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Keywords: Women's Representation, Pakistani Advertisements, Gender Stereotypes, Qualitative Study, Goffman's Model, Semiotic Analysis, MAXQDA

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Women's Representation in Pakistani Advertisements: A Qualitative Analysis Using MAXQDA



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Abstract

Media representations of women play a significant role in shaping societal perceptions and reinforcing gender norms. The present study is based on Goffman's (1979) Gender Display Theory and investigates the depiction of women in Pakistani advertisements. Five advertisements across various product categories were selected and analysed using a qualitative research design and MAXQDA software to identify recurring themes and patterns. The results indicate that women are predominantly portrayed in domestic or caregiving roles, with a particular focus on beauty and grace; portrayals of women demonstrating professional competence, leadership and independence remain relatively low. These representations perpetuate a narrow, stereotypical view of women and narrow the range of women's identities in public debate. The study concludes that Pakistani advertisements predominantly reinforce stereotypical gender roles, and there is a need to represent women differently in advertising to encourage gender equality in society.

Keywords: *Women's Representation, Pakistani Advertisements, Gender Stereotypes, Qualitative Study, Goffman's Model, Semiotic Analysis, MAXQDA*

Introduction

Pakistani commercials tend to depict women as they are perceived in the traditional cultural roles, restricting them to the roles of domesticity, female beauty, and caregiving. The media ads, in particular, have one of the most crucial functions in the development of cultural norms and perceptions. In Pakistan, advertisement is not only a medium of advertisement of goods but also an effective story which can help in the values and expectation of the society. As the most popular objects of advertising, women are often depicted in limited stereotypes and accentuated beauty, nurturing, and domesticity. These depictions reflect patriarchal cultures that determine the value of women relative to men, family roles, and physical appearance. Previous studies have indicated that this constant portrayal has helped to normalize gender inequality and limit the representation of women in the public discourse.

Problem Statement

Although gender equality and women's empowerment are being increasingly enlightened in Pakistan, advertising still recycles a few stereotypically oriented images. Females are still presented as housewives, feminized objects, or passive characters, but the descriptions of independent actions, straightforward leadership, or professional skills are very few. Such an unequal balance poses a cultural issue: media stories that could make women stronger reinforce discriminatory expectations. Such depictions should be analyzed carefully as they are a hindrance to the formation of positive, inclusive and fair images of women in Pakistani society.



Purpose of the Study

This research aims at discussing the use of women in Pakistani commercials and the semiotic techniques used to perpetuate or disrupt gender stereotypes. The study examines the visual and verbal display of gender in advertisements, and provides a detailed analysis of how gender ideology is constructed and consolidated in media using Goffman (1979) model of gender display in MAXQDA.

Research Gap

Whereas some studies have considered the issue of women's representation in Pakistani media, a majority of these studies have looked at print-based advertisements, have utilized quantitative content analysis, or have looked at larger segments of the media. Not many studies use sophisticated qualitative methods like MAXQDA to code and analyze semiotic characteristics of media commercials systematically. Additionally, little focus has been placed on how linguistic and visual aspects can converge to support gender stereotypes. This paper fills this gap by using both qualitative encoding and corpus-based evidence to produce a more detailed description of the representation of women in Pakistani advertisements.

Objectives

This research aims to investigate certain objectives to:

- Conduct a comprehensive content analysis of Pakistani media advertisements to identify and categorize the representation of women's gender roles and stereotypes.
- Examine and describe the portrayal of women's physical characteristics and appearances in Pakistani media advertisements, including any patterns or trends in representation.

Research Questions

1. How do Pakistani media advertisements represent women in terms of gender roles and stereotypes?
2. How are women's physical characteristics and appearances represented in these advertisements?

