological triangulation (Anney, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Investigator triangulation was utilized by making use of two researchers instead of one. The use of more than one researcher increases the trustworthiness criteria of this study by recognizing the existence of different perceptions and incorporating two perspectives instead of one. These two perspectives strengthen the study's argument by embracing different interpretations of reality and ultimately reducing bias. Methodological triangulation was utilized by applying different research approaches to the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researchers applied social semiotic discourse analysis to analyze different components of the grooming advertisements. For instance, if the researchers would have solely applied discourse analysis than only the communicated text would have been applicable for analysis. Utilizing a combination of both methods deepened the analysis, while also establishing credibility, by enabling the consideration of all the semiotics present in the advertisements.

### **Transferability**

Transferability emphasizes the applicability of the findings to other research contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Therefore, Guba (1981) suggests applying purposive sampling, collecting thick data, and incorporating thick description into the study. In order to capture an accurate portrayal of women in magazine grooming advertisements the researchers have increased the transferability of the study by making use of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allows researchers to "maximize the range of information uncovered" (Guba, 1981, p. 86) and focus on the relevant criteria. Guba (1981) stresses the importance of being able to prove how the sample has met the determined criteria. The researchers have achieved this by carefully



selecting the advertisements that met the criteria set about by the scope of the study – the inclusion of magazine grooming advertisements and the physical presence of a woman. Moreover, thick descriptive data was gathered by providing a descriptive account of the textual, semiotic, and behavioral elements communicated from the selection of grooming advertisements. Through the collection of thick description (Geertz, 1973) the researchers were able to decipher contextual meaning conspicuously hidden in the advertisements in the form of metaphors and allegories. As a result, the utilization of thick description facilitates the understanding of the rich data while allowing the findings of this study to be replicated and transferred to other contexts (Anney, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **Confirmability**

As the researchers have naturally followed a constructionist philosophical perspective, they recognized the potential impact subjectivity may have on the study. Thus, the researchers acknowledge the impossibility of remaining fully objective when conducting a qualitative study (Bryman, 2012). However, they have applied strategies such as reflexivity and triangulation to increase neutrality (Guba, 1981). Theory triangulation (Patton, 1999) was achieved by considering and implementing different theories to the theoretical framework comprised of grooming rituals, attributes of stereotypes, Goffman's gender display framework, and social semiotics. By drawing onto the conceptual framework constructed within the in-depth analysis of the 92 advertisements, the confirmability of the study was achieved as the findings were influenced by theory rather than the researchers' bias. The use of theory triangulation also embraced different theoretical perspectives outside the specific field of study (Patton, 1999). In addition, throughout the conduction of the study, the researchers practiced reflexivity. Reflexive practices were applied by being open about the epistemological and ontological stance within the research as suggested by Guba (1981). In this way, the researchers recognized that their philosophical assumptions of the world influenced the study and the manner in which the findings are presented. Another way in which the researchers remained reflexive throughout the study was by keeping a reflexive journal (Anney, 2014; Guba, 1981). The researchers wrote inside their journals to document events, their personal thoughts regarding the data, and the changes encountered throughout the study. In this manner, the confirmability of the study was proven by adhering to a protocol that eliminates the researchers' preferences hindering the findings of the study.

### **Dependability**

As only three different women's lifestyle magazines - Seventeen, Cosmopolitan, and Good Housekeeping - were evaluated it was important to ensure that the findings were considered dependable. Guba (1981) suggests applying stepwise replication. Thus, based on this recommendation the researchers utilized stepwise application by analyzing the advertisements from all three magazines separately, writing down notes based on the predetermined categories and codes, and then comparing the results. The inconsistencies determined from the separate analysis were then discussed to improve the dependability criterion of the study. Once the researchers came to an agreement about the advertisements, the notes were adjusted on the spreadsheets and thus the dependability of the study was confirmed. This procedure ensures

that the findings are consistent, thus allowing other researchers to replicate the study in the future.

## 5 Chapter 5 – Empirical Findings

To answer the research question of how magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women a social semiotic discourse analysis was applied to the sample. As a result, this chapter presents the empirical findings derived from the analysis of the magazine grooming advertisements. The four final themes along with the most relevant examples of advertisements found are presented below in the subchapters. The findings of the analysis draw upon the theory of the conceptual framework illustrated in Chapter 3.

### 5.1 The Lost Subordinate

The theme “The Lost Subordinate” can be best described as the different pressures women feel from society reflected onto advertisements. The collection of advertisements belonging to this theme all share one dominant characteristic: the ritualization of subordination as defined by Goffman (1979). The advertisements portray women in different degrees of subordination liaising the societal pressure of looking young and beautiful often imposed upon women. According to the sample, advertisements that belong to this theme depict women either in dark and emotional portrayals (see Figure 3 and 4), unrealistic and forced displays (see Figure 5 and 6), or as conformists giving in to the fear of aging (see Figure 7 and 8). Moreover, according to the findings of the analysis, in order to adequately manage the societal pressure enforced on them, some women are portrayed as succumbing to the stress by masking their true feelings through a metaphorical mask. Other women portrayed submit to the pressure of attaining everlasting youth by conforming to the use of age defying products instead of embracing naturally aging skin. Furthermore, some women are portrayed as vulnerable things through the use of dark colors and emotive imagery, incapable of coping with the social consensus. The women depicted in this theme groom in order to be accepted by others in society rather than just grooming for themselves. In the following, these different described images of subordination are presented. As a result, “The Lost Subordinate” can be found in 28% of the sample collected of grooming advertisements.

#### **The Sensitive Woman**

One of the degrees of subordination found depicts women as defenseless and delicate creatures in subordinating roles, also known as the “The Sensitive Woman.” An example of this is evident in Olay’s 2017 Ultra Moisture Body Wash campaign found in various issues of Cosmopolitan and Good Housekeeping magazine. Figure 3 shows one part of this campaign. It depicts a young naked woman with dark features in a fetal position against a dark background. She is crouched and caressing her legs with her hands. Her face, pressed against her shoulder, is slightly tilted towards the viewer, showing a slight shy smile. The textual element is centered on her body and reads “Olay. Elevate Moisture. Enhance Skin. Experience Olay.” Towards the bottom right of the advertisement, the body wash and a loofah covered in soapsuds are pictured.

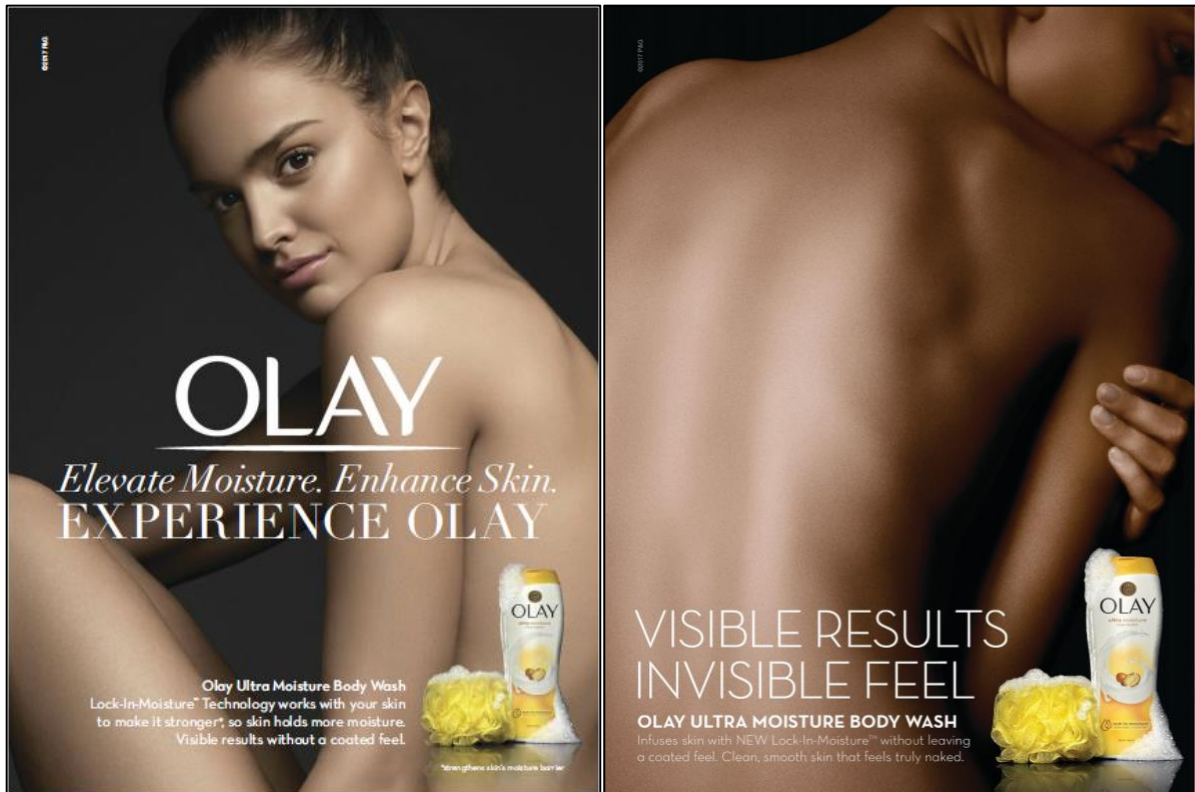


Figure 3: Olay's Elevate Moisture Advertisement (Olay, 2017a)

Figure 4: Olay's Visible Results Advertisement (Olay, 2017b)

In relation to her physical characteristics, the model is considered young and naturally beautiful as she is pictured nude with her hair pulled back. The nudity portrayed is not necessarily sexual and instead symbolizes her femininity by highlighting her soft and gentle looking skin. Although she has a slight smile on her face, her facial expression appears to be almost sad. Her despondent smile considered in relation to the dark background corroborates the woman's sad emotional state. Under the circumstances, her slight smile is associated with female gender role behavior as women are expected to smile even when they do not have the need to (Goffman, 1979), therefore in this portrayal it can be considered forced. Due to the dark background, her subordinated posture and facial expression the model may be considered a sensitive and emotional woman as she has stripped all of her clothes and is in deep thought on the floor. Thus, her female gender role portrayal in this frame is purely decorative and traditional as it adheres to an ideal image of women.

The model's face is slightly tilted and pressed against her bare shoulder emulating Goffman's (1979) display of feminine touch through the act of self-touching. Through the behavioral element of self-touching she is communicating the delicacy of her naked body which also reflects upon her emotional state and wellbeing. The fetal position lowered onto the floor represents Goffman's (1979) ritualization of subordination, indicating her vulnerability and defenselessness. According to existing psychology theory (Dunleavy & Slowik, 2012), assuming a fetal position is indicative of psychological trauma. The fetal position, as enacted by the model, is thus indicative of her need for dependency while also being an emotional and instinctive response to shield her body from further harm (Goffman, 1979). On account of this,

it can be suggested that the woman is physically protecting her body, symbolizing the need to also protect her emotional state from the harm inflicted by social pressure. Although, she is trying to protect herself she is unable to as depicted by her vulnerable position and naked body, ultimately leaving her defenseless.

The grooming ritual aspect of the advertisement is evident through the depiction of the grooming artifact and the implied ritual script represented through the textual and semiotic symbols (Rook & Levy, 1983). The artifact is represented by the body wash and loofah. As a woman is shown in the advertisement, it can be assumed that the performance role should be enacted by women. The script is not made clear by the advertisement but the loofah depicted is covered in foam, therefore one can assume that the body wash should be applied to the loofah. Furthermore, the advertisement uses words such as “elevate” and “enhance.” These words are placed in front of the woman’s naked body instead of near the product, meaning that these words are meant to be read together with the picture (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Thus, the compositional metafunction of the advertisement communicates the grooming script and suggests that the body wash should be applied to the skin to get noticeable results. It should also be noted, that the woman’s exposed skin and shy demeanor used in combination with the words “elevate” and “enhance” signifies her desire to be elevated in order to become more self-confident and socially accepted. Thus, the advertisement might be trying to communicate that through the use of the grooming product depicted social acceptance can be achieved through the physical and metaphorical cleansing and purification of the female body.

Another advertisement used in Olay’s Ultra Moisture Body Wash campaign can be seen in Figure 4. The advertisement displays a similar metafunction as the one previously presented in Figure 3. Attention is immediately drawn to the woman’s bare and naked back as she caresses her own skin gently with her delicate fingers. The woman’s face is not clearly visible other than a small portion that only displays a side of her face. Similarly, to the other Olay advertisement, the background is dark and the woman’s body is crouched down in a subordinating posture. Towards the bottom of the advertisement the textual element is centered and reads “Visible Results Invisible Feel” in large white text.

