

Dark-Skinned Woman's Image Represented in Avon's Catalogue 2022 'WHAT'S NEW' Cosmetic Advertisements: A Semiotic Study

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Abstract. In this case, the researcher wants to analyse three advertising posters for the Avon Catalog 2022 product 'WHAT'S NEW' out of a total of singers representing dark-skinned women using semiotics. The dark-skinned women who became the object symbolized that the advertised product was suitable for all skin types. This study employs a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis. Therefore, this study aims to identify the signs (*icon, index, symbol*) and find out the meaning of messages contained in advertising posters through Peirce's theory. The results of this study indicate that there are 13 signs on 3 Avon advertising posters (*Eye Love It, Luxury In The Shade of You, Winter-proof Your Skin*). Besides that, the researcher also found the meaning of each symbol by using dark-skinned women, which shows that they can also positively impact the beauty world. It could be concluded that each advertisement had a different sign, and this distinct difference had given different interpretations. From the semiotics analysis of ads, the advertiser's complex idea can be quickly delivered by the cons quickly

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INTRODUCTION

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and their use of interpretation. Generally, semiotic analysis studies the places of signs and the part they play on a social and artistic scale. Semiotics is used to inform the anthology of what interpretation they should make concerning the sign. It includes research on the creation and comprehension of meaning. According to the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, it is the study of "the life of signs within society." Studying the importance of decision-making is known as semiotics, also known as the science of meaning and semiology in the Saussure tradition. Indicators, designation, similarity, analogies, metaphors, symbolism, purpose, and communication are all included in this (Saussure, 1916:35). It also provides for the study of signs and the process of signs (semiosis). According to Umberto Eco (2016), any cultural phenomenon can be studied as communication; therefore, semiotics also has a significant anthropological component. However, some semioticians focus on the logical side of science. They also learn topics in the life sciences, such as how to predict and change the organism's behaviour. Usually, semiotic theory uses signs or symbols as the subject of its research.

In accordance to Pierce, who was cited by Pradopo (1995:121), there are three different types of fundamental signs, namely icons (a sign that identifies something by the qualities that it

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shares with that something, but which the hero possesses independently of that thing), indexes (a sign that denotes its object by an actual connection), and symbols (a sign that indicates its object solely because it will be interpreted to do so), depending on the relationship between the signifier and the signified. Something that represents someone or something in some way is called a sign (in the form of a representamen) (Peirce 1931-66, 228). A person's address entails forming an equivalent or possibly more sophisticated sign in that person's mind. The sign's object is something that it represents. Using interpreters is the only way a sign can function as a symbol for something else. Another sign, or a psychological sign (thought or mental image), which interprets or translates the displayed sign is called an interpreter. For instance, symbols are everywhere, including in the form of road signs. When the red light is on, people cross the street using a black-and-white line. Saussure considered the black-white line to be a signifier. For those who see it to comprehend the conventional meaning of the line, the signified is the meaning or concept of the line in their minds. Pierce argues that representation is the line itself, and the object is the idea or reference of a thing (a black-and-white line) that appears as a zebra cross in the mind. The final one is Interpretant. The line's Interpretant, or place where people can cross the street, is its mental meaning. Anything can be interpreted as a symbol as long as it refers to or represents someone other than the person who created it. The semiotics issues are centred on the meaningful use of signs. To convince readers to buy their products, advertisers make good pictures, good sentences, and even an artist as their model advertisement.

In general, the advertisements displayed are not simply pictures or text like those found in a beauty magazine. A source from The Economic Times 2023 stated advertising is a type of information that includes interesting messages about a product or service aimed at the general public. It is one of the most effective media for attracting attention or persuading readers to purchase. Advertising itself is the process by which a business promotes its goods through a variety of media. Although the word "advertisement" sounds contemporary, it does not appear to have existed until a few centuries ago. When they were discovered in Thebes on a piece of papyrus, advertisements date back many centuries (Wood, 1958). Since then, advertising has grown and been taken into account in a variety of media, including printed media like newspapers and magazines, electronic media like radio and television, billboards, brochures, and posters, and even online media like email and social media. Advertising has meaning and significance in every sign or symbol listed here, not just songs and poetry. Simple text, product objects or images, and contexts like the product's surroundings, people, or other living things are typically present. These elements are all utilized to convey messages and create product images (concepts, ideas, themes).

