Putting A Lens on Those Who Are Often Overlooked: Women's Representations in Advertising Messages.

By

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Abstract

This paper investigates the representations of women in advertising messages, especially in several protected groups, in the hope of improving the inclusiveness of advertisements. Through an anonymous online questionnaire, 86 participants whose biological sex and / or gender identity were female expressed their views on the portrayals of women in advertisements. The data collected were analysed as a whole as well as based on whether the respondent was from a protected group or not. This survey found that both the protected and non protected groups thought that the representations of women were distorted to an extent, while the protected groups were less satisfied with their representations in advertising messages. The researcher argues a guideline concerning the inclusivity of women's portrayals in advertising messages covering from true representations to inclusive advertising practitioner hiring practices is demanded. The researcher also hopes this project would open the discussion about protected groups women's representations in advertising messages, and encourage more studies and research in all fields focusing on protected women.

Keywords: Female Protected Groups; Women's Representations; Inclusive Advertising Messages; Inclusive Research Practices.

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Introduction

1.1 The Ads We Are Exposed to Every Day

In the twenty-first century North America, everyone is exposed to advertising messages all day every day. The clock that wakes you up must have a brand name on it, the car you drive to work carries its logo at both the front and the end, it is easy for others to tell whether you stopped by Tim Hortons or Starbucks this morning since all they need to do is to take a look at the cup you are holding. It seems that most advertisements are quite accessible to the majority, the messages they carry on are quiet but also loud -- while a logo on a coffee cup may be subtle, there are thousands of them in cities, when their existence forms a social statement about the person holding the cup, they must have some impacts to people. However, what if some advertising content, which is so ubiquitous and influential are inaccessible or unacceptable?

As an individual who has been paying particular attention to advertising content, the researcher summarized several reasons for the inaccessibility or unacceptance of an advertisement based on her own observations. The first one is the poor graphic techniques such as the misuse of colours, fonts and layouts, especially when it comes to traditional advertisements. The second reason is the devalue and stereotypes of a certain group of people, for example, women in general have been a common victim of stereotypes, and if one is a member of LGBTQ+ community of particular ethnicity such a woman of colours, she is even more likely to be devalued and misrepresented. The third is the neglect of certain groups (mostly screen readers and screen magnifiers) when advertising online.

Until the writing date, the researcher had reviewed the subject information from online resources, university libraries and public libraries for 11 months, and had not yet found any evidence of a holistic official guideline or checklist targeting this problem. Though some individual advertising agencies might have their internal toolkit/philosophies for creating content. Normally such a toolkit is more focused on generating inspiring and eye-catching business projects rather than performing the humanistic concerns.

1.1.1 Poor Graphic Techniques / Results

Graphic design still plays an important role in traditional advertisements such as posters, billboards and even package design. Poor graphic results (i.e. low colour contrast, too small or too blocky fonts and information overload) can interfere with an audience's understanding of advertisement content, no matter if he/she belongs to the visual group or visually impaired groups. There are many possible reasons for the unsatisfactory visual effects. It is true that there are some practitioners who do not consider accessibility when working, whether intentionally or unintentionally. It is also possible that everyone did their job, but external reasons (such as the machine not working properly on the day of printing) caused poor visual effects. However, in this sense, an advertisement with a poor visual performance would do what is opposite of its original purpose, putting up a barrier between the target audience and the product, and earning a bad reputation among that user group and their family and friends. (Preece, Sharp and Rogers, 2015, Chapter 6)

1.1.2 Devaluation and Stereotypes

According to Blashill and Powlishta (2009), stereotyping is a way of simplifying the world, making assumptions that objects that have similar traits in one perspective must be alike in another. Common victims of stereotypes are women, people of colour, sexual minorities, people with disabilities and the elderly. Some examples are women being sexual objects, the gay community is associated with certain ways of dressing and speaking, and using the equipment that people with the certain disability to represent the group (e.g. using a wheelchair without people on it to represent people who are differently abled). It may be true that sometimes it happens just because the speaking person is unthoughtful or simply does not know better, however, these comments still have a strong power to be hurtful to the certain group and cause painful consequences. In this case, a harmful impact has been caused, and the speaker's intention of good or evil has no effect on this impact.

With social progress, more people in North America have realized that many stereotypes for a certain group tend to be biased against objective facts. However, at the same time, some advertisements still play the role of reaffirming and spreading these backward values. An example is the controversial Calvin Klein campaign "I __ in my Calvins"[1]. Advertisements like this go against the facts that every individual is different and deserves their own representations. A person's gender is female does not mean that she must be sexually valuable, a gay man or lesbian do not necessarily look more or less masculine / feminime than heterosexual men and women, and the equipment that people with disabilities use cannnot represent the individual in such a general way.

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[1] A journal about the controversy the campaign caused can be found at:
https://www.cnn.com/2016/05/13/opinions/calvin-klein-underwear-controversy-drexler/index.html

1.1.3 Inadequate of WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guideline)[2]

While the traditional media （excludes radio） are aimed at the visual or partially visual audience, the Internet has offered more possibilities to people who are blind or have a serious visual impairment. However, the lack of semantic coding awareness could kill these possibilities. Though a navigation bar created by using a navigation tag or a table tag may look the same, the screen reader would read everything in the coding honestly and plainly. Such a "short-cut of programmers" would be a huge confusion to the visually impaired people and take more of their time to browse. And worse, there are instances where programmers failed to provide an "alt-text" for non-text content that would make the content completely inaccessible to the visually-impaired. The inconsideration of these groups could cause the brand to lose the entire community as potential consumers when advertising online.

1.1.4 Why Advertisements?

It is important to pay close attention to ethics in advertisements. In Kerr's article (2016), he argued that a frequent used definition of advertising is

> "any paid form of non-personal communication about an organization, product, service, or idea by an identified sponsor" (as cited in Belch and Belch, 2004)", and because it is a form of human communication, it is subject to ethical evaluation (as cited in Dow, 2013).

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[2] WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guideline) webpage:
https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/

Moreover, advertising is ubiquitous, there are so many advertisements so that it is almost impossible, even for a single day, for socialized individuals living in today's society not to be exposed to advertising messages. Therefore, the information conveyed in the advertisement can reflect contemporary popular culture and values in a certain aspect, and also has a certain influence on shaping them -- though the main purpose of commercials is for promoting consumption and the non-commercials are often used to convey certain beliefs and values, the ultimate purpose of advertisements is to establish an influence to the audience, directly or imperceptibly, some may call it promoting while some may call it persuading, however, this sort of communication is around us every single day.

Also, given the entertainment nature of advertising, there is little discussion about the importance of inclusion in the values it conveys -- regulators are paying more attention to the credibility of ads and the judges of advertising awards care more about the creative ideas. But as mentioned above, being a promoting / persuasive message around everyone, ethics are indeed very important.

1.2 Focusing on The Protected Groups in Women

1.2.1 Current Regulations & Guidelines

At the concept stage of this major research project, the researcher was planning to create a comprehensive solution addressing all the defects mentioned above. However, by communicating with the primary advisor, the researcher realized there have already been relatively targeted solutions for the technical problems, such as

"Accessibility — A Practical Handbook For Graphic/Web Design" published by Registered Graphic Designers in Ontario, and Web Content Accessibility Guideline 2.0 (WCAG 2.0) for website accessibility. However, for the value part, the currently existing regulations, such as Ad Standards, are focusing more on the honesty of advertising messages rather than the inclusivity of it. Therefore, to fill in this gap, this research project will focus on those inclusive values that have been perennially overlooked. Those things that equate to equality.

According to the observation of the researcher, the misvalue that showed in advertising messages can be roughly divided into three parts: gender, race and ability. In an ideal situation, all the three misvalues should be given some time studied and researched, a targeting solution for each problem can be expected to generate, thus the outcome can be called as a comprehensive study and solution for the misvalue(s) in advertising messages. Due to the realistic timeframe, also considering the researcher's interest, this project will mainly focus on women.

1.2.2 Women and the Ontario Human Rights Code[3]

In today's male-dominant world, women are still in a disadvantaged position no matter at the workplace ("Unemployment rate, participation rate and employment rate by sex, annual", 2020), family ("Daily average time spent in hours on various activities by age group and sex, 15 years and over, Canada and provinces", 2020) or society("About Gender-Based Violence", 2018). It makes sense to say that women are the largest minority in the world. However, one cannot be judged as vulnerable or disadvantaged just because of their sex and/or gender, so how are the protected groups defined in this study?

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[3] Ontario Human Rights Code official link: http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code

The Ontario Human Rights Code states 17 protected grounds and 5 protected social areas, it prohibits discrimination against people based on any protected ground in a protected social area. The 17 protected grounds are:

- Age
- Ancestry, colour, race
- Citizenship
- Ethnic origin
- Place of origin
- Creed
- Disability
- Family status
- Marital status (including single status)
- Gender identity, gender expression
- Receipt of public assistance (in housing only)
- Record of offences (in employment only)
- Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding)
- Sexual orientation

By stating that it protects everyone's gender identity, gender expression and sex, the Ontario Human Rights Code protects both women and men, the female, the male and the other. Though inequalities such as the gender wage gap ("The Gender Wage Gap in 2018", 2019) still exists, it is not this research project's intention to address one gender/sex as a victim and other genders/sex as oppressors. This research project focuses on a more disadvantaged sex/gender -- people whose either sex and gender are female. For example, a person whose biological sex is male and gender expression is female, and a person whose biological sex is female but gender expression is others both belong to the group focused in this study.

1.2.3 The Protected Groups in A Protected Group

According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, this research project defines "women/female" as a protected group. However, women's representation is a topic which has been discussed as early as in the 1960s, during women's movements in the second wave feminism in Canada. So why does the researcher think it is worth further investigation and what gaps are this project trying to fill?

Besides the people who only fall into the "female" ground, there are also many people who fall into other protected grounds at the same time. For example, an indigenous woman, who is a wheelchair user and also a lesbian. When the discussions of women's representation are happening, is she being included in the conversation? If yes, to what extent? The researcher believes that long-standing neglect of these protected groups in women worth investigating, these groups are also deserved to be represented, and represented fairly.

The focused protected groups in women in this research project are:

- Indigenous Women
- Senior Women
- Visible Minority Women
- Women who belong to the LGBTQ+ community
- Women with Disabilities

The 5 protected groups fit into the protected grounds of Ancestry, colour, race; Ethnic origin; Place of Origin; Disability; Gender identity, gender expressions; Sex and Sexual Orientation in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The choice of the protected groups in women is based on considerations of the relevance of advertising, the availability of data and the timeframe of this project.

1.3 Objectives and Goals

The main goal of this project is to investigate the female advertising audience's opinion towards the current women's representation in advertising messages, especially the representations of the protected groups in women. Though the number of the participants were too few and the result could not be considered scientific, the researcher hopes the data analyzed and the findings would open a discussion regarding the general public's perceptions of women's, especially protected groups among women's portrayals in advertisements.

To obtain this goal, the first action is to do the research. A designed survey, which contains both quantitative and qualitative questions will be disseminated to diverse people whose either sex/gender is/are female, to collect their opinion about the research topic, as well as their suggestions about a potential inclusive advertising guideline which concerns women.

The second action is data analysis. The researcher is going to analyze the information collected, summarize patterns and findings, compare them with literature and studies that have been done.

Moreover, the researcher hopes this whole study can be empowerment to women who are underrepresented or unfairly represented, as well as an awareness-raising project to inspire more.

Literature Review

2.1 Sex, Gender Identity and Gender Role

A person's sex is assigned with and understood by her/his biological sex, which refers to bodily features such as the anatomy, reproductive system and secondary sex characteristics. Gender or gender identity, however, refers to the psychological behaviours of women, men and others who have another gender expression. An individual's sex and gender can be integrated, one's gender identity can be based on her/his biological sex, and an individual's biological factors such as hormone can affect her/his gender characteristics (Heinämaa, 2012).

However, over the last few decades, the understanding of human sexuality has undergone a great shift in western societies. One's gender identity, which traditionally tightly combined with one's reproductive system at birth, has grown more room for the individual to express freely (Giddens & Sutton, 2017). People have gained more rights to define their own gender identity based on the internal awareness of themselves. Also, besides female and male, other gender terms such as non-binary, gender fluid and two-spirit are now in use to describe an individual's gender identity.

The term "gender role" was first used by sexologist John Money (1973) in 1955, he defined it as "all those things that a person says or does to disclose himself or herself having the status of boy or man, girl or woman, respectively. " (p.397), and further explained that:

Gender role is appraised in relation to the following: general mannerisms, deportment and demeanor; spontaneous topics of talk in unprompted conversation and casual comment; content of dreams, daydreams and fantasies; replies to oblique inquiries and projective tests; evidence of erotic practices and, finally, the person's own replies to direct inquiry. (Money, 1972, p.397).

In a more contemporary sense, gender roles are associated closely with stereotypes which are mostly the traditional expectations of the work done well or should be done by women or men. For instance, nursing work is women's work (Boddy, 2009), and the boys perform better at Math and Science (Eccles, Jacobs & Harold, 1990).

What are some typical stereotypes to women based on the traditional gender role expectations? A pattern that can be found in several studies and papers is the conflict between the roles of women as a family member vs. a labour force (Bobby, 2009; Cotter, Hermsen & Vanneman, 2011; Scott, 2008). The traditional gender role expects women to play a warm, caring mother role in the family, take the primary care of children and do more of the chores. When women are trying to step out of their traditional roles, it can cause tensions (Meyer, 1983) and brings a mix of feelings to the women themselves (Gross, 1988).