In the previous Olay advertisement (see Figure 3) described, the woman’s attention is towards the viewer. However, in Olay’s Visible Results advertisement (see Figure 4) the woman is completely withdrawn by facing the other direction and looking down, imitating Goffman’s (1979) display of licensed withdrawal. This can be described as an interactive metafunction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). As previously mentioned, the textual aspect communicates “Visible Results Invisible Feel”, which enhances the interactive metafunction by conveying the potential benefits of the grooming product. However, the text provides a metaphor for how the woman pictured feels in society. Although, she seems to be attempting to achieve a stereotypical feminine ideal expected of her by society by attaining “Visible Results”, she is losing her individuality along the way ultimately leading to an empty and “Invisible Feel” of herself. As she caresses and curls her body together she is communicating the need for protection or dependency (Dunleavy & Slowik, 2012). It can be indicated that the need for protection is more symbolic than physical, as she needs protection from the pressures of society as it has left her feeling naked and stripped of her identity. However, the ritualization of subordination

represented by the image conveys her vulnerability and susceptibility to societal pressure (Goffman, 1979). Therefore, one can suggest that there is nothing she can do to protect herself from the pressures of society so she continues to be submissive to it.

### The Masked Woman

The women belonging to “The Masked Woman” handle the pressure to look perfect differently than “The Sensitive Woman.” As previously illustrated in the “The Sensitive Woman,” women are portrayed in dark and subordinated displays to communicate the negative behavioral and emotional impact caused by the immense pressure imposed by society. In contrast, according to our findings, some women face the pressure head on by conforming to societal expectations. The women depicted in the advertisements of “The Masked Woman” are portrayed as wearing a “mask” in order to adhere to the societal pressure of fitting in and always looking beautiful. According to the sample collected, their hair is always long and perfectly groomed. They are also seldom displayed in natural or casual settings. Certain female gender role behaviors and personality traits such as being nice and kind are affiliated with women (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). Due to these associations women repress their negative emotions in order to adhere to stereotypical gender behavior and instead pretend to be happy or content. Ritualization of subordination does not just include physically lowered bodies to emanate a woman’s inferiority, it also includes subordinating facial expressions such as a smile (Goffman, 1979). Often, the women portrayed are shown in subordinated postures along with a big grin on their face, thus Goffman’s (1979) theme of ritualization of subordination is an unmistakable institution in this theme.



Figure 5: Pure Silk’s for Legs Like Pure Silk Advertisement (Pure Silk, 2017)

*Figure 6: Aveeno's Absolutely Ageless Advertisement (Aveeno, 2017)*

An example representative of this degree of subordination is depicted in the For Legs Like Pure Silk advertisement shown in Figure 5. Evidently, covering most of the page, Jana Kramer, a singer-songwriter, is sitting down on a chair with her knees bent and her body leaning forward. She is shown wearing a short dress, immediately directing the viewer's attention to her smooth and glowing legs. As she grasps onto the chair her gaze is focused on something or someone above her while she wears a big grin on her face. The setting is placed in a tropical paradise due to the palm trees pictured in the back of the frame. On the top left one can see the white textual element communicating "Pure Silk Razors. For Legs Like Pure Silk." Towards the bottom of the advertisement a selection of pink grooming and shaving products is depicted.

The woman portrayed meets the stereotypical physical characteristics pertaining to feminine attractiveness as she is young, slim, pretty and has long hair (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). In the advertisement, the woman appears feminine as she is wearing a dress and makeup, adhering to the expected female physical characteristics and gender role behaviors (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Grau & Zotos, 2016; Zotos & Tschla, 2014). Although the advertisement states that she is a renowned singer-songwriter the focus is not on her professional career but instead on her appearance, reducing the woman to her physical attractiveness rather than her talents. Therefore, instead of being portrayed in a non-traditional or occupational role the woman is portrayed in a traditional and decorative role due to the combination of her appearance and the leisurely tropical setting. In relation to grooming rituals (Rook & Levy, 1983), her legs are portrayed smooth and hair free, signifying that she has used the products or grooming artifacts pictured below her to achieve the look. Although the grooming ritual script is not obviously stated, it is communicated through the compositional metafunction provided by the semiotics that assign meaning to the image when considered in relation to one another (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Thus, the grooming script can be implied by evaluating the visual rhetoric such as the textual element in conjunction to the portrayal of the woman. Correspondingly, the visual focus of the advertisement is on her legs while the textual metafunction communicates that the depicted razors and shaving cream will leave consumers "Legs Like Pure Silk" as rendered by the model.

The most compelling evidence in the advertisement displayed is the ritualization of subordination and licensed withdrawal communicated through the behavior enacted by the woman (Goffman, 1979). It can be argued that the woman has psychologically removed herself from the pressure she feels from society by looking away from the viewer and responding with a smile that appears euphoric but in reality, is forced and unnatural (Goffman, 1979). Based on the interactive metafunction, her gaze is fixated upwards, possibly staring at someone who is literally and figuratively above her. Equally important to consider, is the manner in which her body is turned away from the person she is staring at along with her lowered body and bending of the knees. For these reasons, the woman is displayed as a subordinate to society. The woman, aware of her position in society, is portrayed submissively by withdrawing herself and masking her emotions by wearing a metaphorical mask displayed through her emotional response of laughter and perceived happiness.

An example that similarly mirrors the Pure Silk advertisement is Aveeno's Absolutely Ageless campaign presented in Figure 6. Pictured is the famous American actress, Jennifer Aniston. Her body is lowered onto the couch as she displays a big smile on her face representing Goffman's (1979) ritualization of subordination. She joyfully plays with her hands emitting Goffman's (1979) feminine touch and shows off her diamond ring. The text, strategically placed on her subordinating body, represents a compositional metafunction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and reads "Want to look younger, longer? Take the right steps now." Henceforth, the diamond ring is an indicator of traditional female role stereotypes focused on the importance of the commodity of marriage (Sheehan, 2004; Zotos & Tsihla, 2014). The textual element commands women to "Take the right steps now" by adopting the cream into their grooming rituals in order to look "younger, longer." As this advertisement was placed in *Good Housekeeping* it was directed at an older audience of women (Good Housekeeping, 2017). With this in mind, this command also suggests that by looking younger women will enhance their beauty and increase their chances of getting married as a youthful appearance is associated with fertility (Boncompagni, 2011). Furthermore, reproduction is a social norm expected of women especially after marriage. The American culture, along with other cultures, places a large emphasis on marriage often making women feel pressured to get married (Brown, 2016). Thus, portraying women concerned with marriage is often associated with domestic and gender role behavior such as a nurturing housewife or mother (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Grau & Zotos, 2016; Zotos & Tsihla, 2014). Equally important is the fact that she is portrayed in a traditional role rather than a non-traditional or occupational role. By the same token, Pure Silk's advertisement (see Figure 5) also chose to focus on the woman's appearance through a traditional and decorative portrayal rather than by her professional capabilities. Thus, Jennifer Aniston's and Jana Kramer's successes in their careers have been brushed off and diminished to instead fixate on superficial expectations such as beauty and marriage. All things considered, the women portrayed in advertisements belonging to "The Masked Woman" wear a "mask" that allows them to appear happy, but in reality, they have been forced to a life of conformity by giving in to what is expected of them. Thus, the advertisements communicate that the women portrayed adhere to the duties expected of women by accommodating others through a smile, being beautiful and youthful at all times, being a wife, and bearing children all at the cost of their careers.

### **The Ageless Woman**

Another degree of subordination often pictured in advertisements is the pressure to take care of one's skin in an attempt to reduce or prevent aging to adhere to the societal expectation of looking young, which is described as "The Ageless Woman." Women in grooming and personal-care advertisements are portrayed as being concerned with aging in different ways depending on their age. Notably, this theme also consists of advertisements of women focused on different aspects of youth. For instance, a young woman might be interested in simple products to take care of her skin in present-day. As a woman matures the more concerned with aging she becomes. For this reason, some of the advertisements presented in *Cosmopolitan* communicate to their audience the importance of preventing aging and always looking youthful. Whereas, advertisements targeted at older women, as seen in *Good Housekeeping*, are focused on the already aged skin and the products that can help minimize the appearance of fine lines



and wrinkles. The women in these advertisements are portrayed as having different daily grooming rituals as they age, but the focus on youth always remains. These advertisements also share Goffman's (1979) stereotype of ritualization of subordination by portraying women's social inferiority and lack of assertiveness by submitting to a forced or responding smile.

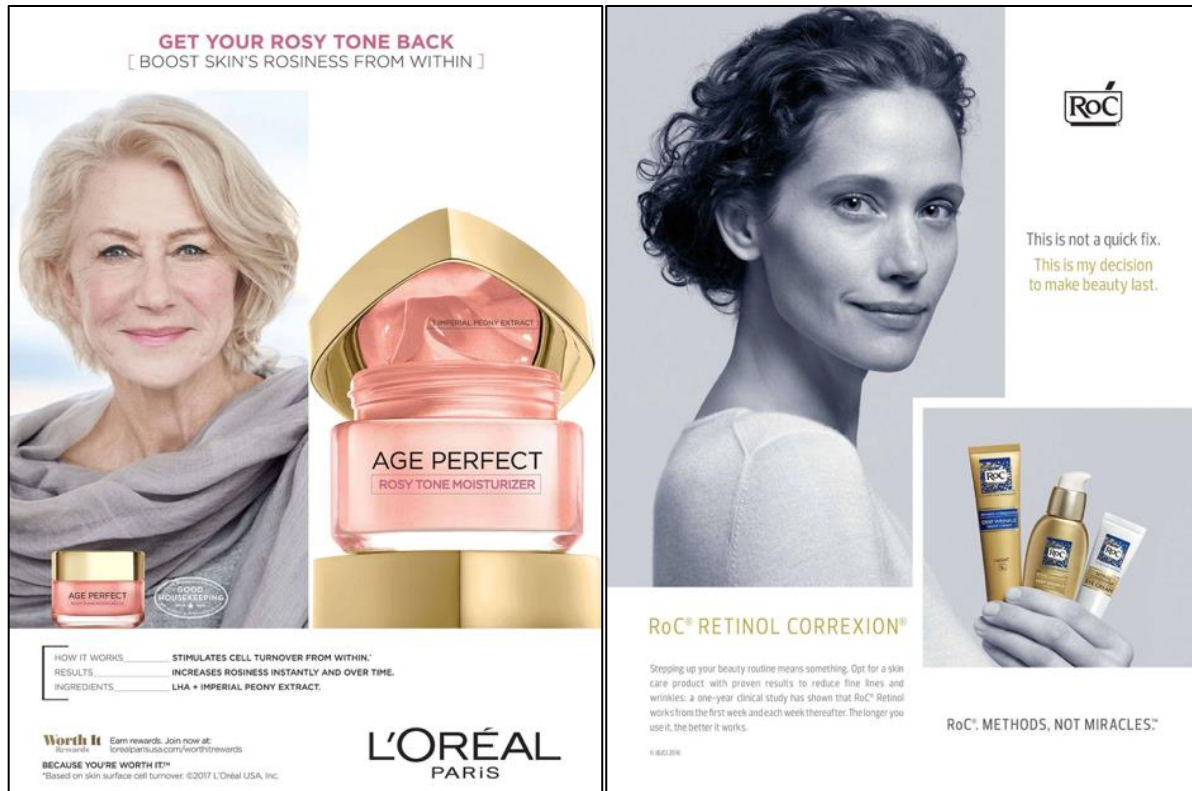


Figure 7: L'Oréal's Age Perfect Rosy Tone Moisturizer Advertisement (L'Oréal, 2017a)

Figure 8: RoC Retinol Correxion (RoC, 2017)

L'Oréal's Age Perfect Rosy Tone Moisturizer (see Figure 7) depicts celebrity Helen Mirren a mature and older but beautiful woman concerned with aging. Half of the advertisement displays her upper body with the product below her while the other half shows the product enlarged. Above one can read the text "Get Your Rosy Tone Back." The text indicates that with the use of the grooming artifact, the facial moisturizer, women can regain their rosy toned complexion back. The rosy tone is indicative of health, youth, and agelessness (Stephen, Law Smith, Stirrat & Perrett, 2009). As a woman ages she begins to lose collagen and elasticity, making her complexion appear dull and sallow (Ganceviciene, Liakou, Theodoridis, Makrantonaki & Zouboulis, 2012). Thus, it can be implied that by incorporating the product into the woman's grooming ritual she can transform her skin and appear to look more youthful. The rosy or pink color represents youth but it can also represent the biological characteristics of a woman that categorizes or pinpoints her femininity. Even though her body is not physically lowered, she is conforming to societal expectations and imitating the ritualization of subordination by displaying a closed mouth smile (Goffman, 1979). The woman's closed mouth smile can be portrayed as disingenuous due to the lack of muscle movement displayed (Mapes, 2015). A genuine smile should display notable muscle movement around the face, particularly the areas of the eyes (Mapes, 2015). In this portrayal muscle movement is not evident, ultimately making

the smile appear forced, which may signify that she is not displaying her true emotions or trying to fit in to her setting. Moreover, similarly, to the examples presented in “The Masked Woman” (see Figure 5 and Figure 6), the woman is a well-known actress, however instead of highlighting her professional capabilities she is portrayed in a decorative and passive role. Thus, the advertisement is only focused on portraying her physical attractiveness by focusing on her youthful appearance.

