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How Women of Color are Portrayed on the Cover of Magazines: A Content Analysis on the Images of Black/African, Latina, Asian and Native American (BALANA)

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How women of color are portrayed on the cover of magazines: A content analysis of the images Black/African, Latina, Asian and Native American (BALANA)

By

Connie M. Johnson

An Alternate Plan Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

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Mankato, Minnesota

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How women of color are portrayed on the cover of magazines: A content analysis of
Black/African, Latina, Asian and Native American (BALANA)

Connie M. Johnson

This alternate plan has been examined and approved by the following members of the
student’s committee.

__________________________________
Dr. Kebba Darboe, Ad

__________________________________
Professor Hanh-Huy Phan
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ABSTRACT

How women of color are portrayed on the cover of magazines: A content analysis on Black/African, Latina, Asian and Native American (BALANA)

Connie Johnson
Master of Science Degree, Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Studies
Minnesota State University, Mankato, May 2015

Historically, women of color with little knowledge can blindly imitate the images of themselves as portrayed in mass media, which can be harmful to their self-esteem, contradictions of self-identification, and daily interactions with majority people. Media literacy is important in understanding how images of minority women are distorted to fit the dominant group’s ideals and cultural relevance, which affect the identity of minority women. The researcher through the use of BALANA and content analysis examined some attributes of how women of color (WOC) are portrayed on the cover of eight selected magazines, for example, 1) Good Housekeeping, 2) Cosmopolitan, 3) Glamor, 4) Vogue, 5) Redbook, 6) Seventeen, 7) Teen Vogue and 8) Maxim. The acronym of BALANA stands for Black/African, Latino, Asian, Native Americans. The analytical framework BALANA and content analysis examined the following attributes or characteristics derived from the literature review: hypersexualization, objectification, likeness to whiteness and intensified exoticism. The theoretical perspectives that guided the study are social identity theory, social cognitive theory, critical race theory and objectification theory.
The findings revealed that of the 278 magazine covers reviewed, 52 covers displayed women of color. 90% percent on the magazine covers with WOC had hypersexual images, contextual cues, and content. The percentage on magazine covers with women of color with ethnic traits being masked by whiteness was also 90%. Twelve, magazine covers of the 52, displayed images of WOC portraying objectification attributes. About 42 percent of magazine covers with WOC portrayed intensified exoticism attribute. The percentage of Black/African Women on the cover of magazines was 4.7%, the percentage of Latinas on the cover of magazines was 11.9% and the percentage of Asian Women on the cover of magazines was 2.2% and there were no Native American women presented on the cover of any magazines reviewed.

This is an exploratory study and for the first time applied a socially constructed framework called BALANA to study WOC, therefore, a limitation. Another limitation is the difficulty to locate physical copies of magazines or other resources at local libraries in Minnesota Areas’ Minneapolis and Winona. The socially constructed BALANA as an analytical framework or tool is to help women better understand and improve their media literacy thereby empowering them.
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ORGANIZATION OF PAPER

The paper has five chapters, a reference section and an appendix section. The chapter contents are:

1. Chapter I introduces the research problem, purpose and objectives of the study
2. Chapter II examines the review of related literature and theoretical perspective.
3. Chapter III explains the research methods employed, for example, content analysis
4. Chapter IV analyzes the findings of the study
5. Chapter V discusses and concludes the study with some recommendations for future research
6. The references section lists all the journal articles, books, names of authors, and year of publication,
7. Appendix section shows the images on the magazine covers
CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Introduction

