

SCS 100 Project 2: Observation Journal Guidelines and Rubric

Overview

Your second longer-term assignment in this course is to complete an observation journal, where you will use the previous information collected in your comparison template to apply social scientific observations to help you to develop a question about the ads that a social scientist might ask. The work you do on this observation journal will directly support your work on your third course project, the final reflection, which is due later in the course.

This observation journal assignment will assess the following course outcome, which you focused on throughout Theme 2:

- Develop questions about fundamental aspects of human behavior that inform personal assumptions, beliefs and values using evidence from the social sciences

Prompt

Your second course project is an observation journal. You have already gathered your advertisements and completed your comparison template to determine the social science approaches that are relevant to your ads. For this assignment you will use that information to write an observation journal that will ask you to draw conclusions from the ads and, eventually, devise a social science question that you might like to investigate. The critical elements of this assessment will be evaluated in your observation journal.

Specifically, the following critical elements must be addressed and will be graded using the rubric at the end of this document:

- I. Explain why you **chose** these advertisements for social scientific and personal study. For instance, what aspects of them intrigued you and made you curious?
- II. Explain the **assumptions and observations** about human interactions and behaviors you made about the advertisements. These are some questions you might want to consider in your explanation:
 - a. Who do you believe the audiences for the ads might be?
 - b. What messages do you think the ads are sending?
 - c. What do you think the nature of the relationship is between or among the people in the ads?
 - d. What relationship(s) do you see between or among the people and the product or service being advertised?
 - e. How effective are the ads in influencing your own consumer decisions?
- III. Identify **topics** in this course that are relevant to the human behaviors in your advertisements and explain how they are relevant. This is your social science evidence for your observations. For instance, what ideas and people have you studied so far that apply to your observations?
- IV. Taking all of your observations and objective conclusions about human behavior in your advertisements into account, assume the role of a social scientist. What **question** would you ask about the advertisements that you, as a social scientist, could seek to answer? What observations and objective conclusions lead you to this question?



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Supporting Work and Resources

The observation journal is due in Learning Block 4-3. Throughout Theme 2, there are three opportunities to work directly on different elements of the observation journal.

1. In learning block 2-4, you submitted your comparison template. You will use this to create your observation journal.
2. In learning block 3-2, you participated in a discussion using the ads you chose in support of your summative work. You can use your answers from this discussion when completing your observation journal.
3. In learning block 4-3, you will work to finalize your observation journal and submit it to your instructor for grading. This learning block also includes an [Observation Journal Checklist](#) that you can use to ensure you have met all the requirements of this project. You can also review the [Observation Journal Exemplar](#) for guidance in how to complete this assignment. Your instructor is available to provide guidance and answer any questions you may have as you work to finalize your observation journal.

Rubric

Guidelines for Submission: This submission will contain your completed observation journal. Submit your observation journal as a Microsoft Word document.

Critical Elements	Exemplary (100%)	Proficient (85%)	Needs Improvement (55%)	Not Evident (0%)	Value
Chose	Meets “Proficient” criteria and details demonstrate insight into the connection between the social scientific and the personal	Explains why advertisements were chosen for social scientific and personal study	Explains why advertisements were chosen, but social scientific and personal connections are overly generalized	Does not explain why advertisements were chosen	23.75
Assumptions and Observations	Meets “Proficient” criteria and details demonstrate a mature awareness of human interactions and behaviors	Explains the assumptions and observations about human interactions and behaviors made about the ads	Explains the assumptions and observations about human interactions and behaviors made about the ads, but is overly generalized	Does not explain the assumptions and observations about human interactions and behaviors made about the ads	23.75
Topics	Meets “Proficient” criteria and connection between topics and ads shows a strong grasp of the social science evidence	Explains how topics from the course are relevant to the human behaviors in the ads	Explains how topics from the course are relevant to the human behaviors in the ads, but is overly generalized or has inaccuracies	Does not explain how topics from the course are relevant to the human behaviors in the ads	23.75