Comparatively, RoC’s Retinol Correxion creams advertisement (see Figure 8) also portrays a beautiful mature adult woman concerned with her beauty routine. Her head is slightly tilted as her gaze is directed towards the viewer. The portrayal of the woman is depicted in black and white rather than in color while the grooming artifact and the rest of the advertisement is in color. The black and white portrayal of the woman is meant to put the focus on the products rather than the woman. The use of black and white images is meant to put the focus on the functions of the product, however in this instance the function of the woman is reduced to her appearance and instead puts focus on the importance of anti-aging products such as the one pictured.

As a woman begins to mature, she is faced with the stigma of age and ageism (Ellison, 2014). Both of the women portrayed in the examples (see Figure 7 and Figure 8) are concerned with their physical appearance, particularly the phenomena of looking younger. They are also both displaying a disingenuous smile through their closed lips and lack of muscle movement around the face. Thus, the advertisements are communicating similar meanings through the use of semiotics. The women illustrated seem to display a conforming smile to others in order to fit in and be accepted by society. The concept of youth, particularly in regards to women hiding their true age and appearing more youthful, is expected of women by society. As the age of a woman is stigmatized in society (Ellison, 2014), it could be suggested that the women showcased are shamed by their age and are attempting to hide their natural signs of aging, as expected by society. For this reason, advertising places a significant focus on youth and reducing the signs aging, which puts pressure on women to buy products that help them look younger to society. The advertisements presented showcase women concerned with age as submitting to the pressure of looking young.

### **Summary of The Lost Subordinate**

The theme of “The Lost Subordinate” portrays how women are subordinates to society. The women portrayed have been forced to look and behave a certain way that is deemed appropriate by society. Additionally, they have adopted certain mannerisms in order to meet these ideals expected of them even if they do not correspond to their true self. The big forced smile, seen in some of the advertisements belonging to this theme, can be read as a response to the emotional societal abuse they have endured. The meanings communicated in the advertisements indicate that they have become adjusted to behaving and looking a certain way that their true self has disappeared and instead they have become slaves to society. The grooming ritualistic behavior portrayed in the sample of advertisements is similar throughout this theme. The women portrayed in these advertisements do not groom for themselves, instead they groom for others due to the pressure to meet the traditional and decorative female stereotype of beauty,

agelessness, and physical attractiveness. The grooming artifacts are used religiously and the script is closely followed by the performer to exude a certain feminine appeal to the viewer or society. Along the way the women portrayed have lost their individuality and only now groom to keep up with societal expectations instead of for themselves and their own sense of happiness. However, the pressure to groom and look perfect is tearing them apart internally. Portraying women through their existential suffering confers that some women cannot handle the stress of the societal expectations of beauty and thus are ultimately regarded as weak and vulnerable by advertisements. Some women, however, are capable of masking their emotions and their true feelings by wearing a metaphorical mask by appearing happy and lively in order to fit into society. Considering the advertisements belonging to this theme, the women depicted submit to the public opinion and are portrayed in subordinating and unrealistic displays in order to be accepted by others while losing their individuality, thus forming the theme of “The Lost Subordinate.”

## 5.2 The Dull Beauty

This Grooming advertisements that belong to this category portray and stereotype women as being “The Dull Beauty.” The advertisements of this theme portray grooming as a necessity to achieve a beauty ideal and hence to gain acceptance and attention by society. The advertisements portray women as being focussed on their outer appearance and the aim to look feminine and beautiful. Furthermore, advertisements in this category reduce women to their beauty by portraying them with typical feminine stereotype attributes such as long, shiny and voluminous hair, feminine curvy bodies and sometimes in sexy and submissive poses. The reduction of women to their beauty is supported by the aspect that advertising communicates messages of women as being beautiful but at the same time also being naïve, simple, boring and dull. These characteristics are often portrayed by blonde hair, which can be associated with naivety, by women taking passive and withdrawn poses and by words such as “weak,” “dull,” “effortless” and “take-me-anywhere,” which indicates that women are being compliant, simple and have no opinion. It seems as if these women only care about their physical appearance and beauty. Hence, the central message communicated by the advertisements belonging to the theme of “The Dull Beauty” is the stereotyping of women as being reduced to the value of being beautiful, while being also being characterized as boring, simple and dull. Overall, the theme of “The Dull Beauty” was found in 24% of all grooming advertisements of the chosen sample.

### **The Pretty Face**

The subtheme of “The Pretty Face” belonging to the major theme of “The Dull Beauty” illustrates advertisements that only focus on the women’s ‘pretty’ faces, reducing women to their beauty. An appropriate example for the “The Pretty Face” is L’Oréal’s Color Vibrancy advertisement (see Figure 9).



Figure 9: L'Oréal's Color Vibrancy Advertisement (L'Oréal, 2017b)

The advertisement shows the upper body of the American actress Blake Lively. She is looking at the viewer a bit from above while her head is slightly tilted to right side towards the camera. She has long, blonde, beautiful, voluminous and shiny hair that she is wearing to her right side. Her lips are slightly opened and seem shiny and soft. The actress wears a white long sleeve. The background of the picture is kept in a mid-gray color. In the foreground, one can read the text “Protect Color + Stay Vibrant” “Up to 60 Days.” The text is directly posted on the picture of Blake Lively. In the bottom left corner of the picture one can see in small letters the text ”Blake Lively For L'Oréal Paris” and the hint “Based on 4 washings per week using the system of shampoo and conditioner,” which is placed in front of her hair. Beneath the picture of Blake Lively, three different products, including the L'Oréal Color Vibrancy shampoo, conditioner and intensive mask, and the L'Oréal logo are depicted. Furthermore, one can read additional product information repeating the product name, some ingredients and the purpose to protect and care for even hard-to-maintain shades. The background of the bottom part of the advertisement with the product description is held in white whereas the product depiction, the product name and the frame are kept in a bright red.

Looking at the attributes of stereotypes used in L'Oréal's Color Vibrancy advertisement (see Figure 9), it can be stated that the woman is presented in a typical feminine way (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). She has long, shiny and healthy hair. These physical characteristics are stereotypically associated with beauty (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). Furthermore, her lips look are remarkably shiny and soft, which is typically associated with femininity. The fact that only the upper body of the model is shown and a large focus of the picture is laid on her voluminous hair indicates that beauty is a central theme communicated by the advertisement. The woman

depicted seems to be interested in beauty and puts a lot of effort into her grooming rituals, seeing the text placed on her hair which indicates the grooming script (Rook, 1985) as it mentions that she is washing her hair at least four times per week with a shampoo and conditioner to achieve a beautiful appearance.

However, analyzing L'Oréal's Color Vibrancy advertisement in more depth, it becomes clear that beauty is not the only topic communicated but that the woman is as well stereotyped as being passive, withdrawn, boring, sensitive and subordinated. The woman depicted in the advertisement has her lips slightly opened, which according to Goffman's (1979) framework on gender display, indicates licensed withdrawal. This licensed withdrawal is further supported and depicted by the fact that the woman is portrayed from the side and not frontal, which implies that although she is present she is psychologically removing herself from the situation, ultimately appearing passive, vulnerable, and sensitive (Goffman, 1979). The text depicted by the advertisement is directly posted on the picture of the model, following a compositional metafunction according to semiotic analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Hence, the text that is placed on the woman is directed towards her. The text states "protect" and is thus in line with her withdrawn posture, indicating that she feels the need for protection. Words like "protection" give the assumption that the woman portrayed is weak, sensitive and not self-confident. Furthermore, the advertisement uses a gray background. Gray is often associated with being boring, dull, shy and unremarkable (Collins Dictionary, 2018), which supports her withdrawal.

Connecting the advertisement's indication of being withdrawn, sensitive, dull, and boring with the portrayal of beauty, as described above, the assumption can be made that the depicted woman uses her beauty in order to achieve acceptance and attention by society. She seems to be regarded as "gray," unremarkable and boring by society. However, it also seems as if she wants to be noticed and accepted by society, which is indicated by the fact that she is looking at the viewer from above in an indirect and passive way, hence the viewer needs to look up at her. The aspect that the viewer needs to look up at her might indicate that she wants to be noticed and looked up to. The woman depicted by the advertisement places significant focus on her grooming rituals, by using a shampoo and conditioner at least four times a week, and tries thus to achieve being noticed, accepted and recognized by society. This is further indicated as the advertisement states that the product "helps protect and care," which can be linked to the fact that grooming protects her from society and takes care of her in a way that helps her meet certain beauty ideals expected of her. Additionally, the advertisement uses a bright red for the depiction of the grooming products, the framing and the word "vibrancy," whereas the background of the woman is gray, illustrates that grooming helps her be less unremarkable and more "vibrant" to be noticed by society due to her achieved beauty. Hence, grooming is expressed as a means to achieve social acceptance and attention. The advertisement's portrayal of the woman as being unremarkable, boring, dull and withdrawn but having vibrant and noticeable hair draws to the conclusion that the woman is depicted as being reduced to her beauty, forming the theme of "The Dull Beauty."

## The Sexy Body

The subtheme of “The Sexy Body” belonging to the major theme of “The Dull Beauty” portrays women in submissive and decorative poses while focusing on their physical attractiveness. In comparison to “The Pretty Face” this theme showcases the women’s full bodies, however they continue to be reduced to their beauty by focusing on their physique. An example of this theme is the advertisement by L’Oréal for its “Sublime Bronze” self-tanning towelettes (see Figure 10).



Figure 10: L’Oréal’s Sublime Bronze Advertisement (L’Oréal, 2017c)

The advertisement portrays a young blonde woman with tanned skin, who is wearing a white bathing suit and lies down on a wall. The woman’s head is turned upwards, her eyes closed and her lips slightly opened. Her curvy body is positioned frontal towards the viewer. The woman delicately supports her head with the back of one of her hands, while the other hand is delicately touching the elbow of her other arm. Her legs are crossed over each other. The woman lies on what appears to be an orange-yellow wall whereas the background is held in light shades of blue, which in relation to her pose gives the impression that the woman lies on a beach. The text depicted above the picture of the woman states “The take-me-anywhere tan” “for a flawless-looking tan without the rays.” At the bottom of the advertisement, the viewer can see product depicted, the L’Oréal logo and the text “Sublime Bronze Self-Tanning Towelettes.” Furthermore, one can read information about the results of using the grooming product, including that it leads to a natural look and that the tan develops in two hours. Additionally, information on the product’s ingredients along with how the grooming product works is illustrated, communicating that it needs to be applied only once and that it also dries quickly.

Considering these observations in connection to the attributes of stereotypes (Deaux & Lewis, 1984) it can be stated that the women displayed in L'Oréal's Sublime Bronze advertisement (see Figure 10), similarly as in L'Oréal's Color Vibrancy advertisement (see Figure 9), is portrayed by typically feminine and beauty associated physical characteristics such as long blonde and voluminous hair, soft and shiny lips and a female curvy body (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). Furthermore, the lying pose in which the advertisement depicts the woman looks unnatural and staged, seeing the fact that she is supporting her head with the back of her hand instead of the palm of her hand. According to Goffman's (1979) gender display framework, the hand gestures depicted in the advertisement can be described as the feminine touch. The woman touches her body in a delicate way, thus communicating the sexy and attractive nature of the female body (Goffman, 1979). Hence, based on the typical female and beauty associated characteristics used and the women's feminine touch, it seems that the beauty of the women is communicated as a central theme by the advertisement, similar as to L'Oréal's Color Vibrancy advertisement (see Figure 9).

