

Femvertising utilization through avatars aiming to captivating the public adhering feminism

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Resumo

A pesquisa se propõe a investigar como as empresas utilizam o *femvertising* através de personagens e avatares para cativar o público com aderência ao feminismo. Nesse sentido, a análise foi realizada sobre o avatar Nat da marca Natura. A metodologia utilizada foi a etnografia virtual, por meio da qual são analisadas as informações disponíveis em sites web. O artigo é inovador ao identificar a aplicação do *femvertising* em avatares. Os principais resultados indicam que para gerar efeitos positivos, o avatar Nat precisou incorporar traços de um biotipo de mulher subalterno na sociedade brasileira, bem como adotar discursos alinhados com práticas ambientalmente corretas, apoiadora da proteção animal, da luta das mulheres frente ao sexismo e antirracismo. Esse avatar é uma forma tecnológica adotada pela marca para se comunicar com o público, dando personalidade e capacidade de interação via Twitter. As postagens reforçam essa personalidade e os interesses de um público interessado em ver as pautas mencionadas, como se pode notar em *hashtags* como #PeloSonhoDeTodas e 'Isoladas sim, sozinhas não', usadas para impulsionar o engajamento da publicidade nas redes sociais ao estimular a participação do público. O termo *femvertising* é a estratégia utilizada por empresas e agências de publicidade para exportar campanhas com ênfase no empoderamento das mulheres, representadas em situações que expressam autonomia e são contra estereótipos e imposições criadas socialmente. Evidencia a relevância atual do empoderamento das mulheres e de que a comunicação deve prever e representar os anseios desse público-alvo.

Palavras-chave: *femvertising; Natura; avatar.*

The use of femvertising through avatars to captivate the public with adherence to feminism

Abstract

This research aims to investigate how companies use femvertising through characters and avatars to captivate their public in adhering to feminism. In this regard, we carried out data analysis on Nat, the Natura brand avatar. The employed methodology was virtual ethnography, through which information available on websites was analyzed. This paper has its innovative value in identifying the application of femvertising in avatars. The main results indicated that, to generate positive effects, the Nat avatar should: incorporate biotype traits of a subordinate women in Brazilian society; adopt a discourse aligned with environmentally correct practices; support animal protection, as well the struggle of women against sexism and racism. The avatar is a technological tool adopted by the brand to communicate with its public, giving it personality and the ability to interact via Twitter. Her posts reinforce this personality and the concerns of her audience, which is interested in the aforementioned guidelines. This can be seen in *hashtags* such as #ForEveryoneDreams and 'Isolated yes, alone no', used to boost advertising engagement on social media by stimulating public's participation. *Femvertising is a strategy is used by companies and advertising agencies to expose campaigns with a supposed emphasis on women's empowerment, represented in situations in which they gain prominence and autonomy in the face of stereotypes socially created and imposed. Evidencing the current relevance of women's empowerment and that communication should predict and represent the aspirations of this target audience.*

Keywords: *femvertising; Natura; avatar.*

1 INTRODUÇÃO

Tied to the deployment of the insertion of societies in the digital environment, subjects formerly implicit, marginated or even ignored became presently a popular agenda broadly disseminated, constituting feminism one of those agendas. This is highlighted, as well promoted, affecting the consumption of goods and services on the media, which has the potential to generate perceptions in consumers influencing their acquisitions of products that are compatible with the ideology and principles of this movement.

The strategy characterized as *femvertising* utilizes the relationship between marketing and some ideas considered as feminist, especially those that suggest empowerment. The assumption that certain brand pursues common interests with the social agenda establishes a linkage between it and consumers, earning their attention and preference, feeling satisfied in buying from companies which are aligned with their ideals.

Marketing takes benefit from the online environment as a tool for their promotional practices due the existing different ways possible for sharing and engaging in their advertising. Combining 3D technology and bots, avatar-person interactions have been noticed as effective in utilizing digital brand representatives with human-like features, representing their interests and interacting with the public, aiming to create self-identification during the purchasing process.

Therefore, Natura suggests adopting such marketing approach, utilizing the Nat Natura character for company's representation. Nevertheless, it is argued how such empowerment traits are presented in this avatar format, which tools promote this engagement and which dilemmas involve the employment of social agenda as an advertising strategy. In this regard, our research problem is expressed by the following question: how companies utilize *femvertising* presenting characters and avatars to commit their public to feminism? Thus, our general aim is to analyze and discuss how companies utilize *femvertising* presenting characters and avatars aiming to commit their public to feminism.

