Al-Qirtas Arabic

Gendered Ideologies in TV Advertisements: A Semiological Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

The influence of television advertisements on shaping and perpetuating gendered ideologies is a subject of substantial interest and concern. The aim of this study is to examine how advertisements on television contribute to the construction and reinforcement of gender stereotypes and expectations. This research employs semiological discourse analysis to dissect the visual and linguistic elements of TV advertisements, revealing the underlying meanings, symbols, and messages conveyed. It explores how advertisements often depict traditional gender roles, beauty standards, and societal expectations, and how they can reinforce or challenge these norms. By scrutinizing iconic, indexical, and symbolic signs in advertisements, this study uncovers the ways in which gendered ideologies are embedded in marketing strategies. The research also addresses how modern advertising practices are evolving to reflect changing cultural and societal norms, striving for more inclusive and diverse representations. In sum, this study sheds light on the complex interplay of gender, media, and consumer culture, highlighting the potential impact of TV advertisements on perceptions of gender and the ongoing discourse around gender representation in the media.

Key words: semiotics, representation, television commercials, gendered ideologies

Introduction

The main aim of this study is to investigate the depiction of socially constructed gender binary interactions in advertisements on television within the context of Pakistan. This study examines the portrayal of gender in advertising within the realm of electronic media, focusing on the prevalent strategies of representation, including dominance, power dynamics, and gender stereotypes. Media discourse, in all its manifestations, serves as a vehicle for shaping the ideological perspectives of individuals. The media has a significant role in depicting the social roles attributed to gender, and this study aims to investigate the extent to which Pakistani television advertising aligns with traditional perspectives on female and male roles. The analysis of gender representation in ads broadcasted on various Pakistani television channels has examined the handling of gender in terms of roles, depictions, activities, and identities. The study is grounded in the theoretical framework of semiotics, as articulated by Dyer (1982). This study focuses on the semiotic analysis of visual imagery, specifically examining how gender representation is emphasised and the ideological assumptions that are implied as a result.

Now a days, our society exists within a technologically driven global community, wherein we are regularly exposed to promotional messages. Advertisements are encountered in several aspects of daily life, such as browsing the internet, reading newspapers, watching television, using cell phones, driving on the road. The scope of influence exerted by advertisements has naturally expanded to encompass nearly all aspects of social life. Commercials employ a range of semiotic codes to successfully communicate advertisers' messages. The application of semiotic analysis to commercials offers linguists and media researchers an extensive framework to explore the latent meanings that are embedded within them, thereby presenting new avenues for investigation. These visual representations and indicators indicate the underlying ideological beliefs within a specific socio-cultural framework.

Media, as a whole, holds considerable influence in shaping and perpetuating culturally dominant binary narratives. One prominent medium through which this influence is exerted is television advertising, which effectively frames and shapes the attitudes of individuals. Cook (2005) asserts that media commercials, as an important social institution, hold enormous influence in contemporary society. The commercials employ a secondary discourse that addresses the socially created power dynamics related to gender, while also promoting the services and products showcased in the adverts. The depiction of gender roles in advertising, specifically the portrayal of males and females in image 2, is closely connected to the comprehension of their social dynamics, power dynamics, and societal behaviours. Hence, ads strategically convey ideology by employing indicators that mirror prevailing cultural norms within a given culture. The promotion of gender roles and stereotypes is facilitated through the utilisation of social practices in advertising campaigns.

Commercials are seen as artistic creations that showcase human subjects with the purpose of promoting the products or things being marketed. The advertising in question incorporate gender as a cultural artefact that symbolically represents the prevailing hegemonic power systems. The advertisements spread a philosophy that supports the socially constructed gender hierarchy's dominance. According to Roy (1998), commercials have the dual purpose of conveying information on the physical attributes, behaviours, and activities of individuals while simultaneously functioning as a means to elucidate culturally constructed gender roles on a symbolic level. Commercials serve as a manifestation of cultural standards, which are widely

recognised as a significant force in the reinforcement of social constructions through the use of visual elements.

The interconnection between advertising and gender is indissoluble, as commercials serve as a means of conveying the cultural and social desires of customers. Advertisers employ human subjects as a means of endorsing a product. The utilisation of male or female characters in the advertisement serves as a symbolic representation that reveals the socially defined roles and domains associated with gender activities. According to Alvesson and Billing (1997), advertisers employ visual representations of gender in their marketing strategies to align with prevailing societal norms, incorporating concepts of masculinity and femininity. The primary objective of the present study is to investigate the correlation between gender representation and electronic media, with a particular emphasis on analysing the dominant gender narrative in developing countries, particularly in the context of Pakistan.

According to Cook (1992), advertising is a continuously growing industry that has gained significant popularity due to its persuasive nature. The primary objective of this phenomenon is not just to foster heightened consumerism through persuasive tactics, but also to perpetuate socially constructed gender identities. Williamson (1978), posits that advertising do not autonomously generate meaning, but rather, they invite viewers to engage in the interpretation of the product's presentation and decipher potential meanings by employing semiotic codes within the socio-cultural framework. Similarly, Dyer (1988) posits that ads serve as vehicles for socially created meanings and contribute to the formation of ideology through the portrayal of social practices inside commercials. Ideology is a construct that is collectively embraced by a community or social class, encompassing a set of beliefs and values. Barthes and Heath (1977), provide additional insight into the concept of a photograph as a tangible medium that pertains to a mythical framework, wherein the elements of signifier, signified, and sign collectively contribute to the creation of ideological interpretations.