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Question	Meets “Proficient” criteria and connections between question, observations, and conclusions demonstrate insight into social scientific study	Poses a question a social scientist could seek to answer, supported by observations and conclusions about human behavior in the ads	Poses a question a social scientist could seek to answer, but lacks support from observations and conclusion about human behavior in the ads or is overly generalized	Does not pose a question a social scientist could seek to answer	23.75
Articulation of Response	Submission is free of errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, and organization and is presented in a professional and easy-to-read format	Submission has no major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization	Submission has major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that negatively impact readability and articulation of main ideas	Submission has critical errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that prevent understanding of ideas	5
Total					100%



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SCS 100 Theme 2: Project 2 Exemplar

Article Choice

I chose the advertisements that I did because I was interested in how they related gender to food. Each advertisement is marketing a certain food: gelato, candy bars, or ice cream. Each advertisement depicts either females alone or females in specific gender roles. I was also intrigued by the advertisements because I am female and I enjoy eating chocolate. When I have had a hard day I enjoy coming home and indulging in dessert to comfort myself. Some of the advertisements portray women as having a desire for sweets, which made me question my own tendency to desire sweet foods after a hard day at work.

Assumptions and Observations

Audience. Each advertisement has a specific audience to which it appeals. Each advertisement depicts mostly white actors and actresses. The intended audience of these advertisements are people who use food as reward. The audience for these advertisements would most likely be people from a westernized civilization who have excess food to use for pleasure or reward. For example, people who live in countries where there is not easy access to plentiful amounts of food would not have the same relationship to food as the people depicted in these advertisements. There are other aspects of the advertisements that make me think the intended audience is white and westernized. For example, the marriage in the Milky Way advertisement appears to be a traditional Christian wedding, based on the presence of a priest and the decoration of the church. The Freddo Ice Cream advertisement depicts children, all of them white, and represents a democracy in which people are elected to government positions. The Celebration advertisement is also showing individuals—all of whom are also white—who again are using food as a way of celebrating. Finally, the Antonio Federici advertisement is depicting a white nun being sinful by eating chocolate, which again seems to be portraying a relationship between indulgence and food. I believe the relationship of food as indulgence is a more westernized and privileged notion. Based on my observations, I believe the intended audience for most of these advertisements are middle-class, white women.

Message. The message the advertisements are sending all seem to be about the relationship between people and food. For the Federici advertisement, the message is that women use rich, sweet food for indulgence and as a “guilty pleasure.” The advertisement even seems to relate the indulgence of this sweet food with sin by showing a nun who is pregnant. The Freddo Ice Cream advertisement is also showing a relationship between food and people. In this advertisement, I observed that the girls are the ones serving food, while the boy is the one running for office. This advertisement seems to portray a stereotype of women serving men. It also is showing a relationship between women being the ones to handle the serving and maybe even the preparation of food. The Celebration advertisement’s message again appears to show a relationship between women celebrating with food. The ad even shows the girls celebrating other’s misfortune, thereby seeming to portray females as selfish. The Milky Way advertisement also depicts a woman as being selfish by indulging in chocolate, which makes her late for her own wedding. A common message is showing gender stereotypes as they relate to women and food.

Relationship between people. I believe that in most of these advertisements, the most important relationship depicted between people is the relationship between sinful females and others. For example, in the Antonio Federici advertisement, one thinks of an innocent nun who has sinned. Females are supposed to be innocent and this advertisement taps into the hidden desires of females. I believe these advertisements also show women as weak compared to their desires; for example, the women in the Celebration advertisement care only about winning and do not care about their injured competitor. Although the Freddo Ice Cream advertisement depicts a different type of gender stereotype, it is still important. The Freddo advertisement shows females serving males and acting in less important or secondary roles. The relationship between genders is the most important relationship I observe in these advertisements.