Nonetheless, besides the depicted beauty, indicators for the women's subordination and withdrawal can also be found. At first sight, the woman appears to be depicted lying in a delicate, sexy and attractive manner. However if examined closely one can see Goffman's licensed withdrawal through the consideration of her crossed legs, her closed eyes and her head being turned away from the camera. In addition, Goffman (1979) further describes the depiction of a woman lying as an indication for subordination. Linking these portrayals of licensed withdrawal and subordination to the fact that the woman has tanned skin, lies on a beach-like background and that the promoted grooming product is tanning towelettes, the assumption can be made that the woman experiences pressure from society to fulfill certain beauty ideals, such as looking beautiful and tanned. One receives the impression that the model depicted wants to withdraw herself from the subordination she is experiencing. These signs of withdrawal and pressure are further indicated by the fact that the woman is depicted with closed eyes, which is usually associated with dreaming. The yellow and blue background symbolizes the beach, however due to the fact that it appears artificial it can be assumed that she is dreaming of laying on an actual beach and getting a real tan. This reflects upon the woman's desire to fulfill her goals, however she is incapable of doing so. Furthermore, the depicted text "for a flawless-looking tan without the rays" indicates how important a perfect and tanned look seems to be by society. Relating to this pressure and subordination by society, the advertisement depicts the "Sublime Bronze" self-tanning towelettes as a way to achieve acceptance by society by reaching the defined beauty ideals as these tanning towelettes enable every woman to achieve a perfect and "flawless-looking" tan in only "2 hours." Similarly as in L'Oréal's Color Vibrancy advertisement (see Figure 9) one gets the impression that the woman emphasizes her beauty in order to be noticed by society, which is indicated by the fact that the woman's body is depicted in the upper half of the advertisement, thus forcing the viewer to look up at her. Besides this, the advertisement depicts the woman as being reduced to her beauty. This is indicated by the lying posture of the woman, which can not only be interpreted as attracting and subordinated, but also in relation to the beach-like background, hints to the woman being depicted in decorative role (Zotos & Tschla, 2014). The fact that the woman is lying and thus seems passive enhances the impression that the woman is depicted as a beautiful decorative element on a beach. In this way, the advertisement depicts the woman as being reduced to her beauty.

This is further enhanced by the text “take-me-anywhere” giving the impression that this woman does not have any opinion, is not really determined and does not care much about where to be, however at the same time it seems as if she wants to escape and be taken somewhere else. Thus, seeing the advertisement’s focus on physical attractiveness such as long hair, a feminine curvy body and a flawless tan at first sight, the advertisement portrays women as being reduced to their beauty by showing them in decorative poses that depicts her as being naïve, unfocused and careless. Hence, L’Oréal’s Sublime Bronze advertisement is a good example for the stereotyping of women as “The Dull Beauty” reducing women to their beauty while describing them as boring, sensitive and not caring. However, in comparison to L’Oréal’s Color Vibrancy advertisement (see Figure 9) describing women as “The Pretty Face,” L’Oréal’s Sublime Bronze advertisement (see Figure 10) reduces women not only to their beauty but also to their sexy or attracting and decorative role thus constructing “The Sexy Body.”

### **Summary of The Dull Beauty**

Overall, looking at these women depicted in magazine grooming advertisements, they at first sight seem to be beautiful and admired by society, however when analyzing these advertisements in more-depth, it becomes obvious that the grooming advertisements stereotype women as “The Dull Beauty” reducing them solely to their beauty while at the same time portraying them as being simple, naïve and dull. Looking behind the beautiful façade of these women, they seem vulnerable, withdrawn and subordinated and dreaming of escaping from the pressure experienced by society to fulfill certain beauty ideals in order to be noticed and admired by society. Seeing the underlying depiction of withdrawal and subordination, the theme of “The Dull Beauty” shows similarities to the theme of “The Lost Subordinate.” However, whereas the focus of the theme in “The Lost Subordinate” is clearly on the subordination, advertisements belonging to the category of “The Dull Beauty” rather focus on the women’s physical beauty. Women are thus, depicted as less subordinated in comparison to “The Lost Subordinate” as they manage to achieve some social acceptance and admiration through their beauty and thus meet social beauty ideals by means of their grooming rituals.

## **5.3 The Authentic-Free Spirit**

The advertisements belonging to the theme of “The Authentic Free-Spirit” portray women as individualistic through their playful, natural, and self-aware expressions and behavior. Often, the women are also portrayed in natural or average everyday settings such as a bathroom, work, or out and about in social settings. These women treat grooming as an everyday activity by having fun with the process rather than making it a major part of their lives as opposed to themes such as the “The Lost Subordinate” and “The Dull Beauty.” In contrast, according to the findings, the women portrayed do not feel the pressure to meet a certain feminine ideal and instead hum to the beat of their own drum. They do not take their grooming rituals seriously or religiously and instead enjoy the process in their own individualistic way. This is due to their self-awareness as individual people. They can also be described as fun and carefree. However, the carefree and playful persona depicted in the advertisements can also be associated with



irresponsibility and immaturity. “The Authentic Free-Spirit” is a recurring theme encountered in 26% of the grooming advertisements found.

### Women in Everyday Life

The subtheme of the “Women in Everyday Life” portrays women actively involved in the setting of the corresponding advertisements. The storylines communicate average or everyday situations encountered by women. The advertisements below (Figure 11 and Figure 12) are suitable examples that fit the depiction of the subtheme.



Figure 11: Secret’s Don’t Pit Out When You Stress Out Advertisement (Secret, 2017a)

Figure 12: Batiste’s Yes You Can Advertisement Dry Shampoo (Batiste, 2017)

Secret’s Don’t Pit Out When You Stress Out advertisement illustrated in Figure 11 is an example of a woman portrayed in a realistic and everyday setting. In the advertisement (see Figure 11), the black woman is dressed in professional attire in a public restroom indicated by the hand dryer depicted. The professional attire in combination with the public restroom indicates that she is most likely at work, depicting her in an occupational role and making her a career-oriented woman (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Zotos & Tschla, 2014). Displayed is noticeable armpit perspiration coming from one of her armpits. The textual element “Don’t Pit Out When You Stress Out” along with the concerned look on her face demonstrates that the woman is in a stressful situation. The stressful situation she is presented with might be created by the work environment, ultimately causing her to sweat. Although the woman is evidently stressed, the advertisement communicates that stress is a normal factor of life that can be taken care of when using the right products. The situation she is in makes her feel less confident about herself but she is trying to make the most out of it in order to hide her noticeable perspiration.

As a result, she crouches down under an air dryer in hopes of drying her armpit and covering her embarrassment while at work. However, the advertisement also communicates that embarrassing perspiration can be avoided by adopting the grooming artifact, the deodorant, into a woman's grooming ritualistic behavior. The ritual script (Rook, 1985) can be understood by connoting the semiotics, thus the deodorant should be applied to the armpits to avoid discernible sweat as depicted by the model. Under these circumstances, the behavior portrayed by the woman is indicative of her desire to be taken seriously in the workplace. Be that as it may, she appears to not take the situation too seriously due to her playful and silly demeanor showcased through body clowning, a form of ritualized behavior pertaining to Goffman's (1979) ritualization of subordination. However, the manner in which the woman is portrayed along with the setting counteracts the degree of subordination and submissiveness suggested by Goffman (1979). Given these points, the rhetoric used in the advertisement can be considered a satirical critique on the ridiculous pressure put on women to look perfect. Thus, it is suggested that if a woman does not look perfect then she will not be taken seriously despite her professional capabilities. The woman is concerned with keeping up with her appearance in order to be taken seriously in the workplace, otherwise her professional capabilities might be overlooked and she will be reduced to her unprofessional appearance caused by the noticeable sweat stain. Although it is not discernible whether she is good at her job or not, these types of stereotypical portrayals may cause her qualities to be overlooked due to her appearance.

Similarly, Batiste's Yes You Can advertisement shown in Figure 12 also portrays a realistic and everyday scenario as the woman displayed looks as if she is ready to leave, what appears to be, her home. The young and pretty woman pictured is in a hurry so she needs to "Roll Out of Bed and [be] Ready in Five" as indicated by the text placed in the upper left corner of the advertisement. Due to the woman being in a hurry she does not have the opportunity to spend copious amounts of time with her physical appearance, therefore the grooming artifact, in this instance the dry shampoo, allows her to look acceptable for society's standards in no time. The advertisement seems to portray the woman in an irresponsible manner. This is indicated for instance through the use of the dry shampoo, which brings order into the woman's life by allowing her to look presentable in a short amount of time. The fact that she does not have a lot of time in the morning to get ready can be interpreted as irresponsibility as she has not taken the notion of time into consideration. Thus, it is indicated that she is most likely not taken seriously in society as the advertisement also reflects the lack of control in her life which is depicted by the messy environment of what seems to be her home shown in the background. The portrayal of the woman in the advertisement emphasizes her inability to make miniscule decisions, ultimately supporting Courtney and Wernick Lockeretz (1971) finding of women only being capable of making limited decisions. However, linking to her ability to make decisions and gain control the use of the dry shampoo can be interpreted as a symbolic artifact that brings some order into her life to a certain degree.

Overall, women of the theme "Women in Everyday Life" are stereotyped by the advertisements as embrative of everyday situations that they may find themselves confronted with. In order to gain control over the obstacles of these everyday challenges, the women adopt certain grooming artifacts and scripts to deal with the societal pressure expected of them.

## Women at Play

The theme of “The Authentic Free-Spirit” also portrays and stereotypes women as playful and flirty through their childish demeanors and playful acts, described as “Women at Play.” They are often displayed in natural and realistic settings where the grooming of the body or face usually takes place such as in a bathroom. Even though they are often portrayed within the household, they are illustrated as being active instead of being depicted in passive or decorative roles such as women belonging to the themes of “The Lost Subordinate” and “The Dull Beauty.” The women representative of “The Women at Play” are often portrayed as being actively involved in the grooming process. They are furthermore interactive with the viewer by directing their gaze at them rather than looking psychologically withdrawn as seen in Goffman’s (1979) theme of licensed withdrawal. Moreover, women of this theme often appear natural and bare faced rather than having their hair perfectly groomed and their makeup perfectly applied.

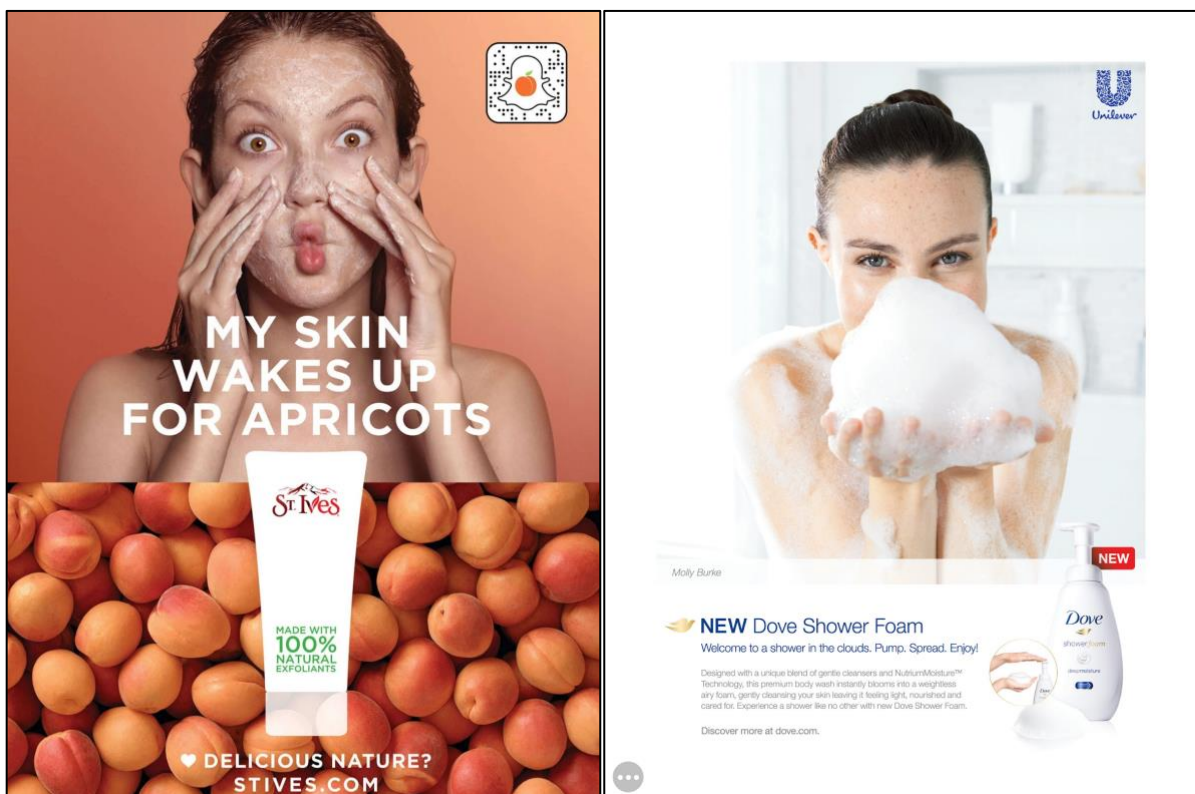


Figure 13: St. Ives My Skin Wakes Up for Apricots Advertisement (St. Ives, 2017)

Figure 14: Dove’s Shower Foam Advertisement (Dove, 2017)

St. Ives My Skin Wakes Up for Apricots advertisement (see Figure 13) portrays a young woman against a peach colored background washing her face with a facial scrub in the top half of the advertisement. She is seen puckering or protruding her lips while her eyes appear enlarged, making her seem playful and carefree as she grooms herself. The second half of the advertisement portrays the grooming artifact, meaning the facial scrub, against a background covered in apricots. It should be noted, that according to Goffman (1979) the protruding of the lips is childish and indicative of the ritualization of subordination. However, the behavior she

portrays does not indicate subordination or submissiveness since instead of being physically lowered she is standing upright and actively involved in the advertisement by imitating the physical motion of washing her face with the product. The protruding of the lips in combination with her enlarged wide eyes makes her appear silly and playful, embracing herself and just enjoying the process of washing her face with the product.