Gender is commonly acknowledged as a fundamental component of social organisation, wherein the development of masculine and feminine identities is primarily shaped by cultural factors. These innovations are manifested through four prominent societal institutions, namely print, and social media, academia, and sports. Sutherland, Gilbert, and Taylor (1992) and Goldman (1992) have observed that advertising has assumed a prominent role as an institution, serving as a symbolic representation of both male and feminine ideas inside commercials. Television ads function as mediums through which socially constructed gender norms are endorsed and the acceptance of the content delivered through visual narratives is promoted. The objective of this study is to examine the gender constructs depicted in television commercials that are encountered in everyday life.

The study of gender distinction has been a subject of controversy in multiple academic disciplines, including media studies, sports studies, academia, and professional domains, since the 1970s. Despite the efforts of researchers to enhance public understanding of gender equality in contemporary times, the persistence of stereotypical depictions of gender remains prevalent across various situations. The Dakar Framework of Action 2000, as outlined by UNESCO in 2002, represents an endeavour to address gender inequalities by striving to eliminate prevailing disparities in social interactions. In the specific context of Pakistan, it is imperative to undertake research endeavours that examine the prevailing gender disparities across several domains, with the aim of addressing and rectifying these forms of gender-based discrimination.

The subject matter of this study implies an examination of the concepts of "subscription" and "subversion" in relation to gender representation in Pakistani television commercials. Specifically, the study aims to determine if these commercials align with the established patriarchal gender narrative, as indicated by previous research, or if they challenge and deviate from standard gender portrayals. The term "subscription" pertains to the endorsement of pre-established hegemonic conceptions of patriarchal frameworks. In contrast, subversion entails the act of questioning and contesting the prevailing gender narrative, thus offering an alternative viewpoint that contradicts established knowledge. The present study is grounded in the theoretical framework of semiotics. Semiotics is an academic discipline that primarily centres its attention on the examination of signs and symbols within the context of a broader system of signification. Dyer (1982) asserts that the indicators utilised by advertisers in commercials or magazine advertisements possess both denotative and connotative meanings. The connotative meaning assigned to signs serves to promote particular underlying beliefs within a specific socio-cultural framework.

Research Objectives:

➢ To assess the extent to which gender stereotypes are present in Pakistani ads and their impact on shaping societal perceptions of gender roles.

➢ To analyze the portrayal of gender roles in Pakistani advertisements, with a focus on whether they reinforce or challenge traditional gender norms.

Research Questions:

➢ How Pakistani advertisements depict traditional and non-traditional gender roles and whether they reinforce or challenge these roles?

➢ In what way advertisements in Pakistan rely on gender stereotypes and the impact of these stereotypes on the audience's perception of gender roles?

Literature Review

The historical development of advertising in Pakistan can be traced back to 1947, when the subcontinent underwent partition, resulting in the formation of Pakistan and India. Since then, it has undergone multiple phases. Understanding the emergence of advertising in Pakistan and its specific motifs is of significant importance. Mazzarella (2003) has provided an analysis of the historical development of advertising in the subcontinent, which he categorises into four distinct stages. In the first period from 1947 to 1964, the practice of advertising was constrained by limited resources and a lack of awareness. As a result, advertising efforts were mostly focused on certain regional and urban areas, with a particular emphasis on print media advertisements, which enjoyed popularity at this time. Newspapers were traditionally regarded as the sole medium for business communication objectives. Several newspapers that have made significant contributions during this era include Nawa-i-Waqt, Daily Jang, and Dawn News. In the past, advertising used visuals that had little human impact due to societal and cultural constraints that prevented advertisers from exceeding ethical boundaries. However, in the present period, these ethical considerations have been disregarded in order to promote consumer culture. During the second phase (1964–1978), the advent of television introduced novel trends and technology that significantly transformed the landscape of advertising. This medium facilitated the evolution of commercials, placing a greater emphasis on visual effects as a means of communication. The Third and Fourth eras (1978–1998) witnessed significant advancements in communication through advertising. International Media Support (2009) offered several novel graphic models for the purpose of generating media commercials.

Since the 1970s, experts worldwide have conducted research on gender with regards to the representation of men and women in television entertainment. According to Courtney and Whipple (1983), the emergence of feminist rhetoric brought more attention to the issue of gender roles and stereotyping in TV ads. A significant portion of scholarly research has focused on the examination of gender representation within television advertising through the method of content analysis. According to Bretl and Cantor (1988), a considerable number of researches, approximately eleven, have been undertaken to examine the portrayal of gender in TV advertising in the United States.