Historically, women of color with little knowledge can blindly imitate the images of themselves as portrayed in mass media, which can be harmful to their self-esteem, contradictions of self-identification, and daily interactions with majority people. This is an exploratory study and for the first time applied a socially constructed framework called BALANA to study women of color (WOC). The acronym of BALANA stands for Black/African, Latina, Asian, Native Americans. Therefore, the social construct is representative of the four major minority groups in the United States. Research has indicated that popular magazines indirectly and directly influence how minority women feel about themselves and other minority women within and outside of their cultural statuses. The Media in the United States play a major role in the socialization process and creating social values for its engaged participants. Given this reality, the media affect people’s lives, for instance, from an early age children are exposed to images in the media that can shape their opinion, thoughts, and beliefs without a clear understanding between reality and fantasy (Dill, 2009). Media literacy is important in understanding how images of minority women are distorted to fit the dominant group’s ideals and cultural relevance, which affect the identity of minority women. A picture is a generic name for all types of visual representations or images that can be drawn or painted by hand, for example, objects, persons, etc. While a photograph is a type of picture, that is
created by the use of a camera or other technological devices. Media refer to communication channels through which news, entertainment, education, data, or promotional messages are disseminated to the general public by people who work in these organizations. It is called mass media when the communication channels reach a large audience. The Media include, for example, newspapers, magazines, television, radio, billboards and internet.

The researcher through the use of BALANA and content analysis examined some attributes of how women of color (WOC) are portrayed on the cover of eight selected names of magazines. The eight selected names of magazines are: 1) Good Housekeeping, 2) Cosmopolitan, 3) Glamor, 4) Vogue, 5) Redbook 6) Seventeen, 7) Teen Vogue; and 8) Maxim. The three types of magazines used in this study publish one or more different names, for example, 1) Women’s Magazines publishes (1) Good Housekeeping, (2) Cosmopolitan, (3) Glamor, (4) Vogue, and (5) Redbook; 2) Teen Magazine publishes 1) Seventeen and 2) Teen Vogue; and 3) Men’s Magazine publishes 1) Maxim. Content analysis is the study of recorded human communications, for example, newspapers, magazines, web pages, poems, books, songs, paintings, speeches, and so on (Babbie, 2011). The analytical framework BALANA and content analysis examined the following attributes or characteristics derived from the literature review: hypersexualization, objectification, likeness to whiteness and intensified exoticism. The theoretical perspectives that guided the study include social identity theory, social cognitive theory, critical race theory and objectification theory.
Hypersexualization

Hypersexualization is a range of sexualized attributes such as tangible or intangible that elicits a sexual response or interpretation, for example, textual cues, body positions, nudity, etc. In the Media context hypersexualization can be an image that implies pornification of images, contextual cues, lyrics, videos, etc. Images of hypersexual women are images where women are presented as a sexual being versus simply being a woman that is put on display (Kitch, 2001). For instance, women wearing little to no clothing, women placed in sexual positions under the guise of something much more innocent, the slacking of a jaw where the tongue is seen, the pursing of lips, etc.

Objectification

Objectification is when a person is exhibited as an object as opposed to a living person (Cahill, 2011). In regards to the Media, women that are objectified are presented in a visual interpretation where their body is displayed as an object to do or be a service, while emphasizing a detachment of personhood. The objectification of women is done, for example, lying out as if presenting their body for the taking, images of solely women’s body parts, images equating a woman to a thing rather than a human being, etc.
Likeness to whiteness

Likeness to whiteness is a social construct that normalizes Euro-centric or American views of the world and forces subordinate groups to adopt those views as status quo in order to fit in or be accepted. Visual images of WOC presented to mainstream society are portrayed in such a way that ethnic and cultural heritage is masked by Euro-centric or American norms, that is, likeness to whiteness (Frakkenberg, 2001). For example, Black women presented with long-straight blonde hair, images of WOC being retouched to reflect lighter skin tones, a nose on a model that may originally be rounded and spread out will be made to look more narrow and pointed, etc.

Intensified Exoticism

Intensified exoticism is when WOC are presented in a hyper-accentuated view in which ethnic and cultural backgrounds are over emphasized (Cahill, 2011). In visual imagery WOC tend to be portrayed in stereotypical garb, accentuated phenotypic traits, stereotypical contextual cues, facial traits, body traits or environmental related to racial categorization. Imagery is a technique that the Media use to construct a vivid mental picture for the audience. For example, Black women dressed in African garb and animal
print, Latinas being referred to as spicy and sizzling’, Asian women presented as submissive while wearing a bun, etc. (Millard & Grant, 2006).