However, the general public's perceptions of gender roles have gone through a shift in recent decades, according to the study "The End of the Gender Revolution? Gender Role Attitudes from 1977 to 2008", four attitudes: "Disagree men are better politicians", "Agree working mom can have warm relationship with kids", "Disagree woman takes care of home" and "Disagree preschooler suffers if mom works" have been greatly increased (Cotter, Hermsen & Vanneman, 2011).

2.2 What Have We Talked about When We Are Talking about Women's Representations in Advertisements?

As mentioned, the portrayal of women in media is an important component in the second-wave feminist movements in Canada, and women's representations in advertisements is a topic that has long been discussed since at least the 1970s (Maher and Childs, 2003). However, the studies and research that have been done are mainly focused on the representations that have been shown to the public. This part of the literature review will focus on the main existing criticisms regarding representations/stereotypes of women in advertising messages.

2.2.1 Stereotypes & Criticisms

Patterson, O'Malley and Story (2008) summarized a list of frequently appeared roles of women in advertisements. It includes: mother, good wife (e.g. 2011 Mr. Clean "This Mother's Day" campaign[4]), sexual object, dependent on a man (e.g. 2016 American Apparel campaign[5]), irrational consumer (e.g. 2015 Nutella advertisement [6]), symbol for objects, component part, object to be viewed and object to be used (e.g. Budweiser campaigns[7]). They described all the roles as stereotypes to women, which restricted femininity only on a set of "exaggerated roles, character traits and body types." (p. 12)

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[4] See Appendix
[5] See Appendix
[6] See Appendix
[7] See Appendix

Patterson, O'Malley and Story (2008) also argued that certain scenes shown in advertisements, such as "Ritualised Subordination (p, 13)" and mocked assaults (e.g. 2007 Dolce&Gabbana campaign)[8] would subconsciously reinforce the stereotypes of gender roles as women always appeared as the obeyed and the victims.

Besides the cultural stereotypes, a concern of "perfect" women in advertisements has risen in recent decades. To the western societies, the portrait of an ideal woman is often portrayed as unrealistically and unreasonably thin (e.g. 2014 Victoria's Secret "Perfect Body" campaign[9]). (Swami et al, 2006). This unrealistic representation of women has caused many negative effects on women's mental and physical well-being (Swami, Salem, Furnham & Tovée, 2008; Frederick, Forbes, Grigorian & Jarcho, 2007). So how about stop using explicit body figures? Gurari, Hetts and Strube (2006) conducted a study that indicated that compared to the explicit body images of women used in advertisements, implicit idealized portrayals can also have negative impacts on women's self-views and self-esteem.

2.2.2 Women's Attitudes and the Trend

Collecting women's opinions about their representations in advertisements is an important component of this research project. The 2 studies reviewed in this section showed a pattern of the different attitudes within the female and the change of female attitudes about their portrayals in advertisements from 1991 to 2008.

Heslop, Newman and Gauthier (1989) conducted research aiming to investigate Canadian women's reactions to the portrayals of women in magazine ads. They

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[8] See Appendix
[9] See Appendix

selected 55 ads from a variety of magazines, and then rated them by a group of women on a scale of five, based on how sexist these advertisements are. Then the researchers first asked the participants (a group of women other than the women who sorted the advertisements) to rate the advertisements, then answer a survey that contains the feminist orientation scale. The respondents' sex-role orientation (AWS) were calculated and they were divided into three groups: the traditional, the moderates and the liberals. This study found that women who were rated on a sex-role scale as liberal had more negative attitudes to all advertising, while more liberal the portrayals of women are, the advertisements are more preferred by all women regardless of their sex role scale.

At the end of the paper, the researchers urged:

> Studies on advertising and its relationship to women must also be continued as a monitoring vehicle to plot advertising's progress and speed towards a more egalitarian orientation and the reactions of audiences to such changes. There is still much room for revising advertising's portrayal of women, and studies like this one indicate advertisers are wasting their time and money resisting the needed changes. There is nothing to lose and everything to gain from reform. (Newman & Gauthier, 1989, p. 16)

This seems to indicate that the female image in advertisements will become fairer, and related research and public opinions will play a supervisory role. But is this true?

Zimmerman and Dahlberg (2008) studied women's attitudes toward the sexual objectification of women in advertising. They followed the sampling rule of a study conducted in 1991 by Ford, LaTour and Lundstrom to select 94 female undergraduates who" had higher incomes, were younger, better educated, less tradition-oriented, and from higher status households (p.73)" as participants when

they compared the result to the 1991 study, they found that contemporary young, educated women (in 2008) more agreed that the advertisements treat them mainly as sex objects than those in 1990; they were not accepting the sexual objectification of women, but slightly more accepting it than one decade ago; however, the young women in 2008 have become less offended by their representations in advertisements than one decade ago. The researchers further explored these ideas by stating that as shown in this study, the college females realized that the portrayals of women are not realistic, it is just a means to the sale. Influenced by the third-wave feminist movement, they may decide to "exercise their girl power and make their decisions independently of how women in advertisements may be portrayed" while staying not offended and calm.

The researcher is a woman who falls in one of the protected group focused in this study, the researcher would like to argue that though the awareness has been raised that the portrayal of women in some advertisements are not real and just a means to the sale, members of protected groups still have the right, or to be more radical, the duty, to be offended by them. Being such a ubiquitous communication, the internal impact advertisements have on people can be huge. Understanding the falseness of the representations and simply ignoring it does not help others to recognize and jump out of the stereotypes about women. But saying an explicit NO can.

2.3 And Who Are They That Are Always Missed?

It is mentioned in the introduction that due to the time scope, it is not feasible to include every protected group in this research project, so based on the researcher's personal interest and the accessibility of resources, with the support of the Ontario

Human Rights Code, the selected 5 protected groups this research project focuses on are :

- Indigenous Women
- Senior Women
- Visible Minority Women
- Women who belong to the LGBTQ+ community
- Women with Disabilities

2.3.1 The Indigenous Women

Compared to the representations in advertising, of women in general, it is significantly more difficult to research the literature related to the protected groups. The researcher did not manage to find any scholarly articles concerning the indigenous/aboriginal women's representations in advertisements after reviewing the online resources, university libraries and public libraries for about 3 months. But the public's concern of using the image of an indigenous/aboriginal person may reaffirm the stereotypes does exist. There is a CBC news "Woman at centre of social media storm says no one told her how to dress" (Strong, 2018) about an indigenous female model who dressed like a cartoon character of Pocahontas in a Government of Canada's advertisement, it raised some concerns about the content of the ad is a racist stereotyping of indigenous people, but the model later claimed that the jewellery and wardrobe was chosen by herself at the shooting day and she had no intention to look like any character. Out of respect for the community she belongs, there is no reason to accuse her for intentionally making the potential harm, however, shall she, a member of the community she was going to represent, be more aware of the concerns over stereotyping about the group?

Meanwhile, in media such as television and films, Women In View, which is a national not-for-profit organization works on gender representations and diversity in Canadian media (both on-screen and behind the screens), published a report indicating that the indigenous women are severely underrepresented regarding their proportion in population (4%):

> No Indigenous women worked on any of the 24 series studied in 2017. Between 2014 and 2017, Indigenous women received only 0.69% (22 of 3206) of contracts studied. (p.1).

Besides the concerns of underrepresentation and stereotypes, some indigenous women that appear in advertisements raise another alert. A Global News post "By the numbers: Missing or murdered aboriginal women in Canada" reveals the disproportionate number of indigenous/aboriginal women have been murdered and missing in Canada compared to non-indigenous women: they make 4.6 percent of the Canadian female population, but 16 percent of female homicide victims over more than 30 years. (Logan, 2014) This fact sadly means that, when people try to think of a representation of the indigenous women in advertising messages, one of them could be a missing woman/girl in a notice of missing person (a form of advertisement).

2.3.2 Senior Women

The starting age for *seniors* is set out at 65 in the research survey of this project, based on the fact that this is the age one is eligible to begin collecting Old Age Security Pension (OASP) from the federal government of Canada. However, the academic studies focused on senior women's representations in advertisements are few. There are academic papers discussing the stereotypes and unfairness

aimed at senior women in the workplace, however, limiting the subject to advertising or media, senior women were often studied within the *Older Population* group.

While researching literature, the researcher realized though the data must be not accurate since every project sets its own beginning age of *Older Adults*, these studies can also reveal the stereotypes about the senior and the underrepresentation of senior women. Lee, Carpenter and Meyers (2007) set the beginning age of Older Adults at 55 and did a study aiming for determining how older people are portrayed in a "comprehensive set of television advertisements."(p.23). Their findings indicate that:

> Older adults appeared in 15% (286) of the 1977 advertisements taped across the five days. Of these, Caucasian older adults appeared in 86% of advertisements, African-Americans appeared in 13%, and older adults of all other ethnic backgrounds in 12%. Older men appeared in more advertisements than older women (82% vs. 38%). The distribution of acting roles between men and women was comparable: older men were cast as spokespeople in 41% of ads, and women were cast as spokespeople in 39% of ads. (Lee, Carpenter & Meyers, 1984, p,25).

While the researchers indicate that the older people are not underrepresented since they appeared in 15% of the advertisements yet comprise 18% of the population of the region where these advertisements are aired, they criticized the gender imbalance in those advertisements. Senior women only appeared in 38% of the advertisements about older people, which simply means that while senior men are not underrepresented, senior women are. (Lee, Carpenter & Meyers, 1984, p,28)

The authors also criticized the impact of the limited roles the senior people cast in advertisements, which reaffirms the stereotypes, overly emphasized senior's needs for medical, physical and financial support, while the seniors may have other interests in a wide variety. However, no senior people were involved in identifying the stereotypes process, nor the discussion of the study. How senior women think of their own representations in advertisements is still a blank space to fill. (Lee, Carpenter & Meyers, 1984, p,28)

2.3.3 Visible Minority Women

Compared to the other 4 protected groups, there are significantly more studies and articles focusing on visible minority women's representations in advertisements over the past few decades. The study conducted in 1989 "The Distorted Mirror: Images of Visible Minority Women in Canadian Print Advertising" argued that the invisible women were not only underrepresented at that time but also severely misrepresented. (MacGregor, 1989) They hardly appeared in one of Canada's most famous magazines "MacLean's" while showing in "extremely limited roles and associated with a very narrow range of goods and services." (p. 139).

A follow-up study of the one conducted by MacGregor was published in 1998, Kunz and Fleras (1998), the authors of "Visible Minority Women In Mainstream Advertising: Distorted Mirror Or Looking Glass?" updated the visible minority women's representations in 1994 MacLean's magazines to be "no longer underrepresented in terms of numbers, " but "continue to be misrepresented with respect to product associations and role placement" (p.27), while they expected a significant improvement of visible minority women's representations. Both studies analyzed a large amount of data and gave clear results and conclusions. However,

collecting visible minority women's feedback about their own representations was not included in the goals of either of them.

Instead of focusing on the visible minority women as a whole, other related studies were focusing on one or several groups within the visible minority women. There are several scholars arguing that Black, East Asian and White women are often put in certain roles (Taylor & Stern, 1997) (Sengupta, 2006), for example, black women for fashion campaigns and Asian women for technology products (Sengupta, 2006). These roles, however, are not illustrating the women based on their origins, or as individuals, but a stereotyped image formed by western culture and history (Kim & Chung, 2005). Sengupta suggested that while the stereotypes for White Beauty and "hypersexual Black women" (2006, p.799) still exist, a new stereotype which connects Asian to "technology savvy" (2006, p.799) is arising, which verifies the researcher's search of literature -- among the visible minority groups, recent articles that focused on Asian women are the most common, while the other groups such as Black women, even though the stereotypes persist, are less mentioned.

2.3.4 Women Who Belong to the LGBTQ+ Community

While the use of homosexual/queer groups in advertisements regarding target groups, mainstream market assimilation and profit are researched, studies focused on representations of the LGBTQ+ groups are limited. Mainstream advertising marketers of popular brands used to reject to include gay or lesbian images (Cortese, 2016). Though the reason behind it may be discrimination or protection, the LGBTQ+ groups used to be underrepresented. However, Gill (2008) argued that it is a fact that lesbians have been appearing increasingly in contemporary advertising, she affirmed the positive impacts of introducing lesbians women in advertisements, such as renewing the public's idea about femininity and

challenging the heterosexual-dominant society, she also gave critisizes about using the image of a women-to-women relationship to satisfy heterosexuality norms by packaging them within conventional female attrativeness. Gill (2009) reconfirmed this criticise on an article she declared that not focused on the representations of lesbian, but the overall sexual figures in advertisements.

In reviewing the literature relevant to LGBTQ+ and the images used to portray women, one often encounters terms like "queer chic" and "hot lesbian" used to caption the images. However, no study has conducted whether it distorted the portrayal of this group of people.

2.3.5 Women with Disability

Due to the lack of research focused on the female groups in our disabled population, this section of the literature review will discuss contemporary studies that investigate the representations of disabled people in advertising content and, more generally, the media. Haller and Ralph (2006) argued that though it is still rare to see a person with a disability appearing in an advertisement, the disabled groups have been increasing in representation. Moreover, the theme of the advertisements they appeared in are transforming from singular charity to a wider range of interests. (Haller & Ralph, 2001).

However, the improvements do not mean that the disabled population is not underrepresented. Ganahl and Arbuckle found through their two-year content analysis that "persons with visible impairments were portrayed far less frequently in the commercials than their 6.5% of the population as reported by the Census Bureau (1994). (para. 32)" Among the 2,999 commercials they monitored, only 15 (0.5%) persons with physical disabilities were cast as the main roles.

At the same time, certain stereotypes that relate to people with disabilities remain a concern. MediaSmarts identified several portrayals of disabled persons in the media as all-the-same, victim, hero and villain ("Common Portrayals of Persons with Disabilities", n.d.). Haller and Ralph (2006) analyzed some prominent themes of advertisements in UAS that persons with disabilities appeared in, they are empowerment, disabled equals broken, disability cool/disability pride and we want your business/supercrip.