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Significance of the Study

This research is noteworthy in three aspects. First, it makes contributions to the genre of gender and media studies in Pakistan because it offers a fresh and detailed perspective on the phenomenon of women in media advertisements. Second, it shows that MAXQDA and the semiotic model developed by Goffman can be useful in the analysis of intricate visual and textual data, which can be used in the methodology by future researchers. Third, the practical implications of the findings are evident to the advertisers, policymakers, and advocacy groups because they found that the current practices in media either perpetuate or challenge gender inequality. The study identifies the need of the media to portray women in a more inclusive, empowering and diverse manner in Pakistan and also identifies the stereotypes and scope of change.

Literature Review

One of the common motifs of the literature is the objectification of women and the focus on beauty and physical appeal in the Pakistani advertisements. Said and Ullah (2025) shows that women are often presented as dependent on men, whose value is determined by their sexual allure, domestic duties, and physical appearance. These images not only support the hierarchies of patriarchy but also exert psychological pressure on women to adhere to unrealistic beauty ideals, which may adversely affect their self-esteem and health. Likewise, Iram et al. (2023) also note that Pakistani advertisements often objectify women, making them passive or sexually charged, and men appear as people in charge. These images maintain the inequality of power and support the negative stereotypes. This pattern of objectification is also examined by Ahmed, Tariq, and Akram (2020), who use a semiotic approach to show how female bodies are represented as commodified and aesthetic-oriented objects in Pakistani advertisements. Similarly, Ayub, Khan, and Hassan (2025) present a multimodal analysis of television commercials, illustrating how visual, verbal, and auditory elements combine to reinforce traditional beauty expectations and domestic roles.

Domesticity and Caregiving Roles

A number of studies note the continuation of domestic and care giving images of women. With a quantitative corpus-based study, Khadim et al. (2025) demonstrate that some of the common linguistic associations women are often associated with include beauty, gentleness, and motherhood. These repeating motifs reflect the conservative social conventions, which relegate women into domestic chores, depicting independent or career-sufficient women. These types of linguistic structures are congruent with visual stereotypes, forming a logical storyline that values the domestic roles of women.

Emerging Progressive Portrayals

Although restrictive portraits are well represented, recent literature indicates a slight transformation. Fatima and Moin (2023), when conducting a semiotic analysis of print and online advertisements, discovered that the picture of a Pakistani woman was independent, confident, and modern. These new images are an indication of opposing the old stereotypes and the effort of advertisers to attract the changing cultural values. On the same note, in their ethnographic content analysis of television advertising, Adil and Malik (2021) noted that there have been attempts to portray repentant gender roles, where women are represented as empowered and men in more equal positions. Although there are still a few, they indicate a gradual change in media discourses.

Media Influence and Cultural Reinforcement

All these studies highlight the strong aspect of advertisements in the development of social attitudes and cultural norms. The advertisements not only mirror the existing values in society but also support them in terms of repetition and mass circulation. According to Adil and Malik (2021), the media advertisement that is more powerful is television because it is more frequent and visible as well. The advertisement industry reinforces the norms of femininity, thus leading to gender inequality, but the positive aspect is that it can facilitate change when the stereotypes are disproved.

Generally, the literature available indicates that in Pakistani adverts, women are portrayed to a large extent through misogynistic images of beauty, homemaking, and subordination. Although a part of the study points to the development of progressive images, these are the exceptions. The studies reviewed can help to emphasize the necessity of further qualitative research with the help of the more sophisticated analytical tools like MAXQDA to gain a deeper insight into the representational strategies and to examine how the advertisements may preserve or alter the gender ideologies in Pakistani society.

Methodology

The current research uses the qualitative method to examine the stereotypes of gender in advertisements. The data includes 5 video ads from YouTube, which involve the female representation within the different products (e.g., beauty, household, technology) to obtain a variety and a wide-ranging sample of the Pakistani advertisements. The verbatim of such videos can be used to examine the visual templates giving a holistic picture of gender stereotypes amongst various industries. These advertisements are loaded from YouTube and transcribed with an artificial intelligence application known as Turboscribe, which offers a precise transcription service that facilitates the linguistic study of spoken data in advertisements. The information is then purged to eliminate irrelevant factors such as unnecessary spaces and stored in the form of a text file (.txt). This preparation is according to the practices that were applied in prior research studies, whereby qualitative analysis of the content was to be done in a systematic manner through transcription.