Significance of the Study

The purpose of socially constructing BALANA as an analytical framework or tool is to help women better understand and improve their media literacy thereby empowering them. Additionally, it can be applied as a media literacy tool, for example, at middle school reading and comprehension levels. BALANA takes on a feminine name to study WOC. There is no question that the media propagates stereotypical imagery for profit on the dollar at the expense of minority women. The analytical framework is explained by Social Cognitive Theory, Social Identity Theory, Critical Race Theory (with an emphasis on whiteness as property) and Objectification Theory.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Media and Magazines

Sociologists, communication researchers, and social science researchers have examined and researched women portrayed in mass media during the last 40 years or more (Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976; Clark, 2009; Dill, 2009; Ford, 1969; Millard & Grant, 2006; Peterson, 1964; Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008; Sumner, 2010; Taft, 1982; Wood, 1965). For instance, there have been many studies on media and its role in agenda setting, not only in the United States but around the world. A considerable amount of the research that focuses on media studies has used a qualitative methodology such as content analysis. Often content analysis that have been conducted in the area of media has focused on women and their portrayal in magazines, television, advertisements, and music videos as well as the socializing properties that the media holds using said images (Behm-Morawitz & Mastro, 2008; Millard & Grant, 2006; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hoplamazian, 2012; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009; Sullivan & O’Conner, 1988).
Research findings have provided some evidence that the media plays a significant role in the socialization of children and adults (Bandura, 2001; Behm-Morawitz & Mastro, 2008; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan, 2002; Ghannam, 2008; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hoplamazian, 2012). Research supports also that women are portrayed in both print and broadcast media through media outlets as agenda setting agents that perpetuate stereotypes based upon the perception and power of upper class white males (Chan & Cheng, 2012; Osucha, 2009 & Singer, 2008). Further, these stereotypes often leave negative impressions, generalized ideological explanations, and not necessarily accurate implications of women and their place in society. Research done by Goffman (1979) pointed out that “a pseudo-reality that is better than real” as it is expressed in media imagery and idealization of fantasy vs. reality. Covert and Dixon’s (2008) research infers “that these portrayals appear to reinforce cognitive linkages between people of color and stereotypes” (p. 232). Many studies focusing on gender and class have examined women and the stereotypical images in media, for example, print and broadcast alike but very few have focused on whiteness as property and the implications of White Supremacy as profitable using those images (Foster, G. A. 2003; Orozco, 2011, & Osucha, 2009).

There are some content analyses that focused on the portrayal and images of women on the cover of sports magazines but no portrayal of WOC on the cover of these magazines and its implications (Couturier, 2010; Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Weber & Carini 2013). However, a majority of content analysis that have focused on women and their portrayal on magazines, have focused mostly on the hypersexual imagery of women on magazines and in mass media; and the effects on those exposed to that imagery. The
gender and media studies have taken an in-depth look at the images of women in music videos and music lyrics (Aubrey, Hopper & Mbure, 2011; Fitts, 2008; Kistler & Lee 2010). To date, scant research is done on the portrayal of WOC on magazines and their dual roles, for example, race-gender on Black women and their portrayal on the cover of women’s magazines.

Goffman (1979) laid out the groundwork in his book *Gender Advertisements* that is a guiding point in how the stereotypical imagery that presents women can have an impact on gender roles and how men and women view women. Goffman’s (1971, 1979) research and work about gender role(s) provides one of the most popularly used and referenced coding systems. Critiques of Goffman’s *Gender Advertisements* point out that Goffman specifically selected advertisements to propose his observations rather than doing a random sample. Kang (1997) explains that the visual imageries Goffman selected were “not chosen so generalization to a population of visual images could be made; instead, he deliberately selected advertisements that mirrored gender differences, sometimes ones that captured the nuances of social relationships” (p.983). Goffman’s work in Gender Advertisements seems to be the closest analytical framework that has been referenced and applied in many studies.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Social Identity Theory**

Social identity theory suggests that there are two cognitive processes: categorization and identification, which combine to transform group membership into identity (Myers, 2008). Social categorization is an automatic cognitive process rather
than a controlled one. Social identification is how we identify ourselves with relation to others by what we hold in common. How we reinforce our in-group versus out-group designation is by drawing comparisons between the metaphorical us or them (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The steps of social identity process include the following:

1) Categorization: One subconsciously categorizes themselves creating an in-group/out-group (belonging to the group/not belonging to the group) designation.