As a result of a search carried out at Scielo.org database, utilizing the keyword 'femvertising', two papers under this subject have been retrieved. Considering such results, we decided search once more, using the keywords 'woman' and 'advertising', resulting in the retrieval of 12 texts, all papers published between 1999 and 2020, with the greatest production being concentrated in 2017. However, not all the retrieved papers effectively discuss women's empowerment approach in advertisements. By the papers titles it was possible to verify that many of them only dealt with women in advertising, regarding the representation of the female figure in this universe of exhibition of ideas and images. It is understood that the quantities of retrieved papers show that the topic of women in the advertising environment is still insufficient, leading to the need for more research, reflections and advances on this topic. Furthermore, it is necessary to consider that in other countries, such as England, discussion and practice have already advanced to the point where the reinforcement of gender stereotypes in advertisements is prohibited by law. The relevance of using characters and avatars as a promotional strategy for brands was also noticed. Nevertheless, presently, they must implement more behavioral functions to provide a more humanized service to customers, demonstrating interest in social issues, aiming for greater engagement and attention from their public. In this regard, robots, bots or avatars gain increasingly advanced features, considering that they need to carry out one of the most complex processes, communication, which is not always verbalized, as they are full of meaning, which is interpreted as they interact with humans. Gestures, mannerisms and other traits that can be observed in a person are fundamental to facilitate communication, attracting communication's recipient attention, strengthening ties with them. In this regard, making use of avatars "[...] and virtual worlds in work environments and in the context of companies is very relevant concerning to relationships between company and consumer, company and employees and even between competitors" (Timeni ; Souto, 2019, p. 1581). Furthermore, they constitute a rich form of communication (Gorry, 2010 *apud* Timeni; Souto, 2019, p. 1576) and are capable of create emotional and social connections (Reeves; Read, 2009 *apud* Timeni; Souto, 2019, p. 1576).

An avatar can be considered as "an image that represents you in online games, chat rooms, etc. and that you can move around the screen" (Cambridge, 2021), while a robot is understood to be "a machine controlled by a computer that can move and do other things that people can do" (Cambridge, 2021).

Our current experience with information and communication technologies in this period of remote work between 2020 and 2021, such as avatars, made it possible to evaluate and test what is most effective for communication between employees and customers. From this intense technology usage emerge new research and funding, focused on holograms usage in video calls, whose purpose is to further improve interaction with people (Wiederhold, 2021).

Avatars, according to Timeni and Souto (2019, p. 1573), have gained space in the business world. These authors also cite Kohler, Matzler and Füller (2009) to explain that avatars are used to create value and transfer it to the real world, for example, when its use is directed towards creating virtual products that can later be transferred to the real world.

In this concern, avatars receive many definitions, understanding that it is a representation that brings together desirable characteristics attributed to a character, which can represent the conceptions, ideas and cultural traits of an individual or legal entity. They are promoters and personifiers of ideas, they can interact with the public and therefore end up being a means of propagating and promoting ideas. Thus, Timeni and Souto (2019, p. 1574) suggest that among the possible virtual environments in which an avatar can be found, there are forums, chats, online store support, social networks, among others.

The use of avatars, characters and mascots seeks to establish the brand's identity through a figure, which can be human, animal or inanimate object, which when viewed immediately refers the brand to something that represents it.

Soares and Manfroí (2013) present concepts about the use of photography in advertising, which has been improved through technological advances, offering tools to transform such figures into animated audiovisual productions,

[...] with the passing of the millennium, a new technology became present in mass communication: 3D modeling. Initially used only in cinematic mega-productions, it is currently used in business communication, especially in mascots (Soares; Manfroí, 2013, p. 583).

Some examples are characters such as Chester Chettah from Chettos, Tony the Tiger from Kellogg's cornflakes, 'Bunny' Coelho from Duracell and Franguinho from Sadia, who were created from an animal figure that gained human characteristics.

Figure 1 - Mascots of the brands Chettos, Kellogg's cornflakes, Duracell and Sadia.



Source: Prepared by the author based on the compilation of images obtained from: 1. Pinterest, (2021), 2. Site Propmark, (2021), 3. Site Mundo das Marcas, (2021), 4. Site Topbrands, (2021)¹.

