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Men, women and T.V. Ads: The representation of men and women in the advertisements of Pakistani electronic media

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Advertising is today an inescapable part of people's social settings. As such it is not surprising that the medium seeks to define women in relation to men, whilst the men are defined in relation to their work, their creativity or their play. Media images have circumscribed woman's body, mind and soul to serve male goals. The commercialization of media has been largely responsible for stereotyping women and moreover it has done immense harm to the image of women within society. This article the nature and the standards of advertising regarding the portrayal of women and is based upon the findings of a six month long data collection and subsequent data analysis of 150 commercials aired over different Pakistani T.V channels. Results reveal that the advertising is affecting the women in three ways: body image, sexuality and consumer spending habits.

Key words: Advertisement, women, Pakistani T.V. channels, portrayal, commercials, products.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a form of communication that typically attempts to persuade potential customers to purchase or to consume more of a particular brand of product or service.

Advertisements tend to communicate the idea that appearance is all-important and they teach us to be self-conscious about how we look. When we grow up surrounded by ads, intense self-scrutiny may seem normal. Negative feelings about oneself, whether related to appearance or anything else, can be followed by lower self-esteem. Advertisements tend to communicate the idea that appearance is all-important and it teaches us to be self-conscious about how we look. When we grow up surrounded by ads, intense self-scrutiny may seem normal. Negative feelings about oneself, whether related to appearance or anything else, can be followed by lower self-esteem (Furnham et al., 1998).

"Advertising in the modern age has established itself as the most important selling media" (Khalid, 1990).

"Research suggests that exposure to gender role stereotypes in advertising often influences gender-stereotyped attitudes" (Singorielli, 1989).

The research at hand examines the temperament of appearance of women in the advertisements that whether their portrayal is according to the cultural values and norms and how stereotypical portrayals of Pakistani women in media advertisements significantly influence perceptions of Pakistani people in interpersonal contexts.

Countless ads have portrayed women as passive, deferential, unintelligent, shy, dreamy, gentle, likely to be manipulated, helpless, and with body language depicting psychological withdrawal, submissiveness and supplication (Browne, 1998). Men, on the other hand, have been portrayed as constructive, powerful, autonomous, achieving, and their body language denoted power, control and dominance (Browne, 1998). Ortner (1974) described that female role stereotyping in advertising exists in every culture. McArthur and Resko's (1975) "watershed study" found U.S. support for Ortner's assertion by comparing television advertising's portrayals of men and women in relation to their credibility basis, role, location, arguments, rewards for using the product, punishments for not using the product, and product types

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(Furnham and Thomson, 1999). The statements made about female stereotyping in Asia give further reason to believe that Ortner's claim holds true in the region. In a report to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Tiongson (1999) stated that, in spite of the diversity in the political, economic and cultural systems in Asia, the Asian media's stereotypes of women have been "characteristically consistent" across the region. Tiongson asserted that women are portrayed as "victims, subservient, dependent, nurturing, selfless, sacrificing mother and wife, heterosexual, sex object, prostitute, mistress."

A stereotype is a view or a characterization of a person or a group of persons based upon narrow and frequently incorrect assumptions. Stereotypes are used by those who cannot or will not take the time to notice what a person is really like. They are particularly common in media because they are easier to create. Audiences and media production personnel both respond to them (Femiano and Nickerson, 2000).

Virtually all groups of people suffer from stereotyping and men are no exception. Stereotypes are powerful because they affect our expectations of what men should and should not be like. They are damaging because they narrow our notions of what men can be and do. They affect women's expectations of men in relationships and men's expectations of other men in work settings or in friendships. Media stereotypes have extra impact because they create images based on these assumptions, helping to shape men's own views about how they should act and how successful they are as men.

Sexual stereotyping begins early in men's lives. Boys learn what it means to be a man from family and peers. These ideas about approved behaviors and modes of thought are focused and supported by media messages. In fact, in his analysis of gender in advertising, author and University of North Texas professor Steve Craig argues that women tend to be presented as "rewards" for men who choose the right product. He describes such commercials as "narratives of playful escapades away from home and family." They operate, he says, at the level of fantasy presenting idealized portrayals of men and women. When he focused specifically on beer commercials, Craig found that the men were invariably "virile, slim and white" and the women always "eager for male companionship."