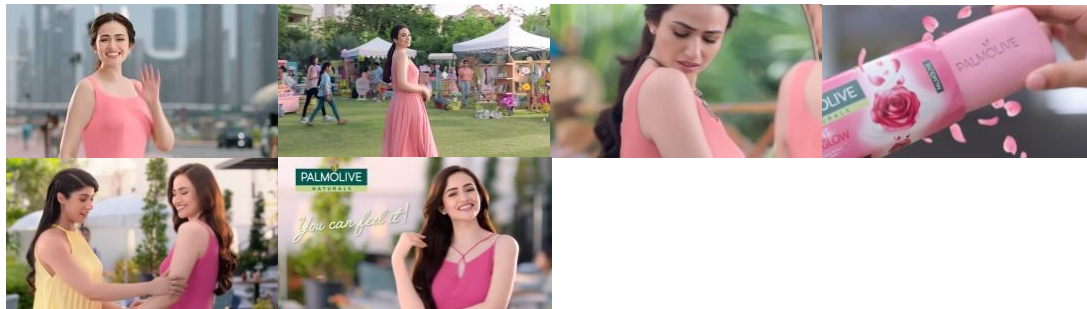
Figure 1*Shots from Lux Soap's Advertisement (Advertisement 1)***Figure 2***Shots from Palmolive Soap's Advertisement (Advertisement 2)***Figure 3***Shots from Vivo Advertisement (Advertisement 3)*

Figure 4

Shots from Ahmed Foods Advertisement (Advertisement 4)



Figure 5

Shots from Eva Cooking Oil's Advertisement (Advertisement 5)



In the visual and semiotic components of the advertisements, we use the Semiotic Framework of Goffman on Gender Display. The reason to select this model is its proven efficiency in demonstrating how the visual clues (e.g., body language, positioning and clothing) enforce the conventional gender roles. This framework has been previously tested and proven useful in studying the semiotics of gender representation in advertisements (e.g., Goffman, 1979; Bartsch et al., 2000). Goffman's Semiotic Framework is applied in analyzing the visual elements

of the advertisements. This entails an in-depth analysis of the visual image of women, in terms of posture, facial expression, and the landscape. This action is supplementing the qualitative results by enhancing the insight into the role of imagery as a means to reinforce or oppose the verbal messages.

Results

The qualitative approach for analyzing the commercials (LUX, Palmolive, Vivo, Ahmed Foods, and Eva Cooking Oil) was implemented through MAXQDA, using the Goffman's model of gender representation. The structured codebook was created to represent predefined categories such as feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, licensed withdrawal, function ranking, relative size and infantilization and new emergent themes were also added. Still frames, transcripts, and advertisement scripts were given codes. The results of MAXQDA were coded into a frequency table, thematic retrieval and code co-occurrence map which were then combined with lexical results.

Semiotic Analysis through Goffman's Gender Display Model

The semiotic analysis based on the Goffman model revealed visual and contextual elements, which support the gender stereotypes. Such categories as *Feminine Touch*, *Ritualization of Subordination*, *Function Ranking*, *Licensed Withdrawal* and *Infantilization* portray how these commercials subordinate women.

Feminine touch & beauty norms

The advertisement of LUX and Palmolive Soap attractively shows women handling their skin in a tender way, which upholds the Feminine Touch concept proposed by Goffman. Here, the focus is put on women as being aesthetic oriented and focusing on beauty and taking care of themselves. Likewise, cooking in Ahmed Foods advertisements is depicted as a caring activity, which upholds classical principles of femininity, which is about grace, gentleness and nurturing, which is in line with what society expects of women. The widely spread theme puts the aesthetic value of women in the heart of the advertisement story. In 80% of the 5 ads (4), shots of beauty products are accompanied by tight close-ups, touching oneself (women stroking their faces/hair), to perform Goffman feminine touch and transforming the female body into a performing space. The corpus linguistic evidence, including the frequency of lexemes like beauty, glow, soft, and other terms, is consistent with the visual codes: the advantages of the products are introduced as the improvement of the social value of women and not of the utility. The net result is a message that remains constant the desirability and social worth of a woman are materially contingent on her surface look; the message is replicated across brands and product category in the sample.