¹ images available: 1) Pinterest, Chester Chettah. Available in: <https://br.pinterest.com/pin/374502525235370747/>. Accessed: 12 maio 2021. 2) Site Propmark "Minha história começou com a do Sucrilhos, não existe um sem o outro", diz Tony. Available: <https://propmark.com.br/serie-mascotes/minha-historia-comecou-com-a-do-sucrilhos-nao-existe-um-sem-o-outro-diz-tony/>. Accessed: 12 maio 2021. 3) Site Mundo das Marcas, Duracell. Available: <http://mundodasmarcas.blogspot.com/2006/05/duracell-trusted-everywhere.html>. Accessed: 12 maio 2021. 4)

Soares and Manfroí (2013, p. 583) state that one of the main reasons for using a mascot or interactive character is due to the ideal of humanizing the brand. For this to happen, it is necessary to awaken in the public a feeling of empathy through semiotic tools such as physical characteristics, features, speech, behavior, among others.

That said, not only brands aimed at children and young people employ the use of characters, avatars and mascots, which can be adapted according to the identity that the brand wishes to convey to captivate its target audience.

To carry out the research, virtual ethnography was adopted, necessary to carry out investigations in virtual social environments.

2 Theoretical background

Feminism deals with women's struggle for equality and social freedom in the political, economic, social and educational spheres, seeking to break with the sexist ideals of a society in which men maintain and impose their privileges. Assis (2018, p. 7) explains that feminism is

[...] a political and social movement that seeks to guarantee equal social rights between men and women and advocates for the autonomy of women and their emancipation in the sense of breaking the stigmas that women carry due to the patriarchal construction in that our country originated and continues.

The feminist movement needs to deconstruct concepts and practices arising from patriarchy, with debates, studies and dissemination of information aimed at eliminating the deep-rooted sexist culture. A movement that has been trying to overcome many barriers and has been gaining ground in the virtual environment.

Among the different demands, those linked to non-white women stand out. With greater support and repercussion at the beginning of the 20th century, the ideas that maintain that women are not equal in their struggles and privileges, recognize that race and class are differentiators in relations of domination and subordination (Caetano, 2017, p. 7). At this point, feminism becomes more aware, open and connected to other issues such as gender identity, sexual orientation, social inequality and racism.

Feminism encourages understanding about women's necessary autonomy regarding their bodies and their own desires, in matters such as marriage, intimate relationships and motherhood, however this struggle has proven to be justifiably divided.

Hooks (2019, p. 16) explains that “The feminist movement happens when groups of people come together around an organized strategy with the aim of combating patriarchy”, which does not mean that this movement has reached unanimity among groups of women. Quite the contrary, the differences between white and non-white women are still evident, generating very different points of view and demands. It is in this context that Hooks (2019, p.144) argues that “[...] as women are not fully organized and are daily manipulated by leading male groups that profit from sexism and female consumerism, we are still unable to exercise this power”. Furthermore, Hooks (2019) states that “As consumers, women have power, and, once organized, they would be able to use this power to improve women’s social status”. This allegation provides ground for enhancing women's power, at least as consumers, and intensifying their participation in this sphere of consumption, demanding special attention from companies, a situation that has intense repercussions in the virtual environment.

2.1 Feminism, social networks and femvertising

The media influence the dissemination of social movements and receive a direct contribution from the access and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) by the population, facilitating the spread of ideas, concepts, trends and perceptions in different groups on social networks. The internet is one of the ways to establish a connection with people at a distance, allowing greater interaction and more connection.

Thus, as the use of social networks gradually increased, the dynamics in the virtual environment provided a space for debate, dissemination and access to information for a portion of the world's population.

That said, social movements no longer only occupy the physical world, but also different online spaces in which they enhance and expand a network of support for different causes. Langner, Zuliani and Mendonça (2015, p. 6) explain that the feminist movement seeks “[...] through the dissemination of its ideals through internet tools, women’s freedom in relation to the standards established by society”.

Seabra (2017, p. 14) explains that cultural changes occurred due to the availability of information that would possibly not be disseminated by traditional media. Through the internet it is possible to produce and disseminate content with ease and customization feasibility, as well as the creation of blogs, digital platforms and online communities have become tools in the propagation of feminism on social networks such as Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr and Facebook.

For example, the use of hashtags is a tool used by feminist demonstrations on social media in recent years. Through this algorithm, they presented a way to promote certain debates in digital media, sharing stories and exposing cases of violence and harassment against women, following the example of campaigns used in Brazil that also brought together women from all over the world through tags such as #MeuAmigoSecreto and #FirstHarassment (Gelain; Bittencourt, 2018, p. 43).