Similarly, Dove's Shower Foam advertisement (see Figure 14) shows a young attractive woman physically covered in foam inside of a bathroom. She is holding a pile of foam in her hands, which she has brought up to her face. A portion of her face is covered, but her eyes, cheeks, and forehead are visible. Although her mouth is not visible she appears to be communicating a natural smile due to the body language communicated with her eyes. It is evident that she is smiling through the depiction of her facial muscles, discernible in her laugh lines around her eyes and her filled cheeks (Mapes, 2015). Her demeanor is playful and she seems happy to be playing with the Dove Shower Foam. She is offering the grooming artifact, the body foam, to the viewer by bringing it closer to the frame. Moreover, the grooming script can be implied through the depiction of the foam on her body. As she is seen playing with the foam, the grooming script is also indicative of an amusing grooming ritualistic experience. Thus, it can be indicated that she is having fun with the grooming ritual by turning it into an enjoyable everyday event as also evidenced by the St. Ives advertisement (see Figure 13).

### **Summary of The Authentic Free-Spirit**

The theme of "The Authentic Free-Spirit" portrays women actively involved in the storyline of the advertisements presented. Often, they are seen outside of the household in average or everyday situations such as at work or out on the go. "Women at Play" portray women actively involved in the grooming ritual by using the product. They embrace their natural appearance by being depicted in natural and makeup free displays. They also appear in playful and silly manners, which can also be associated with childish characteristics such as immaturity. The women portrayed are not in lowered or submissive positions as seen in "The Lost Subordinate" or "The Dull Beauty." Grooming as depicted in advertisements belonging to the theme of "The Authentic Free-Spirit" is described as embracing the natural and authentic character of the women pictured as well as providing them with control to handle unexpected situation in their everyday lives.

## **5.4 The Powerful Maverick**

Grooming advertisements of the category "The Powerful Maverick" stereotype women as being self-confident and determined to fight against the rules and boundaries set by society. The women illustrated in the advertisements belonging to this theme are typically depicted as being strong and confident which is evident by their portrayal from the front and their direct gaze into the camera. This confidence and strength portrayed are usually supported by a bold look and the use of darker colors. Hence, most of the women in these advertisements are stereotyped as brunettes. Furthermore, the strength of these women is indicated by their upright poses and fist gestures, showcasing women as self-confident and willing to fight against inequalities and

boundaries set by society. This is further indicated by sentences such as “you shine through whatever life throws at you” or “because you have to work harder to get ahead.” Grooming within these advertisements seems to play a minor role as the women are depicted large and centered within the frame whereas the grooming product is often portrayed significantly smaller on the margin of the advertisement. However, it is assumed that women adopt grooming rituals that support their strong character. Hence, seeing that grooming advertisements illustrate women in strong and upright poses while demonstrating fists, indicates their strengths and willingness to fight for their rights, this consequently leads to the theme of “The Powerful Maverick.” Whereas the grooming advertisements of this theme all share the same characteristics of stereotyping women as being strong and empowered, differences can be noted in the degree of empowerment being depicted. In comparison, some women are showcased as realizing that they need to be strong and work hard to achieve empowerment, while others are actively fighting by using their fists and other women are depicted as having already reached empowerment. Overall, advertisements belonging to “The Powerful Maverick” could be found in 22% of the chosen magazine grooming advertisements.

### The Aware Woman

The subtheme of “The Aware Woman” also comprises the major theme of “The Powerful Maverick.” The women are depicted as being aware of the need to be strong and work hard to achieve empowerment in society. The advertisements by Infusium (see Figure 15) and Secret (see Figure 16) are good examples that represent the characteristics of this theme.

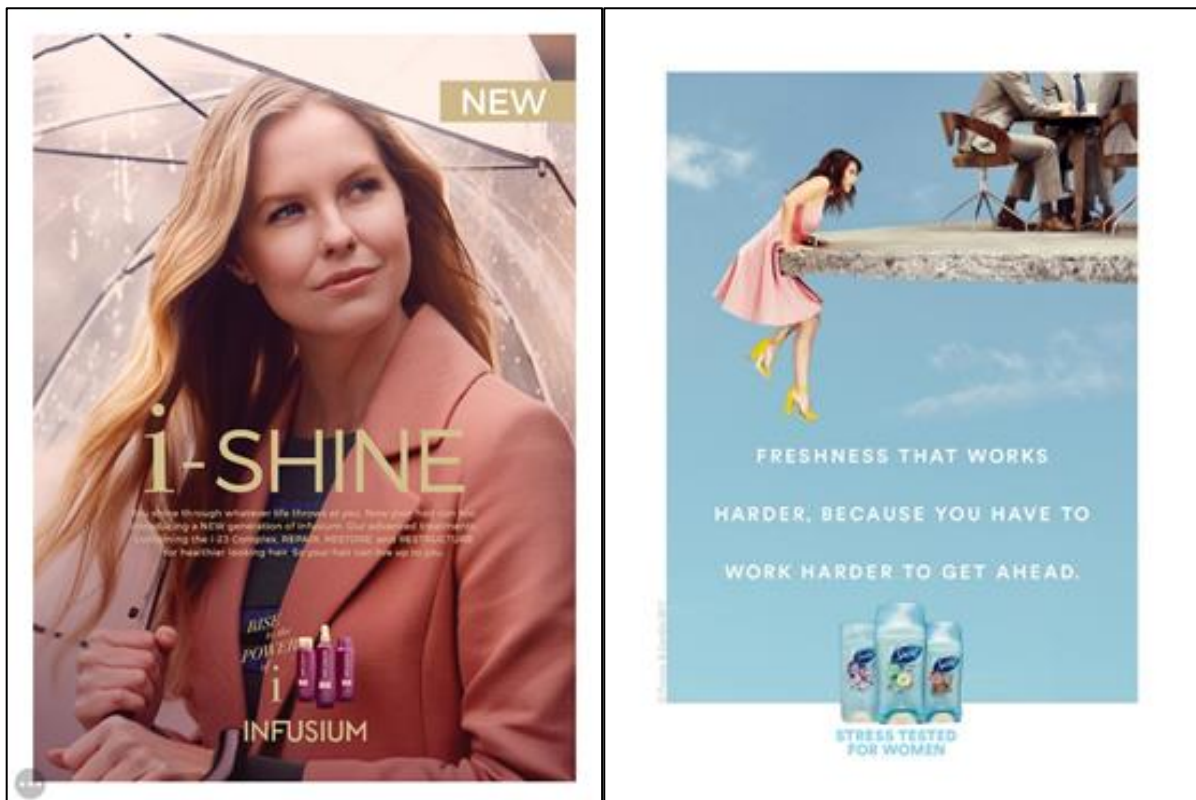


Figure 15: Infusium’s Rise to the Power of i. Advertisement (Infusium, 2017)

Figure 16: Secrets’ Stress Tested for Women Advertisement (Secret, 2017b)

Looking at the advertisement by Infusium, one can see a woman, who is wearing a pink blazer and a blue shirt underneath while holding an umbrella in her hands. In the background one can see rain drops on her umbrella. This indicates that the woman is likely walking outdoors, whereby the formal blazer suggests that she is on her way to her job. In comparison to this, the grooming advertisement by Secret (see Figure 16) shows a woman who is hanging in the air, trying hard to climb up and push herself up onto a piece of concrete floor. Looking further, on top of the concrete floor one can see the lower body of three male figures wearing gray business suits and sitting on chairs at a table, which gives the impression that they are having a business meeting. Hence, seeing the formal blazer worn by the woman in Infusium's advertisement (see Figure 15) and the men in suits in Secret's advertisement (see Figure 16) it becomes clear that what these two advertisements have in common is their depiction of women in relation to the topic of occupational business roles (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Zotos & Tschla, 2014). When it comes to these business roles, it can be stated that both women are portrayed by the advertisement in a typical traditional feminine appearance, which is indicated by their pink clothes. The color pink is traditionally associated with femininity and feminine attributes such as being weak, sensitive and caring, whereas blue is associated with masculine attributes such as professional business occupational roles and dominant personality traits (van Tillburg & Lieven, 2015). However, what is remarkable is the fact that the advertisement by Infusium depicts the woman in a pink blazer, however underneath she is wearing a blue shirt. Based on the advertisement's choice of portraying the woman with a pink blazer on the outside and a blue shirt underneath, one gets the impression that women are perceived in traditional feminine roles on the outside by society, however in reality they might feel less feminine and more according to male attributes inside. Furthermore, the combination of portraying the woman in pink and blue clothes can as well be interpreted as an indication and request by the advertisement for more gender equality in society and especially in business, seeing the fact that the woman with her formal clothes looks as if she is on her way to her job. Similarly, the advertisement by Secret (see Figure 16) comparatively requests for more gender equality in society by depicting the woman in traditional feminine clothes trying hard to climb up the piece of concrete floor, whereas the men sitting on the concrete floor seem very relaxed, having already managed to climb up. By playing with the depiction of women in traditional feminine clothes but at the same time including masculine elements, such as the blue shirt in Infusium's advertisement and the woman in Secret's advertisement who seems to be strong as she is trying hard to push herself up, the advertisements indicate that women are seen as traditionally feminine by society which makes it hard for them to reach traditional masculine roles such as becoming a business women, however these women want to break out of this and thus try hard to reach their goal. By seeing how hard these women try to reach their goals, such as by pushing and climbing up (see Figure 16), the grooming advertisements showcase women as strong and determined. Their strengths are further supported by the text used by the advertisements. The advertisement by Infusium places the following text on the picture of the woman and thus makes the viewer relate the text to the woman "i-SHINE" "You shine through whatever life throws at you." Furthermore, the advertisement states the words "RISE to the POWER" and emphasizes the words "rise" and "power" by writing them in capital letters. By stating these words, the advertisement communicates women as being powerful and strong. Seeing that the woman depicted by Infusium (see Figure 15) is holding an umbrella while it is raining shows

that she is strong and can protect herself from whatever life throws at her. As she holds the umbrella her hands are also clenched into fists, which is a typical indication of being ready to fight (Tops & De Jong, 2006), supporting her strengths. The advertisement by Secret equally uses text to stereotype women as being strong by using the caption of “freshness that works harder, because you have to work harder to get ahead.” This caption indicates that women are aware that they can and need to be strong in order to achieve their goals. The sentence “freshness that works harder” further indicates that these strong women also choose grooming products that match with their character and support their strengths. As these grooming advertisements still portray woman in traditional feminine physical characteristics while also communicating their strong character and supporting the emancipating captions, the assumption can be made that these women are aware that they need to fight and work hard to reach empowerment, but have not yet fully reached this stage, seeing that the woman in Infusium’s advertisement is trapped in a pink blazer and the woman depicted in Secret’s advertisement is still hanging in the air trying to push herself up.

### **The Fighting Woman**

The subtheme of “The Fighting Woman” describes women who are portrayed as actively fighting for their empowerment through different hand postures such as a strong grasp or clenched fist. An example of this subtheme is the grooming advertisement by Pantene Pro-V (see Figure 17).