Advertising would involve and have an impact on contemporary people's societies and advertising-related ideology. Customers are offered a specific message in an advertisement that has been coded in a variety of ways for the general public to understand (Jalasutra, 2003:280). The advertising codes that are promoted through mass media convey a message to the general public that is interpreted as the code, which is how the code was intended to persuade consumers to buy goods or services (Yasraf Amir Piliang: 2003). A semiological method known as "sign interpretation" was used in advertisements to interpret signs, particularly in the case of an advertisement for Avon featuring a woman with dark skin.

Dark-skinned women refer to the societal attitudes and perceptions surrounding women with dark skin. Historically, many societies have tended to associate lighter skin with beauty,

privilege, and higher social status, while darker skin has often been associated with lower social status and even discrimination. This has resulted in a phenomenon where women with darker skin tones may face negative stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. According to Wilder & Cain (2011), being described as "dark-skinned" has historically had stereotypically negative connotations, which has led to a division between people with lighter and darker skin tones. In many cultures, beauty standards have been heavily influenced by European ideals, which prioritize lighter skin tones. This has led to a lack of representation for dark-skinned women in media, advertising, and other public spaces, which has further reinforced negative stereotypes.

Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) that rearticulates concerns about black female marginality in mainstream theorizing. It provides a complex ontology of "really useful knowledge" that reveals the everyday lives of black and ethnicized women who are positioned in multiple structures of dominance and power. A black feminist epistemology is contextual and contingent, and it looks at the distinct and variable organizing logics of race, class, and gender as well as other social divisions like sexuality, age, disability, culture, religion, and belief that shape women's lives in various historical periods (Yuval-Davis 2006) and geographical locations (McKittrick 2006). Black feminism holds that the primary cause of women's oppression is gender. Black feminism views the family as a crucial defence against racism, in contrast to white female feminism, which sees the family as the primary mechanism of women's subordination (Breines, 2007). According to Collins' *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Collins, 2009), black feminism focuses on issues of race, class, and gender. Three of them are regarded as contributing factors to the intersecting oppression (intersectionality) that black women experience. Thus, racism, sexism, and classism are all forms of oppression that black women must endure (Lynn, 2014). If there is no strong ideology supporting the existence of black women, discrimination against people based on race, gender, and class will continue. Black feminism plays a significant role in combating the negative stereotypes of black women in this regard (Acuff, 2018; Benard, 2016; Collins, 2009; Taylor, 2016). These negative depictions are intended to make social injustice seem natural, normal, and unavoidable in daily life (Collins, 1996, 2009).

In the world of beauty, beauty is typically defined as something lovely and appealing. A woman's beauty criterion is an ideal body, fair skin, straight black, and long hair. With globalization, the definition of beauty becomes uniform across all regions and countries. Generally, most women who meet the above criteria are the targets of objects or models in various media, one of which is cosmetic brands. This media representation is increasingly permeating the consumer community, leaving a lasting impression of what "beauty" should look like regardless of skin colour. Fair-skin models are the only ones whose beauty is recognized by the public (Adodo, 2016: 7).

Despite the growth of the "Black is beautiful" movements, recent research has revealed that the traditional Eurocentric standards of acceptance and beauty in the United States have encouraged and solidified colourism (Ryabov, 2019). On the other hand, in recent years, emphasis has been placed on the idea that profoundly dark skin is attractive. (Ryabov, 2019). However, as time passed, the public came to accept that there was no discrimination against women with dark skin, especially those who became models. Even today, many supermodels, particularly in the

cosmetics industry, have dark skin, including Lupita Nyong'O in Lancôme cosmetic advertisements.

