

Profiling Social Roles in Pakistani Media Advertisements

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Abstract: *This study investigates the influence of advertisements on consumer perceptions, with a specific focus on the portrayal of gender stereotypes and associated gender roles. By examining how these stereotypes impact consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions, the research highlights the role of media in shaping social norms. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected through a structured questionnaire from a sample of 375 youth, primarily students active on social media. Convenience sampling was employed to ensure broad representation within this demographic. The collected data were analyzed using Pearson correlation to identify significant relationships. Findings reveal a strong association between exposure to gender stereotypes in advertisements and shifts in consumer perception and purchase intentions, emphasizing the powerful role of media in reinforcing traditional gender roles. This research contributes to the understanding of advertising's social impact, providing insights for both marketers and social scientists on the implications of gendered media portrayals.*

Keywords: Advertisements, Gender Stereotypes, Consumer Behavior, Purchasing Intentions, Social Roles, Societal Norms, Pakistan

Introduction

In recent years, social media has significantly influenced culture, economy, and communication patterns. As an online communication medium, social media has had a profound impact on society (Luttrell & Wallace, 2024). Broadly, social media encompasses a range of internet and mobile technologies that enable users to participate in online exchanges, contribute content, and join communities. Through these platforms, individuals can share photos, express opinions, engage in discussions, and interact with vast audiences (Dewing, , 2010). A large segment of the population, particularly the youth, has transitioned from traditional digital platforms like television and radio to social media. This shift has sparked questions regarding its societal impact. While it is widely acknowledged that these platforms influence people's lifestyles, they are also observed to affect areas such as political awareness, physical activity, social life, and learning (Shabir, 2014).

The influence of social media on human behavior has become a focal point of research for scholars. Studies indicate that social media is linked to behaviors related to self-promotion, identity development, social comparison, and self-esteem. Furthermore, researchers have identified social media as a source of addictive behaviors. Literature suggests that social media users, particularly those heavily engaged,

may experience adverse psychological and social outcomes.

Social Media Influence

Social media plays a substantial role in shaping consumer behavior and influencing purchasing decisions. Modern social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are actual real-life retail stores where business interacts with consumers, introduce products, and shape trends through collaborations with influencers, advertisements, and customers' content. These have disclosed themselves as being unrivalled tools for branding and marketing with specific regard to the market pull.

Influence of Social Media on Gender

Gender roles also play another important role, influenced by sites such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube. These platforms have unique algorithms that follow the interests and needs of the users, especially gender preferences. For example, the female population arranges its plans and chooses routes based on such visual material as pictures and videos. As for the interests, they also change with gender because some preferences represent the dominant male or female stereotype.

Gender per se is a difference based on a social construct; in fact, gender entails the aspects a particular culture or society deems as appropriate for a male or female. Gender roles refer to the perimeters expected of a male or female within societies or cultures. These norms tend to work in a way that entailed women as feminine and men as masculine.

Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are generalized perceptions that attribute specific characteristics to women and men, often reinforcing distinct roles for each. Stereotyping simplifies and categorizes individuals based on exaggerated, and frequently negative, traits, obscuring natural variations and solidifying perceived disparities (Zotos & Tsihla., 2014). In Pakistani society, specific gender roles are strongly associated with men and women. To navigate social expectations, both genders often adhere to these stereotypes, with advertisements that portray gender roles contributing to their reinforcement.

Advertising is a powerful tool for marketers, as it influences consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions (Kardam & Dua, 2021). By shaping narratives around products, advertisements communicate societal norms and ideals, including those related to gender.

Historical Context

The portrayal of gender stereotypes in advertisements has evolved but has deep historical roots. In the early 20th century, advertisements depicted men within resource-providing roles and women within domestic settings (Natalia, 2023). Earlier stereotyped representations gave dominance to males and females as minor role models who were depicted as home-bound caretakers, dutiful and obedient. Much as they mirrored other frameworks of gender roles in society, it could also be said that they reinforced them in addition to proactively building upon them. Stereotyping, in this case, means making assumptions about a person's traits in a particular group and attributing those qualities to other members of the group (Ellemers, 2018) presentations not only mirrored but also perpetuated existing societal norms around gender roles. Stereotyping, in this context, involves forming judgments about individuals based on generalized characteristics assigned to specific social groups

Advertising can play a significant role in framing consumer perception and also shape gender-stereotyped products. For instance, women are typically used in promoting beauty products or even products such as skin bleaching products, cooking oil, and the like. Also, as with other brands and products, men are sexually objectified, accompanied by images of muscles and athletic ability in muscular appealing men targeting them such as advertisements and commercials of for instance sports equipment or grooming products.

