

Sexually suggestive content in advertising

A multimodal social semiotic analysis of Mambo's Chicken advertisements on Twitter

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Abstract

This chapter analyses Mambo's Chicken advertisements on Twitter with the aim of finding the type and extent to which the food outlet used sexually suggestive content in its advertisements. A review of the legislative and regulatory framework on their degree and level of deterrent on the use of sexually suggestive content in Zimbabwe is done. Using multimodal social semiotic analysis, the study analyses eight purposively sampled Mambo's Chicken Twitter advertisements and randomly selected Twitter comments. The researcher concludes that the food outlet's advertisements were sexually charged. Both the language and the images in the advertisements employed double entendre, where an advertisement gave two different meanings, one innocuous, with the other being sexually suggestive. Twitter users managed to decode this double meaning with some seeing it as humorous and not offensive. Some thought the advertisements were offensive due to their strong sexual appeal. Zimbabwe has various legislative and regulatory bodies to monitor and prosecute those who use unacceptable sexual content in advertisements. However, prosecution of such errant advertisers proved to be problematic. The study therefore recommends that customers who feel sexually offended by any advertisements should boycott the goods or services given the difficulties in prosecuting such cases.