Statement of the problem

For decades women have been portrayed as housewives, dependent on men and attractive objects in advertising (Craig, 1992). The woman is used as a body rather than somebody. This article analyzes the representation of men and women in Pakistani advertisements of electronic media.

Objectives and significance of the study

Tiongson (1999) stated that if indeed there has been any change in media portrayals during the 1990s that might reflect this societal change, it may be found in the current trend "to project women as "liberated", young, upward and mobile professionals who remain devoted to their reproductive duties and roles." In spite of societal changes in the status and roles of women over time, gender role research indicates that female stereotyping persists. These modifications and new trends in the field of advertising has made the commercials significant for the people from different aspects of life. The commercials perform the function of making the attitudes of the viewers towards certain brands of products as well as the models presenting the message of the advertisement. The change in certain trends of advertising has also changed the standards of thinking towards females and their roles and status as well. This study will explore the trends of female portrayals in the advertisements that whether these portrayals are in accordance with our religious and social values? The outcomes of this research can be used to establish the standards whether the images of women in the advertisements are traditional and enlightening in nature or are the women being used as a tool for the promotion of commercial products?

The portrayal of women in print media is quite degrading more often than not depicting her as commercial commodity. Media does not provide a balanced portrayal of women's diverse lives and their contributions to society in a changing world, often reinforcing stereotyped image of woman and their roles in the society. Magazines are portraying the woman as sex objects, consumers and slaves (Anonymous). Media is not providing the balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society" (Anusha, 2008). "The women are portrayed in advertisement only as an object of beauty and sex by high lighting certain parts of their body, and this fake image of woman persuades other women in society to buy certain beauty products" (Kilbourne, 1999). The women have been portrayed in media as men would like to see them- beautiful creatures, submissive mothers, efficient house keepers. Women are viewed as "things", objects of male sexual desire, and/or part of the merchandise rather than people (Barbara, 2005). Body exposure and frequency of these ads have increased at an alarming rate over time. Fashion photography has incorporated blatantly sexual poses from pornographic publications that include sexual cues, such as closed eyes, open mouth, legs spread to reveal the genital area, and nudity or semi nudity, particularly in the areas of breast and genitals (Ferguson, 2005).

According to Rasul (2000) women models are used as the item for promotion of selling of certain products. Further analysis of the advertisements reveals that the gender is being used in stereotypical way of portrayal,

largely as their issues of male gaze and womanliness. Therefore the ads demonstrate females as sex objects, obsessed with beauty ideas and appearance. The advertisements often contain subtle clues about gender role and may operate as socializing agents on sexual levels. The findings of Signorielli (1989) demonstrates that the exposure to gender role stereotype in advertising affects gender-stereotyped attitudes among the certain groups of the society creating different types of behaviors among them.

Moreover the portrayal of genders in the commercials also has affected the psychological appearances of the viewers. The portrayal regarding the perfect body of the models in advertisements is creating frustration in the minds of youth as they are following unhealthy ways for acquiring the body type of their own favorite celebrities, stated by Jones in 1991. The media portrayal of women as thin and tall is creating a desire among young girls and female viewers to attain the exact body presented by media. For this purpose they adopt unhealthy ways to attain the unrealistic image of beauty.

In few advertisements like the advertisements of cosmetics and cooking products, women are portrayed as the main characters while mostly they are portrayed in stereotypical roles by highlighting their body features and certain traditional roles like the advertisements which are going to communicate a new idea among the people. According to Harbin (2006) the average number of advertisements viewed by females is 400 to 600. These commercials have a strong impact on the psyche of female viewers as they try to maintain themselves according to the depiction of women given by these commercials. The females struggle to recreate the exact image portrayed by these advertisements.

The constant flow of images on media has great effect on masses. The impact of exposure to the thin-ideal media image on women affects self-esteem, body satisfaction, eating disorder symptoms, and level of internalization of the thin-ideal. College women were randomly exposed to photographs from popular magazines containing either thin-ideal images or neutral images. The findings show that exposure to thin-ideal magazine images increased body dissatisfaction, negative mood states, and eating disorder symptoms and decreased self-esteem, although it did not cause more internalization of the thin-ideal (Harrison, 1997). The researches regarding the impact of advertising on health conditions shows that the exposure to thin-ideal media images can create the disorders of eating patterns by causing body dissatisfaction, negative moods, and low self-esteem among women (Hawkins et al., 2004).