Besides visible physical disabilities, mental disabilities are harder to spot thus to show in advertisements. However, in recent years, we witnessed several meaningful campaigns that empower this group. One of the examples is Clara Hughes in Bell "Let's Talk" campaign, by which she made a series of efforts to raise the public's awareness about mental health from 2010.

Thus, with some progression, the problematic and the positive / encouraging representations of not only women, but people with disabilities can be seen at the same time in the media.

2.4 Feminist Data Visualization

The last paper reviewed is not directly related to women' representations in advertising content, but feminist data visualization. Though the data collected in this major research project is specifically about female portrayals in advertisements, data visualization serves as an important communication tool. Thus, to analyze and visualize data properly, becomes crucial in this project.

D'Ignazio and Klein (2016, October) offered fresh perspectives on how applying feminist theory can benefit the information visualization research and other science fields. For example, in the Science and Technology Studies (STS), they argued:

> Challenging neutrality, objectivity, and universality does not mean that feminist STS retreats to a position of relativism or solipsism, however. The field rejects neither the scientific process nor quantitative ways of knowing the world. Rather, feminist STS allows us to see how all knowledge is situated, how certain perspectives are excluded from the current knowledge regime, and how multiple true objectivities are possible. (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2016 October, p.1).

Applying feminism in science fields can not only reveal possible objectives, but also can empower it to head in a more inclusive direction. For example, representations of non-binary gender that challenging digital humanities, and to include those who are excluded -- the indigenous population, in a Geographical Information System. (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2016, October)

They then proposed six principles in feminist data visualization, that are Rethink Binaries, Embrace Pluralism, Examine Power and Aspire to Empowerment, Consider Context, Legitimize Embodiment and Affect and Make Labor Visible. (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2016, October) These principles are not only going to guide the research in this major project, but also propose new standpoints and conversations about the inclusion of the information visualization area.

Methods

3.1 The Original Design of Survey And the Ethical Constraints

Given that one of the goals of this major research project is to provide participants' insights, four groups of people are considered potential interviews/surveys subjects. They are the general public, advertising practitioners, advertising industry regulators, and the protected (the term "vulnerable" was used in the survey draft) groups[10] defined in this study. Three questionnaire drafts were designed based on the first three groups, and a questionnaire was designed for the last group as a semi-structured interview outline draft.[11]

The three survey drafts designed for the general public, the advertising practitioners and the advertising industry regulators are quantitative oriented, the semi-structured interview outline was qualitative oriented. The survey for the first three groups would be distributed mainly online, however, for practitioners who belong to the protected groups, a simultaneous conversation (in-person, via video/phone call, via messages/emails) was expected. This design aims to gain comprehensive insights from practitioners who hold different perspectives, while providing a perspective emphatically for groups previously not included in this conversation.

The number of expected participants in any of the first three groups is as many as 100, with 10 as the expected number of those in the protected groups. The

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[10] The first three questionnaire drafts do not require the gender of the participants to be female, the protected groups were defined as people whose sex and/or gender are/is female and fall into the 5 protected grounds (see pages 12-13) in this study.
[11] Three questionnaire drafts and one interview outline draft are attached in Appendix

quantitative research methods used to investigate the general public, advertising practitioners and the advertising industry regulators were expected to yield an overview regarding women's representations in the advertising industry, while the quantitative, simultaneous interview was expected to illustrate some individuals' perspectives in this matter, and what forged their thoughts.

However, according to the feedback the researcher got from the Research Ethics Board of OCAD University, a concern of how to approach the protected groups practitioners became a challenge. This is especially challenging to the consent process since the purpose of it is to provide information about the study, while stating that they would be free to make their decisions to participate or not. To do that, the practitioners would need to understand that they were recruited since they belong to certain groups. Would some of them feel offended or obligated to take part even if they do not want to?

3.2 The Final Design And Recruitment

Generally, there are two shifts of the final version survey[12]. First, a qualified potential participant in this study is anyone whose biological sex/gender identity/gender role is/are female; second, the surveys facing specific industries (advertising practitioners and regulators) are merged into the survey that facing the general public. The participants are asked to answer whether they belong to a protected group defined in the study without identifying which group, and their career/academic background. These refinements are based on two considerations, one, to generate a validate dataset which only collected answers from people who

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[12] Attached in Appendix: Ubiquitous Advertising Survey-Final

are female in any means, and two, to solve the challenges of approaching the protected groups as well as to better protect their privacy.

The final survey consists of 25 questions, of which 22 are quantitative and 3 are qualitative. The first part of the survey explains who is a potential participant and emphasizes one more time the goal of this research and the rights of participants. The three questions in the first part collect the demographic information of the participant, including if they belong to a protected group, their age group and their career/academic backgrounds. The data would be analyzed based on whether the participants belong to a protected group and the participants' age groups. Any pattern/finding relating to a certain career/academic background would be stated in the fourth chapter (Findings) in this written thesis.

Before answering the second part, the participants were expected to read two paragraphs introducing the definitions of *advertising* and *women*.

> The term **_advertising_** mentioned in this study can refer to both commercial and non-commercial advertisements. It includes both traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, cinema and direct mail, and emerging digital media such as search results, blogs, social media, websites and text messages. The form of the advertisements including but not limited to signs, billboards, posters, videos, audios and text. Please keep this definition in mind while answering the questions below.

> Please keep in mind that *women* include women with disabilities, indigenous women, visible minority women, women who belong to the LGBTQ+ community and senior women. Each group of women belong to one or more of the protected grounds listed in the Ontario Human Rights Code. For example, an indigenous woman, with a disability, who is transgendered. For

the purposes of this study, we will refer to these women as 'protected groups' of women.

The purpose of these two paragraphs are to define the main subjects in this research project -- *advertising* and *women who belong to a protected group*, as clearly as possible. Participants are also reminded to be as comprehensive as possible in their recalls, in case they only consider, for example, television commercials, when answering questions, which may cause bias in the data collected.

The second part of the survey consists of 7 questions, 6 of them are quantitative while 1 additional qualitative question asking about if there is anything they want to elaborate on. The purpose of the second part of the survey is to gain a general understanding of how women see their own representations in advertisements. The answers will be analyzed as a whole -- all participants are female no matter it is their sex, gender identity or gender role, and the collected data will be derived into 2 kinds and then discussed again: answers from the participants who belong to the protected group, and answers from those who do not.

The third part of the survey is aimed to gain an understanding regarding how participants see the representation(s) of their group in advertisements. To indicate that this part is not limited to the protected groups, participants were asked to read a paragraph before answering questions:

Please think if you belong to a protected group of women (the protected groups in this study include women with disabilities, indigenous women, visible minority women, women who belong to the LGBTQ+ community and senior women). If you do not belong to any of the groups mentioned above, you still belong to certain groups based on your own backgrounds. (E.g., a Caucasian, middle-aged, heterosexual women with an abled body.)

The questions in part three were designed to investigate the participants' general satisfaction of their group's representation(s) in advertisements, as well as whether they think there are fair/distorted representations and if their group has been represented enough.

At the end of part three, participants were explained that one of the outcomes of this major research project is creating an inclusive guideline regarding women's representations in advertisements and they were invited to contribute. The last question in the survey is a comment box for them to elaborate anything as they want.

After the survey, the participants were reminded once again (they shall see the first reminding message in the consent form[13]) that since no personal identifier would be collected, they can only withdraw their participation before quitting the survey. Advice about what to do if they encounter an emotional crisis and the researcher's contact information is shown at the very end.

For a pair of questions which ask about the positive and the negative side of a subject (e.g. "What are you satisfied with your group's representations in advertising messages?" and "What are you not satisfied with your group's representations in advertising messages?"), the order of the choices were randomly placed except for "Not Applicable" and "Other, please specify". For example, if the first choice for "What are you satisfied with your group's representations in advertising messages?" is "My group's representations in advertising messages have been increased", the choice "My group's representations are not showed enough" must not be placed as the first choice in question "What are you not satisfied with your group's representations in advertising messages?". The reason for that is to let

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[13] Attached in Appendix

the participants make their choice after reading all available choices and think about their real opinions.

It is worth noting that all the multiple choice questions in this digital survey were presented as single-choice questions due to technical flaws. (The "Multiple Choices" question type in Google forms works as a single-choice question with multiple available choices.) Though this was not the way the researcher had planned, the survey was valid as a single-choice questions only survey. However, the researcher still has to consider the result in a different way given the lack of multiple choices.

3.3 Data Collection Method and Process

The digital version of the questionnaire is made and published using Google Form and all data would be collected online. This decision is based on the consideration that a digital survey is more convenient to access to the majority of people compared to a paper survey. Also, a digital survey offers more protections to the participants' privacy, while a paper survey would somehow make it possible to identify the participant, for example, by hand writing; the digital survey can be modified to collect absolutely no personal identifier during the participation.

After receiving the approval from the Research Ethics Board of OCAD University, the participants recruitment began. The researcher was posting recruiting posters[14] on the OCAD University graduate building, public advertising boards and online communities. In other situations, for example, if an individual showed interest in participating during a talk, the researcher would send them the links of the consent form and the survey by email or messaging tools.

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[14] Attached in Appendix

The data collection lasted about 4 months before the data analysis and visualization (from November to February).

Findings

4.1 Demographic and Academic / Career Backgrounds

Of the 86 responses collected, the proportion of respondents who belonged to minority groups and respondents who did not belong to the minority group was perfect half and half, that is to say, 43 minority-group women and 43 non-minority-group women participated in the questionnaire.

Among the 86 participants, the great majority (59, 68.6%) were in the age group of 20-29. 14 respondents were in the age group of 30-39 (16.3%). Thus, we can say that the outcomes of this survey is based on people who aged from 20 to 39.

Table 1. Part I Question 2 - Distribution Of Participants By Age Groups

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Under 20	7	8.1%
20-29	59	68.6%
30-39	14	16.3%
40-49	3	3.5%
50-59	2	2.3%
60-64	0	0
65+	1	1.2%
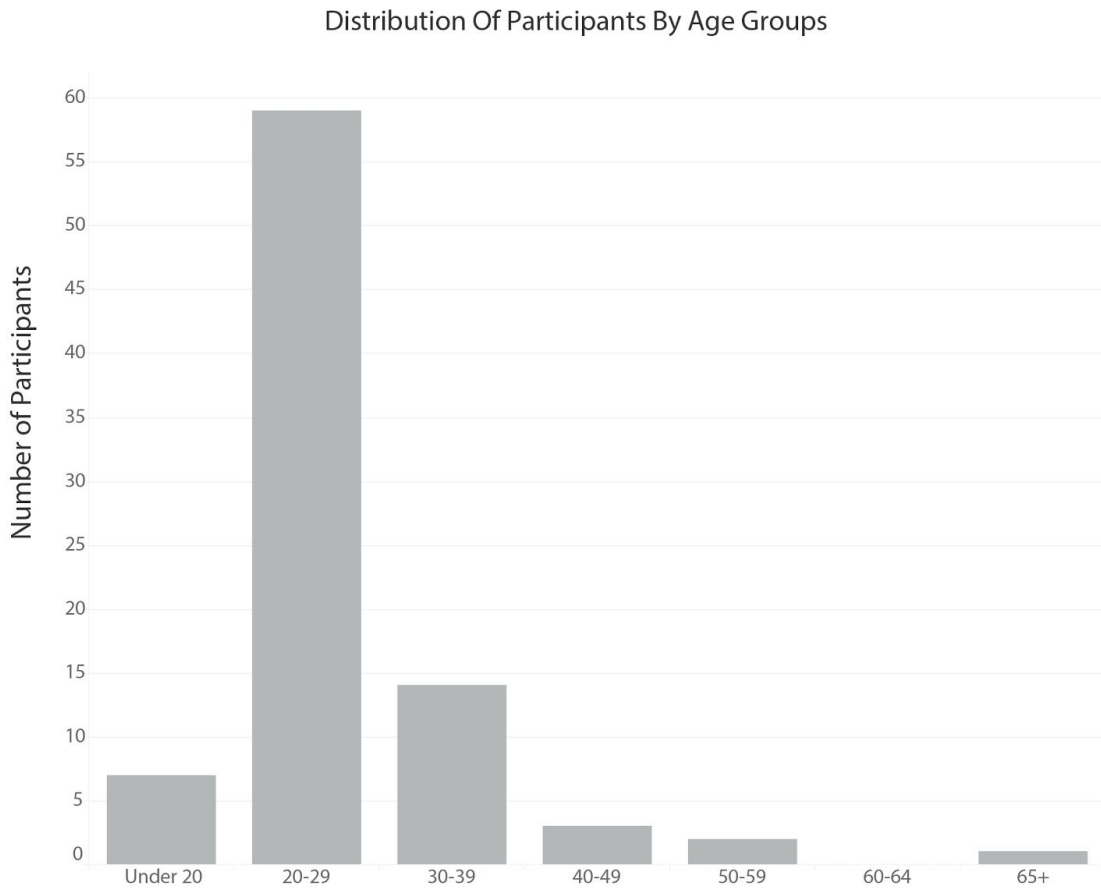
Figure 1.

More than half (46 out of the 86) of respondents identified themselves to work/study in the field of Arts & Humanity. 11 of them chose "Other" while 2 of them further explained that they worked in Graphic Design and UX Design respectively, which in fact belong to Arts & Humanity (Graphic Design) and Computer Science & Information Technology (UX Design), and 1 participant who chose "Other" indicated they were working in an interdisciplinary field.