The researcher used Charles Sander Peirce's theory to analyze a cosmetic brand representing dark-skinned women in this study. Several previous studies were used by the researchers in this study, the first being "*Women's Image Represented on Dolce & Gabbana Advertisement*" by Sari and Fadilah (2020). The theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes are used, as well as Leech's theory of advertising structure. The authors concluded that the Dolce & Gabbana Millennialskin On-The-Glow Tinted Moisturizer and Passioneyes Intense Volume Mascara have symbolic meanings of 22 marks. In addition to the theory used by ACI (2018), women want to be seen as attractive, self-assured, powerful, and engaged in business life, as depicted in outdoor advertising. Men simply want to be thought of as attractive. The structural semiotics of Saussure and Barthes were also used in this study. Suryana and Merrita (2022) also examined lipstick advertisements using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach, discovering three icons, one index, and seven symbols. According to researchers, MS Glow advertisements have significantly altered people's perceptions of the ideal and attractive smooth white skin from a skin-related perspective (Abdullah, Widiasmara, Ulum 2022).

According to research by Sukisman and Utami (2021), dark skin can make women more stylistic, expressive, and exotic. Moreover, beauty is not only about light skin colour, but self-confidence, pride, and intelligence are among other things that represent beauty. Therefore, this research looks at how dark-skinned women are displayed in Avon's 2022 'WHAT'S NEW' cosmetic advertisements by analyzing the signs using Charles Peirce's semiotic theory, which involves icons, indexes, and symbols.

METHOD

Descriptive qualitative research was utilized in this study to examine data by describing each datum in detail. This method aims to understand participants' perspectives and beliefs in the context, ensuring that conclusions are supported by facts in society. Yulianty & Jufri (2020) note that careful data analysis is required in qualitative research for the data to be presented in a way that is plausible as a research conclusion. The goal is to reveal a deep understanding of specific phenomena, such as environment, process, and belief, while describing everything related to the research topic.

The object used in this analysis is only three advertising posters of Avon Cosmetics Campaign 2022 'WHAT'S NEW' sourced from jenantunesbeauty.com with the titles: Eye Love It, Luxury In The Shade Of You, and Winter-proof your skin. Before analyzing the data, the researcher took three posters representing dark-skinned women with different conditions, namely casual, formal, and daily, as a part of data collection. After that, the researcher analyzed in terms of representation, namely objects in the form of images on the posters and symbols such as some of the texts that the signs had. Later on, the data would be analyzed by applying two steps: 1) identify and describe the icon, index, and symbol of the advertisement using Peirce's theory. The researcher analyzed the colour of the posters, the writing text, and the expression of dark-skinned women. 2) determines the advertisement's meaning from the Interpretant.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

At this stage, the researcher will discuss the results and research data regarding the problems described, namely the Semiotic Analysis of Dark-Skinned Women's Image Represented on Avon's Catalogue 2022 'WHAT'S NEW' Cosmetic Advertisements. These three advertisement posters have meanings and messages to change people's mindset towards dark-skinned women who also have a good influence on the world of beauty. As a result, the researcher examined each icon, indexical, and symbol to be observed using three aspects of Peirce's Object theory (Idawati et al., 2021).

1. Avon What's New "Eye Love It"



Figure 1. Avon "Eye Love It"

a. Icon Analysis

The first advertisement above shows the face of a dark-skinned woman with eyes on the other side as if she does not care what other people say about her and a smile with an open mouth and her hands holding the sides of her face confidently that she looks beautiful. The poster is the representamen for this observation of the icon. Therefore, the semiosis process for this data is that the representamen is the poster mentioned above, representing confidence and beauty. Then, for the Interpretant, which is the relationship between the representamen and the object, namely that in the advertisement, the woman is wearing a blue eyeliner product, which makes her look different and beautiful so that a sense of self-confidence arises.

b. Index Analysis

The first index for this advertisement is the writing language "Eye Love It". From Peirce's semiotic theory, this is the representation of the index. After that, a semiosis process is carried out; namely, the word "Eye Love It" is a representation personified by the beauty of the eyes that are highlighted so that it becomes a strength for self-confidence so that beauty and confidence are objects. Besides that, the other index is that the woman shows a smile with her mouth slightly open, which means that in this form of a smile, they are positive figures, both from their hearts and minds.

c. Symbol Analysis

The several symbols used in the advertisement are written language. The first-word symbol listed is "DON'T MISS IT! Semi-annual clearance sale in the Brochure", which is the representamen that looks limited. The second is "Our 5-star fan favourite" is the representamen which looks best seller. Then the "Valentine's Day gift they'll love" is the representamen, which looks lovely.