*Figure 17: Pantene Pro-V’s Fuel Your Hair Advertisement (Pantene Pro-V, 2017)*

The advertisement portrays American celebrity Selena Gomez with long and wet brunette hair directly looking into the camera with her lips are slightly opened. The woman has her hand

formed into a fist as she pulls her hair. Moreover, the woman is portrayed wearing bold jewelry. The advertisement by Pantene Pro-V depicts the woman frontal and standing upright while she is directly and deeply looking at the viewer, which gives the impression that the woman is strong and determined. What is striking is the fact that the model is portrayed with her hand formed into a fist, similarly to Infusium's advertisement, hence underlining the woman's power, strengths and readiness to fight. Her strengths are further supported by her bold jewelry, which gives the impression that her jewelry is in line with her powerful character. Furthermore, the woman is a brunette, indicating that brunettes stereotypically possess a strong and determined demeanor along with the intellectual capability of being self-aware (Beddow, Hymes & McAuslan, 2011). The advertisement supports the stereotyping of the woman as being strong by using the caption "fuel your hair, strong is beautiful." Using the word "fuel" and "strong" in the caption, the advertisement stereotypes the woman as being strong and determined, however while at the same time indicating that being strong and empowered is beautiful and should be accepted by society.

Looking at grooming, it can be stated that the advertisement by Pantene Pro-V does not depict any grooming product, thus indicating that the focus of the advertising message is to communicate the strengths and power of the woman, who does not necessarily need grooming to match any beauty ideal. The women in these advertisements do not feel the need to match any beauty ideal as their focus is on their character, which is fierce and determined. The fist gesture can indicate that the depicted woman does not allow society to tell her how to look and behave or how to groom, so she fights for her individuality and embraces her true character. In relation to the grooming aspect, it can additionally be stated that the advertisement depicts the woman with wet hair, however according to her facial expression the woman does not seem to be bothered by it and instead combs her hair with a fist gesture. In this relation, her wet hair supports the impression that she does not allow society to dictate how she should look. In addition, her portrayal indicates that she is not interested in fitting into socially constructed beauty ideals, where wet hair might be unaccepted, and as a result she wears her hair as she wants.

Comparing the advertisement by Pantene Pro-V (see Figure 17) with the advertisements by Infusium (see Figure 15) and Secret (see Figure 16) it becomes obvious that these advertisements depict women as strong and determined and encourage them to embrace their character and be ready to fight for it if necessary, thus consequently forming the theme of "The Powerful Maverick." However, in contrast to the advertisements of "The Aware Woman" the advertisement by Pantene Pro-V stereotypes woman even more so as being strong and energetic and actively fighting for their empowerment, whereas the women in the advertisements of "The Aware Woman" are portrayed as still being captured in traditional feminine appearances. This feminine appearance is eliminated and ultimately not communicated by Pantene's advertisement.

### **The Empowered Woman**

Building upon the stereotypical depiction of women as being strong, determined and fighting for their empowerment, the advertisement by TRESemmé (see Figure 18) is another example



of a subtheme called “The Empowered Woman” belonging to the major theme of “The Powerful Maverick.” The subtheme of “The Empowered Woman” describes women who have reached empowerment through their bold looks and confident textual statements.



Figure 18: TRESemmé’s Smooth Doesn’t Have to be Straight Advertisement (TRESemmé, 2017)

Similarly, to the advertisement by Pantene Pro-V, TRESemmé portrays a young brunette woman frontal and looking directly at the viewer with a determined gaze. Being portrayed frontal and looking actively at the viewer gives the impression of the woman being powerful. Her strengths are further communicated by the caption “Smooth doesn’t have to be straight.” This caption indicates that the illustrated woman is capable of having her own opinions and making her own decisions where the rules and interpretations set by society do not always apply. This message is conveyed as one gets the impression that society sees smooth as needing to be straight, however by stating that it does not have to be straight, the advertisement depicts the woman as disagreeing with the view by society. Besides this, the caption can also be interpreted as an indication for the woman having already found herself and seeming to be empowered as she openly states her opinion. She seems strong and not being scared of disagreeing with the social consensus. Her stability is further indicated in TRESemmé’s advertisement by the woman using a gentle hand gesture. The model is gently touching her face and does not form a fist as compared to the advertisements of Infusium (see Figure 15) or Pantene Pro-V (see Figure 17). The choice of the hand gesture can be seen as a sign that this woman has already achieved empowerment and confidence and no longer needs to fight for it. What is remarkable is the depiction of the woman in a dark red leather jacket, which communicates her transformation to empowerment. The dark red leather jacket can still be interpreted as feminine as it belongs to the same color category as pink, however it seems stronger and less traditionally feminine as pink. In comparison, the women of “The Aware

Woman” are stereotyped as still wearing the traditional feminine color pink, whereas the advertisement by TRESemmé can be interpreted as a transformation of the woman to having reached empowerment by transforming pink into a dark red. This can further be linked to the fact that the woman shown by TRESemmé has already reached empowerment and is no longer trapped in traditional feminine stereotypes and needs to fight to find her way out of it. Hence, comparing TRESemmé’s advertisement to the advertisements described above, the woman is similarly portrayed as being strong and determined, however the woman shown in this advertisement seems to have fully achieved empowerment.

### **Summary of The Powerful Maverick**

Concluding, it can be stated that the advertisements belonging to the theme “The Powerful Maverick” share the portrayal of women as being powerful, self-confident, willing to fight for their empowerment, and being willing to break down the barriers set by society. Hence, these women do not want to fit into socially constructed beauty ideals but rather embrace their individuality. Additionally, the advertisements of the category “The Powerful Maverick” rather put focus on the strong character of women instead of concentrating on their beauty or the necessity to groom. Hence, grooming products are barely depicted or only depicted in small on the margin of the frame, signifying that grooming is not of utmost importance for these women. Moreover, the advertisements described above share the common traits of being strong, determined and concerned with their empowerment, however, differences can be found in the depiction of the degree of empowerment that these women have achieved. Some advertisements portray women as still being trapped in traditional female associations imposed by society, while being aware that they need to fight for their empowerment. Additionally, other advertisements portray women as actively fighting for their empowerment while other advertisements show women who have already reached empowerment. Hence, the theme of “The Powerful Maverick” shows similarities to the theme of “The Authentic Free-Spirit,” however it differentiates in the way that it shows woman as being stronger, determined and concerned with reaching empowerment, putting this in the focus and as the ultimate goal. What is striking when comparing “The Powerful Maverick” with the other themes described above is the fact that Goffman’s (1979) gender display framework is not evident or actually contradicts the degree of submissiveness suggested by Goffman. The women of “The Powerful Maverick” do not show evidence of licensed withdrawal and instead direct their complete attention to the viewer. Furthermore, they do not touch their body in a delicate way as described by the feminine touch but rather form fierce and powerful fist gestures. All of the women are also displayed in upright positions, indicating no form of subordination.

## 6 Chapter 6 – Conclusion and Discussion

This paper investigated how magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women. The following sections provide a conclusion of the research findings along with a discussion in relation to the past literature and critical issues in society. Moreover, the researchers provide recommendations for future research in order to extend the existing theories. Furthermore, the researchers provide a research tool called “The Fair Representation Index” that can be used by organizations and consumers to evaluate whether women are portrayed fairly in advertising. Lastly, an overview of the theoretical contributions and practical implications is presented.

### 6.1 Conclusion Summary

With the aim to investigate the question *How do magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women?* this thesis analyzed 92 magazine grooming advertisements from the 2017 issues of Good Housekeeping, Cosmopolitan, and Seventeen magazine. The purpose of the research study was to examine how grooming advertisements found in women’s lifestyle magazines currently portray and stereotype women in order to understand whether women are being fairly represented according to women’s changing role in society. In order to evaluate the advertisements and to understand the construction of stereotypes, the researchers created a theoretical framework consisting of Goffman’s gender display framework, the attributes of stereotypes, grooming rituals and semiotics in advertising communications. The theoretical framework was then applied to the sample to facilitate the analysis by providing a foundation to the understanding of gender and grooming behavior and stereotypes used in relation to semiotics found in magazine advertisements. Correspondingly, a semiotic discourse analysis was utilized to reveal the underlying meaning communicated in the advertisements and also to identify the different stereotypes in which these grooming advertisements portray women. Based on the philosophical assumptions of the constructionist paradigm, followed by this thesis, the researchers attempted to answer the predefined research question of *How do magazine grooming advertisements portray and stereotype women?* With this intention, the researchers divulged that each grooming advertisement is unique and portrays women in various ways, however the similarities representing the most prevalent stereotypes were uncovered and developed into themes. These developed themes are “The Lost Subordinate,” “The Dull Beauty,” “The Authentic Free-Spirit,” and “The Powerful Maverick.” Advertisements belonging to the theme of “The Lost Subordinate” stereotype women as emotional and submissive conformists giving in to the societal pressure imposed upon them in hopes of being accepted by others. In comparison, advertisements forming the theme of “The Dull Beauty” reduce women to their physical attractiveness and beauty. Women of “The Dull Beauty” are stereotyped as being concerned with reaching societal beauty ideals in order to achieve acceptance and admiration, while at the same time seeming to be boring, simple and dull. The women representing “The Authentic Free-Spirit,” in contrast, are portrayed as natural and self-aware individualists who do not feel as pressured by society to look or behave a certain way

and instead are stereotyped by their playful demeanor and at times their immaturity. Lastly, the theme of “The Powerful Maverick” stereotypes women as being powerful, self-confident, and willing to fight for their empowerment. The women of this theme are portrayed as being strong-willed enough to break down the constraints set by society. The findings of this study indicate that magazine grooming advertisements portray women using different stereotypes. However, the advertisements analyzed predominantly stereotype women in traditional female roles and subordinating displays while also being depicted as concerned with achieving beauty ideals as constructed by society. Nevertheless, the findings additionally reveal that advertising is indeed adapting to women’s changing role in society as some advertisements take on a more empowering approach by stereotyping women as being powerful and independent.

## 6.2 Discussion

The conclusion shows that current magazine grooming advertisements portray women using four different stereotypes namely “The Lost Subordinate,” “The Dull Beauty,” “The Authentic Free-Spirit,” and “The Powerful Maverick.” Comparing these different themes of stereotypes, the analysis revealed that the two themes, “The Lost Subordinate” and “The Dull Beauty,” composing 52% of the advertisements, are focused on communicating a very subordinated picture of women by portraying them in traditional and decorative roles. Whereas, in comparison, “The Authentic Free-Spirit” and “The Powerful Maverick,” accounting for 48% of the analyzed grooming advertisements, depict women in non-traditional and career-oriented roles. The fact that the subordinated themes are the most dominant portrayal of women illustrated in the sample of the advertisements signifies that women continue to be mostly portrayed in need of dependency and concerned with physical appearance as indicated by (Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971; Zotos & Tsihla, 2014). The findings of this study are in line with prior studies such as those of Zotos and Tsihla (2014), who investigated female stereotypes in print media. The authors argue that although the portrayal of traditional female stereotypes in print media has witnessed a decrease, they still exist by reducing women to objects of beauty and undermining their professional capabilities rather than focusing on contemporary gender roles. Similarly, Baker (2005) found that advertisements found in women’s magazines place a large emphasis on physical attractiveness and portray women conforming to the traditional functions of femininity by appearing submissive, objectified, and in need of dependency. Comparatively, the findings of Baker (2005) corroborate the findings of this study as the women in “The Lost Subordinate” and “The Dull Beauty” are also portrayed as dependent on the acceptance of others in society while also being concerned with their beauty. Thus, it can be argued that the findings of older studies such as Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) and Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) remain relevant today as women continue to be portrayed and stereotyped predominantly as decorative and dependent on the protection and approval of others. As argued by the past studies (Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976; Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971) women are also currently still portrayed in the home and involved with limited household decision-making rather than with decisions concerned outside of the household. For instance, the findings of this thesis indicate that the majority of the advertisements portray

women within the household or in leisurely activities instead of being actively involved in an activity outside of the house or at work.

Although this thesis supports the findings of prior studies such as by Zotos and Tsihla (2014) and by Baker (2005), revealing that women are primarily stereotyped by advertising in traditional roles and as being dependent, this thesis also found a shift towards more empowering and less traditional advertising messages of women. It was found that 48% of the sampled advertisements, seen together in “The Authentic Free-Spirit” and “The Powerful Maverick,” indeed illustrate women as being independent, fierce and brave. This shows that some advertisements take on a more femvertising approach, as described by Åkestam, Rosengren and Dahlen (2017), communicating messages that encourage women to free themselves from being captured by traditional feminine roles. Hence, although women are said to still be portrayed in traditional roles by the media, which can be supported by this study, a shift towards more empowered stereotypes can be observed. The fact that women are also being portrayed as powerful and independent shows that the media is slowly adapting to the changing role of women in society. Nevertheless, seeing that traditional female roles prevail in the media, it shows that the media is only slowly adapting to women’s changing role in society and hence portrays a limited picture that according to women’s changing role seems to be inaccurate.