Table 2. Part I Question 3 - Distribution of Participants by Career / Academic Backgrounds

Career / Academic Background	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Arts & Humanity	**46**	**53.5%**
Computer Science & Information Technology	**10**	**11.6%**
Finance & Business	**8**	**9.3%**
Science	**4**	**4.7%**
Social Study & Social Work	**3**	**3.5%**
Education	**2**	**2.3%**
Medicine & Health	**2**	**2.3%**
Other	**11**	**12.8%**

Distribution of Participants By Career / Academic Backgrounds
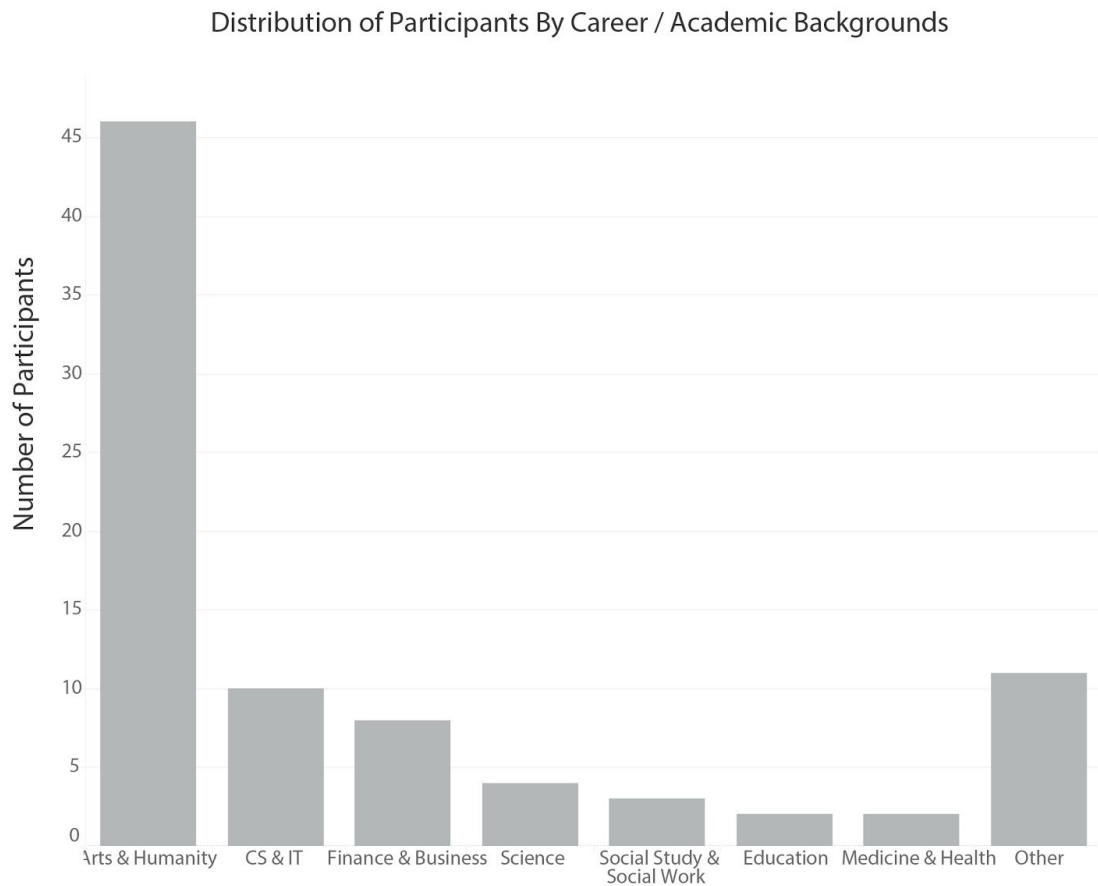
Figure 2.

Based on the age group and the career/academic background distribution, we can observe that respondents who were in their 20s/30s studying Arts & Humanity make the great majority of the participants. This overlaps with the researcher's background and the fact that OCADU was the biggest community the researcher collected data from.

4.2 Women's Representations In Advertising

The purpose of the second part of the survey is to gain a general understanding of how women see their own representations in advertisements with an emphasis on the protected groups within them, based on the ads they had seen during the past year.

The first two questions in the second part asked the participants to recall the number of the advertisements that portray women positively and why. Of the 86 answers, more than half (45) participants chose "Several".

Table 3. Part II Question 1 - Numbers of the Advertisements that Convey a Positive Portrait of Women

Numbers	Number of Responses
None	**1**
One or two	**26**
Several	**45**
More than ten	**14**

The responding rate of the question which further asked about why they made their choices dropped dramatically, only 19 people responded. It is worth noticing that 2 participants chose N/A for this question but only one of them answered "None" to the previous question, in fact, the other individual who answered "N/A" chose "Several" without further elaborations.

Table 4. Part II Question 2 - Reasons Why the Participants Think the Advertisements Are Positive

Reasons	Number of Responses
They broadcast a fair representation of women	**5**
They respect and support women	**5**
They break stereotypes	**4**
They appeal to gender equality	**2**
Not Applicable	**2**
Other	**1**

From the answer pattern, we can see that women recognize "fair representation" and "respect and support" the most, each of them were chosen 5 times. "Breaking stereotyping" was chosen 4 times. And "appealing to gender equality" was chosen twice. The respondent who answered "Other" in this question further explained that they thought the reason we see more inclusion in advertisements nowadays is simply because the companies need to build their name to earn financial benefits.

The questions 3 and 4 in the second part asked the participants to recall the number of the advertisements that portray women negatively and why. Of the 85 answers, a great number of participants expressed that they had seen ads that convey inappropriate messages about women's representations at least three times -- 32 participants chose "Several" and 30 chose "More than ten".

Table 5. Part II Question 3 - Numbers of the Advertisements that Convey a Negative Portrait of Women

Numbers	Number of Responses
None	**7**
One or two	**16**
Several	**32**
More than ten	**30**
null	**1**

To compare the answers of question 3 to question 1 in the second part, we can see that the answers were more polarized when it comes to the negative portraits of women. The number of participants who thought they saw more than ten negative ads was double the number who thought they saw more than ten positive ads. At the same time, 7 participants thought that they had seen none negative ad, and only one participant thought that they had seen none positive ad.

In the past year, how many advertisements that portray women, convey a positive / negative message about women in your view?
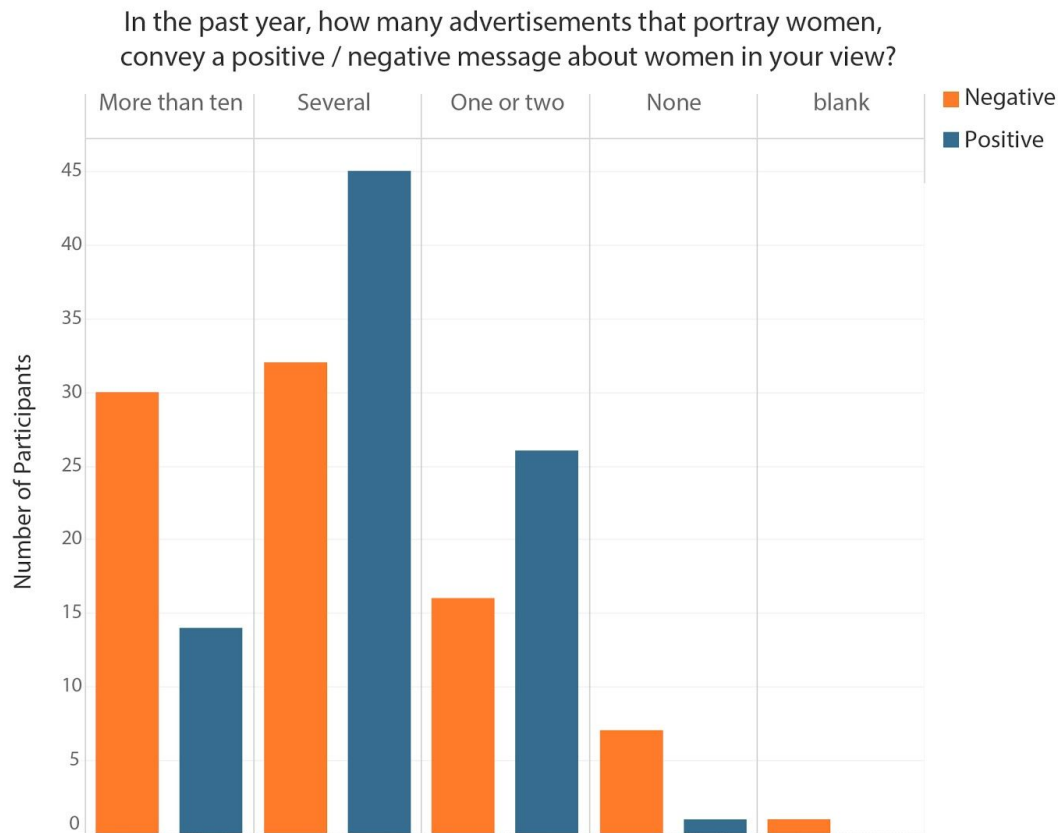
Figure 3.

Similarly to question 2 "Why do you think these advertising messages are positive?", the response rate of question 4 "Why do you think these advertising messages are inappropriate?" dropped significantly, too. But the number of people who answered question 4 (27) are more than the number of people who answered question 2 (19), which resonates with the researcher's observation that the participants were having stronger reactions to advertisements which contain negative messages about women's representation.

Of the 9 people who answered "N/A", 7 of them were the ones who chose "None" for question 3, while 2 others chose "Several" and "One or two" for question 3

without further explanations. Among the reasons why an advertisement contains inappropriate messages about women's representations, the sexual objectification was the most recognizable one (8 responses).

Table 6. Part II Question 4 - Reasons Why the Participants Think the Advertisements Are Negative

Reasons	Number of Responses
Not Applicable	**9**
They are sexist, they objectify women	**8**
They broadcast an unfair representation of women	**4**
They re-affirm stereotypes	**4**
They ignore women	**2**

The question 5 to 6 emphasized representations of women who belong to protected groups in advertisements. Of 86 answers, 36 of them were "One or two" and "None" was chosen 21 times. From this question, we can summarize that generally, the participants in this study thought that women who belong to protected groups were underrepresented.

Table 7. Part II Question 5 - Numbers of the Advertisements that Showed Women from the Protected Groups

Numbers	Number of Responses
None	**21**
One or two	**38**
Several	**21**
More than ten	**6**

Question 6, which asked about the participants' impressions of the protected groups women in ads, got 86 responses. The answer rate for this question did not drop is most likely since it asked for a general, "bad to good" impression rather than specific reasons / facts that need recalling and considerations.

The participants' general impression about the representations of protected groups women is very positive. Among the 86 respondents, 27 of them had a positive/fair impression for protected group women who appeared in advertisements and 7 stated "Innovative". A much smaller number of people, 5, stated that their impression of protected groups of women in ads is "Biased". Both of the participants who chose "Other" further specified their reason, one of them explained their impression was tailored to individual groups, and another expressed that they felt the company was just using the protected group character to gain reputations.

Table 8. Part II Question 6 - The Impression of Women from the Protected Groups Shown in Advertisements

Impression	Number of Responses
Innovative	**7**
Positive / Fair	**27**
Neutral	**23**
Biased	**5**
Not Applicable	**22**
Other	**2**

Question 7 asked participants to comment on anything they wanted to elaborate. Of 12 valid answers, 3 of them were used by respondents to clarify why they made

certain choices. 4 were concerned about the diversity and the representations of protected groups women in advertising, 3 were criticizing the objectification and "fake perfectness" of women in ads. These comments resonate with the data collected.

However, there was one comment that drawed the researcher's attention. The respondent proposed that it happens sometimes that promoting gender equality leads to inequality for "the other" gender. The researcher opposes gender dualism and female chauvinism, the researcher believes that promoting gender equality can benefit all genders and help everyone to be relieved from so stereotyped gender roles.

4.3 Your Representations In Advertising

The third part of the survey was designed to investigate how participants feel about their group's representations. Different from questions 5 and 6 in part two, which asked the participants to think about the general protected groups, this part asked them to think about a very specific group they belong to and really think in their own shoes:

> Please think if you belong to a protected group of women (the protected groups in this study include women with disabilities, indigenous women, visible minority women, women who belong to the LGBTQ+ community and senior women). If you do not belong to any of the groups mentioned above, you still belong to certain groups based on your own backgrounds. (E.g., a Caucasian, middle-aged, heterosexual women with an abled body.)

Participants were asked to read the above paragraph before answering questions in part 3, thus they would be reminded to give their subjective opinion and express their feelings individually.

The question 1 in part three asked participants to give a score based on how satisfied they are about their and their group's representations in advertisements.