Feminism is a process of constant deconstruction of rooted behaviors, in a way benefited by the internet, as shared content transforms and is added to new information at all times, with a reach that it could never have without access to the internet. A fertile field for cyberfeminism, a place in which people who direct their content in the digital environment through profiles focused on feminism, not only use their own personal experiences and assumptions to base their arguments, but also seek to read, study and research the subjects that are on the agenda in the posts, with the aim of responsibly and honestly producing materials that inform and help other women. That is, cyberfeminism promotes the organization of the production and dissemination of information about the different agendas of feminism. Sousa and Araújo (2018, p. 4) argue that:

Through cyberactivism, it is possible for girls and women who are unaware of women's rights to learn about, get closer to and become aware of the importance of feminism. It becomes an instrument that encourages critical thinking, promoting positions that influence both personal life and society.

In this way, such content makes up a network of information sources made available to women of various ages, who can learn about these issues, facilitating the breakdown of reproduction and acceptance of sexist ideals, as well as understanding the originators of oppressive situations.

Regarding the quote from Sousa and Araújo (2018), it can be considered that critical thinking could influence the sphere of consumption of goods and services, as it is the personal conviction situated in the minds of individuals not to consume brands that, in some way, benefit from or maintain links with any types of oppression or discrimination, choosing to

consume primarily from organizations that involve inclusion actions regarding social movements, as well as demonstrating support for them.

Thus, a large portion of consumers indirectly start to boycott brands that present, at some point, oppressive behavior both in internal corporate actions and in advertisements. For the business sector, then, there is a need to change the way of understanding the consumer, which, through the function of offering the public the supply of their needs, develops Femvertising.

This approach arises from the need to cover potential consumers who are connected and identify with the feminist movement, even if at a less profound level of knowledge of the cause's ideals, but who are still attracted by the idealization of female empowerment.

Femvertising is the combination of the word's feminism and advertising, and therefore aims to involve concepts from the feminist movement in the promotion of goods and services (Heck; Nunes, 2016). This strategy is used by companies and advertising agencies to address the female universe through campaigns with an emphasis on women's empowerment, whose advertisements

[...] they try to build a relationship with consumers (women) through representations of "real" and "ordinary" girls and women, where the emphasis is on their personal experiences (Gelain; Bittencourt, 2018, p. 46).

The strategy focuses on establishing a bond with the female public, using representations of women with real bodies and experiences, something that advertising, until then, did not express while only proposing idealizations of perfection to be achieved by women.

Femvertising was disseminated by Samantha Skey at Advertising Week in 2014, an event in which professionals discussed the role of advertising in disseminating negative stereotypes regarding the female gender, also pointing out how they could put empowerment on the agenda (Heck; Nunes, 2016, p. 7).

For Hamlin and Peters (2018, p. 170) “[...] in the case of femvertising, female empowerment is explicitly presented as the fundamental value around which the image of the product or brand is structured”, whose expression refers to power women, represented in situations in which they take the lead and gain a prominent place in their personal and professional lives, the way they dress, acceptance of their image and other areas that were restricted and controlled until then.

Gelain and Bittencourt (2018, p. 46) establish that the first campaign focusing on empowerment took place in 1929, when Edward Bernays, one of the pioneers in the field of public relations and advertising, promoted smoking among women after realizing that it was a consumption base not explored until that moment. The authors further demonstrate that,

[...] since femvertising is motivated to promote gender equality in its campaigns, it can be considered feminist. However, these companies also explicitly influence the consumption of advertised products, which contradicts some certainties held by feminist researchers that women's empowerment is not only an economic issue and of choosing to buy one thing or another, but also of the existence and application of policies, conduct and social practices.

That said, Hamlin and Peters (2018, p. 171-176) present “[...] commodity feminism”, characterized as a partnership between feminism and advertising. Furthermore, it highlights part of the history between the suffrage movement and the history of subsequent feminism and brings as an example the growing financial autonomy of women, a result of their massive entry into the job market in the 20th century, as one of the agents that helped in the change of advertising aimed at the female public, whose advertisements began to be planned in such a way that they used articles that captivated this public.

The diffusion of digital media and digital activism contribute as crucial components for advertisements worked from the perspective of femvertising and for them to become viral, resulting in this marketing strategy being disseminated by brands from different segments (Heck; Nunes, 2016, p. 9).

For Bayone and Burrowes (2019, p. 26), feminist concepts have become an advertising commodity, that is, they are being used at different levels as a means to gain public attention and improve the brand's image, as it is about address an issue that is being highly debated in social spheres.

However, it is worth highlighting that brand must understand that simply incorporating the feminist discourse of empowerment in advertising actions would not be enough, as there is a need to maintain congruence, that is, to follow social movements (Bayone; Burrowes, 2019, p. 26).