2) Social identification: Through communication and observation one can identify key concepts, values, and ideas related to the categories that formed the in-group/out-group (belonging/not belonging) designation. When one has established in-group designation there can be an emotional risk and investment gained or lost that will connect one with their in-group.

3) Social comparison: After one has established social identity, they will begin to compare the other group to their own where bias, prejudice, and conflict can then occur. Identity establishment from both in-group and out-group viewing platforms can highly affect how one creates meaning and connection between themselves and others as well as their connection to the world or society they live in.

Social Cognitive Theory

Behm-Morawitz and Mastro (2008) pointed out that “Bandura’s social cognitive theory, media messages serves as a meaningful source for the acquisition of ‘gender-linked knowledge and competencies’ and the development of expectations of gender roles and conduct, self-evaluative standards and self-efficacy beliefs” (p. 132). Since mass media has become widely accessible the information that the public find themselves
exposed to is an overabundance of information regarding social normative values and practices. Knobloch-Westerwick and Hoplamazian (2012) argued that their research exposes media outlets as contributing factors on “how gender norms may be subject to selective reinforcement through media use” (p. 359). Knobloch-Westerwick and Hoplamazian (2012) also pointed out that “Gendered media preferences have consistently been found in empirical research” (p. 359). Social-cognitive theory of mass communication suggests that similar role models will be preferred, as “people are motivated by the successes of others who are similar to themselves” (Bandura, 2001, p. 274)

**Critical Race Theory and Whiteness as Property**

According to Tillery (2008) social constructionists proposed that “race and racial categories are created by people” (p. 641). Critical Race Theory maintains that race is an ordinary and fundamental part of society. The theoretical perspective rejects notions of neutrality, objectivity, color-blindness and meritocracy. Critical race theorists argued that such constructions serve to maintain White privilege; and conversely, systems of non-White oppression (Orozco, 2011). Deriving from Critical Race Theory is the viewpoint of whiteness as property (Ghannam, 2008 & Osucha, 2009). Harris (2003) contends that “Whiteness has functioned as self-identity in the domain of the intrinsic, personal, and psychological; as reputation in the interstices between internal and external
identity; and, as property in the extrinsic, public, and legal realms (p. 1725)” (as quoted by Foster, 2003, p. 13).

Critical Race theorists argued also that the standards of beauty, humanization, and worthiness as well as images, concepts and values are forced upon the subordinate groups through socialization of whiteness as property. Green, Sonn, & Matsebula (2007) pointed out that Whiteness of property “places white people in dominant positions and grants white people unfair privileges, while rendering these positions and privileges invisible to white people” (p. 390). For example, Orozco (2011) explains that “Blacks as slaves, or property of Whites, were used to benefit Whites in economic domination, while simultaneously subordinating, and dehumanizing Blacks.” (p. 821).

The stratification between those that are in power and those that are powerless allows the domination by the wealthy white males. It is this dominant group that controls media outlets, thereby, having the means to establish a filter that produces the standards of what can be inferred as status quo. Since the dominant group controls the media, they have the means to establish a filter that produces the standards of what can be inferred as status quo. Orozco (2011) points out that “whiteness as property is validated by law, established systems of oppression against non-Whites,” (p. 821). As a result, the male dominated-American-Eurocentric perspective controls what is considered mainstream culture especially in the mass media. Green, Sonn, and Matsebula (2007) also pointed
out that the dominant group, which leads and controls the types of images that we are exposed to are those of the majority group “views and interpretations of social phenomena are, by virtue of their visibility, ruling ideas” (p. 390). Harris (1993) explains that “Whiteness has functioned as self-identity in the domain of the intrinsic, personal, and psychological; as reputation in the interstices between internal and external identity; and, as property in the extrinsic, public, and legal realms” (p. 104). Further, Tillery, 2008, p. 643) pointed out that white identity and white skin became property that guaranteed “sources of privilege and protection.”

