

Gender & Sexuality Reading Summary

Layla Lusby | 2/8/24

A Research Agenda for (Gender) Troubled Times: Striving for a Better Tomorrow. [Academic Journal]

This article places a lot of emphasis surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on LGBTQ+ people as they are confined to home, potentially in situations where it's unsafe for them. Many topics are covered within these pages, including LGBTQ+ issues, as well as women's issues and the intersectionality with being non-white and being within those communities. The article discusses the changes to people's lives and the necessary adjustments needed to coincide with the pandemic.

The article cites many statistics, but the few that stood out to be for the purpose of this assignment were LGBTQ+ brand values (sincerity), masculine bias in ads, and women's evolving roles in society impacting gender stereotyping. There are a lot of numerical statistics cited that have to do with things like queer healthcare, incline in women's unemployment in the face of the pandemic, and both group's proclivity to work in industries related to care.

I think this research is very well done and highlights everything needed to be said about these groups in the wake of the pandemic. While we are no longer in quarantine, we do live in a post-pandemic society and are still feeling the impact of this time period. The state of fear and instability for the LGBTQ+ community that rose in the pandemic is an important factor in both consumer behavior and representative ideals. In order to understand the people we aim to represent, we need to know the context of their realities and what facets of their lives they consider important.

Media and the Development of Gender Role Stereotypes [Academic Journal]

This article focuses on gender stereotypes and development and how they are influenced by media, particularly television. It highlights the underrepresentation of women and the misrepresentation of masculinity and femininity. They go into depth about what values are instilled into children relative to the amount of screen time they have, with things like appearance of girls and stereotypical gender norms for toys and other interests.

The research found that children are exposed to roughly 8 hours each day to material that reinforces gender roles and stereotypes. This, of course, does include advertising among other things. Exposure contributes to how firmly this generation of children will uphold traditional gender norms. They recommend a shift toward other means of socialization and emphasis in milestones in media made for children.

I find this study very useful and important regarding the current consumer market. The research in the article looks at media from the years 2000 to 2020, which for the most part comprises the childhood of gen z. Gen z is the primary target for most companies as we enter young adulthood, and understanding the context we have for gender socialization from our childhoods is pretty valuable. It also gives us a starting place to examine where, why, and how gen z would need to do some unlearning with gender norms.

Inclusion and diversity in advertising and marketing in the United States [Statistics]

The research, sourced from GLAAD, is a compiled variety of statistics pertaining to audience reception of LGBTQ+ themes in advertising.

The overall consensus that can be taken is that consumers are not deterred by queer representation in advertising. Controversially, they tend to think positively of brands that support the LGBTQ+ movement. Focusing on chapters 4 and 5 of the report, associating with pride actually boosts brand image. In terms of gender representation, audiences were more neutral than anything. Which isn't negative, it just shows they're unsure due to unfamiliarity. Something that can be resolved with more representation.

To me, this serves as a good example. Most brands are apprehensive about encouraging diversity in gender and sexuality because they think it'll scare away customers. The numbers prove that it's actually good for business, and attracts a larger audience than it deters.

Discussion

All three of the research materials I pulled supports my belief in using advertising to promote diversity. It would actively better both the industry and its impact on society as a whole. Diversifying gender representation specifically would greatly expand the understanding held about people who exist outside of binary norms. It helps people of marginalized existence see visibility and ease the public further toward public acceptance, and it's profitable for businesses.

Bibliography

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