Therefore, brands that adopt this positioning must also impose practices that truly promote and support this ideal, by assigning actions in the work environment that are committed to inserting women in a place of equality, from hiring to promoting women in management positions. leadership and representation, career plans, fair salaries and others, providing consumers with the idea that buying from that brand will contribute to actions like this continuing to happen.

Heck and Nunes (2016, p. 6) maintain that “[...] it is evident most of the time that macho and sexist social conventions erroneously serve as the basis for many advertisements today, and femvertising practices come to counter these actions”.

This popularization of femvertising and approaches that encompass social agendas constitute an important guide for companies, acting as a thermometer in the production and dissemination of ideas through promotional tools that deal with empowerment, following the aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion. Notions increasingly incorporated by management and marketing practices.

Motta, Vieira, Duarte, Viana and Souza (2011) present a Marketing concept that establishes that

[...] in this scenario, the concept of social cause marketing emerges, different from charity, companies have taken on social causes as a way of differentiating themselves from their competitors and enhancing their image in society. It shows that the product does something for everyone's well-being.

This idea of being beneficial to everyone, despite being unknown to many, is also defended by feminism, as explained by Hooks (2019, p. 176) “It is essential for the feminist fight to end violence against women that this fight is seen as part of a larger movement to end violence in general.”

Social cause marketing stipulates that companies value their brands through the dissemination of ideas that reinforce their social or environmental contribution (Motta et al, 2011).

In this way, it is understood that new forms of relationship between organizations and consumers are developing and seeking their bases in social demands themselves.

3 Methodological procedures

It is defined that this research is qualitative. Thus, to establish a theoretical basis, bibliographical research was used, creating a theoretical framework, used to support the analysis and inferences presented.

That said, it was also necessary to use virtual ethnographic research in order to analyze how the Nat Natura avatar is presented in this digital medium. This research method studies social practices on the internet and the feedback they generate on participants, allowing for an analysis of the relationships established in these virtual spaces where communities and groups for exchanging ideas are created (Mercado, 2012). However, criticism of the method is frequent, in a way that Santos and Gomes (2013, p. 5) warn that

[...] the notion of space and, consequently, “field”, cannot be taken in its objective and material perspective. Rather, it must be conceived as instances frequented by

personas who symbolically and virtually construct their locations and establish their delimitations.

In this way, the method is based on investigating a set of communication objects within the internet, such as blogs and social networking sites, based on specific procedures, listed by Santos and Gomes (2013, p. 7), as constituting a “[...] combination of observation and participation, a long period of engagement in the studied community that implies immersion in the environment”.

Therefore, the Natura website was analyzed, which has a large volume of content about the character and his creation process, personal presentation and objective, helping to understand the motivations in creating the physical appearance and personality characteristics and preferences incorporated into the character. Natura Brasil's Twitter social network was also observed, a site where the strategy is directly applied, used as a direct channel for interaction between the character Nat and the public.

Thus, the searches for communicational objects and representative of the way of “thinking and reacting” occurred on the brand's Twitter, seeking in the analysis to demonstrate alignment with what was exposed in theory regarding what femvertising proposes and the noticeable themes that are addressed in order to generate engagement and participation from online users.

The application of the virtual ethnography method was carried out both in the search and in the selection of communications that could characterize proximity to what is understood as femvertising.

4 Results and analysis: femvertising implemented in avatars and characters

Aiming to humanize the brand and add technological innovation, it is observed that Femvertising has been implemented by companies such as Natura. This has a 3D female character, with empowering traits, which in addition to being the brand's virtual representative is also used in the customer support and service process.

Natura is a Brazilian cosmetics brand founded in 1969 by Luiz Seabra, who in 2016 opened stores in several regions of Brazil and, the first of them, in New York. Between 2016 and 2020 he created the Natura & Co group, a union of Natura, Aesop and The Body Shop, a recently acquired British cosmetics brand, combining with the acquisition of Avon, he created the fourth largest group in the world in the beauty segment².

The Nat Natura character had already been launched on Facebook in 2016, but only showed gift options for consumers to buy online. On November 26, 2018, Natura presented the character in a bot version (internet robot) on its official website³, consisting of the brand's virtual assistant, with the proposal to 'accelerate digitalization and humanize digital service with new features such as renegotiating debts, order status, payment, sending a duplicate bill, among other functions.

Regarding the creation of Nat, Natura's official website mentions that “[...] to define Nat's visual identity and main characteristics, a multidisciplinary team came together, including the areas of marketing, digital technology and, of course, the relationship with clients and Beauty Consultants”.

