

Investigating Global and Traditional Hispanic Culture in Hispanic TV Advertisements

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Abstract The main goal of this study was to respond to the call for researchers inside the advertising discipline to explore Hispanic advertising research and globalization. To address this theoretical gap in the advertising literature, we draw knowledge from semiology to evaluate the plots and stories used in promoting local traditional Hispanic culture and global culture in advertisements from Spanish language network television in the United States.

Students in a marketing communication class in a regional University located in the Mid-Western United States voluntarily collected a sample of Hispanic advertisements from YouTube. Of the 89 advertisements collected, the 70 included in the final sample were required to meet the following criteria. The ads: (1) must be ads shown on Univision or Telemundo; (2) must promote a consumer product; (3) must have more than 50 views at the time of the download; (4) be less than 3 min long (since ads longer than 3 min tend to be short documentaries and infomercials); and (5) must include narrative plots that contain conceptual richness. This form of selective sampling is normal in studies using semiotic analysis (Mick and Oswald 2006). The evaluation and interpretation of the Hispanic advertisements were conducted by the author and two business graduate students who are native Spanish speakers. The coders, including the author of the paper, are bilingual (Spanish and English).

The initial analysis of the Hispanic advertisements resulted in identification of five main plots. However, a closer evaluation of these initial plots and more iteration revealed three main plots and four sub plots: (1) Americanized upper middle class main plot with two sub plots (Nurturing woman and empowered woman); (2) Heritage main plot with two sub plots (Soccer cult and family ritual sub plots); and (3) Celebrity main plot.

Overall, the results suggest the ideas of global culture are portrayed by highlighting the celebrity power of non-Mexican Hispanic artists who have global appeal. We also found that the sampled ads showed advertisers taking socio-political stands. The promotions of American Dream ethos and woman empowerment were the most dominant global culture socio-political stands revealed in the ads evaluated.

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In terms of theory implications, unlike previous studies which suggest that advertising reflects commonly-held values of its target audience, our findings suggest that advertising reflects commonly-held socio-political stands of its target audience rather than reflections of commonly held values of its target audience.

References

References Available Upon Request