According to the information in the advertisement, blue eyeliner is a fantastic beauty item that can make dark-skinned women feel more confident and stand out. Although it has a significant impact on all women, those with darker skin tones are particularly impacted. This shows that dark-skinned women have the freedom to look as they like without being looked down upon, but the surrounding community will recognize that dark-skinned women have unique characteristics. By using this eyeliner, women can leave a good impression and convey a positive impression to others. To put it another way, the "Eye Love It" index demonstrates that consumers are beginning to value and take notice of Avon products used by women with dark skin. In other words, society has begun to acknowledge the existence of women with dark skin and has helped these women become more self-assured. This finding is supported by research from Kenaisa (2018) that, in every advertisement it displays, Clean & Clear never discriminates against black/dark skin and instead wants to say that differences in skin colour are not a problem. The advertisement is intended so that consumers always appear confident without being afraid and feel insecure because they have dark skin.

This finding also aligns with research by Sukisman and Utami (2021), demonstrating that having fair skin does not equate to having beautiful skin, as all skin tones can appear unique and beautiful. The stigma of skin colour says that dark skin looks ugly with curly hairstyles or heavy makeup and clothes she wore. Instead, it was noted that white women could wear all kinds of clothes and any style. Through this poster, Avon also conveys to women, particularly young women, the importance of free expression regardless of skin colour. On the other hand, according to Izazi (2018), blue, which interprets the eyeliner, is a colour that is suitable for black skin. Blue also looks more elegant with a very soft touch of colour. This colour also makes the appearance look brighter.

In this vein, advertisements possess rhetorical nourishment. Yet, their potential to bring about ideological persuasion is restricted as they heavily rely on the market and consumption, thereby imposing significant limitations on their reality (Eco, 2005). Advertising serves as a source of entertainment by employing deceitful arguments, enticing recipients to fill in incomplete reasoning (enthymeme), but underneath this facade lies a sly and manipulative nature.

2. Avon What's New "Luxury In The Shade Of You"



Figure 2. Avon "Luxury In The Shade Of You"

a. **Icon Analysis**

The second advertisement is the same as before, showing a dark-skinned woman and the cushion foundation as an icon. The picture shows a dark-skinned woman who only shows the side of her face that looks calm and natural but very elegant. In the semiosis process, the image of a dark-skinned woman who looks peaceful and natural but very elegant and luxurious is the representamen, which personates elegance and luxury as the object. Besides that, the cushion foundation product is brown and has a simple round shape. This colour has a binding meaning and a natural impression, so the advertised product attracts the attention of consumers, especially those with dark skin types.

b. **Index Analysis**

The word index listed is "*Luxury In The Shade of You*" is the representamen. "*Luxury*" in large letters means abundance, elegance, and challenging and robust objects. Most of the population views luxury as having access to the finest experiences, possessions, or degrees of comfort or ease that life offers. Though not entirely necessary, luxury gives a person pleasure or comfort.

c. **Symbol Analysis**

The symbol used in the advertisement is written language. The word symbol listed is "New FMG Cashmere Cushion Foundation + Free Gift", which is the representamen that looks smooth, has a natural-looking finish, and has a buildable coverage. In addition, by giving customers gifts, business owners can show they care about and appreciate customer loyalty. Indirectly, the level of customer retention can be maintained or even increased, as well as the level of satisfaction.

For dark-skinned women who want to look elegant and natural, a brown cushion foundation product is the best option out of the three semiosis processes mentioned above in the advertisement. It can give a superficial impression while enhancing skin beauty and a formal and wealthy one. The phrase "*In The Shade Of You*" denotes that there are now many shade colours appropriate for dark skin, as opposed to the few shades available in the past. To support black feminism and give them the same opportunity, this Avon product becomes a space for creativity. This is especially true in the world of fashion, which can represent black women who want to stand out.