**Objectification Theory**

Discussions in research emphasized the fact that there are damaging consequences of adopting a third person perspective on the self (Loughnan, et al., 2010; Moradi, 2010; Papadaki, 2010; Watson, Robinson, Dispenza, & Nazari, 2012). This perspective dehumanizes ones personhood for it “constitutes ‘personhood’ under the circumstances of the “process of depersonalization” (Loughnan et al, 2010, p. 710). In the literature review to qualify as a person “an individual must be seen as possessing a mind and as deserving moral consideration” (Loughnan et al, p. 710). Moradi’s (2010) pointed out
that “objectification theory posits that gender socialization and sexual objectification experiences define women by their bodies and appearance” (p. 139). Objectification of people can be considered a negative as explained by Papadaki (2010, p.17):

Objectification involves treating a person as an object, in the sense of a mere instrument for someone else’s purposes, and consequently reducing this individual to the status of a mere instrument. Objectification, then, is a necessarily negative phenomenon because it involves seriously harming a person’s humanity. In being reduced to a mere thing for use, the objectified individual’s humanity is diminished.

In a comparative perspective of the objectification theory and critical race theory Moradi (2010) pointed out that WOC may feel an intensified pressure as subordinates in relation to “skin tone, hair color and texture, facial features, and shape and size of body parts may shape manifestations of body surveillance, body shame, and other objectification theory constructs and contribute to body image and eating problems for racial or ethnic minority women” (p. 141).

**Summary**

Media outlets are male dominated in their ownership and the selected images and portrayals of women continue to be based upon the fantasy of what it is to be a woman in the United States. Often those images and conversations from media outlets promote their ideas to develop an impressionable viewer/reader/listener that are not educated and believe pseudo reality as actual reality with no disclaimer or filter of reference.
BALANA is meant to be an analytical framework that can be used as a filter in
discerning reality and pseudo reality being portrayed in media in regards to WOC.
BALANA’s framework is based on the following foundations: 1) Social Cognitive
Theory Social Identity Theory, 2) Critical Race Theory with an emphasis on whiteness as
property and 3) Objectification Theory.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction
Women’s magazines play influential roles as agents of socialization. Women use magazines to determine what is trending now; acceptable behaviors and beliefs; what are determined as important issues pertaining to women; and are also simply entertaining. The images that are presented on magazines can be a representation of what is trending as the cultural norm. When magazine editors put together magazine issues they are looking to include information that they believe their readers will relate to and emulate. Editors use the images and headlines on their magazine covers as their selling point to attract readers to purchase their magazines (Fink & Kensicki, 2002). By using a content analysis of images on the cover of magazines, one can examine the images marketed to the readers for the magazine in question.

**Research Questions**

Each magazine cover investigated was analyzed through the analytical framework of BALANA, for instance, the attributes of hypersexualization, objectification, and likeness to whiteness also shortened to whiteness, and intensified exoticism of imagery and context in the portrayal of WOC in media. The questions presented asked simple questions regarding the most often observed attributes identified by the BALANA Analytical Framework. To apply the BALANA framework, the researcher asked the following research questions:

1) What is the percentage of magazine covers with women of color?

2) What is the percentage of magazine covers with objectifying properties of women of color?

3) What is the percentage of magazine covers with hypersexual images, contextual cues, and content of women of color?
4) What is the percentage of magazine covers with ethnic traits of women of color being masked by whiteness?

5) What attributes of BALANA are expressed most often in images?

6) What attributes of BALANA are expressed the least often in images?