In addition to the marketing team, it is noted that the participation of consultants was present in this process, in order to obtain the evaluation of these women who also need to be

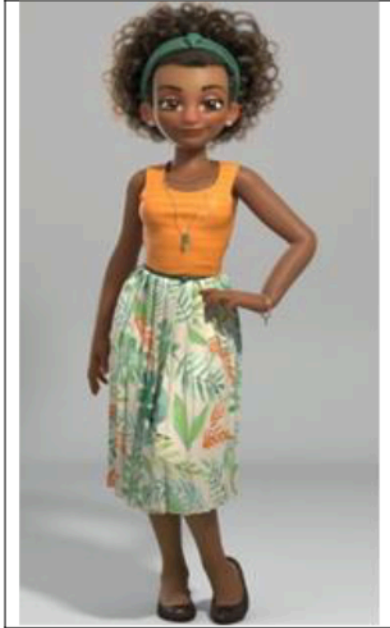
² Site Natura. História da marca. Available: https://www.natura.com.br/a-natura/nossa-historia?consultoria=cris_souza. Accessed: 20 abr. 2021.

³ Site Natura. Apresentação da Assistente Virtual. Available: <https://www.natura.com.br/blog/mais-natura/conheca-a-nat-a-assistente-virtual-da-natura> Accessed: 20 abr. 2021.

represented by the avatar. In this way, the beauty brand created the avatar with characteristics aligned with its organizational image, which needed to be inclusive, linked to a commitment to sustainability and environmental preservation, without forgetting the ingredient of female empowerment.

In this way, characterized as an adult, black woman with curly hair, having a Twitter profile to interact with the public, Nat Natura presents itself as 'Beauty Consultant, Digital Influencer, Spokesperson for Natura on Twitter, supporter of socio-environmental causes and “mother” of Murumuru'.

Figure 2 - Nat Natura's view



Source: Image obtained from an article on the Olhar Digital blog (2018)⁴.

In the biographical description of the profile, it is possible to observe the demonstration of support for the environmental cause, reinforcing the ideals that the brand conveys regarding the various actions in favor of the environment, as well as calling itself the mother of its pet cat, reinforcing empathy for the cause animal.

The company uses Twitter as the central environment to create a link between the public and the bot, which presents itself almost like a real influencer with interests, opinions and positions, constantly interacting with followers directly.

Being represented by a black woman, Natura implements this character in a strategic way, clearly aiming to draw attention to its capacity for inclusion and working with racial diversity naturally, demonstrating the inclusion of brown and black women in prominent positions, just as it is defended in internal practices regarding the team of consultants, models and other collaborators.

In view of this, posts against racism and in favor of the empowerment of black women are addressed as topics of interest to Nat on her profile, for example on Black Awareness Day, Latin American and Caribbean Women's Day, the Black Lives Matter movement, between others.

⁴ Site No Olhar digital. Nat, Assistente Virtual da Natura, ganha cara e novas funcionalidades. Available: <https://noolhardigital.com.br/2018/11/16/nat-assistente-virtual-da-natura-ganha-cara-e-novas-funcionalidades/> Accessed: 21 abr. 2021.

Figure 3 - Post about the Brazilian black conscientiousness day.



Source: Posts from Natura's Twitter page (2020)⁵.

Figure 4 - Posts about Latin American and Caribbean Women's Day



Source: Posts from Natura's Twitter page (2020)⁶.

With Femvertising in focus, Nat Natura has recurring posts about female empowerment, positively the naturalization of frizzy and curly hair, a characteristic in part of black and brown women, which, as Assis (2018) explains, was not socially accepted for a long time.

As an example, there is a post that shows the character before and after accepting her natural hair after the hair transition, a process in which the straightening of the strands is interrupted. This was one of the posts with the highest number of interactions on Nat's profile, with 182 thousand likes, demonstrating the public's strong identification with the proposal.

⁵ Nat Natura Twitter Page. Available: <https://twitter.com/naturabrofficial/status/1329771475579121665?s=19>. Accessed: 21 abr. 2021.

⁶ Nat Natura Twitter Page. Available: <https://twitter.com/naturabrofficial/status/1287009711624200192?s=19>. Accessed: 21 abr. 2021.