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses made are given as:

H₁: Pakistani electronic media is portraying women

against the cultural and social values in advertisements.

H₂: Women are being used excessively in the advertisements.

H₃: Media advertisements have enhanced glamour through attractive presentation of women in advertisements.

H₄: Portrayal of women in advertisements is creating frustration among female viewers.

H₅: Women are being used as decorative and entertaining element.

H₆: A woman's bodily charm is used to promote ads concerning physical fitness products, cosmetics and those that add to appearance of the body.

H₇: Young female models are treated by the advertisers as the important components in the advertisements.

METHODOLOGY

The present study focuses on the advertisements of the electronic media. The method used to answer the questions was content analysis.

Content analysis can be defined as a research design which examines the information, or content, in written or symbolic material. First of all the researcher points out a body of material for analysis and then formulates a system for recording specific information about it. The system might include counting how often certain words or themes occur. Content analysis is used for exploratory and explanatory research but is most often used in descriptive research" (Krippendorff, 2004).

The sampling technique is primarily based on purposive sampling, that is, the advertisements are selected randomly (how?).

Category selection

One hundred and fifty commercials aired over the Pakistani television channels between 1st July 2008 and 31st December 2008 were used as the basis for analysis. Commercials were grouped into nine categories:

Food and beverages: All those advertisements which include the products related to food and different drinks come under this category, for example, Dalda cooking oil and Banaspati, National foods, Nestle milk pack, Twister fresh juice etc.

Personal hygiene and cosmetic: This category includes all those commercials advertising cosmetics like creams and lotions and all those products which are used for hygiene like mouth-washes, tooth pastes and shampoos etc.

Electric, electronic and household aids: Advertisements presenting electrical devices and domestic appliances for example, washing machines, Air conditioners and all the other related electrical products are under this category.

Cleansers: These includes washing powders and dish washing

bars, that is, Rin washing powder, Max dish wash etc.

Medical items: Medicines fall under this category, for example, Disprin, Iodex, Vics etc.

Vehicles and related products: Motorbikes, vehicles and the petroleum of certain vehicles are included in this category, for example, Honda Cd 70, PSO Petroleum etc.

Public service messages and insurance: Messages for the welfare of general public in the form of certain advertisements to attract target audiences and messages from banks and the services of different insurance companies are included in this class of advertisements.

Textile material and footwear: The advertisements and the commercials presenting the female models in the products which are concerned with clothing and shoes are included, for example, Bata shoes, Gul Ahmad lawn etc.

Cellular phones and mobile networks: Advertisements which are presenting certain products regarding cell phones and the mobile networks, that is, Mobilink network, Ufone and Nokia etc.

Data collection

Data collected from each advertisement included:

(1) The number of principal or dominant characters present in the advertisements:-The age of the principal characters, (The age of the characters was based on three categories. The category of children was between the age of 7 to 15 years old, while the models categorized in youth were between the age of 16 to 25 and middle age models were 26 to 35. All the models playing the roles of retired people and grand parents were grouped under the category of old age).

(2) The setting of the commercial. (The setting of the commercial was formulated on the basis of location and the surroundings given in the commercials. All the commercials presenting the view of a room inside the house were categorized under the category of room in house while the commercials giving the location outside the house are grouped under the class of outdoor setting. The advertisements presenting the amalgamation of both locations fall in third category. But the presentation of a location which was not under these categories was grouped in a separate class named any other).

(3) The task and activities performed by the product representatives or the dominant character.

(a) The gender and quality of voice – over.

(b) The latent message of a commercial.

FINDINGS

Content analysis of the commercial reveals that the number of female principal characters is higher than male principal characters. Moreover the findings shows that the female models are frequently used in all categories of advertisements while there are few categories of commercials like food, beverages, personal hygiene, cosmetics and cleansers which can be considered as the specific fields of women. Most of the females are shown engaged in domestic tasks such as cooking, washing clothes, cleaning their kitchens, and beautifying their personalities. In short the results show that stereotypical approaches

were followed.

