

Case Report

1. Case Number :	0068-24
2. Advertiser :	Koh
3. Product :	House Goods Services
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	TV - Free to Air
5. Date of Decision:	20-Mar-2024
6. Decision:	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.1 Discrimination or Vilification

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This advertisement depicts a woman speaking to camera. As she walks around a kitchen, she says: "During childbirth, the female body can stretch as much as a... ok the guys are gone. Ladies, let's have a chat. Did you know that women are doing 113% more cleaning at home. And one of the reasons? Well, some guys claim..." The scene changes to a man sitting on the floor surrounded by cleaning tools saying "I don't know how to do it". The woman asks him to explain crypto in four words and he says "Digital currencies cryptographically secured". She replies "...but you can't wipe down an oven".



THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

The ad is sexist.

The add describes men as being incapable of doing household chores - also stereotypes men as insensitive and naive. It would be inappropriate to make an

advertisement stereotyping women as knowing nothing about Financial markets, therefore it is inappropriate to make an advertisement about men and housework.

I have a major problem with the sexism and general stereotyping against males in this companies commercial During this whole commercial, the MALE, in the commercial is constantly put down and belittled, to the point he is even sitting on the floor while being further provoked. Imagine if this commercial was reversed, and a male said "men work 113% more than women" while putting her down and making her look stupid, while sitting on the floor. Please take a close look at this companies tv commercial, and make your own opinion if it is gender equal, I think you will find it is NOT. I believe if a female can't be portrayed in this way then neither should a male.

Personally, I find that this ad is sexist as it makes men look like that they are useless and lazy in undertaking household activities. It says men know a lot of useless facts, but yet won't or can't undertake cleaning. This is stereotyping all men. The last comment but the female actor saying "anyone can clean with Koh" is degrading as it makes out that even men can clean.

Was quoting unsubstantiated percentages of what about of house cleaning a man does. Made me feel like because I'm a man I do nothing around the house.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

Our advertising campaign ran from 11th February 2024 - 10th March 2024 and is no longer running across any advertising channels. The advertisement ran across multiple platforms, with a TV reach of 1,452,291 against our buying demographic of W25+; 1,029,124 impressions on BVOD, 300,000 YouTube impressions and Meta impressions of over 500,000 - a total of 3,281,415 media impressions/reach with 5 complaints. Responding to the complaints and Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics.

Provenance of data referenced:

The advertisement referencing Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics June 22 2023 Time Use Survey. There's also data from ABS October 2022 study that uncovered 42% of men contribute to housework compared to 70% of Women.

Our proprietary research conducted in November 2023 with 1,127 respondents showed that 81% of our female identifying customers do the majority of housework at home compared to 53% of our male customers.

- **2.1 - Discrimination or vilification:**

Race - this advertisement does not reference, discriminate or vilify race

Ethnicity - this advertisement does not reference, discriminate or vilify ethnicity

Nationality - this advertisement does not reference, discriminate or vilify nationality

Age - this advertisement does not reference, discriminate or vilify age

Sexual orientation - this advertisement does not reference, discriminate or vilify sexual orientation

Religion - this advertisement does not reference, discriminate or vilify religion

Disability - this advertisement does not reference, discriminate or vilify disability

Political belief - this advertisement does not reference, discriminate or vilify political belief

Gender - this advertisement does not reference, discriminate or vilify gender, in response to the complaints see our responses as follows;

The advertisement uses statistics to explain that cleaning is a gender stereotype and that roles shouldn't be limited to a particular gender. Depicting men as incompetent or inexperienced in one situation does not suggest that this same situation applies to all men, or that it is specific to men, this is proven in the 30" ad by the line "And one of the reasons? Well, some guys claim..."

The ad dramatises the dialogue between a man and a woman in a light-hearted manner to bring to light the possible cause of the statistical imbalance is that cleaning is a complex task people don't want to spend their time thinking about.

The ad depicts men and women in roles reflective of gender stereotypes when the stereotypes are not negative - we are not suggesting that doing more cleaning is a negative thing for women, or less cleaning is a negative thing for men. There is also no suggestion that the roles are limited to a particular gender, in fact we are encouraging equality in the roles.

- *2.2 - Exploitative or degrading - this ad does not sexualise, exploit or degrade.*
- *2.3 – Violence - this ad does not present or portray violence.*
- *2.4 - Sex, sexuality and nudity - this ad does not contain any sex, sexuality or nudity.*
- *2.5 – Language - this ad only uses appropriate language within the setting and does not include any obscene or strong language.*
- *2.6 - Health and Safety - this ad does not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.*
- *2.7 - Distinguishable as advertising - the ad is clearly clearly distinguishable as such.*

THE DECISION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (the Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainants' concern that the advertisement uses gender stereotypes and discriminates against men.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

Section 2.1: Advertising shall not portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.

The Panel noted the AANA Practice Note which provides guidance on the meaning of:

- Discrimination - unfair or less favourable treatment
- Vilification - humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule
- Gender – refer to the attributes, roles, behaviours, activities, opportunities or restrictions that society considers appropriate for girls or boys, women or men. Gender is distinct from 'sex', which refers to biological differences

The Panel noted that the Practice Note also includes:

“Harmful gender stereotypes are unacceptable because they perpetuate unconscious bias and rigid norms of femininity and masculinity that shape what it means to be a girl, woman, boy or man.

Advertisements should take care to avoid suggesting that skills, interests, roles or characteristics are:

- *always uniquely associated with one gender (eg. family members creating a mess while a woman has sole responsibility for cleaning it up);*
- *the only options available to one gender; or*
- *never carried out or displayed by another gender,*

as this may amount to discrimination on the basis of gender.”

Does the advertisement portray material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person on account of gender?

The Panel noted that the advertiser's response that the advertisement reflects statistics from the US Bureau of Labour, Australia Bureau of Statistics and its own survey of customers.

The Panel considered that the messaging of the advertisement is that Koh is so easy to use, even some men who claim that they do not understand cleaning or can't work out how to clean will be able to use the products.

The Panel considered that the advertisement does not state that men in general are incapable of performing household chores, or are useless, indeed it is the opposite. The Panel considered that while there may be a stereotype that men don't participate

in household cleaning, the advertiser has shown it to be a largely accurate stereotype and that it does not result in the man being demeaned, vilified or ridiculed.

The Panel noted that the concept of 'weaponised incompetence' is widely known and the advertisement depicts such a scenario. The Panel considered that this scenario is not a suggestion that all men say they cannot do housework, it is simply a depiction of one type of (perhaps common) household conversation.

The Panel considered that the man in the advertisement is not treated unfairly or less favourably nor does the advertisement humiliate, intimidate or incite hatred, contempt or ridicule of the man because of his gender.

Section 2.1 conclusion

Finding that the advertisement did not portray material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of gender, the Panel determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

Conclusion

Finding that the advertisement did not breach any other section of the Code the Panel dismissed the complaints.