Furthermore, a substantial body of study has been conducted by scholars such as Williamson (1978), Goffman (1979), and Shields (1990) in the realm of television advertising content and its portrayal of gender. The contributions made by the individuals in question were found to be deficient in terms of addressing the crucial aspect of economic factors, which holds significant importance within the realm of advertising. Within the realm of advertising agencies, it is the economic variables that establish the framework and substance for deliberation and discourse. Advertisers strategically tailor their marketing efforts to reach specific target audiences based on factors such as timing, age, and gender, so contributing to the formation and perpetuation of a consumer culture.

According to Craig (1992), advertisers purposefully add gender-biased structures in advertising with the objective of reinforcing established traditional perspectives. According to Craig (1992), the presence of cultural institutions such as sexism restricts advertising and agencies from depicting men and women in an equitable manner. Advertisers often depict men and women in distinct positions. Hence, the portrayal of gender stereotypes in broadcast advertising serves as a means of expressing and defining the identities of men and women. Sceibe and Condry (1984) conducted a study examining the advertisements aired during talk show programmes and comparing them to those presented during sports programmes and soap operas. The examination of television advertising reveals a portrayal of women as being highly aware of their facial beauty, leading them to seek a more youthful appearance. In contrast, men are shown as engaged in showcasing their physical strength, bravery, and participation in sports-related pursuits. Signorielli and Lears (1992) conducted a study examining the representation of gender in television ads and arrived at the conclusion that these commercials offer insights into the broader socio-cultural treatment and handling of gender structures.

According to Bern (1981), individuals who frequently watch television advertising are more likely to be exposed to stereotypical gendered structures, which ultimately shape their ideology. Subsequently, individuals engage in the process of assessing and interpreting their own self-concept as well as the perceptions of others, utilising the cognitive frameworks that were previously established through discussion and personal development. Bred and Cantor (1988) propose a contrasting perspective to certain prior studies, asserting that current television advertising exhibits fewer instances of sexism and displays a greater inclination towards gender equality in societal depiction. Contrarily, Lovdal (1989) contested the notion of equality and proposed that the prevailing gender portrayal in media discourse has assumed a normative status.

Das (2010) conducted an examination that revealed that male individuals in Indian television advertisements have been prominently featured, assuming a variety of positions in comparison to their female counterparts. The frequency of male presence in the public domain tends to be higher on average compared to that of female characters. Furthermore, the researcher

examined the proportion of male characters who served as voice-overs in Indian television commercials and found that they significantly outnumbered their female counterparts. Additionally, the author asserted that there are variations in the scenery and product advertisements associated with male and female characters, which serve to indicate their respective spheres of influence. The female protagonists exhibited a notable age disparity as compared to their male counterparts.

However, all of the aforementioned research was conducted using a quantitative approach to data representation and was analysed using statistical methods. In his study, Rajesh (2014) exclusively focused on qualitative characteristics and derived specific findings. These findings were subsequently compared to earlier studies in order to establish their validity. Rajesh (2014) proposed the introduction of two novel study approaches, namely pessimistic studies and optimistic studies, and subsequently applied them to the examination of gender representation in broadcast material. In his analysis of gloomy studies, he contended that such studies depict women as being subjected to subjugation, suppression, oppression, and deprivation of their rights. In contrast, it is important to note that these pessimistic studies tend to portray women in a negative and limited manner, relying on stereotypical characterizations that align with the aforementioned attributes as outlined by Das (2010). Optimistic studies pertain to the achievement of gender equality across various domains of society. The optimistic perspective of the depiction of gender in televised material often serves to challenge and dismantle prevailing stereotypes associated with gendered hierarchies. The examination of Indian television advertisements within this research pertains to the presence of gender parity in certain categories; however, a majority of them continue to perpetuate conventional gender roles. The analysis of gender representation in Pakistan has been centred on scholarly discussions. Prior conversations have shed light on the gender disparities observed in third-world and emerging nations in Asia.

The examination of literature has engendered a vigorous scholarly dialogue concerning the portrayal of gender in Asian nations, with particular emphasis on the Philippines, India, and Bangladesh. This dialogue underscores the discriminatory practises utilised by advertisers in their depiction of males and females across diverse media channels, encompassing print, electronic, and social media. The present component of the literature review centres on the scholarly investigations carried out in the context of Pakistan, with a particular emphasis on scrutinising the depiction of gender roles in televised programming. Furthermore, this study examines the socio-cultural attitudes that are involved in the representation of men and women from the above-mentioned perspective.

Based on the findings of the Pakistan Economic Survey report spanning from 2001 to 2012, it is evident that Pakistan has emerged as a very notable and auspicious nation in terms of fostering the consumer market on a global scale. Pakistan is an exceptional nation characterised by its rich cultural and linguistic variety, and it holds the distinction of being the sixth largest country globally. Pakistan's current population exceeds 200 million, with an annual growth rate of 2.03%. Based on data from The World Factbook (2011), the female population in Pakistan is predicted to be nearly equivalent to the male population. Recent research on gender representation has revealed disparities in the representation of women and the perpetuation of traditional gender norms. Women are actively striving for equitable representation in professional contexts and actively contributing to the advancement and growth of the nation.