Domestic roles and function ranking

They are also observed in the domestic advertisement such as Eva Cooking Oil and Vivo Ramadan, where the women are positioned in roles of caregiving whereas their male counterparts are positioned in the roles of authority or beneficiary as introduced by Goffman in his theory of rank in functions. Despite the accolades that have been given to women concerning their power, their functions are limited to care giving. In the same manner, Ahmed Foods focuses on the concept of caregiving as the core of the woman value and supports the traditional gender roles at home.

The MAXQDA coding has revealed female characters as having domestic labor and caring as the two main social functions. Women in three ads (60%) are engaged in cooking, serving, and keeping the house tidy as the male characters hold beneficiary or power roles. Such patterns do not just serve as incidental props: they organize the narrative force of the commercials, interconnecting product usefulness with the relationships to the accomplishment of gendered house tasks. The trend recreates a symbolic split in which women provide emotional/domestic labor and men get to enjoy or judge the results, which further asserts gender-based distributions of roles instead of portraying women as independent or professional agents.

Ritualization of subordination & behavioral restrictions

There is also the form of ritualized subordination in the form of behavioral signals such as sit properly or don't

laugh too loud in LUX advertisements which encourage humility and obeying society. This coincides with the submissive behavior explained by Goffman. The lack of the voice of the woman in Ahmed Foods also supports her role as the subordinate one, and the gender stratifications and the necessity to obey the cultural norms continue.

The combination of visual posture, dialogue and camera orientation is a way of encoding women as modest, restrained and socially regulated. Ritualized subordination codes and literal prescriptions of behaviour (e.g., sit properly, don't laugh too loud, etc.) are present in four ads (80%), and serve as normative advice to feminine decorum. These factors work at two levels; the visual (postural) (lower framing) and the textual (directives or scripted admonitions). Together they teach and normalize a constrained expression of feminist quiet, compliant, and deferential rather than diverse or assertive female subjectivities.

Licensed withdrawal and emotional detachment

The licensed withdrawal, which is the case with Goffman's model, is also reflected in the Vivo Ramadan and Ahmed Foods advertisements, where women appear to be engaged in multiple roles as a caregiver, which implies the lack of emotional engagement. The aspect of their attention to meet the expectations of the society and family, as opposed to personal engagement, is a sign of their total lack of interest in any activity. This makes self-sacrifice and emotional withdrawal a norm, and this supports the traditional gender standards of femininity.

Licensed withdrawal, which depicts women as multitasking, avoiding eye contact, or having a visual background, are presented in four advertisements (80%). In this trope, camera concentrations are often done such that foreground items (hands, products, food) take priority over faces, which are either pushed aside or broken, essentially diminishing the expressiveness of the women involved. Narratively, licensed withdrawal makes the advert women appear as current but not entirely agentic; their emotional and discursive participation is partial, following a more general trend of symbolic invisibility.

Colorism and fairness ideals

Colorist cues are present in three advertisements (60%), most of which are beauty-oriented advertisements, where the lights, retouching, and words give preference to lighter skin tones. The lexical portrait of the dataset has the words that describe fairness of code as desired and associate complexion with success or beauty. This restates the South-Asian prejudices that have long held lightness and social value as one-to-one- another- it is this effect that perpetuates and contributes to the market need to be fair/whitening products.

Infantilization and Hierarchy of Relative Size

In certain advertisements, infantilization is not very common, in which small words are used to refer to women as dears or girls, which indirectly undermines their maturity and independence. The reference to the silence of the woman since childhood in the Ahmed Foods advertisement makes her look less mature and independent, which makes the image of a dependent woman even stronger.

