**Title: Argumentative Essay on Racism in Advertisement**

The increase in competition between brands trying to expand their customer size brought about more demands of better marketing strategy and two departments are responsible for this; PR and advertising department are two of the most impactful fields of the media, so much so that whenever you think of Christmas, you think of Santa Claus, well, it is the advertising team of coca-cola that you have to thank for that, advertisement are so powerful that a single scene/illustration/caption can dictate a social norm, a fashion vogue and even instigate a protest or revolution. PR and adverts do not only reminds us what we think but can also manipulate us to thinking in a way desired/designed by the team, a popular example is how we all rooted for armed robbers and saw the police as the bad guys in the movie titled "Money Heist", don't worry, you need not feel guilty for thinking like that, it's just how they wanted us to see the narrative and that's how much impact they have on us all.

Just how much impact?

South Africa is a multiracial country with population percentage of 80.2% Black/African, 8.8% colored, 8.4% white, and 2.5% Asian but even as it is demographically diversified, the media tends to under-represent some demographic groups (race, marital status and sexual orientation) to a point that a foreigner would have thought situation was quite different than it really just by the advert media alone for reasons like lopside representation and targeted ads to the minority race population either due to race population in the industrial states or white washing of the media and projection of patriarchal society, as for the race issue in the media which can be traced to white population flip in the industrial state, this can be traced to apartheid (which ended in 1994) and how it left a serious racist scar in the commercial cities of the country, taking Cape town as a case study, with a demography of 42.4% colored, 38.6% African, 15.7% white, 1.4% Asian and 1.9% others, but still seems to be divided not racially but socio-economically, the effect of the apartheid left the blacks poor by a phenomena known as "Ebony Sealing Effect" and can be obviously seen in between 'Imizamo Yathou and Hout Bay', 'Memenburg and Nyanga' and 'Strand and Nomzamo' etc. With that stated the market research teams in the advertising brands usually get an incomplete and partial data of the target market and usually focus on the rich and industrial zones which is predominantly white and that's the genesis of the problem, take for example 'Clicks' advert for 'Tresemme' seems to attempt two things which buttress the premise of my argument, which are;

i. Most white women have straight hair, so the brand needs to tell them to buy their products by describing the black women's hair as damaged and offering their product as prevention.

ii. Most black women have fluffy hair, so they describe their hair as damaged so they proffered their product as solution ergo the caption "Frizzy, dull, dry and damaged hair" versus "Normal, fine and flat hair".

Normally strategy in 2 would have worked just bleaching lotion companies capitalize on the color insecurities in West Africans, unfortunately for them it did not work and in fact led to a boycott of their product. I wouldn't blame the market research team too much for this failure but also the lack of race diversity in the marketing team because mistakes like the "Coolest Monkey" in the H&M's hoodies would have obviously be pointed out by the black in the board and captions and pictures would never have been approved let alone hit public view. Now to address the latest elephant in the room; family diversity misrepresentation, truth be told, if we are looking for who is to be blamed for this, we only need look into a mirror, we all need to take responsibility for breaking the bias and give more encouragement to the single mothers who hold down the fort while the man is nowhere to be found (or not doing his duties), also for the same-sex couple (a relatively new matter) which is still getting various forms of religious, cultural and political condemnation and it's understandable that the advert agencies are afraid to touch such a new and sensitive issue nevertheless subtle reminder, support and representation wouldn't hurt anyone.

There are solutions to the above stated problems but first playing the devil's advocate, some may argue that the same-sex couple population is statistically low compared to the man-woman couple but that does not explain the under-representation of single mothers and black family dynamics which is statistical majority but instead scrubbed for their description of perfection, I'd proffer the following steps to be taken to end the misrepresentation;

i. Government and socio-economic activists should work together to ensure diversity and ban the sensitive adverts

ii. The marketing board should ensure a more thorough and realistic market research from a diverse data source and team.

iii. The marketing and advert media should be forced to be more diversified from board members to the content creators and actors.

There is so much advantageous impact on the socio-economics of the country if those solutions are enforced, for example, if the family is represented more accurately, people will stop looking at a single mother as failed or broken but as strong and independent since they would no longer think the default norm is couple family also same-sex couple would not be seen as immoral or different since they would now be seen more often in the public view and acceptance rate will increase (Statista, 2021) and finally for racial diversity, all that is to done is make more 'beauty in diversity' adverts and people will begin to embrace their racial image and accommodate others more since that will be seen more often and taken as the new norm and it will also help improve the body image issues like hair and skin-color related self-esteem, lastly, the need for diversity in advertising teams will rebalance the field race economy because more diversity mean more jobs for the left out race which also translate to moving into the industrial areas and so improving socio-economic balance.

References

# Ethnic groups in South Africa. [online] *Wikipedia.* Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups_in_South_Africa> [Accessed at 10 April, 2022].

Why South Africa is still segregated, 2021(video file), Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVH7JewfgJg> [Accessed at 10 April, 2022].

# South Africa is still under apartheid | AJ+, 2018 (video file), Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jga235t0um4> [Accessed at 10 April, 2022].

# Cape Town Population 2022. [online] *World population review.* Available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/cape-town-population> [Accessed at 10 April, 2022].

# South African Companies Clicks, TRESemmé & Unilever Under Fire for Racist Ad, 2020(video file), Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMJ8g4t8wtk> [Accessed at 10 April, 2022].

# EFF In South Africa Shutdown H&M Store For Disrespectful Coolest Monkey In The Jungle Hoodie, 2018(video file), Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgjVxItH21Y> [Accessed at 10 April, 2022].

## People stating that homosexuality should be accepted by society in South Africa in selected years between 2002 and 2019, 2021. [online] *Statista.* Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1269949/acceptance-of-homosexuality-in-south-africa/> [Accessed at 10 April, 2022].