These commercials give the impression that women at home have no valid interest in their life except worrying about the perfection of their house, their clean shining floors, immaculate laundry and cooking. These advertisements romanticize the housework and motherhood. The needs and desires of women are depicted in terms of her nurturing and caring role within the family. In the category of food and beverage commercials, she is shown more often than not in the focus of an ideal family wherein her family members appreciate her household work.

Stereotypical approach may be defined as the women are portrayed only in the limited roles like house wives, working at their homes and as a sex objects attracting viewers or adding glamour to that advertisement to grab the attention of the viewers. This dissertation verifies different aspects of advertisements and standards to check the nature of women's portrayal. The categories were formulated on the basis of the products.

As Table 1 indicates women featured in all the products categories and their visibility is comparatively higher than men. Out of 173 principal characters (110) or 63.59% are women as against (63) or 36.41% are men. The higher rate of visibility of women in advertising as against the severe under representation of men in other types of media content is reported by other scholars like Courtney and Lockeretz (1974), O' Donnell and O' Donnell (1978) in their findings.

Further, women are prominently visible in the category of personal hygiene, cleanser, textile material and footwear and household aids as compared to vehicles, public service messages and medical items. Foods and beverages category which is considered as women's domain, features more women principal characters than men, although the difference is not very significant. These commercials have featured male children rather than female in the family set up.

The finding of content analysis regarding the number of female characters being portrayed in the advertisements confirmed the hypothesis that females are excessively used in the advertisements (Table 1). Out of total 150 advertisements 173 principal characters were distinguished. In these principal characters 110 principal characters were executed by females in all the sub categories. While only 63 characters out of total 173 principal characters were performed by males which is 36.41% as compare to 63.59% of female principal characters.

The analysis of the advertisements on the basis of age group shows that the youth appears to be very important component of the commercials of all the categories, especially for women, as out of the 54.43% young characters, 31.07% are female (165) characters and 23.35% are male (124) characters out of total 531 characters. This confirmed the hypothesis that the young female models are the important and main part of the advertisements of all the selected commercials (Table 2).

But as far as representation of children in the

Table 1. Commercials by product category and showing number of principal characters.

Product category	Number of commercials	Principal characters		
		Male	Female	Total
Foods and beverages	50	14	44	58
Personal hygiene and cosmetics	38	13	31	44
Cleansers	11	2	9	11
Electric, electronic and household aids	12	5	9	14
Medical items	10	5	5	10
Textile materials and footwear	9	7	6	13
Vehicles and related products	4	4	—	4
Public service and insurance	7	5	2	7
Cellular Phones and mobile networks	9	8	4	12
Grand total	150	63	110	173
Percentage (%)	150	36.41	63.59	173

Total number of advertisements = 150, Total number of principal characters = 173, Male principal characters = 36.41%
Female principal characters = 63.59%.

Table 2. Commercials by age group representation.

Product category	Children		Youth		Middle age		Old age	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Foods and beverages	23	15	49	49	22	28	8	6
Personal hygiene and cosmetics	4	8	19	46	3	11	1	—
Cleansers	2	—	5	10	3	7	1	3
Electric, electronic and household aids	1	4	6	14	7	6	3	1
Medical items	8	9	8	11	6	8	3	2
Textile materials and footwear	2	2	8	13	4	2	1	1
Vehicles and related products	—	—	5	3	2	1	—	1
Public service and insurance	—	3	4	3	4	5	5	3
Cellular phones and mobile networks	—	—	20	16	—	2	1	—
Grand total	40	41	124	165	51	70	23	17
Percentage (%)	15.25		54.43		22.79		7.53	

M = Male, F = Female.

commercials is considered there are less female children (36) as compared to the male children (45) but the difference was not significant. The total portrayal of children was 15.25% of the whole.

However, in the categories of middle and old age, the male and female ratio is more or less even (Table 2).

The total percentage of the presence of middle age models is 22.79% in which 9.6% are males and 13.19% are females. The portrayal of the old age group was less observed which is 7.53% of the whole and 4.33% are males while 3.20% are females.