Infantilization (2/5 ads, 40%) consists of high-context forms of address (dear/girl), playfulness in gesture that makes a woman seem less mature and relative-size framing (2/5 ads, 40%), where the camera size demonstratively positions a woman as inferior (seated vs. standing, marginal positioning). These techniques (which are less common than beauty/domestic codes) continue to undermine adult agency and symbolically establish inequality of power in the form of styles.

Table 1

Representation of Present and Absent Features in Advertisements based on Goffman's Model

Advertis ement	Feminine Touch	Function Ranking	Ritualization of Subordination	Licensed Withdrawal	Infantilization	Body Display
1	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
2	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
3	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
4	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
5	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗

Integration with corpus-level findings

The themes identified in the MAXQDA outputs are supported by visualizations recorded in the project) which map keywords into phenomena coded, like a function ranking, feminine touch, and the stereotyped beauty norms. Lexical and visual productions are thus as convergent, as the same semantic domains of domesticity and appearance also organizes the visual semiotics according to which women are aesthetic and nurturing subject matter and not independent social agents.

The systematized representation of women across the five sampled commercials is through a restricted number of roles, including beauty objects, domestic caregivers, and social-regulated figures, which are supported by camera work, dialog, and lexical choices. The most prevalent codes (appearance-oriented and subordination-related) are found in 80 percent of advertisements, and function-ranking and colorism are used in 60 percent each. Such multimodal patterns replicate and naturalize gender hierarchies in media representation, restricting the discursive vocabulary of other, empowered representations of Pakistani women.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Pakistani advertisements predominantly reinforce stereotypical and restrictive portrayals of women, closely aligning with patterns documented in prior scholarship. By using MAXQDA to code recurring semiotic features such as *feminine touch*, *function ranking*, *ritualization of subordination*, and *licensed withdrawal*, the analysis highlights how women continue to be associated primarily with beauty, caregiving, and passive social roles.

The prominent theme that came out of the analysis is the representation of women as their appearance. Four of the 5 advertisements used the feminine touch and beauty norms and portrayed women as aesthetically valuable subjects, using a close-up camera angle and repeated words such as soft, glow, beauty. The fact that the same name is used on several brands shows how much beauty is still a business and a gendered thing.

The other major finding relates to domesticity and function ranking, in 60% of advertisements, women was depicted as cooks, servers, and nurturers, while men appeared as recipients or authority figures. The representations are rooted in the traditional and entrenched nature of patriarchy, which limits women's worth to the private sphere. The ads not only praise women for their role as caregivers but also suggest that it is their natural role and primary duty. Media normalizes gendered roles, which in turn reduce women's visibility in professional or decision-making situations, contributing to inequality. Media reinforces gendered roles which reduces women's visibility in professional or decision making situation leading to inequality.

Another common theme was ritualization of subordination and behavioral restrictions, which appeared in 80% of the sample. For instance, the phrase “sit properly” or “don't laugh too loud” explicitly enforces women's behavior, and the camera positions and body postures of the women metaphorically situate them as deferential. These depictions teach viewers what it means to be a good woman, what is considered acceptable modesty, silence, and compliance of a woman. These elements are integrated on visual and verbal levels and give an idea of the depth of the embedding of stereotypes that makes them look natural and culturally desirable.

The symbolization of licensed withdrawal women who are multitasking, looking down or appearing distracted continued to emphasize symbolic invisibility. These representations imply that women are not whole or full in social interactions, reducing their agency and voice. Advertisements relegate women to the role of a passive observer and encourage self-sacrifice and emotional detachment as feminine values.

The theme of colourism was apparent in advertisements that emphasized beauty, with lighter skin being directly described with words such as fair, light, bright. It perpetuates colonial ideals and ingrained South Asian beauty standards, deifying fairness as a desirable trait. Colorism in advertisements not only perpetuates discriminatory standards but also sustains commercial demand for whitening products, reflecting how cultural bias and consumer capitalism intersect.