This finding supports the previous study carried out by Kong (2016). Some people's perceptions of what is beautiful have changed, such as the current Western preference for bronzed-toned skin, which conveys an image of being more athletic or healthy. Women typically use cosmetics to look attractive and conceal all of these flaws. They gain confidence, feel more beautiful, are empowered, and become more attractive (Hazel, 2020). People do appreciate lovely people because when meeting someone new, physical appearance is usually the first thing that is noted. People will value someone less if they are less attractive, as it is only natural.

On the other hand, Faniditya (2023) explains that psychologists also interpret the colour brown as a sense of security, comfort, and humility. This colour is often equated with an earthy personality because it is synonymous with the colour of earth, wood. Therefore, the brown colour can also be classified as a natural colour.

3. Avon What's New "Winter-proof Your Skin"



Figure 3. Avon "Winter-proof Your Skin"

a. Icon Analysis

The poster shows a dark-skinned woman sitting, hugging her legs, offering smooth and moist skin and giving an expression with a big smile that means self-confidence and a natural character. This description is the icon and also the representation of the semiosis process. Furthermore, the semiosis process is that the poster mentioned above is the representamen, which personates naturally and confidence are objects.

b. Index Analysis

The word index listed is "*Winter-proof your skin*" is the representamen. The written language of "*Winter-proof your skin*" can be interpreted as healthy, moist, and natural are the object.

c. Symbol Analysis

The symbol used in the advertisement is written language. The word symbol listed is "Brand guides and exclusives bundles, for healthy-looking skin all season long, + Free gifts" is the representamen which looks clear, complete, and nourishes the skin in every season. In addition, by giving customers free gifts, business owners can show they care about and appreciate customer loyalty. Indirectly, the level of customer retention can be maintained or even increased, as well as the level of satisfaction.

According to the semiosis process depicted in the third advertisement, dark-skinned women should use moisturizing serum products to maintain and protect their skin's health as the seasons change. They may feel more assured and natural in their appearance as a result. Dark-skinned women can maintain healthy, moisturized skin even during the chilly winter months with the right serum products. This finding supports the previous study carried out by Searing and Zeilig (2017) that reveals ten categories of words for describing youth in cosmetic advertisements, such as nourishing, suggesting the function of refining and recovery or repair, implying revitalizing or refreshing the skin, and so on. The phrase "Winter-proof Your Skin" itself shows that dark-skinned women have the right to take care of their skin in any season, including winter. To support black feminism, this Avon product explains that they are now proud of their dark, moisturized skin and can appear presentable by exposing it without feeling embarrassed in public.

Additionally, the blue colour in the poster's background with the clothes worn by dark-skinned women will attract people's attention because it has a calming effect and brings peace. This colour also connotes trust and reliability (Wawa, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the Dark-Skinned Women's Image Represented on Avon's Catalog 2022 'WHAT'S NEW' Cosmetic Advertisements that use Pierce's theory analysis with Representamen (R), Interpretant (I), and Object (O) and uses the icon, indexical, and symbol aspects of the ad to educate the audience. The researcher discovered three posters depicting a dark-skinned woman for the Avon Catalogue 2022 product 'WHAT'S NEW'. The semiotic signs of these posters were analyzed, and it was discovered that dark-skinned women can look beautiful with any product without losing confidence. According to the "Eye Love It", consumers valued Avon products designed for women with dark skin more, encouraging acceptance and self-assurance. The "Luxury In The Shade Of You" advertisement featured a dark-skinned woman who appeared natural, cosy, and humble, promoting black feminism and empowering black women in the fashion industry. The advertisement for "Winter-Proof Your Skin" featured a dark-skinned woman with exotic body skin, warm clothing, and a chilly setting, demonstrating the calming effect of blue on the woman's expression. These commercials encourage women to embrace their dark skin and look presentable without feeling insecure.

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