Analysis of the settings in which male and female characters appear, provides support for the stereotypical contention that women's domain is the house or private sphere whereas that for the man is public or outside the house. 24.14% of women are shown in the house (as against 10.78% of men).

Further there is a significant difference in the number of women featuring in the house for particular commercials such as personal hygiene, cleansers and household items. More women are placed in the house in these advertisements further differentiating the world into male and female spheres (Table 3).

Although there are more men shown outdoors than women, the difference is not very significant. This is because certain commercials though have male as product representative also include female merely as "attractive objects". For example in male fairness cream (Fairs Men) the setting is outdoors, a man is shown on a bike while a glamorous and fashionable woman is shown casting seductive glance towards him. Here the use of female character has no relevance whatever in the product.

Some of the commercials have a combination of both

Table 3. Portrayal of women in certain settings of the commercials.

Product category	Room in house		Outdoors		Combination of both		Any other	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Foods and beverages	11	17	18	20	8	5	—	—
Personal hygiene and cosmetics	4	8	10	11	4	11	1	—
Cleansers	4	8	2	1	2	1	—	4
Electric, electronic and household aids	2	3	3	2	4	4	—	—
Medical items	—	2	4	5	3	1	—	—
Textile materials and footwear	—	1	4	1	—	—	—	—
Vehicles and related products	—	2	4	2	2	3	—	—
Public service and insurance	1	5	4	3	3	1	—	—
Cellular phones and mobile networks	3	10	2	—	2	1	—	—
Grand total	25	56	51	45	28	27	1	4
Percentage (%)	10.55	23.63	21.53	18.98	11.81	11.39	0.42	1.69

Total portrayal of models in different settings = 237.

settings within the house and outside. As in case of the Tea advertisement (Brooke Bond Tea), both husband and wife are shown engaged in recreational activities outside the house and then inside the house sipping hot tea. In other advertisements the setting is the office (Zong) or a marriage party (Bonus Washing Powder).

Women are particularly shown in the home settings mostly in the commercials of cooking oils and the cleansers. In the advertisements of cooking oils women is shown cutting the vegetables, serving their families, cooking mouth watering dishes. While in the advertisements of the washing powders and dish wash bars women are portrayed washing clothes and cleaning their homes and dishes.

Mostly males are shown in the outdoor settings which are 21.98%. Females are portrayed in outdoor settings in the ratio of 19.40%.

The results show that the females are portrayed in the household settings while males in the out door settings (Table 3).

The tasks and activities performed by principal characters in commercials strengthen the traditional and stereotypical images of women and are interested in maintaining the status quo. Advertisements indicate that most often women characters perform domestic tasks involving the advertised product which is 17.59% of the whole (Table 4).

These activities include demonstrating the product features by using the product – for example, washing clothes with 'Express washing powder' preparing mouth watering dishes with 'Dalda cooking oil' refined oil or cleaning the pots with 'Rin dish wash' cleaner. However 0.5% male principal character is seen engaged in domestic tasks. The message one gets when one watches these advertisements is that the work woman performs is exclusively her work, and no self respecting man would dream of helping her with the washing, cleaning or cooking (Table 4).

The male characters on the other hand are most often utilized to demonstrate product advertised. For example, in Ariel washing powder, the male character holds a washing contest between two women. So women for the most part continue to clean house, launder, cook and serve meals, while the men give instructions, advice, consume food and appreciate the cooking. Even the scenes outside the home, women are shown performing stereotyped activities like shopping and marketing. These activities either indicate by showing them in the supermarket or miscellaneous store or carrying a shopping basket. A typical example of the advertisement of "Ariel washing powder" where a housewife with her son is shown moving from shop to shop in a market with a basket full of vegetables, household goods and surf carry bag packet prominently displayed.

In other categories the portrayal of women shows the similar patterns of stereotypical approach as in the sub category of personal hygiene most of the females were engaged in using that product or beautifying there personalities. While there was no significant difference in other activities shown in the commercials.

The overall analysis of the advertisements under this category shows that the females are being portrayed in stereotypical roles that is, as housewives or as attracting objects to capture the attention of viewers. While the portrayal of male also shows the stereotypical approaches. In most of the advertisements males are presented as the important figure of our society, directing, demonstrating, advising and guiding the females.