Signs of infantilization and relative size hierarchies were fewer but still present. Women were symbolically reduced when addressed as “dear” or “girls” and when they were seen as physically smaller than men. While only 40% of ads include these depictions, these images add to an ongoing conversation that makes women feel dependent and subordinate.

Lastly, corpus analysis has been integrated with the coding process in MAXQDA, which further confirmed the convergence between verbal discourse and visual representation. Beauty, home, mother and cook all directly correlated with coded themes, emphasizing the fact that women are at once aesthetic objects and domestic attendants. The present multimodal consistency indicates that advertisements in Pakistan function in both language and visuals, perpetuating the imbalanced gender ideology.

Relevancy with Existing Literature

The findings of this study corroborate with current studies on the portrayal of women in Pakistani advertisements. Said and Ullah (2025) highlight that ads often feature women in subservient positions whose value is based on their looks and caregiving duties, a pattern also observed in this study, where women were largely depicted as fashion accessories or homemakers. Similarly, Iram et al. (2023) state that women are objectified and reduced to passive figures, which is reflected in the common presence of feminine touch and licensed withdrawal in the present data set. Khadim et al. (2025) found that the words associated with women are related to “gentleness” and “motherhood,” which align with the lexical evidence provided by the words beauty, glow, soft, and home in this analysis. Meanwhile, the few examples of progressive portrayals are in harmony with Fatima and Moin's (2023) and Adil and Malik's (2021) findings that women are increasingly being portrayed as independent and modern. Furthermore, the high prevalence of visual objectification and beauty norms (80% of advertisements in this sample) aligns with the semiotic and multimodal analyses of female representation by Ahmed, Tariq, and Akram (2020) and Ayub, Khan, and Hassan (2025). The persistent division of domestic labor identified in our MAXQDA analysis also reflects the long-term progression of advertising stereotypes outlined by Ejaz et al. (2024). Finally, the emerging depictions of female agency and male role reversal discussed in recent literature (Farooq & Qandeel, 2025; Obaid, 2023) present a potential path for counter-stereotypical representations that could help redefine gender discourse in Pakistani advertising.

Addressing the Research Questions

The study was conducted to address two interrelated questions regarding the representation of women in Pakistani television advertisements; which are as follows: First is that what is the current scenario of women representation in TV advertisements, and second is what are the factors that can be responsible for their representation in such way? The method was based on three elements: (a) theory-driven visual coding based on Goffman's gender-display categories, (b) systematic coding and retrieval in MAXQDA, and (c) corpus-level lexical checks (AntConc / Voyant). By combining this mixed multimodal approach, the research was able to focus on both the grounded description (what is shown and said) and the interpreted explanation (what those choices mean culturally), directly addressing both research questions.

1. How do Pakistani media advertisements represent women in terms of gender roles and stereotypes?

For the first question the codebook and frequency results in the MAXQDA software are directly answered. These were revealed as stereotyped role-portrayals through coding, and consist of *feminine touch*, *ritualization of subordination*, *licensed withdrawal*, *function ranking* and *behavioral restrictions*. These categories are not mutually exclusive; for instance, close-ups that accentuate a feminine touch tend to be found with framing that involves women in caregiving roles (function ranking) and that use dialogue to discipline behavior (behavioral restrictions). Appearance- and subordination-related codes are found in 4 out of 5 ads (80%), and function-ranking codes are found in 3 out of 5 ads (60%), showing that the ads overwhelmingly represent women as aesthetic and domestic objects, rather than autonomous actors. The qualitative memos and the still-frame annotations (exported from MAXQDA) give the concrete evidence (visual description and script excerpts) for this interpretation. To summarize, both the presence/absence data and the rich visual/verbal examples illustrate that Pakistani advertisements in the sample are, by and large, the reiteration of stereotypes associated with women and beauty and caregiving, which are passive social roles.