**Qualitative Content Analysis**

The qualitative data that utilized in this study is visual imagery and contextual content. Many researches on women in print media have used content analysis. Some research looked at the depiction of women in mass media, which provided in depth analyses on how women are portrayed within different time frames in ads, articles, and on the covers of magazines in United States. While other content analyses have focused specifically on the portrayal and images of women covered in sports magazines (Couturier, 2010; Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Weber & Carini 2013). However, an increasing trend in communications and sociology research has been using content analysis of imagery as a methodology to gain insight in the media.

Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009) and Sullivan & O’Conner (1988) contended that women in print media have been stereotyped as hypersexual objects through the means and standards that lie between the Bible and pornography. And other content analyses have focused on the hypersexual imagery of women in magazines and in mass media. Scant content analysis study has been done on the portrayal of women of color in magazines, for example, on the imagery of Black women on the cover of women’s magazines. For instance, editors of magazines do research to stay ahead of the competition on current popular culture to continue the agenda setting what is most popular and acceptable ideas and notions in mainstream society (Fink & Kensicki, 2002).
The magazines selected for this study are well known magazines that feature a variety of celebrities’ images and public figures on covers of magazines. The celebrities featured were athletes, entertainers, actors/actresses, producers, singers, writers, comedians, television personalities, journalist, political figures, models and the First Lady of the United States. The large range of possible persons to select from gives editors an opportunity to diversify the faces they feature on the cover of magazines.

This study selected a total of eight magazines that were in the top 20 most monthly circulated magazines; and top 20 most circulated magazines by subscription in the United States within their genres (Alliance for Audited Media [AAM], 2013; 2012; 2011). Additionally, the eight magazines studied were the most circulated in the second half of 2012 (June to December statistics) in the categories of women’s magazines, men’s magazines, and teen magazines (AAM, 2013; 2012; 2011). The selected magazines fell into the following categories: women’s magazines, for example, Cosmopolitan and Glamor; teen magazines, for example, Seventeen and Teen Vogue; and men’s magazines, for example, Maxim. The magazine covers examined were selected over duration of three years (2011-2013) totaling to 295 magazine covers including multi cover issues that were initially examined.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Results and Data Display

The three types of magazines used in this study publish one or more different names, for example, 1) Women’s Magazines publishes (1) Good Housekeeping, (2) Cosmopolitan, (3) Glamor, (4) Vogue, and (5) Redbook; 2) Teen Magazine publishes 1) Seventeen and 2) Teen Vogue; and 3) Men’s Magazine publishes 1) Maxim. The selected magazine covers were examined over a period of three years, from 2011 to 2013, totaling to 295 magazine covers as shown on Table I.

Table I. Magazines Used in this Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women's Magazines</th>
<th>Teen Magazines</th>
<th>Men's Magazines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cosmopolitan</td>
<td>Seventeen</td>
<td>Maxim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glamor</td>
<td>Teen Vogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Housekeeping</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Redbook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vogue</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Of the 278 magazine covers reviewed, 52 covers displayed women of color. Table 2 displays the valid percentage and frequency of women of color found on the cover of magazines by ethnicity found in this study.

Table 2: Women of Color Presented on Magazine Covers by Ethnicity
In the observed magazines the percentage of WOC that were presented on the cover of magazines in the simple convenient sample was 18.7% while white women were found on approximately 81.3% of all magazine covers reviewed. The percentage of Black/African Women on the cover of magazines was 4.7%, the percentage of Latinas on the cover of magazines was 11.9% and the percentage of Asian Women on the cover of magazines was 2.2% and there were no Native American women presented on the cover of any magazines reviewed.

The percentage of magazine covers with WOC on them with objectifying properties was 23% as shown on figures 1 and 2. In the 52 magazine covers that portrayed WOC of the total 278 magazine covers reviewed, 12 covers displayed images of WOC portraying objectification attributes. Of the four attributes the objectification
attribute was the least portrayed. The covers of magazines play an important role in selling magazines.

**Figure 1: BALANA Results and Portrayals**

90% percent of magazine covers with WOC on the cover of magazines had hypersexual images, contextual cues, and content as shown on figures 1 and 2. In the 52 magazine covers that displayed WOC of the total 278 magazine covers reviewed, 47 covers displayed images of WOC portraying hypersexualization attributes. The hypersexualization attribute displayed one of the largest percentages among the four attributes portraying WOC.