Men are projected engaged in leisure activities (7.04%) while women are beautifying (11.06%). For example a woman is shown using bath soap (Lux Beauty soap) to enhance her beauty while man using it for his good health (Detol bath soap). Moreover woman is always portrayed as having a beauty bath while man is engaged in sports, construction work and hence he needs a healthy bath (Lifebuoy). These kind of stereotypical

Table 4. Activities performed by principal characters in advertisements.

Product category	Domestic tasks		Leisure activities		Beautifying		Eating/ using, demonstrated product		Singing/ dancing/ conversing		Shopping/ exchanging	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Foods and beverages	—	20	6	5	—	—	13	13	3	5	—	2
Personal hygiene and cosmetics	—	—	—	—	1	23	8	9	1	—	1	—
Cleansers	1	9	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	—	—
Electric, electronic and household aids	—	2	3	2	—	—	1	3	—	—	1	2
Medical items	—	3	1	2	—	—	5	5	—	—	—	1
Textile materials and footwear	—	—	1	—	—	—	3	6	1	1	2	1
Vehicles and related products	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—
Public service and insurance	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1	3	1
Cellular phones and mobile networks	—	—	2	—	—	—	4	1	4	4	—	—
Grand total	1	35	14	9	1	23	39	38	12	13	7	7
Percentage (%)	0.5	17.59	7.04	4.52	0.5	11.6	19.6	19.1	6.03	6.5	3.51	3.51

projections raise the expectation about a woman to be young and beautiful while man to be strong and healthy. Commercials also promote another stereotypical image of woman being interested only in domestic affairs and having no interest in public affairs.

A number of commercials show that women are adversely fond of small talk and where two or more women gather, their conversation usually revolves around shampoo, creams, detergents and dresses. For example in a commercial of shampoo (Panteen Pro-V) two young girls are shown discussing hair care and comparing various brands of shampoos. In another advertisement for detergent (Express washing powder) two attractive women meet at market place when one remarks about the other's clean white dress and reproaches her for using more detergent powder with a higher expenditure (saving is yet again a woman's concern while a man can swindle money on himself for cigarettes, drinks etc.). Then the other woman proudly says that she has used little

amount of Express washing powder which produces fantastic results.

So even when women are portrayed in an occupational status they are projected as interested more in keeping their dresses clean and bothering about savings.

A mother is complete if her children have gleaming white clothes and the dishes sparkle. No husband helps her in her washing and cleaning tasks. When the job becomes slightly more responsible or demands physical effort, men appear on the screen - they paint the walls climbing up on a ladder (Asian paints), they replace the cylinders (Mitsubishi Mister slim air conditioner) suggesting that women are physically weak and unable to perform these tasks. Women are never shown to be knowledgeable about financial management. This is evident from the items a woman is shown to purchase. She goes shopping for detergents, soaps, food and beauty products. But when the things are little expensive as in the advertisement of Dawlance refrigerators,

she merely follows her husband and accepts his choice. Moreover, when handling the finances and making financial investments in Insurance policies like the State Life Insurance Policy, Credit Cards, Master Card, the husband deals with them.

Women are primarily used by advertisers to sell products to both women and men. Depending on the gender of the target group, the strategies vary. In female oriented advertisements, women are to identify with the female product representative and easily enhance the appeal to men.

In the male-oriented commercials, consumers are promised the attraction of females as it happens in the commercials after use of the particular product.

Young boys, on the other hand are shown engaged in sports activities, consuming health drinks or imitating their fathers in bestowing approval on their mother's cooking. Quite a few commercials project the male child as a 'super hero' capable of doing extraordinary tasks. In a biscuit advertisement of 'Tiger milk biscuit', the

Table 5. Gender of voice – over.

Product category	Gender of voice-over		
	Male	Female	Both
Foods and beverages	29	13	15
Personal hygiene and cosmetics	12	23	2
Cleansers	6	4	1
Electric, electronic and household aids	10	1	1
Medical items	6	3	1
Textile materials and footwear	7	2	—
Vehicles and related products	4	—	—
Public service and insurance	5	2	—
Cellular phones and mobile networks	7	1	1
Grand total	86	49	21
Percentage (%)	55.13	31.41	13.46

Total voice-over = 156, Male = 86, Female = 49, Both = 21, Male = 55.13%, Female = 31.41%, Both = 13.46%.