Figure 5 - Post before and after hair transition

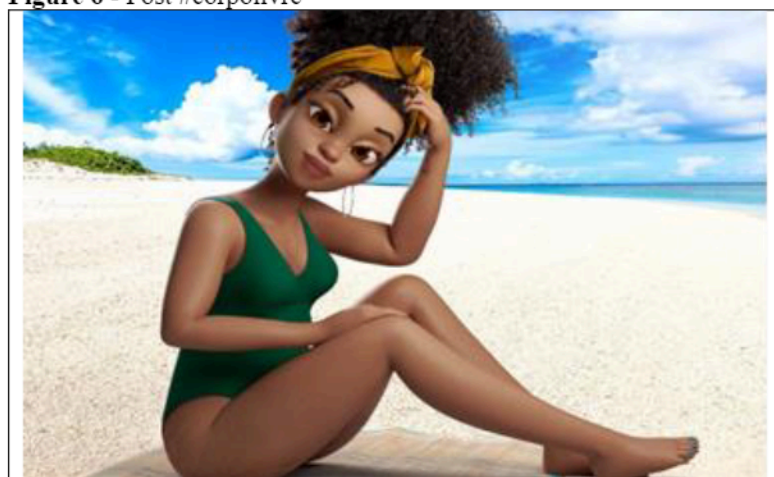


Source: Posts from Natura's Twitter page (2019)⁷.

This content provides women, who are going through or intend to go through this process, to find in this online space a place to share questions, experiences and recommendations, consequently leveraging the brand's engagement on social media.

In its posts, Natura uses captions focusing on breaking standards, that is, regarding what is considered an ideal body, highlighting characteristics such as cellulite in the character Nat, demonstrating the representation of real physical characteristics in this character that the brand chose to implement. This idea of acceptance and empowerment of a body that is more representative of reality allows us to understand the application of femvertising.

Figure 6 - Post #corpolivre



Source: Posts from Natura's Twitter page (2019)⁸.

⁷ Nat Natura Twitter Page. Available: <https://twitter.com/naturabrofficial/status/1206620857348640769?s=19>
Accessed: 21 abr. 2021.

⁸ Post: #corpolivre Nat Natura Twitter Page. Available:
<https://twitter.com/naturabrofficial/status/1210923356763017216>. Accessed: 21 abr. 2021.

Even though it was approached in a subtle way, it generated comments from the public that demonstrate identification with the proposal that this advertising image involves, as it is accompanied by the caption 'Putting on my new swimsuit and my usual body for the game.' Beach body is mine, yours and everyone else's! #free body'

Figure 7 - Comments on the post #corpolive



Source: Montage of comments taken from the post on Natura's Twitter page (2019).

Violence against women is addressed in the character's profile. The question 'Have you ever suffered or do you know any woman who suffers some type of violence?' was launched using the poll tool on Twitter, with responses confirming that 93.6% of respondents have suffered or are suffering violence.

Thus, the brand launched the campaign with the hashtag 'Isolated yes, alone no' and 'Even far away we are close', referring to the support for the fight against domestic violence during the social isolation caused by the pandemic in 2020, attaching to posts links on how to help women in these situations. This post reinforces the approach to a feminist theme. Violence can even be, according to Hooks (2019, p. 183), romantically equated with love. That is, confused with acts of love. Such posts seek to deconstruct this idea and reveal that violence is banal in our society, nurtured and preserved in the false association with love.

The constant use of hashtags can be seen in order to boost advertising engagement on social networks by encouraging public participation in these campaigns, as in the online space, this sharing becomes easier.

However, it is a fact that the brand does not use its Twitter network exclusively to make posts focusing on social issues, but also has recurring promotional content for its products, since it is a company aiming to sell its products. However, the presence of captions with expressions that refer to empowerment and self-care is noted.

Figure 8 - Posts about Natura products.



Source: Posts from Natura's Twitter page (2020)⁹.

This approach through the social network provides Natura with a direct channel of communication with its audience, with the brand page being a space for sharing and identifying ideas, providing a regular circle of followers, using the tools available on the network to promote products. and socio-environmental actions that it promotes.

The website is present as a space to apply in a more comprehensive way, subjects that appear more timidly on the brand's Twitter, for example the post #ChamadoDoOceano¹⁰ which addresses plastics found in the ocean. In this space, we would like to present a link to an article on how to help with this environmental issue. In this link directed to the Natura website, you will find an advertisement for Kaiak Oceano perfume and its benefits to the environment, announcing that part of its packaging uses plastic removed from the coast and part of it is made from recycled glass, using around 7 tons of recycled plastic.

In this way, the online sites used complement each other, helping to expose the elements necessary to capture the public's attention, providing a narrative of assimilation of ideas that is told by the brand.

Addressing the fact that Nat Natura is the brand's virtual assistant, the customer who needs the help of this bot to carry out pre- and post-sales service is familiar with the character's face, turning an otherwise bureaucratic process into something simpler. more familiar, as if it were being resolved with a friend.