Promoting increased engagement in various spheres of life has the potential to foster gender equality on a national scale.

In a study conducted by Ali et al. (2012), an examination was carried out to explore the gender patterns seen in Pakistani television commercials, encompassing both food and non-food contexts. The researchers implemented two primary categorizations, specifically food ads and non-food-related commercials, to examine potential gender disparities within television advertisements in these specific domains. The researchers employed the content analysis methodology to interpret the underlying meanings of gender representation within the aforementioned categories. A comprehensive collection of 250 advertisements was first recorded and documented for the purpose of this study. Following that, a sample of 103 advertisements was chosen in a representative manner, with careful consideration given to eliminating any duplications, monotony, and commercials lacking major characters. The provided sample was divided into two unique categories: advertisements associated with food, amounting to a total of 54, and non-food commercials, amounting to a total of 49. Food advertisements contain a diverse array of food products, accompanied by promotional content associated with beverages. On the other hand, non-food advertisements comprised a wide range of categories, including electric appliances, beauty and cosmetic promotions, pharmaceuticals and medical marketing, and sports-related promotions.

The study conducted by Ul Huda and Ali (2015) looked into the impact of social media on the depiction of gender roles in the Pakistani setting. The investigators employed an open-ended questionnaire as a method of data collection for the investigation. The data was collected by a simple random sample methodology, wherein 100 surveys were randomly sent to Pakistani Facebook users who voluntarily provided the required information. The objective of this research was to identify the media factors that lead to the depiction of distorted images and biased views regarding genders. The outcomes of the study revealed that women were subjected to objectification not only within the context of social media, but also across several other kinds of media discourse. Despite the significant progress achieved by women, contemporary society persists in perceiving them as lacking strength, so impeding their capacity to overcome the negative and stereotypical depictions disseminated by the media. The occurrence of underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women in the media is suggestive of a dearth of proactive efforts of women working in media institutions to confront and alter the narrative around their depiction.

In their study, Ullah and Khan (2014) conducted an examination of the manner in which women are objectified in Pakistani television advertising. It is often believed that significant research has been conducted in Western nations to examine the portrayal of women in media content. However, comparatively little scholarly work has been undertaken in the specific context of Pakistan. An attempt was made to reveal the portrayal of women as produced in discourse inside electronic media. In order to achieve this objective, the researchers utilised critical discourse analysis as a qualitative methodology to elucidate the recurring patterns associated with the marginalisation and stereotyped representation of women. The data collection process employed the purposive sampling technique. The data was obtained from PTV, a state-run television channel, as well as four other channels that are widely recognised and favoured by the general public. This approach was employed to enhance the validity and reliability of the data.

Based on the analysis of the data, the findings indicate that television advertising serves to legitimise and perpetuate negative and stereotypical portrayals of women. Moreover, televised material effectively showcases the achievements of women's bodies in order to captivate the target audience. As evidenced by prior scholarly investigations, advertisements often feature a certain portrayal of women's body image, with a preference for young girls. According to Jacobson and Mazur (1995), several attributes that contribute to the enhancement of beauty encompass a fair complexion, open silky hair, and symmetrical bodies, which are believed to enhance the attractiveness of women. However, the authors express criticism towards these characteristics due to their artificial nature and lack of natural appearance. The inclusion of sexually objectifying characteristics portrays women as commodities and diminishes their status within gender dynamics.

Malik and Kiani (2012) sought to investigate the portrayal of women in Pakistani televised material, with a focus on the promotion of a favourable image. The authors proposed that while the media does not fully portray a positive picture of women, electronic media does make attempts to display women in a more favourable light. This study examines the portrayal of women in the media and explores the extent to which the media has the capacity to offer a good gender image. The SWOT model was utilised to analyse the present depiction of women in the media. The study employed a survey methodology to gather data from three distinct media organisations, utilising a questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. The data was gathered from individuals employed as news anchors, news broadcasters, and producers within media organisations.

The portrayal of women in ads reflects the influence of patriarchal societal norms, wherein the state promotes certain ideals, such as the expectation for women to embody beauty, passivity, familial roles as daughters, sisters, wives, mothers, and proficiency in domestic tasks. The elucidation of how inequality is legitimised through the utilisation of sophisticated language and semiotics becomes imperative within the context of symbolic violence. Advertisements play a significant role in forming habits; however, there has been less attention given to local advertisements within the framework of critical discourse analysis. Therefore, it is imperative to do a critical analysis of the use of language and other semiotic elements inside advertisements aimed at promoting the sale of products. However, other scholarly works have examined the influence of advertisements, including Fairclough (1995), Van Dijik (2001), and Bazergan (2012). The current investigation serves as a valuable complement with respect to the current corpus of knowledge in this particular field. This study aims to examine the gendered ideologies portrayed in Pakistani television advertisements during the 21st century.