Table 6. Quality of voice-over.

Product category	Authoritative		Informative		Demonstrative	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Foods and beverages	15	5	10	3	12	7
Personal hygiene and cosmetics	7	—	9	10	5	7
Cleansers	4	2	2	1	2	—
Electric, electronic and household aids	3	1	4	—	4	—
Medical items	3	—	5	2	—	—
Textile materials and footwear	3	—	—	2	4	—
Vehicles and related products	1	—	3	—	—	—
Public service and insurance	—	—	5	1	1	—
Cellular phones and mobile networks	2	—	2	—	5	—
Grand total	38	8	40	19	33	14
Percentage (%)	25	5.26	26.32	12.5	21.71	9.21

Total = 152.

young boy races with a tiger and defeats him. Yet another advertisement shows our 'super hero' pulling the table after consuming vitamin preparation Blue Band margarine.

One prominent aspect of the man's position of dominance in relation to woman in T.V is the off-camera voice-overs. Voice-overs could be defined as messages delivered by an unseen speaker during the commercial. The voice-over typically imparts information to the viewers and by implication holds the role of the expert. Out of 150 commercials, 55.13% have male voice-overs while only 31.41% commercials have female voice-overs.

Further in 13.46% commercials both male and female voice over are used (Table 5).

That means male voice over is present in nearly 68.59% commercials as against females in 44.87% commercials. Interestingly, the products which are mostly used by women such as food and cosmetics also have male

voice-overs.

The quality of the male voice-over is predominantly informative rather than authoritative or appealing. Nearly 25% of the male voice-overs are authoritative as against a mere 5.26% of the female voice-overs (Table 6).

Authority is considered a masculine trait. So by using male authoritative voice, commercials seem to endorse the dominance of men and subservience of women. Moreover, whenever female voice-over is used it is in the form of gorgeous and catching tone so as to add the touch of glamour to it. Women are allowed to certain extent to be informative but they are hardly presented as authoritative persons. Thus, by and large the commercials enable the inferior position of women over male superiority.

One sees the woman helplessly struggling in front of a pile of dirty clothes until the male voice of authority dictates to tell her how the Bonus detergent with its fast

acting enzymes will help her to wash clothes clean. So also a male authoritative voice tells a woman how she can keep her hair shining with the 'Sun silk shampoo', her face glowing with the "English fairness Ubtan" and her body beautiful with 'Capri soap'.

It appears that the male voice over is considered more convincing in the patriarchal set up. A man thus has automatic credibility on the TV. Even in those commercials when the voice-over is by both genders, the male has last word. As evident in the male voice-over has the last word in 73.03% commercials as against the 26.97% commercials with female voice over having the last word.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The data in this article is mainly focused on previous studies and the data collected with the help of content analysis of the commercials portraying the women in different products and items as well. The results reveal that women are being portrayed in limited roles and most of the portrayal was against the cultural and social values which are affecting the self esteem of the females in our society. These findings support the hypothesis regarding the portrayal of women in advertisements and their impacts on the viewer's mind. Moreover the females are portrayed in less active part and almost having no role in development of society while males were portrayed in variety of occupations while the roles of females were limited. Furthermore analysis of the tasks and the activities performed by the models in the advertisements exposes the stereotypical approach about the portrayal of females in electronic media.

The analysis of the tasks and the activities performed by the models and the gender and quality of the voice-over again upholds the hypothesis of stereotypical portrayal of women in the commercials.

The overall results indicate that the portrayal of females in most of the advertisements is unnecessary and needless. The females are used as an attractive and eye-catching element of the advertisement having the function of capturing the attention of viewers.

Moreover, the results found by the research techniques discloses that the woman's bodily charm is used to

promote ads concerning physical fitness products, cosmetics and those that add to appearance of the body. This again confirms the research hypothesis. The findings of content analysis of all the categories of commercials verify that the young female models are the important element of the advertisements.

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