Therefore, such actions result in this humanization of the brand, with the creation of a persona with characteristics and behaviors that represent the Natura customer, reinforcing the public's involvement and identification with the brand, whose image seeks to highlight organizational values.

⁹ Post: Twitter Natura. Available: <https://twitter.com/naturabrofficial/status/1283748901019951105?s=1002>. Accessed: 22 abr. 2021.

¹⁰ Post: #ChamadoDoOceano no Twitter Natura. Available: <https://twitter.com/naturabrofficial/status/1314188798507401216?s=08>. Accessed: 17 maio 2021.

5 Final considerations

This article presents concepts about femvertising, discussing how digital networks helped in the dissemination of the feminist agenda and how this ends up being a source of ideas for companies to attract supporters, transforming them into consumers. Concomitant to this, there is an increase in the technological use of 3D characters (avatars and interactive bots) that represent brands, aiming at humanizing and greater representation of their image in the market through characteristics built to please the target audience.

The Natura brand presents itself implementing this femvertising strategy, as it uses a focus on women's empowerment in its advertisements by using a bot, characterized as Nat Natura, which is used as a virtual assistant and digital influencer on the company's Twitter social network. brand.

Through the analysis of public interactions in Natura's posts, we observed the feedback that this strategy provided to the company and the return to the brand's marketing image.

The main results indicate that, to generate positive effects, the Nat avatar needed to incorporate traits of a subaltern female biotype in Brazilian society, as well as adopt discourses aligned with environmentally correct practices, supportive of animal protection, women's struggle against sexism and anti-racist. This avatar is a technological form adopted by the brand to communicate with the public, giving personality and interaction capacity via Twitter. The posts reinforce this personality and the interests of an audience interested in seeing the topics mentioned, as can be seen in hashtags such as #PeloSonhoDeTodas and 'Isoladas sim, solas não', used to boost advertising engagement on social media by encouraging participation of the public. Finally, the empowerment of women, subordinate figures in Brazilian society, is asserted through a fictitious spokesperson, endowed with the ability to communicate and represent certain desires, of course restricted, to the context of commercial interests.

Therefore, the central research problem was to investigate how companies use femvertising through characters and avatars to captivate the public with adherence to feminism. Thus, a response to this problem, based on the information collected and the literature investigated, without forgetting that with the development of the research it was decided to carry out the investigation specifically in a single company, it is considered that the central purpose of The use of feminist ideals is to identify the consumer with the image that is being displayed by the brand, placing themselves in a position of supporter of the cause and offering a humanized side to the public by encouraging socially active issues within advertising.

However, it requires care to implement this type of proposal, since it is essential that the brand is level in terms of objectives in multiple organizational spheres in order to support this image, as illegitimate behavior, which diverges from what is shown in advertisements, may lead to the interpretation that the brand is using a significant social agenda only in an external and commercial way, aiming for profit and engagement through those who are captivated by it. Possible risks could result in what is currently called 'cancellation', which would be the term popularly used in the digital environment to verbalize the boycott of the brand, products and personnel involved in it.

In summary, to be successful in using an advertising strategy based on social agendas, one must deeply understand the implications and meanings of these agendas for different audiences and how they will react. Furthermore, parameters must be adopted that stipulate how best to approach such issues, as the risks involved are high, as the public may repudiate certain ideas. However, when executed assertively, it results in the achievement of a solid image in the market, as when the public takes ownership of the idea, recognizing it as part of its context, it develops empathy towards the avatar and "their" thoughts and behaviors. expressed.

Finally, we believe it is relevant to indicate other possible research problems that could be investigated, such as: are the characteristics of these femvertising avatars based on any specific feminist approach? Do these avatars have similarities in their planned “personality traits”? What are the feminist public's opinions on these avatar traits? Do they really suggest empowerment? What ideas of empowerment are not noticed in the avatars' behavior? What criticism does femvertising receive in Management literature? Who are the Brazilian theorists who carry out research and discussions on the topic? What are the areas that are producing the most on the topic? How is the Ministry of Women¹¹, established by the Federal Government starting in 2023, treating or using femvertising to seek rapport with the public? What are the differences in the literature on femvertising between Brazil and other countries, such as those in Latin America? These and other problems were not addressed and deserve academic attention, because the topic involves not only knowing something that is being used by the market to approach the consumer public, but also, it deals with an approach that can be used, for example, by governments to help educate the population about violence, especially violence directed at women at different stages of their lives.

Therefore, this is research whose extension seems more than necessary, either due to the growth of this strategy by companies, or because it is becoming yet another marketing strategy that includes a humanized, but profitable, notion.

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