The results of this study also support the literature in regard to the fact that stereotypes represent oversimplified concepts that limit women in their development as stated by Knoll, Eisend and Steinhagen (2011). Within all the themes identified in this study, women are portrayed as being concerned with the pressure exercised by society to fit into certain stereotypes, which restrains them from their personal development. As an example, women belonging to “The Lost Subordinate” experience pressure from society to look young and beautiful according to socially constructed beauty ideals, which makes them feel insecure and dependent on the acceptance of others. The women of “The Dull Beauty” are reduced to their physical attractiveness and are often depicted as being dull, simple and boring. Seeing that women of “The Dull Beauty” are often portrayed in dreamy and withdrawn poses indicates that they want to be acknowledged and admired by society for more than their beauty. Similarly, women of “The Authentic Free-Spirit” try to embrace their genuine character through the illustration of average everyday settings and behaviors but are often ridiculed for this attempt by being portrayed as childish or foolish. Furthermore, the theme of “The Powerful Maverick” portrays women as fierce and strong through their willingness to fight for what is right, but their inclination to fight can also be linked to the pressure and burden that they experience from society. These women are determined to fight against the stereotypes society categorizes them in and are willing to work hard to not fit into the traditional stereotypes, whereas “The Lost Subordinate” seems to accept the suffering they are enduring from the social pressure imposed upon them. Hence, it shows that the pressure imposed by society and the association with certain stereotypes, hinders the personal development of women by dismissing their true character and capabilities and instead focuses on the superficiality of women such as their physical appearance. However, although all women are faced with pressure from society to fulfill a certain stereotype, this thesis shows that the women of each theme handle this pressure differently, such as from accepting the pressure to fighting against it. In relation to societal pressure, grooming in all of the themes presented is seen as a necessity and a helpful tool to

face the pressure from society. Additionally, grooming is also seen as tool used to reach social acceptance and admiration. Thus, grooming is also often presented as a prerequisite to reach socially constructed beauty ideals.

One of the ways in which gender roles are identified in print media is by determining the communicated behavior of men and women through the utilization of Goffman's (1979) gender displays and stereotypes. The findings of this study show that particularly the display of Goffman's ritualization of subordination, licensed withdrawal and the feminine touch were present in the investigated sample, which corroborates the findings of prior studies such as the ones conducted by Döring and Pöschl (2006), Kang (1997), and Mager and Helgeson (2011). This demonstrates that the displays used by Goffman in 1979 are still prevalent today and seem to be continued to be used by advertisers. While most of the advertisements analyzed by this thesis portrayed one or more gender behavior displays, they were most prominent in the themes of "The Lost Subordinate" and "The Dull Beauty." The ritualization of subordination was the most commonly used gender display within the sample of the women's grooming advertisements. Some of the women portrayed, enacting the ritualization of subordination, were shown physically lowered by lowering their bodies through movement or by being portrayed laying down or sitting down. Other women depicted in the advertisements represented the gender display of ritualization of subordination through their unnatural and manipulated smile. Mager and Helgeson (2011) argue that the display of ritualization of subordination has seen an increase since the inception of the concept. This signifies that women continue to be represented submissively and accepting of the subordination of others, particularly of society. Licensed withdrawal was especially evident within the advertisements pertaining to the themes of "The Lost Subordinate" and "The Dull Beauty," depicting women as psychologically withdrawn from their reality in passive roles. This finding suggests that women continue to be stereotyped in advertisements as submissive and incapable of making decisions for themselves despite their true desires. Similar findings pertaining to the licensed withdrawal of women was found by Mager and Helgeson (2011). Although, the display of feminine touch was found in some of the grooming advertisements to convey the delicacy of women, utilitarian hand gestures such as a strong grasp or hold were evident in "The Powerful Maverick." This behavior enacted in the advertisements was used to communicate a contrasting and domineering message opposite to Goffman's (1979) feminine touch, indicating a subtle change in the way women are represented. Function ranking was not evident in any of the advertisements analyzed while relative size was found in one advertisement. The finding corroborates Kang's (1997) findings as she suggests that these displays are seldom used in advertisements. Similar findings were also reported by Döring and Pöschl (2006), who argue that function ranking is not as discernible as other displays. Thus, while some displays are still commonly used, others are not as common. However, the fact that only grooming advertisements within women's lifestyle magazines were used to identify the presence of Goffman's gender behavior displays should be taken into account.

Hence, this thesis shows that most of Goffman's gender displays developed in 1979 can still be found in today's advertisements, around 40 years later. The fact that advertising continues to communicate these gender displays creates the assumption that they still seem to be part of today's consumer culture and society. However, research such as Zotos and Tsihla's (2014)

study, shows that the role of men and women in society has changed and continues to change. Consequently, the question arises whether advertising is slow to adapt to the changes in society and whether it is mirroring society accurately. Seeing that society seems to be gearing towards gender equality by embracing men in more softer roles such as stay at home dads and women in powerful and professional occupations (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014), the question arises whether advertising should take a more supportive and educational role by dismissing traditional gender stereotypes that according to Knoll, Eisend and Steinhagen (2011) limit people in their development. As the findings of this thesis show, women especially seem to suffer from the stereotypes communicated in grooming advertisements, as they predominantly portrayed women as subordinates and dependent on reaching the acceptance of society by attempting to fulfill socially constructed beauty ideals. Hence, women's professional capabilities seem to be often overlooked due to the focus put on their physical appearance. The thesis found that women seem to be portrayed as if they have to look and behave a certain way in order to be taken seriously, otherwise they will seem irresponsible and incapable of making decisions in the eyes of society. In this connection, grooming advertisements stereotype women as being dependent on grooming for the sake of society in order to reach acceptance and admiration by others rather than for themselves.

### 6.3 Recommendations and Future Research

Considering that the existing literature related to female stereotypes and grooming advertising is limited, it is recommended for future research to continue to explore this arena to further extend the field of study. Furthermore, this thesis, to the best of its knowledge, is the first to investigate women's stereotyping in grooming advertisements. It is recommended for future research to extend and build upon these insights by investigating other women's lifestyle magazines and hence gain a better and broader understanding of women's portrayal in grooming advertisements.

As this thesis further focused on the portrayal of women in grooming advertisements found in American magazines, it could be of interest to investigate advertisements found in magazines of other countries. As an example, future research could compare female stereotypes portrayed in grooming advertisements found in *Cosmopolitan* U.S. with advertisements found in *Cosmopolitan* Australia. Women's grooming advertisements have been seldom explored by past research, therefore investigating advertisements of different countries can provide an understanding of how different cultures portray and stereotype women. A cross-cultural analysis of grooming advertisements would also be of relevance as it would provide knowledge on the similarities and differences between the use of stereotypes in contrasting countries. For instance, evaluating how women are depicted in Western countries in comparison to Eastern countries will provide a cross-cultural comparison of the use of different stereotypes and whether any significant distinctions exist.

In relation to gender stereotypes, it could be of interest for future research to investigate the portrayal and stereotyping of women in grooming advertisements found in men's magazines.

According to Baker (2005), magazines entail advertisements aimed at a certain target audience. Hence, as this thesis investigated advertisements targeted towards women, the portrayal and stereotyping of women might differ in advertisements targeted towards men. By comparing the different depictions of women in advertisements targeted towards women and men, future research could uncover how gender stereotypes are perceived and interpreted by different genders and how advertising communicates these images.

Another interesting future research venture could potentially focus on the stereotyping of women within other product categories, other than grooming, as Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009) argue that there is a relationship between product categories and stereotypes. Investigating other product categories, such as clothing, will allow for the most prevalent stereotypes illustrated to be uncovered. Thus, the interrelation between specific product categories and stereotypes could be further extended.

## 6.4 Contributions and Practical Implications

The portrayal and stereotyping of women in magazine grooming advertisements was a venture previously left unexplored by past studies. This thesis delved into the uncharted territory by extending the theory and knowledge of various schools of thought by investigating the portrayal and stereotyping of women in magazine grooming advertisements.

Several literary and theoretical contributions were achieved through the findings of the study. The findings of this study helped to extend the literature on advertising, gender stereotypes, and the representation of women in magazine advertisements, particularly in relation to grooming. Additionally, the findings of this study uphold theoretical significance by contributing to the existing knowledge on Goffman's gender display framework. Past studies have not considered Goffman's gender display framework in relation to grooming advertisements, thus the thesis has explored how Goffman's displays are used in advertising today to depict women in society. The display of function ranking, relative size, and the family were indiscernible within these advertisements. However, the ritualization of subordination, feminine touch, and licensed withdrawal were prominent. It also extends the theory on the ritualistic behavior of grooming specifically evaluated within women's lifestyle magazine advertisements, an endeavor previously uninvestigated.

Through the construction of a theoretical and conceptual framework, knowledge was drawn upon to evaluate magazine grooming advertisements, which provided a unique perspective on the portrayal and stereotyping of women. The theoretical framework combines theories on semiotics in advertising communications, attributes of stereotypes, gender display, and grooming rituals to create a relevant framework of existing theories to apply to the grooming advertisements. The synergy between the differing concepts allows for the underlying meanings hidden in the advertisements to be uncovered. Social semiotics can be considered the binding factor to all the elements communicated in the advertisements. By considering the portrayed behavior in relation to semiotics, the advertisements assign meaning which in turn communicates specific stereotypes used in relation to grooming. Although the theoretical



framework was specifically constructed to analyze women's magazine grooming advertisements, it can also be utilized by scholars and students to analyze other grooming advertisements. Moreover, there is also the possibility to adapt the framework to focus on different product segments rather than just grooming in order to investigate stereotypes. For instance, the grooming ritual aspect can be adapted to include general consumer ritualistic behavior by looking into the artifact, the script, the performance role, and the audience.

The findings of this thesis indicate that women continue to be predominately portrayed and stereotyped according to traditional, decorative, and subordinating female stereotypes. Although women are seldom portrayed in non-traditional and professional career-oriented roles, there were elements identified within the advertisements that contradict this portrayal. The predominant use of these oversimplified ideas of women communicated through stereotypes presents a grave issue to women as they are the specific target of these types of advertisements. Moreover, the insights of the study can help to bring awareness to how women are currently being portrayed. It can also be used to make women more aware of how advertising unconsciously restrains them by communicating certain stereotypes. Thus, as women build awareness towards these advertising messages they will be given the strength to break down the personally restraining stereotypes constructed by the social consensus.

At first sight some of the grooming advertisements analyzed seem to communicate the message of women being powerful and independent. However, when taking a second detailed look at it, most advertisements turned out to portray women as being subordinate and dependent while communicating grooming as a necessity, hence putting pressure on women to look a certain way. Based on these findings, women can be encouraged to read advertisements in more depth in order to understand their true message and meaning.

In this way, the findings of this thesis can also help marketers to become more aware of how their advertisements can be interpreted by society and evaluate the potential effects of their advertising pictures.

## 6.5 The Fair Representation Index

The researchers of this thesis were astonished by the empirical findings of the study. A substantial amount of the advertisements analyzed depict women in traditional, decorative, and subordinated roles rather than empowered, non-traditional or career-oriented roles despite the changing roles of women in society. Therefore, the researchers believe it is critical to bring awareness to this issue by facing the problem head on. "The Fair Representation Index" is an analytic research tool, constructed by the researchers of this thesis, to allow consumers and organizations to evaluate whether women are being fairly portrayed in advertisements and in a manner that mirrors their evolving role in society. In the context of this research tool, the word fair indicates a portrayal of women that relates to their current role in society, which is changing from a more dependent, domestic and decorative role to a more independent, powerful and professional one. Thus, in order for women to be portrayed fairly the advertisements must be considerate of the elements and behaviors depicted. "The Fair Representation Index" can be

used in all types of advertisements portraying women, not just grooming advertisements. Thus, the transferability of the tool to other contexts is emphasized, essentially increasing its novelty. The following questions determine whether women are being fairly represented in advertisements:

- 1. Is the woman in a position that is not physically lowered or crouched down?**  
The woman must be in a position that is not physically lowered or crouched down. This means that their posture should not be lowered, they should not be sitting down or laying down.
- 2. Is the woman portrayed in functions other than domesticated roles?**  
The woman must be portrayed in functions other than domesticated roles concerned with men, marriage, children, or other functions associated with the household.
- 3. Is the woman concerned with something other than her physical appearance or beauty?**  
The woman must be concerned with something other than the superficiality of her physical appearance or beauty.
- 4. Is the woman depicted in an active role rather than a passive role?**  
The woman must be depicted in an active role rather than a passive role. This means that the woman must be actively involved in the advertisement rather than just looking withdrawn and psychologically not present.