Table 9. Part III Question 1 - Distribution of Scores Given by Participants to Their and Their Group's Representations In Advertising Messages

Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of Participants	3	4	12	13	12	10	20	5	5	1

Average Score: 5.34

In score 1 to 10, how satisfied are you about your and your group's representations in advertising messages? (1 for the least satisfied, 10 for the most.)
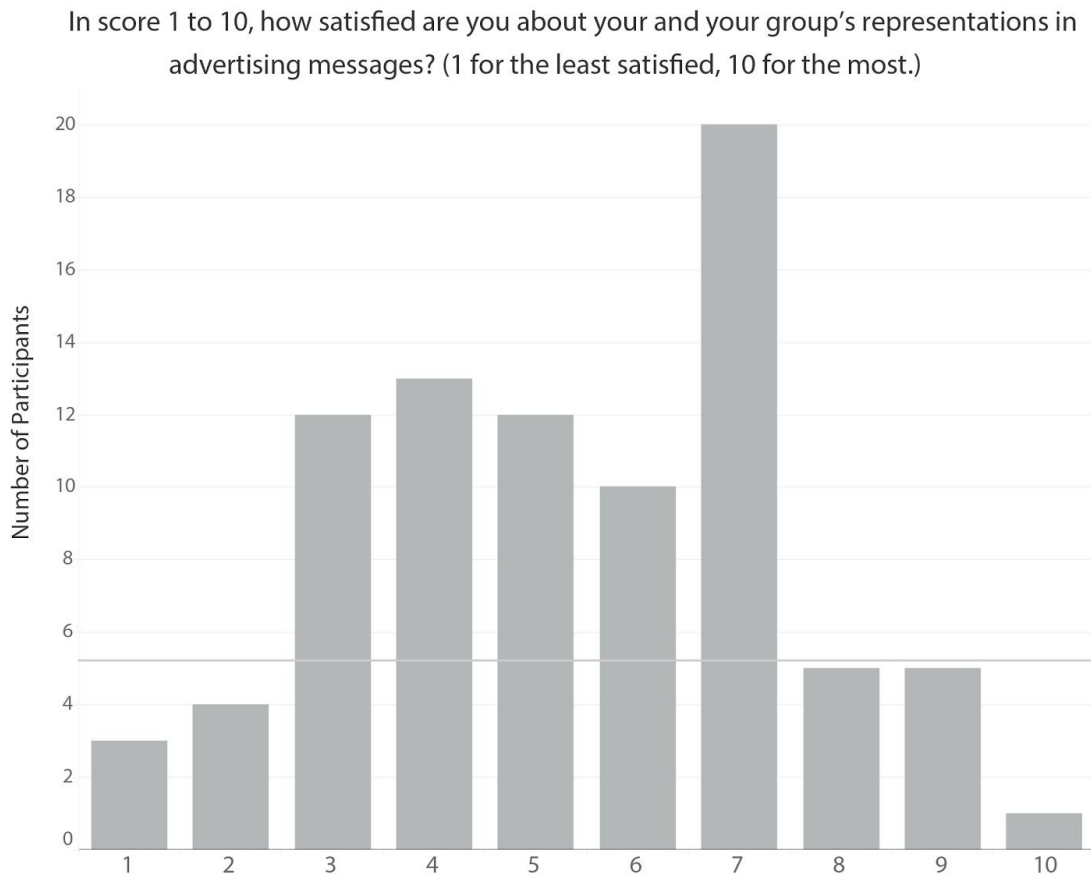
Figure 4.

Generally, participants in this study gave higher scores than the researcher's expectation. The average score is 5.34 and it is very close to the median 5.5. This result also resonates with the trend mentioned in one of the literature quoted in chapter 2.2.2 Women's Attitudes and the Trend, which stated young women in 2008 were less offended by their portrayals in advertisements than one decade ago. (Zimmerman and Dahlberg, 2008)

Question 2 in the third part asked participants "What are you satisfied about? " 28 out of 86 participants answered that they were satisfied with the fact that their

group's representations in advertisements have been increased. Of the 21 "Not Applicable" respondents, 6 of them scored 5 in the previous question and chose "N/A" for both question 2 and 3 in this part. 2 of them scored 5 and 6 to question 1 and the rest of them gave a score below 5.

Table 10. Part III Question 2 - The Distribution of the Facts that Participants Are Satisfied About

What are you satisfied about?	Number of Participants
My group's representations in advertising messages have been increased.	**28**
Not Applicable	**21**
My group's representations have been more diverse.	**16**
My group's representations have been more authentic.	**11**
My group's representations have been more justified.	**9**

The question 3 in the third part is "What are you not satisfied about? In other words, what do you think need to be changed? " The top selected (29 out of 86) one was the fact that their group's representation in advertisements is simple. Only 9 people chose "N/A" for this question and that includes 6 of them who chose "N/A" for both question 2 and 3 in this part. The rest scored no less than 7 in the response to question 1.

Table 11. Part III Question 3 - The Distribution of the Facts that Participants Are Not Satisfied About

What are you not satisfied about?	Number of Participants
My group's representations are simple.	**29**
My group's representations are not showed enough	**21**
My group's representations in advertising messages are biased.	**15**
My group's representations are false/cannot represent us.	**11**
Not Applicable	**9**

The difference between the distribution of question 2 "What are you satisfied about (your group's representations in advertising messages)?" and question 3 "What are you not satisfied about (your group's representations in advertising messages)?" resonates with the previous finding that participants had stronger actions to express their negative feelings regarding their representations in advertising messages.

The question 4 asked the participant to suggest a guideline regards inclusive advertising content: "one of the outcomes of this research is a guideline towards inclusive advertisements, please think in your shoes and propose one or more than one guide you would like to see in this guideline." 46 participants answered this question, and their answers were divided into the following categories.

Table 12. Part III Question 4 - Suggestions Got From Participants Regarding The Guideline of Inclusive Advertisements

Category	Number of Participants
Challenge the stereotypes	**12**
Authenticity (both content and visual)	**8**
Improve the underrepresentation of certain groups	**8**
Consult members of protected groups	**3**
Gender equality and rethink binaries	**3**
Consider the content's influence	**3**
Inclusive hiring practice: to make sure there are female practitioners in the team	**2**
Invalid	**3**

The original purpose of this question was to gather the views of the participants and to use this as a basis for designing a guideline on inclusive advertising content. At this stage of the project (the data analysis was completed), however, the researcher realized that the study was not sufficient to support the design of a complete guideline. Therefore, the point of this question here is to provide a sense of what women feel most urgently needs to be addressed regarding the content of advertising messages.

At the end of the survey, participants were provided with a comment box to elaborate on anything they would like to talk/ask/say more. Of 10 valid answers, 4 of them further expressed their dissatisfactions about the inclusiveness of current advertisements by stating examples or talking about their experience. 2 expressed the belief in a bright future of inclusive advertising. 1 criticised the idea of inclusive advertising -- since they did not want to be represented at all. 1 thanked the researcher for doing this project. 1 stated that they were not so related to this

survey. 1 raised the concern that using the term "women" may exclude some AFAB (assigned female at birth) from the study.

4.4 Further Analysis - The Protected And The Non Protected

The previous data analysis treated all the participants as whole and summarized their opinions non-differently. However, a core part of this major research project is to put a lens on those who are often overlooked: the protected groups. Thus, the data from the protected groups participants and the non protected groups were analyzed again, separately, to allow the audience to have a clearer view of the differences of views from these two groups.

In the past year, how many advertisements that portray women,
convey a positive message about women in your view?
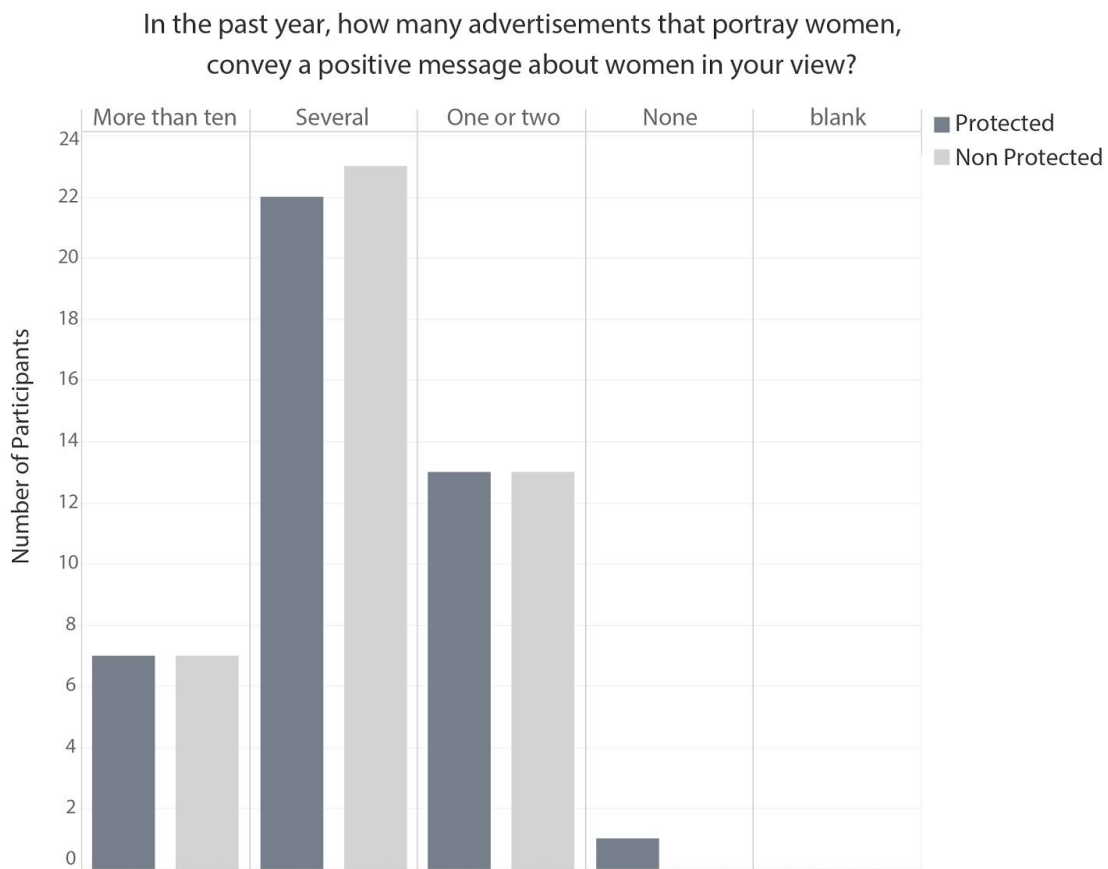

<div align="right">Figure 5.</div>

Regarding "In the past year, how many advertisements that portray women, convey a positive message about women in your view?" The opinions from protected and non protected groups are very similar. The only participant who stated that they did not see any positive advertisements last year belongs to the protected group.

In the past year, how many advertisements that portray women, convey an inappropriate message about women in your view?
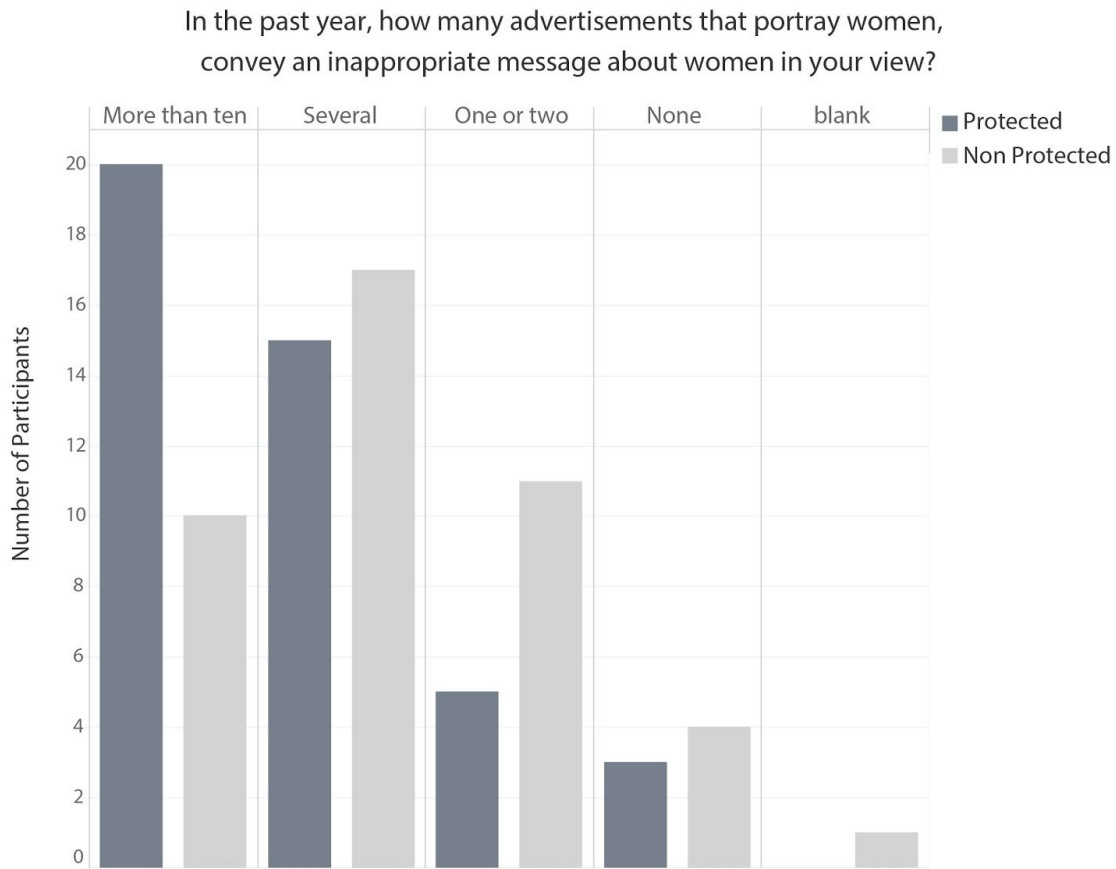

Figure 6.

However, in terms of negative advertising, protected groups participants respond much more strongly than non-protected groups. Protected groups respondents that are twice as many as unprotected groups (20 to 10) believe they have seen more than ten ads with inappropriate female images in the past year.