Relationship with product. In each of the advertisements, the relationship that I chose to focus on is the relationship between women and food. The Freddo Ice Cream advertisement shows females in the traditional secondary role of serving and preparing food, while the male is in the primary role of running for office. The other three advertisements all portray women as being selfish and indulgent when they engage in eating sweet food. The relationship is that a woman cannot help herself and indulges in the guilty pleasure of a sweet food.

Effectiveness. For me, the least effective advertisement is the Celebration advertisement, because it depicts females acting in an obviously selfish way by showing them celebrating when their competitor is injured. The Milky Way advertisement also shows a woman acting selfishly, but the ad does it in a less obvious way; the consequence of her selfish behavior is not celebrating another person getting hurt, but that people have to wait for her wedding. Therefore, the Milky Way advertisement is more effective than the Celebration advertisement. I also believe the obviousness of the message impacts the effectiveness of the Antonio Federici advertisement, because if the nun were not pregnant, the message of indulging and being sinful would be less obvious, and would therefore be more effective for me. Finally, the Freddo Ice Cream advertisement very obviously depicts stereotypical gender roles; for me, it is hard to look past that and focus on the product. Overall, the advertisements that make a less obvious attempt at getting their message across seem to be the most effective.

Social Science Evidence

To back up my observations about the relationship between women and food, which in these advertisements I observed to represent gender stereotypes of women in servile roles and as being weak and unable to resist their desires, I looked for evidence within the course so far. My interest in the portrayal of the women in these advertisements seems to fit both within the psychological and sociological fields. In Theme 1, we learned that gender stereotypes can be examined through the idea of the “social construction” of these topics, meaning that society creates and reinforces the category of gender. In Theme 1, we learned that psychology is the study of the mind and behavior (American Psychological Association, n.d.) and even though gender roles may be socially constructed, the behavior of engaging in those gender roles is very interesting to me.

We learned about perception in Theme 2. Perception plays a big role in these advertisements because it helps to explain why we perceive what we do from these advertisements. The halo effect is described as “a bias in which our overall impression of a person (a figurative halo)

colors our judgments of that person's character" (Baumann Foundation, 2013). The halo effect comes into play in multiple advertisements. For example, in the Antonio Federici advertisement, we see a nun who has sinned and we start to make assumptions about all the other choices in her life. We also do this with the Celebration and Milky Way advertisements. The depiction of females choosing to indulge within the advertisements leaves the audience making assumptions about the females' overall weaknesses and tendency to give into their desires. Confirmation bias can also be used to describe why we perceive what we do from these advertisements. Confirmation bias is described as seeking and/or interpreting evidence in a way that is congruent with one's existing beliefs or expectations (Nickerson, 1998). Gender stereotypes already exist; therefore, we are more likely to interpret the advertisements in line with the gender stereotypes with which we are familiar. According to confirmation bias, we see the Freddo Ice Cream advertisement as confirming societal gender stereotypes that women are secondary to men. Even though these cognitive biases happen automatically, we learned in Theme 2 that they influence our opinions and emotions about situations.

Question

The Theme 1 overview describes one of the big questions in psychology as "What motivates individuals to act in certain ways?" I used this question, along with the evidence about cognitive biases, to help inform my own question about gender stereotypes. I am also using my own experiences because in my household I do more of the cleaning, while my husband does the lawn work. These behaviors fit into stereotypical gender roles of women doing more of the cleaning and cooking and men doing more of the yard work. Although my experience is different than the gender stereotypes portrayed in the advertisements, these behaviors still fit into the theme of gender stereotypes. I created a question a social scientist might ask using both the information from the course and my own experiences. Based on this information, my social science question is: How do cognitive biases influence our behaviors to adhere to gender stereotypes?

References

- American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *Definition of psychology*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/about/>
- The Baumann Foundation. (2013). *The halo effect: Why angels and devils walk the earth*. Retrieved from <http://www.beinghuman.org/article/halo-effect>
- Nickerson, R. S. (1998). Confirmation bias: A ubiquitous phenomenon in many guises. *Review of General Psychology*, 2(2), 175–220.