

# Age Stereotypes in Advertising: Examining the Effects of Using Non-Stereotyped Portrayals of Older Women in Advertising

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## **Abstract**

Age stereotypes are very prevalent in advertising. Older people are not only underrepresented in advertising, but the portrayals of them are often stereotyped. This under- and misrepresentation is even stronger for older women. There are of course exceptions; some prominent advertisers have recently begun to use non-stereotyped ad portrayals of older women. This practice is in line with a recent stream of research that has demonstrated positive effects of avoiding other common advertising stereotypes. The purpose of this paper is to examine the ad effects of featuring non-stereotyped portrayals of older women in ads. In two empirical studies, we compare the effects of using 1) non-stereotyped portrayals of older models and 2) stereotyped portrayals of younger models. The findings indicate positive ad effects for female consumers of using non-stereotyped portrayals of older women in ads, and that these effects can be explained with signaling theory and the social effects of advertising.

**Keywords:** *Advertising Stereotypes; Age stereotypes; Signaling effects*

**Track:** Advertising & Marketing Communications