In the past year, how many advertisements did you see
that portray women who belonging to protected groups?
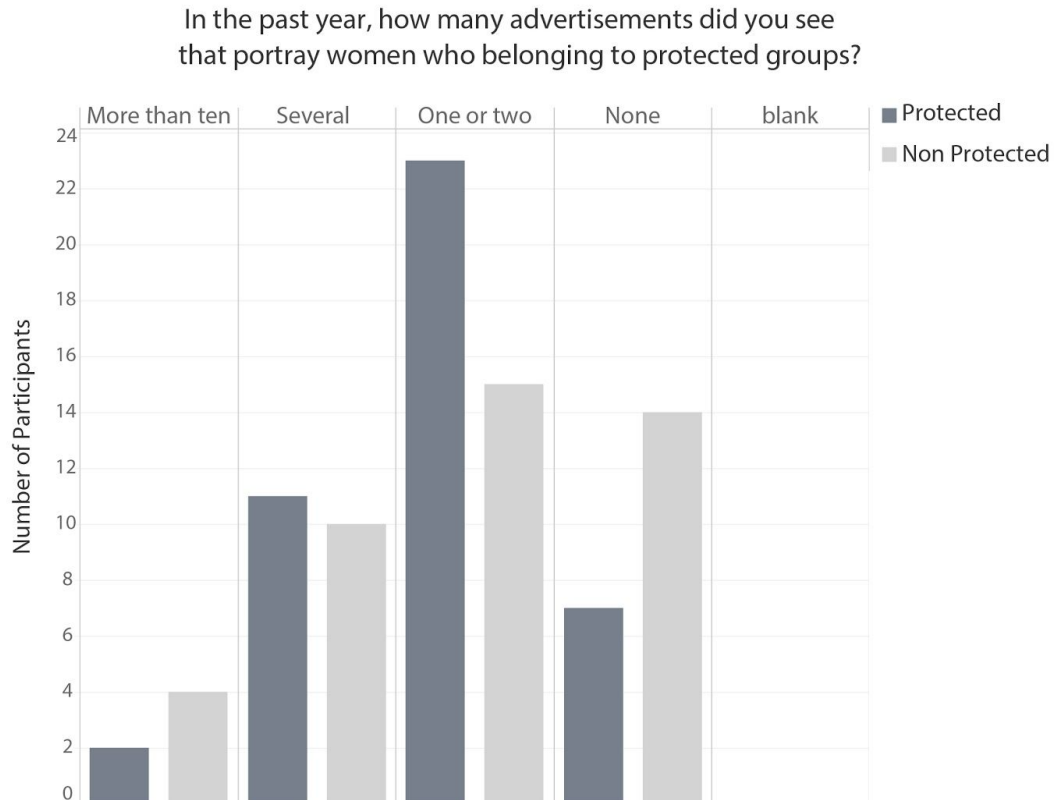

Figure 7.

In the question regarding whether the protected group is underrepresented, the most selected choice for protected and non-protected groups is that they have only seen the portrayals of a protected group female in advertisements in the past year "One or two" times. But the number of respondents who belong to a protected group (23) was significantly greater than the number of respondents who belong to a non protected group (15). At the same time, double the number of non protected groups participants (14) believe that they have not seen any portraits of protected groups women in advertisements in the past year, compared to 7 protected groups. Though the majority of both groups thought that there was not enough portrayals of protected groups women in advertisements, the protected groups top-selected

that they had seen "One or two" protected group females in advertisements after all, while the non protected groups thought they had seen "None". The possible reason behind is that, based on the common understanding that protected group women are underrepresented, respondents belong to a protected group can be more sensitive to portrayals of protected groups women in media, therefore, it is easier for them to recall one or two examples of advertising messages showcasing protected groups women, however, for the non protected respondents, this recall may be harder.
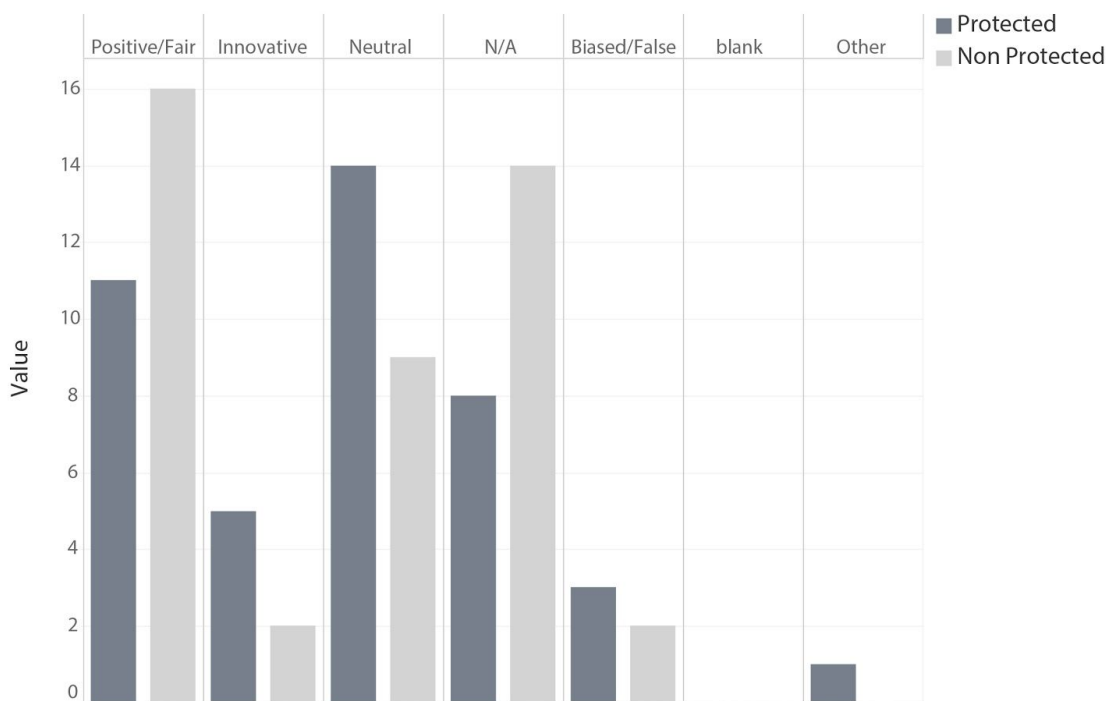

Figure 8.

Regarding the question "What is your impression of advertising messages that portray protected groups of women?" The strongest impression non protected groups participants had was "Positive/Fair" but the protected groups thought it was

"Neutral". The respondents of this study did not think protected groups women were misrepresented regarding their images in advertisements as there were only a very small number of both groups selected "Biased/False". However, one respondent mentioned in the follow-up comments that the use of the women from protected groups was tokenistic, therefore the positive/innovative portrayals of women in advertisements may still be unreal.

It is worth noticing that the proportion of non protected groups and protected groups participants who chose "N/A" were correlated to those who stated that they have seen "none" protected groups women's portrayals in advertising messages in the past year in the previous question.

In score 1 to 10, how satisfied are you about your and your group's representations in advertising messages? (1 for the least satisfied, 10 for the most.)
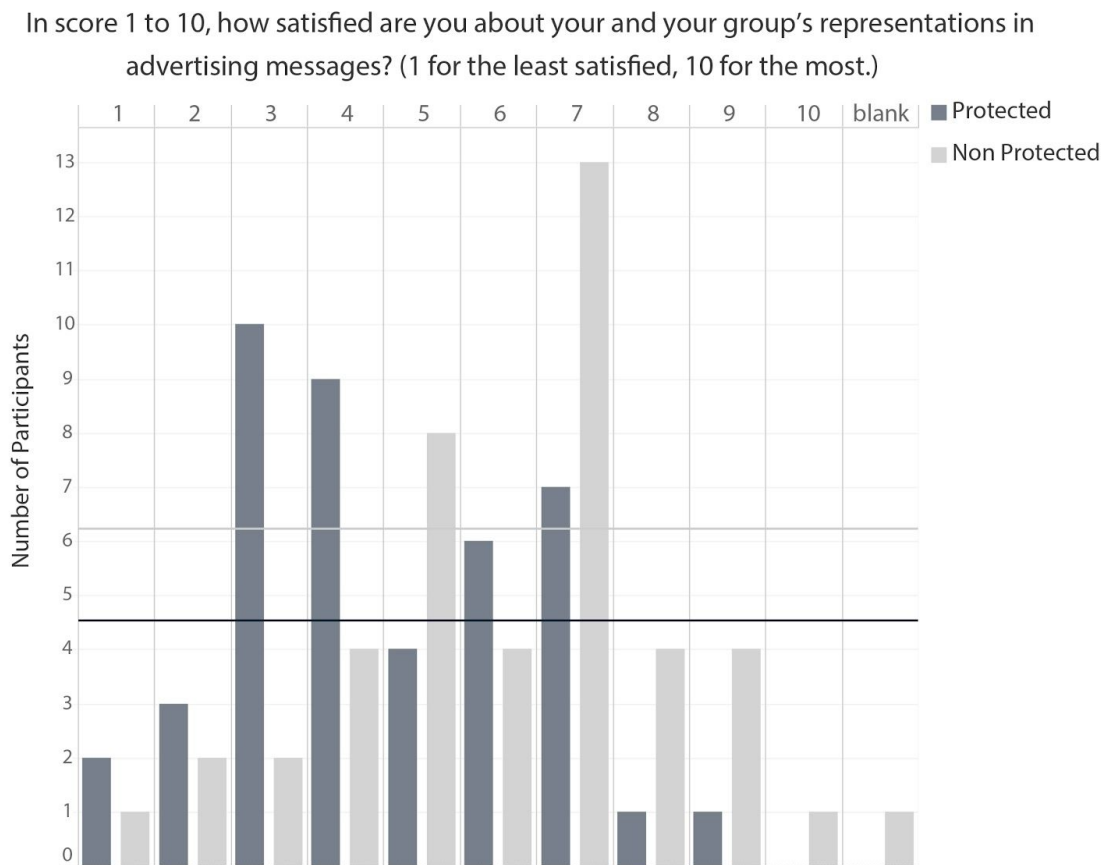
Figure 9.

The satisfaction score given by protected and non protected groups were also different. The most chosen score of protected groups participants was 3, which is much lower than the most chosen score, 7, of the non protected groups participants. The average score scored by the protected group was 4.56, which was 1.63 lower than the average score scored by the unprotected group of 6.19. Generally speaking, the non protected groups participants in this study were more satisfied with their representations in advertising messages compared to their protected counterparts.

As shown in data, compared to non protected groups participants, the respondents who belong to a protected group were acting stronger to negative advertising content regarding women's representations in advertisements. They were also less satisfied about their own representations in advertising messages.

4.5 Other Findings

Some participants were very proactive and they answered qualitative and quantitative questions carefully. However, the response rate of most participants to qualitative questions is not as high as that of quantitative questions. In part 2, question 2 "Why do you think these advertising messages are positive? Please select 2 reasons you see the most." and question 4 "Why do you think these advertising messages are inappropriate? Please select 2 reasons you see the most." can be regarded as both qualitative and quantitative questions. However, for such questions that require participants to recall carefully, the answer rate has also dropped significantly.

Based on the researcher's observations, participants who belong to protected groups showed more interest in this study. While doing this project, four women reached out to the researcher. They learned about this project in different ways, some of them saw recruitment posters and some of them listened to the researcher's presentation on the colloquium. They all offered help and comments, and are very interested in future plans for this topic. All four women belong to a protected group, which is the judgement of the researcher based on face-to-face experience. This experience can be related to the data collected that the protected groups participants were less satisfied with their representations in advertising content and thought there were more need to be changed.

Conclusion

5.1 Putting A Lens on Protected Groups

The topic of women's representations in advertisements has been discussed for decades. However, after several decades, it still is the truth that the representations of women in protected groups are often distorted in advertising messages and that protected groups are often in an unrepresented or underrepresented position. These facts were confirmed by literature reviews as well as the data collected.

Other highlights in data collected including that the participants who belong to a protected group, compared to those who do not, were responding stronger to inappropriate content in advertisements, and are less satisfied with their representations in advertising messages.

Though this survey did not collect further personal identifiers such as the specific group the participants belong to. Several concerns related to a certain protected group have arisen by participants in questions asking for elaborating comments. For example, the stereotype of exotic, or extremely skinny and pale Asian girls in advertisements, and the underrepresentation of indigenous women. We can infer that females in every protected group face different issues regarding their portrayals in advertising. Within the protected group, each group's response to positive / negative advertising content and overall satisfaction would be different.

Advertising practitioners should explore the possibility of women's representations in advertisements. At this stage that the representations of protected groups

women in advertising content have just begun to be valued, they should consciously include more groups of female images in advertisements, so that people can practice perceiving diverse women's representations in advertisements. For instance, the practitioners could include senior women and women with disabilities in advertising content that they were not always engaged with, like fashion ads. In such repetitive exercises, people will form a conditioned reflexive questioning of stereotypes of females. The diversity of women's images in advertisements and people's contradictions to female stereotypes would enhance the inclusiveness of advertisements and allow it to continue to be improved.

Feminist researchers, or any researcher who is interested in this field, should be encouraged to conduct studies relating to any topics that are leaning towards protected groups' portrayals. This is not to say the representations of general females or non protected groups women are not important or not worth studying. It is that as one of the main subjects in the second wave feminist movement, the portrayals of females as a whole in media have been much discussed. However, the discussions focused on a specific protected group were often related to a certain topic (e.g. representations of senior women in the workplace), this is, however, another stereotype towards females that may re-affirm that a certain protected group in women only face a certain problem, or this certain problem must be the most urgent one to address for this group, which indirectly suggests that other problems this group is facing may be less important or urgent.

Moreover, for those who belong to more than one protected group (an example is an homosexual indigenous woman who is a wheelchair user), their unique challenges are very easy to be overlooked. The discussions about women, or people with this intersectionality have even not begun yet.

As a member of a protected group, the researcher once again appeals to the protected group; it is our responsibility to speak for ourselves and each other. The

researcher also calls on all women to speak for ourselves. The literature review demonstrated that in recent years, an increasing number of women have realized that the false female images in advertisements are just for sales, so that they will not be offended. But this should not be the reason we stop caring or stop speaking out.