2. How are women's physical characteristics and appearances represented in these advertisements?

The second question is answered in the project with two complementary strands of evidence. First, visual practices were captured using the image codes and scene descriptions of MAXQDA, which focus on skin, hair and facial beauty, stereotypical beauty norms, and feminine touch. Secondly, the items that were found as a result of the visual analysis were confirmed by the corpus outputs (AntConc and Voyant) with the recurrent appearances of the words soft, glow, beauty and fair in the transcripts and voiceovers. These data illustrate both the staging of appearance (camera shots, touch, and lighting) and the linguistic narration (product benefits that are related to appearance).

Importantly, in three ads (60%) lighter complexions are valorized by lighting and linguistic construction, reflecting the fact that appearance in this sample is not neutral, but constructed out of culturally contextualized hierarchies of skin tone. Second question is answered here by presenting evidence that women's physical attributes serve as the main grounds for assessing value via visual framing, embodied gesture and lexical emphasis, and these practices reflect both general beauty ideals and local colorist preferences.

The semiotic approach of Goffman and a semiotic approach of coding in MAXQDA and corpus triangulation are especially appropriate for these questions since they both capture non-verbal semiotics (posture, framing, touch) and verbal discourse (lexical patterns). This multimodal triangulation increases the validity of causal reading: when the camera work, gesture and language are all aligned, the causal reading of the advert towards stereotype reinforcement, as revealed in the Results exports, is more valid. The findings from this study, however, are limited to the sample that was studied, five ads, and so should not be used to make inferences to generalizations beyond that sample, but they are evidence of sample characteristics and indicate a pattern for that sample that is consistent with previous studies. Future research on a larger sample with stratification would validate whether these patterns exist in Pakistani advertising in general.

In direct answer: (1) Pakistani advertisements in this sample predominantly depict women as aesthetic objects, domestic carriers, and socially regulated subjects that are coded in the sample from the scenes, and (2) Women's physical qualities are foregrounded and are coded in the sample, both visually and verbally (through lexical clusters such as soft, glow, and fair), which relate to a cultural theme of colorism; the lexical association of the terms 'soft', 'glow', and 'fair' are frequently coded. These conclusions are drawn from the coded data, illustrative frame descriptions, and corroborating corpus outputs documented in the results.

Conclusion

The aim of the study was to analyze the gender display in Pakistani television adverts through the lens of MAXQDA and Goffman's gender display framework. The discussion of five ads demonstrated that the female figure is most often represented in the form of limited and stereotypic images, majority of them being the objects of beauty, household nurturers, and subordinates in society. Some of the categories like feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, licensed withdrawal and ranking of functions were observed to cut across and were present in most of the samples. These images create a normalization of the ideology that women are only valued based on their physical attractiveness, nurturing skills, and compliance to social conventions and restrains their presence as independent and professionally capable beings.

Simultaneously, the findings also revealed the presence of cultural bias, including colorism, where light skin tones were directly glorified, and infantilization, where women were talked about in demeaning terms that belittled their adulthood. These types of representations promote discriminatory ideals and establish additional hierarchies on a patriarchal basis. The combination of corpus results and the qualitative code proved the intersection of visual and linguistic stereotypes and the support of the narrow sphere of semantics women occupy in the context of media discourse.

Implications

These findings have some important implications. Advertisements do not mirror society as they are very strong cultural texts influencing perceptions and expectations. The advertising industry helps to strengthen gender inequality by reproducing restrictive images constantly. Yet, advertisements, as observed in the literature and alluded in some of the new cases, also have a potential to break the stereotypes and make progressive change. The portrayal of women as self-reliant and capable in their positions, as well as diverse, can help to redefine cultural discourses and make Pakistan a more gender-equal society.

To sum up, although the current research emphasizes the fact that the stereotype-driven representations are still present, it also mentions the possibility and necessity of change. The producers and advertisers of the media have a moral obligation to go beyond reductionist portrayals and to adopt a portrayal that is complex, varied, and full of agency as it pertains to women within the Pakistani society today.

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