Theoretical Framework

The current investigation employs semiotics as a conceptual framework to scrutinise the depiction of gender in Pakistani television advertisements. A multitude of scholars, such as Williamson (1978), Dyer (1982), and Jhallay (1990), argue that semiotics can be an effective method for conducting a critical analysis of televised content. This methodology improves the reliability and validity of the instrument used to examine the research inquiries presented in this investigation. The foundation of semiotics' theoretical framework primarily rests on the concepts proposed by Barthes in 1977. This research is largely based on the semiotic framework proposed by Dyer (1982), which clarifies the importance of incorporating gendered stereotype ideologies into the semiotic analysis of advertisements.

According to Dyer (1982), denotation and connotation are two analytical variables that help readers and consumers analyse advertisements within a sociocultural framework. The term "denotation" refers to the descriptive information that an advertisement provides to its intended audience. At the denotative level of analysis, the identification of objects and key signifiers plays a significant role in enhancing the attractiveness and profitability of an advertisement. According to Barthes (1977), the initial level of analysis is denotation, which provides further support for the examination of the subsequent level, connotation. The concept of connotation has multiple dimensions and involves a more advanced degree of examination that necessitates knowledge of the contextual, social, cultural, and historical factors at play in order to reveal the culturally ingrained symbols used in an advertisement. Dyer (1982), also proposes that some non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions, contextualised bodily movements, visual images, colour, gender, behaviours, and activities, communicate social constructions within a specific socio-cultural framework. The manner in which indications are deconstructed inside ads exhibits variation across different societies, contingent upon the cultural norms that prevail within each country. To analyse the semantic interpretations of human representation in commercials, it is crucial to examine three overarching categories: physical appearance, behaviour, and the nature of the activities depicted. These categories encompass various aspects that require further examination and discussion. The variables that facilitate the denotative analysis of ads are individually described.

The present study incorporates an analytical framework developed by Dyer (1982) in order to analyse the textual and visual aspects of television advertising. Dyer (1982) proposed a set of features that have been utilised in the examination of gender portrayal and positioning in Pakistani television advertisements.

Research Methodology

The present investigation aligns with the qualitative research paradigm. The research methodology employed in this study utilises a descriptive and explanatory qualitative approach to analyse and interpret the collected data. The analysis is performed through the application of the concepts and principles that are derived from Gillian Dyer's semiotic theory (1982). Polkinghorne (1983), posits that qualitative research encompasses a variety of techniques within its methodology. These techniques consist of critical discourse analysis, ethnography, grounded theory, semiotics, and discourse analysis. The present study offers valuable insights on the dynamics of gender-binary relationships and the societal expectations associated with gender roles within the context of Pakistan.

The current research uses semiotic analysis as a methodology to critically examine television advertising in Pakistan. The process of semiotic analysis elucidates the intricate framework of signification, which is fundamentally grounded in the use of signals. Signs serve as conveyors of cultural meanings, thereby supporting an underlying ideology. According to Dyer (1982), the assertion is made that every sign in existence is inherently imbued with ideology. The analytical approach employed in this study is rooted in the interpretive paradigm, which rigorously adheres to the principles outlined in the theoretical framework.The process of gathering information or data for research purposes. The dataset utilised in this study consists of television advertisements that were aired on several television stations in Pakistan. The aforementioned list comprises prominent terrestrial television channels currently in operation inside Pakistan. The collection of data, which encompasses television ads, has been conducted in multiple phases, necessitating meticulous observation of the information being broadcast. The

researcher conducted a systematic observation of very popular television channels during the prime-time period of 7 PM to 9 PM in order to collect the necessary data. The data obtained from several television stations has been documented on a Digital Versatile Disc (DVD).

Population and Sampling

Marshall (1996) describes the term "population" in the context of research as the specific units that are the focus of research. The individual in question regards the population as discrete data points rather than collective entities. These units may encompass individuals, instances, and data units collected from various sources. The target population for the current study involves all television channels that were broadcasting during the specified duration of the investigation. A total of five television commercials were included for qualitative analysis, with two commercials being deleted due to content duplication in order to prevent monotony. The current study used a sample technique known as non-probability purposive sampling. The non-probability sampling technique is a method in which the researcher is interested in selecting specific units or data. The primary characteristic of non-probability sampling techniques is the researcher's discretion and judgement in selecting and analysing data to form a sample. The sampling strategy indicated above is commonly used in qualitative research investigations. Hence, the use of this technique is deemed appropriate within the framework of this study, rendering it qualitative in nature. The sample has five distinct categories that emphasise the representation of gender across different domains of human activity. A total of three advertisements were strategically positioned within each respective category. Furthermore, for the purpose of analysis, a single commercial from each category that has garnered the highest viewership and extensive broadcasting has been taken into consideration. The data collection process extends for a duration of six months, specifically from July 2022 to December 2022.

Data Analysis

This section provides an overview of the prominent methodological and theoretical frameworks that have been utilised for the analysis of the data. The present research offers an interpretation of the collected data by employing theoretical concepts derived from the field of semiotics. Through data analysis, the researcher has attempted to answer the research questions within the context of the theoretical framework.