The main audience of this paper is the English-speaking population living in the West, while in other parts of the world (including the researcher's home country), protected groups and even all women's voices cannot be heard in the societal winds of change. The researcher here urges every audience to speak out for those who can not. Only in this way can the representations of all females be portrayed authentically and fairly, and the status of females can be directly or indirectly promoted.

In the progress of writing this thesis paper, all human beings are going through a pandemic which no one who is alive has ever experienced. The COVID-19 virus first came out in one city and finally the whole world has been heavily hit. So pernicious and crippling is this novel coronavirus, that global governments have intervened by closing schools and shops, and social spaces and enforced social distancing. In doing so, governments have halted the economy and brought about record unemployment. At the same time this has brought to light the inequities overlooked in health care for many seniors, health care workers, indigenous peoples, the homeless and, some say, domestic violence. So severe are the outcomes of this virulent and ubiquitous illness that governments have stepped in and taken control in an attempt to reduce the harms. While advertising messages representing women are in and of themselves not wicked, they are no less spreadable than the wicked viral pandemic global societies continue to battle. If similar inequities and harms continue in advertising messages it is plausible that the State could intervene to reduce the spread.

5.2 Project Limits

5.2.1 The Variety of Protected Groups

As mentioned in chapter 5.1, due to the ethical constraints, the researcher was not able to collect which specific protected/non protected group the participants belong to. Therefore, this study did not differentiate every single group in protected and non protected groups and the data analysis was only able to analyze the collected data based on whether the participants belong to the general protected/non protected groups.

The limitation is here since based on the literature review and the comments collected in the survey, we can learn that different protected groups are probably facing different challenges regarding their representations in media or even in everyday life. For example, the senior women in advertising messages are reported as underrepresented and stereotyped, but the visible minority women are often reported as misrepresented and objectified.

The specification of the non protected groups are also important. It is reasonable to infer that females in different age groups and different career backgrounds may face completely different situations. Some groups may be extremely dissatisfied, for example, a colleague of the researcher working in the engineering industry once discussed with the researcher that their representations in media were very much distorted. These groups, however, may be even bothered more than some groups

in protected groups about their portrayals in advertisements, but due to the limitations of this study, their dissatisfaction were not able to be well identified.

5.2.2 In-person Real-time Communication

The researcher planned to do in-person, or at least synchronous interviews with voluntary protected groups participants to talk about their feelings and experience with women's representations in advertising messages. However, since the time constraints and ethical concerns, this plan was not conducted. Therefore, this project could be richer with participants' real stories and insights, and hopefully would be more inspiring to the audience.

Though this project may regrettably miss some qualitative data, the current data analysis and visualizations remain valid at all. This is to say, if the researcher could have conducted the interviews, the data collected from the interviews would be analyzed separately from the survey.

5.2.3 Terminology And Gender Inclusiveness

People whose biological sex/gender identity are/is female are included in this study. However, to include such a group in one term is challenging, "women" or "females" are not enough to address, for example, AFAB (assigned female at birth) transmasculine and AMAB (assigned male at birth) transfeminine who might be participating in this study. Due to the feasibility, the researcher decided to declare the included groups in this research project at the beginning of the survey as well as in thesis, but to generally describe them as "women" or "females" in writing. This,

however, caused some confusion and might limit the participation of some qualified groups.

In question 5 in part 3 " If there is anything you would like to elaborate on, please leave a comment here", 1 participant raised the concern of the term women used in part 3 preface in a very friendly and thoughtful way. They thought that this could exclude some AFAB (assigned female at birth) from this study. The researcher wholeheartedly accepted their comments and apologized for not paying particular attention in the use of gender-inclusive terms. When the questionnaire was originally designed, the AFAB transmasculine group, who belonging to LGBTQ+ community was definitely a target group valued and included as qualified participants by the researcher. However, the use of the term "women", which is not gender inclusive, may exclude them from the surveyable population.

5.2.4 Digital Techniques

The survey was built on Google Forms and there was a technical defect. All the multiple-choice questions were presented as single-choice questions with multiple available choices, which is the designated feature of "Multiple Choice" type questions in Google Forms. However, since all the choice questions in the survey were single-choice, the data collected stayed valid though this defect did violate several design initials of the researcher.

5.3 Future Work

A feasible short-term future work of this study is to build on existing research and continue the interviews that have been proposed but not achieved. There will be new recruiting posters and voluntary participants who belong to protected groups will be arranged a time to talk about how they perceive their own representations in advertisements and their feelings. Another possible discussion is to show them the data collected in this study and ask for their comments. In this way, through a human-to-human discussion, the researcher would get a more holistic view of the protected groups women's feelings about their representations in advertisements.

The other short-term future work the researcher is interested in doing is a male version of this project, a study about men's representations in media. It could be in advertising messages or other content that is more relevant to men's situations. However, the next time the researcher hopes to conduct the study in more detailed ways, such as collecting which specific groups the respondents belong to and interview some voluntary participants. The comparison between the female and the male studies should reveal some hidden facts about challenges each gender faces, giving a stronger scan at the stereotypical representations people face in late 2010s and early 2020s.

One of the long-term future work of this study the researcher can see is to focus on one specific group and study their representations and how they feel about it. This may involve an enormous amount of preliminary research and spend a more-than-a-year time period to get to know the focused group's community. If it is an academic project, getting the research ethical board's approval would take a foreseeable long time as well. This initial idea could hopefully foster a topic or a direction of the researcher's future academic goal to achieve.

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Appendix

1. 2011 Mr. Clean "This Mother's Day" campaign

2. 2016 American Apparel campaign

3. 2015 Nutella advertisement

4. Budweiser campaigns

5. 2007 Dolce&Gabbana campaign

6. 2014 Victoria's Secret "Perfect Body" campaign

7. Ubiquitous Advertising Survey - to the General Public

Ubiquitous Advertising – A Questionnaire Designed to Investigate Women's Representations in Advertising Messages

-to the General Public

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to investigate women's representations in advertising messages, then to build a more inclusive guideline regarding the content of advertisements. Please be advised that the feelings of participants are highly respected in this study, **you have the right to skip any question or withdraw from the survey at any time**. The data you provide will be stored safely in an encrypted file in the external hard drive belonging to the researcher during the research and destroyed before May 23rd, 2020. If you think there is any question which is inappropriate, please do leave a comment at the last question or directly contact the researcher at the student's email address (redacted in this appendix for privacy).

I.   Basic Information.

1. What is your gender identity?
-Female
-Male
-Prefer not to say
-Custom, please specify

2. Which age group do you belong to?
-Under 20/
-20-29/
-30-39/
-40-49/
-50-59/
-60+

3. Do you consider yourself a visible minority?

-Yes/No

4. Do you consider yourself an indigenous/aboriginal person?
-Yes/No

5. What ethnic culture/titles do you most identify with?
(Comment box)

6. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?
-Yes, please specify if you want. (Comment box)
-No

7. Do you consider yourself as a part of the LGBTQ+ community?
-Yes, please specify if you want.
-No

8. How would you describe your career and academic background? (E.g. A copywriter with an academic background in illustration.)
(Comment box)

Before doing Part II: The term **_advertising_** mentioned in this study can refer to both commercial and non-commercial advertisements. It includes both traditional media such as newspaper, magazines, radio, television, cinema and direct mail, and emerging digital media such as search results, blogs, social media, websites and text messages. The form of the advertisements including but not limited to signs, billboards, posters, videos, audios and text. Please keep this definition in mind while answering the questions below.

II.   Advertising.

1.   In the past year; how many advertisements that portray women, convey a positive message about women in your view?
-0/1-5/6-10/10-15/16-20/20+

2.   Why do you think these advertising messages are positive? Please select two reasons you see the most.
-They break stereotypes.

-They broadcast a fair representation of women.
-They appeal to gender equality.
-They respect and support women.
-Other, please specify.
-Not Applicable

3.   In the past year; how many advertisements that portray women, convey an inappropriate message about women in your view?
-0/1-5/6-10/10-15/16-20/20+

4.   Why do you think these advertising messages are inappropriate? Please select two reasons you see the most.
-They broadcast an unfair representation of women.
-They intent of brainwash the audience's ideas of women's representations.
-They are racist.
-They re-affirm stereotypes.
-They are sexist, they objectify women.
-Other, please specify.
-Not Applicable

5. Other comments.

Before doing Part III: The definition of women is not simple, there are women with disabilities, homosexual women, transgender women, indigenous women, women in colours and senior women, etc. (E.g., an indigenous woman who is transgendered and with a disability.) Each group belongs to one or more protected grounds listed in the Ontario Human Rights Code within every social spheres, therefore we can say that they are the vulnerable groups in women.

III.   The Vulnerable Groups in Women

1. Do you think the vulnerable groups in women are represented enough in advertising messages?
-Yes/No

2. Do you think the vulnerable groups in women are represented properly in advertising messages?
-Yes/No

3. Please name which single group is the most represented in advertising messages.
-Indigenous Women
-Senior Women
-Sexual Minorities Women
-Transgender Women
-Women of Colours
-Women with Disability
-Other, please specify

4. Please name which single group is the least represented in advertising messages.
-Indigenous Women
-Senior Women
-Sexual Minorities Women
-Transgender Women
-Women of Colours
-Women with Disability
-Other, please specify

5. Please name which single group is the best represented in advertising messages.
-Indigenous Women
-Senior Women
-Sexual Minorities Women
-Transgender Women
-Women of Colours
-Women with Disability
-Other, please specify

6. Please name which single group is the worst represented in advertising messages.
-Indigenous Women
-Senior Women
-Sexual Minorities Women

-Transgender Women
-Women of Colours
-Women with Disability
-Other, please specify

7. In part III, if there is anything you would like to elaborate on, please leave a comment here.
(Comment box)

8. Ubiquitous Advertising Survey - to the Professional Practitioners

Ubiquitous Advertising – A Questionnaire Designed to Investigate Women's Representations in Advertising Messages

-to the Professional Practitioners

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to investigate women's representations in advertising messages, then to build a guideline around inclusivity regarding the content of advertisements. Please be advised that the feelings of participants are highly respected in this study, **you have the right to skip any question or withdraw from the survey at any time**. The data you provide will be stored safely during the research and destroyed before May 23rd, 2020. If you think there is any question which is inappropriate, please do leave a comment at the last question or directly contact the researcher at <u>the student's email address (redacted in this appendix for privacy)</u>.

I. Basic Information.

1. What is your gender identity?
-Female
-Male
-Prefer not to say
-Custom, please specify

2. Which groups of the following do you belong to? (Multiple Choice)
-Aboriginal/Indigenous people
-LGBTQ+ Communities
-People with Disabilities (please specify if you want)
-Visible Minorities
-Other, please specify
-None of the above

3. How long have you been working in the advertising industry?
-Under 1 year/

-1-3 years/
-4-6 years/
-7-10 years/
-11-20 years/
-20+ years

4. What kind of advertising do you create (E.g., pharmaceutical, brand advertising, retail, etc.,)?
(Single box)

Before doing Part II: The term advertising mentioned in this study can refer to both commercial and non-commercial advertisements. It includes both traditional media such as newspaper, magazines, radio, television, cinema and direct mail, and new media such as search results, blogs, social media, websites and text messages. The form of the advertisements including but not limited to signs, billboards, posters, videos, audios and text. Please keep this definition in mind while answering the questions below.

II.   Advertising.

1.   From a practitioner's perspective, what is the most relevant reason for that some advertisements failed to convey an inclusive and justified women's representation?
-Consumption/Eye-Catching
-Intention to lead a social trend (especially for non-commercial ads)
-Unawareness of the sexism and gender equality
-Other, please specify

2. Based on your experience, how likely is showing women's representations in an inclusive and justified way to benefit the **consumption** (for commercial ads)/the **message** the stakeholders want to convey (for non-commercial ads)?
(Rate 1-10)
-N/A, please specify

3. Based on your experience, how likely is showing women's representations in an inclusive and justified way to benefit the **brand image** (for commercial ads)/the **stakeholders' image** (for non-commercial ads)?
(Rate 1-10)
-N/A, please specify

4. Based on your experience, how likely is showing women's representations in an unjustified and biased way to result an actual impact on the **consumption** (for commercial ads)/the **message** the stakeholders want to convey (for non-commercial ads)?
(Rate 1-10)
-N/A, please specify

5. If you have anything you would like to elaborate about part II, please leave a comment here.
(Comment box)

Before doing Part III: The definition of women is not simplex, there are women with disabilities, homosexual women, transgender women, indigenous women, women in colours and senior women, etc. Each group belongs to one or more protected grounds listed in the Ontario Human Rights Code, therefore we can say that they are the vulnerable groups in women.

III. The Vulnerable Groups in Women

1. Based on the experience, which two groups of the vulnerable women are the most presented in advertisements?
-Indigenous Women
-Senior Women
-Sexual Minorities Women
-Transgender Women
-Visible Minorities Women
-Women with Disability
-Other, please specify

2. What is the reason of these two groups of women are the most presented vulnerable groups?
-Innovational content
-Showing diversity/Benefiting the brand image
-The number of the potential consumers
-Other, please specify

3. Based on the experience, which two groups of the vulnerable women are the least presented in advertisements?
-Indigenous Women
-Senior Women
-Sexual Minorities Women
-Transgender Women
-Visible Minorities Women
-Women with Disability
-Other, please specify

4. What is the reason of these two groups of women are the least presented vulnerable groups?
-The number of the potential consumers
-Unawareness
-Discrimination/Stereotype
-The group is only the main potential consumers to a certain kind of products
-Other, please specify

5. If you have anything you would like to elaborate about part III, please leave a comment here.
(Comment box)

9. Ubiquitous Advertising Survey - to the Industry Associations

Ubiquitous Advertising – A Questionnaire Designed to Investigate Women's Representations in Advertising Messages

-to the Industry Associations

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to investigate women's representations in advertising messages, then to build a more inclusive guideline regarding the content of advertisements. Please be advised that the feelings of participants are highly respected in this study, **you have the right to skip any question or withdraw from the survey at any time**. The data you provide will be stored safely during the research and destroyed before May 23rd, 2020. If you think there is any question which is inappropriate, please do leave a comment at the last question or directly contact the researcher at <u>the student's email address (redacted in this appendix for privacy)</u>.