A majority of the images that portrayed women on the covers of magazines presented images of women that were partially and mostly nude. The images where hypersexual representation took place, there were a high exposure to women’s shoulders to very low cuts of their breast. Other images that were viewed were mid-thigh dresses, skirts, and shorts. White women on the cover of magazines tended to exert hypersexual images through placement, gentle caressing, and body positions, whereas WOC exerted hypersexual images through facial expressions, levels of nudity, and body position. Both the hypersexual and masked by whiteness attributes were the highest visibility among all four attributes of the BALANA analytical framework.

The percentage of magazine covers with women of color with ethnic traits being masked by whiteness was also 90% as shown on figures 1 and 2. Of the total 278 magazine covers reviewed 52 covers portrayed WOC and 47 covers displayed images of
WOC portraying likeness to whiteness attributes. The likeness to whiteness attribute displayed one of the highest percentages among the four attributes portraying WOC. The attributes of BALANA expressed most often in images and context was shared between hypersexualization and likeness to whiteness attributes. The masked by likeness of whiteness attribute occurs when the women’s skin tones were lightened as well as the implementation of straight blonde hair. There were images of WOC where facial attributes could be seen as altered, for example, a woman with a rounded nose being altered to look a little more pointed in one magazine, while her nose looked rounded in another magazine.

The intensified exoticism attribute of BALANA was the second least expressed image and context portraying of WOC. The percentage of magazine covers with WOC with intensified exoticism attributes was 42% as shown on figures 1 and 2. In the 52 magazine covers that portrayed WOC of the total 278 magazine covers reviewed, 22 covers displayed images of WOC portraying intensified exoticism stereotypes.
The contributing factors that determined the intensified exoticism were attire and prop related. Often the attire and props seemed out of place with the lightened image. In some magazines the features of women seemed to be touched up. For example, a celebrity may find that their once fair skin was made into a darker or olive pigment while finding their bust slightly increased. An observation made of the white women that were on the cover of magazines; there were a higher percentage of women whose skin tones were made darker to give them a tan look.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Future Research and Limitations

For future research, however, researcher recommends a time period of five years or more and sample size of 500 magazine covers. Additionally, to create a code sheet that will explicitly list the images related to the aforementioned attributes and calculate the reliability. Reliability is the degree of consistency shown by one or more coders in classifying content according to defined values, for example, images of WOC. This is an exploratory study and for the first time applied a socially constructed framework called BALANA to study WOC, therefore, a limitation. Another limitation is the difficulty to locate physical copies of magazines or other resources at local libraries in Minnesota Areas’ Minneapolis and Winona. In this study, researcher reviewed specifically eight magazines from a variety of genres over a time period of three years.

Conclusion

BALANA is a good analytical framework that can be used as a media literacy tool to study WOC. In general, the mass media outlets are owned and managed by white men and women, as a result, there is always a filter placed upon the information before us as consumers hear and see the messages. This issue affects communication and cultural studies.

Ideally, if BALANA was to be implemented in media literacy studies, it will provide a tool that the general public can relate to and apply to study the social world.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX

Magazine Covers
These images display the likeness to whiteness properties in the BALANA Framework. When compared to the image in the middle in regards to lightening the skin on the photos on these covers.
These covers showcase Latinas showcasing hypersexual properties in the BALANA framework.
The images each showcase the same woman. The images all showcase Latinas exhibiting hypersexual properties and in the 3 images one can see that the skin tone has been altered. The noses presented in the teen magazines stay rounded and the nose on Cosmopolitan has been reduced in size.
The images each showcase the same woman. The images all showcase this exhibiting hypersexual properties and in the 3 images one can see that the skin tone has again been altered.
This men’s magazine that regularly showcases women as hypersexual beings while and at the same time consistently and upholding likeness to whiteness properties in images displayed of women of color.
In magazines reviewed likeness to whiteness properties in images displayed women of color with Straight hair versus their natural textured hair.