Adveritisement-1: Advertisement of Lux Beauty Soap:
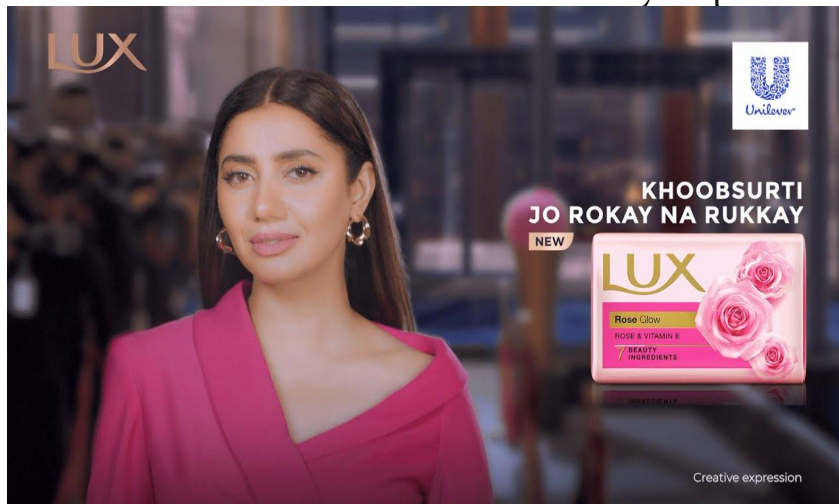
This commercial showcases a beauty soap called Lux. The advertisement begins with the presence of a celebrity, Mahira Khan, who is depicted holding a bar of soap. In the subsequent

scene, Mahira Khan is seen approaching a group of cameramen who eagerly capture her image. During this moment, her face is prominently illuminated, emphasising her beauty. Among the cameramen, there is one female who receives a friendly gesture from Mahira Khan, resulting in her face also appearing radiant. This par At the conclusion, Mahira Khan expresses the notion that the aforementioned remark, "*bs zra sa lux*," implies that only a minimal amount of the substance is necessary to enhance one's aesthetic appeal. Gendered ideology in advertisements often involves the portrayal of traditional gender roles, stereotypes, and expectations. In the context of a beauty soap advertisement like the one you mentioned featuring Mahira Khan, there are several elements that can be analyzed from a gendered perspective:

1. **Role of Women**: Beauty soap ads often depict women as the primary consumers and users of the product. This reinforces the traditional gender role of women as caretakers of their appearance and beauty. Mahira Khan, a female celebrity, is presented as the ideal user and embodies the standards of beauty to which women are expected to aspire. The ad assumes that women are primarily responsible for their personal care, hygiene, and beauty. This reinforces the traditional role of women as caretakers of their appearance and well-being.

2. **Desirability and Attractiveness**: These ads typically associate the use of the product with increased desirability and attractiveness. Women are encouraged to use the soap to enhance their physical appearance, conforming to societal expectations that place a premium on women's beauty as a source of their value and self-esteem.

3. **Stereotypical Beauty Standards**: The portrayal of Mahira Khan and the depiction of her beauty can reinforce traditional, sometimes unrealistic, beauty standards. Such ads may suggest that for women to be considered beautiful, they need to have flawless skin, perfect features, and be impeccably groomed.

4. **Luxury and Femininity**: The use of terms like "luxury" and "elegance" in beauty soap ads can be seen as emphasizing elements traditionally associated with femininity. The ad implies that by using the product, women can achieve a more luxurious and feminine self.

5. **Implicit Beauty-Related Tasks**: By presenting a narrative that usually starts with a problem (e.g., dull skin) and offers a solution (the beauty soap), these ads reinforce the idea that women should be actively engaged in managing their appearance and addressing perceived flaws.

6. **Consumer Power**: In many cases, these ads present the act of buying and using the product as a source of empowerment for women, suggesting that taking control of their beauty and appearance through the purchase of beauty products is a form of self-determination.

7. **Language and Text**: The use of phrases like "Bs zra sa Lux" may imply that women should prioritize the simplicity of using the product to achieve beauty, aligning with stereotypical expectations that women should strive to look attractive effortlessly.

To conclude, it is important to remember that the role of women in advertisements like this one reflects and reinforces existing gender norms and stereotypes. While some women may find empowerment in taking control of their appearance, it's essential to recognize that these ads are rooted in societal expectations and may not represent the diverse range of roles and aspirations that women have in reality. Modern advertising is increasingly moving towards more inclusive and diverse portrayals of women and challenging traditional gender roles and beauty standards.

Adveritisement-2: Advertisement of Shampoo Sunsilk:

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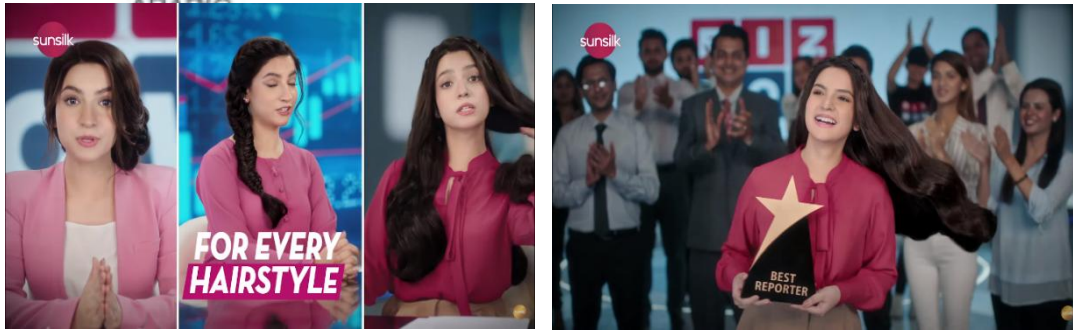
This commercial is about shampoo called Sunsilk. The advertising commences by depicting the setting of a news channel studio, where a female employee is seen requesting approval from her manager to report on the newest happenings in the realm of business for the day. A male individual positioned in close proximity to the authoritative figure engages in the act of objectifying his fellow's hairstyle and expresses uncertainty over how the female individual will report the news. The young woman responded to him, asserting that he had not yet observed her hairstyle. She proceeded to explain her hair care routine, specifically mentioning the shampoo she employs. According to her, by utilising this particular shampoo, one may get a diverse range of hairstyles. In the subsequent scene, the primary character is holding the award for best reporter in his hand while her hair is being visually emphasised for its aesthetic appeal, thus endorsing a particular brand of shampoo. She went on to elucidate that individuals with luxuriant hair possess the freedom to experiment with various hairstyles. Furthermore, she asserts that phrase while moving and adjusting her hair.

A semiological analysis of this Sunsilk shampoo commercial involves dissecting the visual and verbal elements to reveal the underlying meanings and messages communicated through the signs and symbols present in the ad. The analysis considers both the explicit and implicit meanings conveyed:

1. **The Signifier**: The key signifiers in the commercial include the news channel studio setting, the female employee, the male colleague, the discussion about hairstyles, and the Sunsilk shampoo product itself.

2. **The Signified**: The signified elements are the ideas and concepts represented by the signifiers. In this case, they include the professional workplace, gender dynamics, the significance of hairstyle, and the association of Sunsilk shampoo with hair versatility.

3. **Iconic Signs**: The studio setting and the professional attire of the characters are iconic signs representing a corporate environment. The male colleague's comments and gestures are iconic signs of objectification and gender bias, emphasizing the prevalent gender dynamics in such settings. The Sunsilk shampoo product is portrayed as a symbol of hair care and styling.

4. **Indexical Signs**: The primary character's award for best reporter signifies her professional success, while her hairstyle indexically represents her personal style and confidence. The Sunsilk product, when applied, indexes the possibility of achieving various hairstyles.

5. **Symbolic Signs**: The award symbolizes achievement and recognition, suggesting that professional success and attractive hairstyles are complementary. The Sunsilk shampoo symbolizes the idea of freedom and flexibility in hairstyling, emphasizing that using this product offers a solution to hair-related concerns.

6. **Narrative Structure**: The ad follows a narrative structure where the female employee faces a challenge (doubt about her hair's appearance) and overcomes it by revealing her hair care secret,

which is Sunsilk shampoo. The narrative conveys the message that using Sunsilk empowers individuals to achieve diverse hairstyles.

7. **Text and Language**: The phrase "phrase while moving and adjusting her hair" serves as a linguistic sign that communicates the central message of the ad. It suggests that Sunsilk shampoo users have the freedom to experiment with different hairstyles.

8. **Gender and Stereotypes**: The ad plays with gender stereotypes and expectations. The male colleague's objectification of the female employee's appearance and his skepticism about her ability to report the news allude to stereotypes related to women's appearance and competence in a professional setting. The ad suggests that Sunsilk shampoo can help women overcome these challenges by providing them with the freedom to express themselves through diverse hairstyles.

9. **Consumer Empowerment**: The ad portrays the Sunsilk user as an empowered individual who can confidently navigate professional and personal challenges. By using Sunsilk, the female employee asserts her control over her appearance and style, challenging traditional gender expectations.

10. **Cultural and Social Context**: The ad operates within the context of workplace gender dynamics and beauty standards. It implies that individuals, particularly women, can challenge stereotypes and achieve success while expressing their unique styles.

In conclusion, the Sunsilk shampoo commercial employs a semiological analysis to address gender dynamics and professional challenges while emphasizing the power of hairstyling. It suggests that using Sunsilk shampoo empowers individuals, especially women, to break free from stereotypes and embrace diverse hairstyles that express their individuality.

Adveritisement-3: Advertisement of Shan Masala:

The advertisement features two individuals in their twenties who live in foreign countries. The main character is the younger sibling who expresses to their older brother that "our mother must be preparing a multitude of dishes in observance of this propitious event, and I am

experiencing a profound longing for her presence." Subsequently, the younger sibling becomes emotional, shedding tears while asserting that "the celebration of Eid is incomplete without the presence of our mother." In the auditory backdrop, a poignant melody resonates, serving as a medium to illuminate the poignant circumstances experienced by youthful individuals residing in foreign lands, who find themselves bereft of the opportunity to reunite with their cherished companions. The prevailing perception in Pakistani society is that young men experience enjoyment when living overseas, while girls endure hardships. However, this advertisement has shown an alternative perspective on this matter.