I. Basic Information.

1. The name of your association:
(Single box)

2. The industry you are in is more leaning to the:
-Traditional Advertising Industry
-Emerging Media Industry
-Both

Before doing Part II: The term advertising mentioned in this study can refer to both commercial and non-commercial advertisements. It includes both traditional media such as newspaper, magazines, radio, television, cinema and direct mail, and new media such as search results, blogs, social media, websites and text messages. The form of the advertisements including but not limited to signs, billboards, posters, videos, audios and text. Please keep this definition in mind while answering the questions below.

II.   Advertising.

1. Please choose the closed description of the relationship between female consumers and your industry:

-The main targeting consumer group.

-Taking the same proportion of the male consumers.

-There are female consumers but it is not the targeting group.

-There may be female consumers.

2. Has your association ever made women's representation in advertising messages a topic in the form of a workshop or a seminar?

-Yes, please specify the form.

-No

-We are currently planning to have one.

-Other, please specify

3. If your answer in question 1 is "Yes" or "We are currently planning to have one", what is the biggest purpose of this action?

-Fulfilling the government's or industry's regulations.

-Promoting potential consumption.

-Raising awareness of inclusion and gender equality.

-We received complaints in regard to this issue.

-N/A

4. If you have anything you would like to elaborate about part II, please leave a comment here.

(Comment box)

Before doing Part III: The definition of women is not simplex, there are women with disabilities, homosexual women, transgender women, indigenous women, women in colours and senior women, etc. Each group belongs to one or more protected grounds listed in the Ontario Human Rights Code, therefore we can say that they are the vulnerable groups in women.

III. The Vulnerable Groups in Women

1. In your industry, which two groups of the vulnerable women are the most presented in advertisements?
-Indigenous Women
-Senior Women
-Sexual Minorities Women
-Transgender Women
-Visible Minorities Women
-Women with Disability
-Other, please specify

2. What is the reason of these two groups of women are the most presented vulnerable groups in your industry?
-Showing diversity/Benefiting the brand Image
-The number of the potential consumers
-Other, please specify

3. In your industry, which two groups of the vulnerable women are the least presented in advertisements?
-Indigenous Women
-Senior Women
-Sexual Minorities Women
-Transgender Women
-Visible Minorities Women
-Women with Disability
-Other, please specify

4. If you have anything you would like to elaborate about part III, please leave a comment here.

10. Ubiquitous Advertising Survey - to the Protected Groups

Ubiquitous Advertising – A Questionnaire Designed to Investigate Women's Representations in Advertising Messages

-to the Protected Groups

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to investigate women's representations in advertising messages, then to build a more inclusive guideline regarding the content of advertisements. Please be advised that the feelings of participants are highly respected in this study, **you have the right to skip any question or withdraw from the research at any time**. The data you provide will be stored safely in an encrypted file in the external hard drive belonging to the researcher during the research and destroyed before May 23rd, 2020. If you think there is any question which is inappropriate, please do leave a comment at the last question or directly contact the researcher at <u>the student's email address (redacted in this appendix for privacy)</u>.

I.   Basic Information.

1. Which age group do you belong to?
-Under 20/
-20-29/
-30-39/
-40-49/
-50-59/
-60+

2. Do you consider yourself belong to any of the minority groups? (multiple choice)
-The visible minority
-The indigenous/aboriginal group
-People with disability/disabilities
-The LGBTQ+ community

3. Please specify your answer to question 2 and elaborate. (e.g. "I am a wheelchair user and a queer" or "Canada born Chinese, lived in Europe for 5 years")

4. How would you describe your career and academic background? (E.g. A copywriter with an undergraduate degree in illustration.)

Before doing Part II:

The term **_advertising_** mentioned in this study can refer to both commercial and non-commercial advertisements. It includes both traditional media such as newspaper, magazines, radio, television, cinema and direct mail, and emerging digital media such as search results, blogs, social media, websites and text messages. The form of the advertisements including but not limited to signs, billboards, posters, videos, audios and text. Please keep this definition in mind while answering the questions below.

The definition of **_women_** is not simple, there are women with disabilities, homosexual women, transgender women, indigenous women, women in colours and senior women, etc. (E.g., an indigenous woman who is transgendered and with a disability.) Each group belongs to one or more protected grounds listed in the Ontario Human Rights Code within every social spheres, therefore we can say that they are the vulnerable groups in women.

If this is an email interview, answers in short sentences and long paragraphs are all welcomed, please make sure that you express everything you would like to say. The researcher may propose several follow-up questions during the research, your participation is highly appreciated.

II. Advertising and your group.

1. In score 1 to 10, how satisfied are you about your and your group's representation in advertising messages? (1 for the least satisfied, 10 for the most.)

2. What are you satisfied about? (You can start by listing all the aspects you are satisfied, then elaborate and give examples. E.g. My group's representations in advertising messages have been increased in recent years, I think it is a good sign, now you can easily see my group's faces in make up advertisements.)

3. What are you not satisfied about? In other words, what do you think need to be changed? (The instruction is the same as above. E.g. Even I've seen that my group's representation has increased, I still think it cannot represent my group's aesthetic fully, it is more like using my group's image to appreciate the "mainstream" aesthetic.)

4. Please describe one or more than one times when you were surprised by an advertisement.

5. Please describe one or more than one times when you felt offended by an advertisement.

6. One of the outcome of this research is a guideline towards inclusive advertisements, please think in your shoes and propose one or more than one guide you would like to see in the guideline.

7. If there is anything you would like to elaborate on, please leave a comment here.

11. Ubiquitous Advertising Survey - Final

Ubiquitous Advertising – A Questionnaire Designed to Investigate Women's Representations in Advertising Messages

This study is focused on people whose biological sex and/or gender role and/or gender identity is **female**, if you belong to other sex/genders, please kindly exit this survey, your interest is highly appreciated.

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to investigate women's representations in advertising messages, then to build a more inclusive guideline regarding the content of advertisements. Please be advised that the feelings of participants are highly respected in this study, **you have the right to skip any question or withdraw from the research at any point before submitting**.

The participation will take 10-15 minutes.

I.   Basic Information.

1. Do you consider yourself belong to any of the minority groups? The minority groups in this study are:
The visible minority/
The indigenous people/
People with disability/disabilities/
The LGBTQ+ community/
The Senior
-Yes
-No

2. Which age group do you belong to?
-Under 20/
-20-29/
-30-39/
-40-49/
-50-59/
-60+

3. How would you describe your career (or academic if you are a student) background?
-Arts & Humanity
-Education
-Finance & Business
-Computer Science & Information Technology
-Medicine & Health
-Science
-Social Study & Social Work
-Other, please specify.

Before doing Part II:

The term ***advertising*** mentioned in this study can refer to both commercial and non-commercial advertisements. It includes both traditional media such as newspaper, magazines, radio, television, cinema and direct mail, and emerging digital media such as search results, blogs, social media, websites and text messages. The form of the advertisements including but not limited to signs, billboards, posters, videos, audios and text. Please keep this definition in mind while answering the questions below.

Please keep in mind that ***women*** include women with disabilities, indigenous women, visible minority women, women who belong to the LGBTQ+ community and senior women. Each group of women belong to one or more of the protected grounds listed in the Ontario Human Rights Code. For example, an indigenous woman, with a disability, who is transgendered. For the purposes of this study, we will refer to these women as 'protected groups' of women.

II.   Women in Advertising.

1.   In the past year, how many advertisements that portray women, convey a positive message about women in your view?
-More than ten
-Several
-One or two
-None

2. Why do you think these advertising messages are positive? Please select 2 reasons you see the most.

-They break stereotypes.

-They broadcast a fair representation of women.

-They appeal to gender equality.

-They respect and support women.

-Not Applicable

-Other, please specify.

3. In the past year, how many advertisements that portray women, convey an inappropriate message about women in your view?

-More than ten

-Several

-One or two

-None

4. Why do you think these advertising messages are inappropriate? Please select 2 reasons you see the most.

-They broadcast an unfair representation of women.

-They ignore women.

-They re-affirm stereotypes.

-They are sexist, they objectify women.

-Not Applicable

-Other, please specify.

5. In the past year, how many advertisements did you see that portray women who belonging to protected groups?

-More than ten

-Several

-One or two

-None

6. What is your impression of advertising messages that portray protected groups of women? (multiple choice)

-Innovative

-Positive/Fair

-Neutral

-Biased/False

-I did not see any advertisement featuring women in protected groups.
-Other, please specify.

7. If there is anything you would like to elaborate on, please leave a comment here.

Before doing Part III:

Please think if you belong to a protected group of women (the protected groups in this study include women with disabilities, indigenous women, visible minority women, women who belong to the LGBTQ+ community and senior women). If you do not belong to any of the groups mentioned above, you still belong to certain groups based on your own backgrounds. (E.g., a Caucasian, middle-aged, heterosexual women with an abled body.)

III. Advertisements and your group.

1. In score 1 to 10, how satisfied are you about your and your group's representations in advertising messages? (1 for the least satisfied, 10 for the most.)

2. What are you satisfied about? (multiple choice)
-My group's representations in advertising messages have been increased.
-My group's representations have been more justified.
-My group's representations have been more authentic.
-My group's representations have been more diverse.
-Not Applicable

3. What are you not satisfied about? In other words, what do you think need to be changed?
-My group's representations in advertising messages are biased.
-My group's representations are not showed enough.
-My group's representations are simple.
-My group's representations are false/cannot represent us.
- Not Applicable

4. One of the outcomes of this research is a guideline towards inclusive advertisements, please think in your shoes and propose one or more than one guide you would like to see in this guideline.

5. If there is anything you would like to elaborate on, please leave a comment here.

After your participation:

Your participation in this study is highly appreciated! Please be advised that since no personal identifier was collected in this survey, the researcher will not be able to identify which answer is from whom after the participant submits the data, **the withdrawal of participating in this project is only possible before you submit the survey, if you want to withdraw from this research, please do not submit the survey and exit the survey window now**.

If you experience any emotional crisis or negative mood due to participating in this research, you are encouraged to let the researcher know by the contact information provided, and

1) If you are within the OCAD U network, please visit the Health & Wellness Centre at 6th floor, 230 Richmond St.
2) If you are outside the OCAD U network, please visit your family doctor.

If you have any further question regarding this research, please feel free to contact the researcher at the student's email address (redacted in this appendix for privacy).

12. Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Date: Sept/08/2020
Project Titile: **Women's Representations in Advertising Messages**

Researcher:	**Primary Advisor:**
Mengdan (April) Yu	Anthony Kerr, Professor
Inclusive Design	Faculty of Design
OCAD University	OCAD University
Student's email address (redacted in this appendix for privacy)	Primary advisor's faculty email address (redacted in this appendix for privacy)

INVITATION
You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to investigate women's representations in advertising messages, then to build a more inclusive guideline regarding the content of advertisements. Please be advised that the feelings of participants are highly respected in this study, **you have the right to refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the participation at any time before submitting the survey**. If you have any question, please directly contact the researcher at the student's email address (redacted in this appendix for privacy).

WHAT'S INVOLVED
As a participant, you would be involved in an anonymous online survey answering questions relating to three parts: 1. your background; 2. how you feel towards women's representations in advertising messages; 3. suggestions to the guideline for inclusive advertising. Participation will take 10 to 15 minutes.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS
Possible benefits of participation include contributing to a meaningful project which would likely improve the fairness and inclusiveness regarding women's representations in advertising messages. There also may be risks associated with participation, the participant may have to recall unpleasant memories in terms of women's representations in advertisements and experience negative emotions such as anger and sadness during participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY
All information you provide will be considered confidential and grouped with responses from other participants. No video/photographic data will be collected. No personal identifier will be collected.

Data collected during this study will be stored in locked cabinets and on password-protected disks only accessible to the researcher and her primary and secondary advisors. Data will be kept till end of May 2019 after which time any paper documents will be shredded and digital documents erased. Access to this data will be restricted to the advisors and the researcher.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study is voluntary, participants will receive no compensation. If you wish, you may skip any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any point during participating. However, since no personal identifier will be collected, the researcher will not be able to identify which answer is from whom after the participant submits the data, **if you decide to withdraw your participation in this project, do not submit the survey**.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS
Results of this study may be shown in classroom presentations. In any such presentation, the collected data will be presented in anonymized and aggregate forms, none participants will be identified directly or indirectly. This project is an academic and non-commercial project.

If you wish to receive feedback about this study, please contact Mengdan (April) Yu at the student's email address (redacted in this appendix for privacy).

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE
If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Mengdan (April) Yu and/or the course instructor when applicable using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at OCAD University file number: 101594. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact the Research Ethics Office manager Christine Pineda, cpineda@ocadu.ca, 416-977-6000 x4368

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time before submits my data.

Name: _____

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

15. Recruiting Poster

Participants Wanted

Women's Representations in Advertising Messages

Hi! My name is April and I am a 2nd year master student in the Inclusive Design program at OCAD U. I'm currently working with my Principle Advisor Anthony Kerr on my MRP and recruiting participants.

o   Who are the potential participants:

People whose sex and/or gender is female.
People who age 18 and above.

If you volunteer as a participant in this study, you will be asked to answer a series of questions in an online survey which should take 10-15 minutes. Your participation is highly appreciated.

You can simply use your phone camera to scan the QR code!

Online Survey:

If you have any question, please contact me at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
the student's email address (redacted in this appendix for privacy)