When answering the questions, the entire advertisement including the communicated text and visuals should be considered. Henceforth, to interpret the results of “The Fair Representation Index” and determine whether the woman or women shown in the advertisement are depicted fairly, the answer to all the questions must be met with a yes. If the answer to all the questions are no, the advertisement is not communicating a fair representation of women. It is possible to have a mix of yes and no answers signifying that women are portrayed fairly to a certain extent.

The questions were tested on the sample of the 92 advertisements and approved to be suitable to be applied to women’s advertising. It should be noted, however, that the sample corresponds to grooming and personal-care advertisements only. It would be of interest to test it on other types of advertisements in the future.

Furthermore, this test is intended as a tool for consumers and advertisers to determine whether women are being portrayed fairly. However, to draw accurate conclusions whether women are portrayed fairly it is advised to additionally analyze and consider the semiotics and the context additionally when making use of the test. Further, the test can act as a general help, however it needs to be considered that it is based on gender and stereotypical interpretations in Western society and hence might be less adequate for other cultures with different perceptions of gender

stereotypes.

Through the use of advertising, organizations have the power to communicate how women are portrayed. Organizations should carry an ethical obligation to depict women accurately and fairly. Therefore, the researchers provide organizations with this tool, “The Fair Representation Index,” to ensure that the behavior and displays illustrated communicate a fair message to women aligned with the societal role women play today. Using the tool can potentially create goodwill for organizations by creating awareness on the issue. Consumers can also apply the tool to an organization’s marketing campaign or a specific advertisement to determine whether women are being portrayed fairly.

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# Appendix

## Appendix A Overview of Advertisements

Ad #	Magazine	Month/ Year	Volume, Issue	Brand	Caption
1	Seventeen	March/ April 2017	vol. 76, no. 2	Blistex	Lip care you can really flip over
2	Seventeen	March/ April 2017	vol. 76, no. 2	Burt's Bees	Defy mother nature by embracing her
3	Seventeen	March/ April 2017	vol. 76, no. 2	L'Oréal	Discover liquid care. Lightweight, long-lasting.
4	Seventeen	March/ April 2017	vol. 76, no. 2	L'Oréal	The take-me anywhere tan, for an effortless flawless looking glow
5	Seventeen	March/ April 2017	vol. 76, no. 2	Secret	Don't pit out when you stress out
6	Seventeen	March/ April 2017	vol. 76, no. 2	Simple	Merciless on makeup. Sensitive to skin.
7	Seventeen	March/ April 2017	vol. 76, no. 2	Splat	No bleach needed, the midnight collection
8	Seventeen	March/ April 2017	vol. 76, no. 2	TRESemmé	Hair that's always in fashion
9	Seventeen	May/ June 2017	vol. 76, no. 3	Differin	The biggest news in acne in 30 years
10	Seventeen	May/ June 2017	vol. 76, no. 3	Pure Silk	For legs like pure silk tropical paradise
11	Seventeen	May/ June 2017	vol. 76, no. 3	St. Ives	Love natural exfoliants?
12	Seventeen	May/ June 2017	vol. 76, no. 3	TRESemmé	Do some damage

13	Seventeen	May/ June 2017	vol. 76, no. 3	TRESemmé	Hot hot hair
14	Seventeen	May/ June 2017	vol. 76, no. 3	Neutrogena	Acne. Meet your mask. Light Therapy Acne Mask
15	Seventeen	July/ August 2017	vol. 76, no. 4	L'Oréal	Air Dry It. Drop the dryer. Goodbye heat damage. goodbye frizz.
16	Seventeen	July/ August 2017	vol. 76, no. 4	L'Oréal	Color your way!
17	Seventeen	July/ August 2017	vol. 76, no. 4	Schick	You can't skip bad hair days but you can skip a shave
18	Seventeen	July/ August 2017	vol. 76, no. 4	Splat	Be fun, BE BOLD! Be Expressive
19	Seventeen	July/ August 2017	vol. 76, no. 4	Pure Silk	For legs like pure silk
20	Seventeen	September/ October 2017	vol. 76, no. 5	Batiste	Roll out of bed and ready in five
21	Seventeen	September/ October 2017	vol. 76, no. 5	Bioré	Shay Mitchell, Actress and Bioré Ambassador
22	Seventeen	September/ October 2017	vol. 76, no. 5	Mane 'n Tail	Discover the secret...for soft, silky, shiny hair
23	Seventeen	September/ October 2017	vol. 76, no. 5	Nair	Free yourself from the drag of the daily shave
24	Seventeen	September/ October 2017	vol. 76, no. 5	Pantene Pro-V	Damaged by summer rescued by Pantene
25	Seventeen	September/ October 2017	vol. 76, no. 5	Secret	Invisible for all
26	Seventeen	November/ December 2017	vol. 76, no. 6	Bioré	Dirty little secrets? Not in these pores.
27	Seventeen	November/ December 2017	vol. 76, no. 6	TRESemmé	My "Steal The Show" Hair
28	Seventeen	November/ December 2017	vol. 76, no. 6	St. Ives	My skin wakes up for apricots
29	Seventeen	November/ December 2017	vol. 76, no. 6	Blistex	Triple Treat Your Lips

30	Seventeen	November/ December 2017	vol. 76, no. 6	Pantene Pro- V	Makes hair stronger in just 3 minutes
31	Cosmopolitan	February 2017	vol. 262, no. 2	Aussie	3X the moisturizing power
32	Cosmopolitan	February 2017	vol. 262, no. 2	Avon	Ultimate supreme advanced performance creme
33	Cosmopolitan	February 2017	vol. 262, no. 2	L'Oréal	A skindrink with aloe water
34	Cosmopolitan	February 2017	vol. 262, no. 2	L'Oréal	Transform skin in just 10 minutes.
35	Cosmopolitan	February 2017	vol. 262, no. 2	Olay	Visible Results, Invisible Feel
36	Cosmopolitan	February 2017	vol. 262, no. 2	Pantene Pro- V	Don't wash your hair...Fuel it
37	Cosmopolitan	February 2017	vol. 262, no. 2	Secret	Freshness that works harder, because you have to work harder to get ahead
38	Cosmopolitan	February 2017	vol. 262, no. 2	Sephora	Ready. Set. Hydrate.
39	Cosmopolitan	February 2017	vol. 262, no. 2	sexyhair	Fight frizz. Keep fullness
40	Cosmopolitan	April 2017	vol. 262, no. 4	Aussie	End your dry spell
41	Cosmopolitan	April 2017	vol. 262, no. 4	Dove	Dove shower foam
42	Cosmopolitan	April 2017	vol. 262, no. 4	Garnier	Editorial
43	Cosmopolitan	April 2017	vol. 262, no. 4	Head & Shoulders	New Head & Shoulders. Cleans, protects and even moisturizes
44	Cosmopolitan	April 2017	vol. 262, no. 4	Infusium	i-shine; rise to the power of i
45	Cosmopolitan	April 2017	vol. 262, no. 4	L'Oréal	Purified roots. Hydrated ends. For up to 48 hrs.
46	Cosmopolitan	April 2017	vol. 262, no. 4	Mane 'n Tail	Color protect, new look... new formula

47	Cosmopolitan	April 2017	vol. 262, no. 4	Nia	Into weekends, into working out (kinda), into pizza, into change, into travel, into binge watching, into napping, not into aging
48	Cosmopolitan	April 2017	vol. 262, no. 4	Olay	DNA or Olay?
49	Cosmopolitan	April 2017	vol. 262, no. 4	Pond's	Perfectly clean. Timelessly beautiful. Since 1907.
50	Cosmopolitan	April 2017	vol. 262, no. 4	Splat	Blue hair dye
51	Cosmopolitan	April 2017	vol. 262, no. 4	L'Oréal	Color your way!
52	Cosmopolitan	June 2017	vol. 262, no. 6	Amope	Ready, set, summer with Amope
53	Cosmopolitan	June 2017	vol. 262, no. 6	Australian Gold	Enjoy the fun
54	Cosmopolitan	June 2017	vol. 262, no. 6	European Wax Center	I'm not shallow, I'm skin deep
55	Cosmopolitan	June 2017	vol. 262, no. 6	Garnier	Super fruit. Super hair.
56	Cosmopolitan	June 2017	vol. 262, no. 6	L'Oréal	Get your bronze on
57	Cosmopolitan	June 2017	vol. 262, no. 6	Live Clean	Live kind, Live beautiful
58	Cosmopolitan	June 2017	vol. 262, no. 6	Olay	Get a better clean with Olay daily facials
59	Cosmopolitan	June 2017	vol. 262, no. 6	ScarAway	Visible scars. Meet visible results.
60	Cosmopolitan	June 2017	vol. 262, no. 6	Schick	You can't skip adulting but you can skip a shave
61	Cosmopolitan	August 2017	vol. 263, no. 2	Bioré	Peace. Love. And Pores To Dye For.
62	Cosmopolitan	August 2017	vol. 263, no. 2	Head & Shoulders	"Don't believe I use head & shoulders? You're right. I use new head & shoulders."
63	Cosmopolitan	August 2017	vol. 263, no. 2	L'Oréal	Protect color + stay vibrant

64	Cosmopolitan	August 2017	vol. 263, no. 2	Schick (Hydro Silk)	Secrets of the serum. A hydro silk story
65	Cosmopolitan	August 2017	vol. 263, no. 2	Schwarzkopf Gliss	I don't cut. I choose repair. Beautiful by choice
66	Cosmopolitan	August 2017	vol. 263, no. 2	TRESemmé	Smooth doesn't have to be straight
67	Cosmopolitan	October 2017	vol. 263, no. 4	Bioré	Got a hot minute? Your pores will thank you.
68	Cosmopolitan	October 2017	vol. 263, no. 4	Cantu	My curl. My cantu.
69	Cosmopolitan	October 2017	vol. 263, no. 4	Dove	90% delicate, 10% freckles, wash with care
70	Cosmopolitan	October 2017	vol. 263, no. 4	European Wax Center	Life goals: Be as in shape as my brows.
71	Cosmopolitan	October 2017	vol. 263, no. 4	Garnier	SkinGenious
72	Cosmopolitan	October 2017	vol. 263, no. 4	Olay	So much more than a makeup remover
73	Cosmopolitan	October 2017	vol. 263, no. 4	Olay	Wake up like this
74	Cosmopolitan	October 2017	vol. 263, no. 4	One Two	No glue. No mess.
75	Cosmopolitan	October 2017	vol. 263, no. 4	Pond's	Removes even the toughest makeup for soft and smooth skin
76	Cosmopolitan	December 2017	vol. 263, no. 6	Alba Botanica	Meet the woman who
77	Cosmopolitan	December 2017	vol. 263, no. 6	Blistex	Serums do wonders for skin... ever wonder what...
78	Cosmopolitan	December 2017	vol. 263, no. 6	European Wax Center	Here's to our past and present(s)
79	Cosmopolitan	December 2017	vol. 263, no. 6	Garnier	Nourished hair, better color
80	Cosmopolitan	December 2017	vol. 263, no. 6	Garnier Whole Blends	Holiday indulgence
81	Good Housekeeping	February 2017	vol. 264, no. 2	Aveeno	Want to look younger, longer? Take the right steps now.



82	Good Housekeeping	June 2017	vol. 264, no. 6	Pantene Pro-V	summer RESCUE - Helps repair even extreme hair damage in just 3 minutes
83	Good Housekeeping	August 2017	vol. 265, no. 2	Aveeno	Experience the light as air, barely there, beautiful skin hydration
84	Good Housekeeping	August 2017	vol. 265, no. 2	Garnier	For oily skin. Cleanse, remove make-up and purify pores all-in-1!
85	Good Housekeeping	August 2017	vol. 265, no. 2	L'Oréal	Fights 5 signs of damage
86	Good Housekeeping	August 2017	vol. 265, no. 2	RoC	This is not a quick fix. This is my decision to make beauty last.
87	Good Housekeeping	October 2017	vol. 265, no. 4	Bath Planet	Bath remodels that won't scare you
88	Good Housekeeping	October 2017	vol. 265, no. 4	Dove	Beauty blogger Christina reveals why Dove Bar gets her top rating
89	Good Housekeeping	October 2017	vol. 265, no. 4	L'Oréal	Get your rosy tone back
90	Good Housekeeping	October 2017	vol. 265, no. 4	Pantene Pro-V	Fuel Your Hair 100% Stronger
91	Good Housekeeping	December 2017	vol. 265, no. 6	Aquaphor	Spray Away Dry, Rough skin
92	Good Housekeeping	December 2017	vol. 265, no. 6	Olay	Elevate Moisture-Enhance Skin. Experience Olay