This advertisement portrays male individuals exhibiting attitudes and emotions traditionally associated with ladies. Subsequently, the older sibling embraces him in an act of solace. The older sibling compiles a comprehensive inventory of items as instructed by their mother during a telephone conversation. Subsequently, they proceed to the marketplace and engage in the procurement of various groceries, including Shaan Food Masala. It is noteworthy that this task is commonly associated with femininity in numerous television advertisements, thereby defying societal expectations placed upon males. This advertisement sheds light on the plight endured by young Pakistani men who find themselves responsible for managing both domestic and external responsibilities single-handedly, solely for the betterment of their families. The accompanying musical composition once again evokes a sense of tragedy, as exemplified by the words "*Mola sub ki suntan ha per ksi ksi ko chunta ha*" (The divine entity hears the pleas of all individuals, yet selectively grants fulfilment to only a few). The observation is made of the elder sibling engaging in physical exertion within a store and subsequently on a road, with the purpose of boarding a bus. This behaviour is interpreted as a manifestation of the individual's hardships experienced in a foreign country. However, it is noteworthy that his apprehension and affection towards his younger sibling are commendable. In Pakistani society, it is commonly observed that sisters often exhibit caring attitudes towards their brothers, while brothers tend to display a lack of concern. Furthermore, this dynamic is exemplified in a bus scenario, where the brother willingly offers his seat to an older man. This portrayal offers a distinct perspective on male members of our society, as they are typically depicted as pursuing romantic interests, engaging in recreational activities, or being occupied with work-related matters.

Both main characters are male, and the background song is in male voice to depict young men's sentiments overseas. The older brother cooks all the dishes and takes advice from his mother, defying the stereotype that only famous chefs are displayed in kitchens. When the younger brother arrives home at night, he hears his mother say "Umer" and starts crying, breaking the Pakistani prejudice that boys cannot cry. Finally, he sees all the Shaan Food Masala dishes near his mother, who is on Skype wishing him a good Eid. The mother and boy are now overjoyed, and in the last picture, the friend shows them that he made her son happy with an excellent meal. The melancholy music again plays in the background to depict the love between mother and son, which is distinct from the love between girls and boys.

The ideological analysis shows that this ad contradicts Pakistani tradition. Pakistani society is patriarchal; however, this ad highlights the issues of young men living overseas and missing their families. Men can be oppressed when their families send them away to work, no matter how much they miss them or their issues. Families care about the money they send. Since advertisers use non-semantic notions to create new ideologies and promote their products, Pakistani men represent consumer ideology (Wolska, 2011).

All societies have stereotypes, and most advertising reinforces gender stereotypes. Recent Pakistani TV advertising defies these preconceptions, according to this study. Challenge gender conventions to market products and services because advertisers know non-semiotic ideology is interesting. Semiotic discourse analysis shows that these ads challenge gender stereotypes in social and cultural contexts using language and paralanguage. Pakistani ads used to examine gender representational value reinforce stereotyped men and women's power narratives. This shows that Pakistani advertising perpetuates imbalanced or conventional gender structures by showing men and women in their traditional roles within their social domains. Strong advertising makes such images seem natural, supporting a patriarchal worldview. Media depictions of gender influence the audience and make us evaluate gender roles, positions, and power. Commercials with male and female voices reinforce gender norms.

Findings and Conclusion

The study also examines the current position, role, activities, binary relationships, and socially created ideology that are promoted through a system of signification. The present study's findings are as follows: Women are commonly depicted in traditional roles that involve managing household matters, while men are typically portrayed with minimal presence in domestic settings. Men are commonly portrayed in stereotypes as individuals who possess physical strength, exert power, and assume the role of decision-makers. Women are often portrayed as being more inclined and concerned with their physical appearance, suggesting that advertising promotes and reinforces these particular behavioural characteristics in females. Conversely, men are depicted as being less concerned with societal standards of beauty. The examined advertisements feature both male and female individuals as representations of the products. The depiction of men is often associated with things that are relevant to their intended purposes. Conversely, women are often portrayed as prominent representatives of household and beauty products.

Every society has stereotypes, and most advertisements perpetuate gender stereotypes. This study shows that recent Pakistani television commercials have defied these assumptions. Challenge gender norms to promote products and services since advertisers know non-semiotic ideology can grab attention and be interesting. These advertisements challenge gender stereotypes using linguistic and paralinguistic elements in broader social and cultural settings, as revealed by semiotic discourse analysis. The Pakistani advertisements used to study gender representational value tend to support the power narrative of stereotyped men and women. This suggests that The portrayal of men and women in traditional gender roles within their socially assigned domains in Pakistani electronic television programming, including commercials, serves to perpetuate imbalanced or stereotyped gender structures. Advertising, as a potent medium, presents these depictions in a manner that appears intrinsic, strengthening the patriarchal mindset. The media's depiction of gender exerts influence on the audience as a persuasive medium, prompting us to contemplate the constructs of gender roles, positions, and power dynamics. The combined use of masculine and feminine voices in commercials serves to promote societal constructs and notions surrounding masculinity and femininity.

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