Regarding gender stereotyping ads also enshrined women as weak, emotional beings who are merely

ornaments to grace an ad, but who lack the power usually associated with decision-making. On the other hand, men are portrayed as rational, muscled, and brave reason givers, the least swaying when it comes to emotions. A woman depicted in commercials and adverts is usually sexually symbolized and complimented with perfect skin, harmonious facial features, and other fantastic characteristics that are hard to emulate.

How Consumers Perceive Messages in Advertising

Consumer perception in advertising therefore encompasses the way that consumers regard or make sense of communication advertisements, brand images, and product information. This process encompasses the cognitive activities by which the consumers develop perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and predispositions towards brands and products as a result of contact with the advertising stimuli.

Gender roles in advertising begin with an actual influence on the consumer's perception of a product's quality, gender appropriateness, and need. For example, advertisements that reinforce gender stereotyping will make consumers regard other commodities as the epitome of gender roles and perceptions of their roles in society.

Decision Making

Gender stereotyping in advertising affects consumers' buyer behavior and decisions in their purchases. That is how stereotypical advertisements can influence consumer's views on a specific brand of a product or a social standard. The authors argue that it is possible for consumers to assimilate these stereotypical images in advertisements thereby influencing their attitude toward certain products, and or beliefs which may affect their buying decisions.

Problem Statement

The profiling of social roles in media advertisements, where the portrayal of women as inferior and the portrayal of men as superior has been a significant problem since the 17th century. Still, it is a main factor preventing social development. Interestingly, Media especially in commerce-centered advertisements play a major role in expanding these stereotypes as more socially constructed bias logos are launched. This paper will highlight how gender stereotype in advertising not only influences consumers but also constrain the abilities of people and promote unfair treatment based on their gender. Although these stereotypes have been employed internationally, in a considerably traditional extended culture like Pakistan such depiction might even augment values concerning gender. Unchecked, gender-stereotypical advertising damages gender equality goals, distorts gender portrayal, and erodes consumer trust and the power of brands. This current study also examines the Pakistani consumers' perception of gender-stereotyped advertising and their congruity with social norms and values, with regard to advertisement influences on consumers' purchase attitudes and preferences. In this study, easy access to Pakistani youth living in Islamabad will be made in an attempt to establish the perception of such youth on advertising and how increased ad prom, equity erasing, self-esteem boosting advertising that is inclusive of progressive local brands can change the society for the better.

Research Objectives

RO1: To examine how Pakistani consumers perceive gender stereotypical advertising as reflective of social norms and values.

RO2: To analyze the influence of gender stereotypical advertising on Pakistani consumer purchase intentions and brand preferences.

Literature Review

Advertising serves as a strategic tool for communication aimed at promoting products, services, or ideas, often through persuasive messaging across various media outlets such as television, radio, print, online platforms, and outdoor displays like billboard service (Cook, 2001). Effective advertising has

the power not only to inform but also to influence opinions, emotions, and attitudes toward specific products or services. In the modern era, advertising has become a potent ideological force that can shape societal values and norms (Kilbourne, 2000). Through visual representation, advertisements often reinforce specific gender roles, impacting societal mindsets about the roles traditionally assigned to men and women.

In Pakistani culture, gender roles are deeply rooted, associating specific roles and behaviors with each gender. For instance, women are typically viewed as homemakers and are expected to embody submissive, nurturing traits, while men are seen as breadwinners, decision-makers, and dominant figures within the household (Anam, 2018). Physical characteristics are also considered with men having to be physically endowed, tall, and muscular while women should be light-skinned and skinny. These gender-specific divisions of roles continue to assume that men have power and can be self-employed, while women are defined as powerless. Their roles include cooking, raising children, and doing other house chores.

Stereotypes can be defined as general and frequently overgeneralized assumptions made concerning members of a certain group and how these dictate the interaction between the members of the said group. Gender stereotypes, in particular, are preconceived ideas about attributes, behaviors, and roles appropriate to man or woman (Ellemers, 2018).

Mass media commercials always provide loyal pictures of the standard gender roles, where women do the chores at home while men act powerfully and professionally (Khan, Khattak, & Shaikh, 2020). That is, such portrayals are accepted, embraced, and shared in society, thus effectively ensuring the continuity of gendered behaviours and roles. For instance, it is common to find commercials regarding women where a particular product is presented as a must-have if women want beautiful skin that conforms to particular high standards of beauty (Heathy, 2020). Such portrayals reflect and perpetuate societal expectations, influencing gendered behaviors and roles. For example, ads targeting women often emphasize beauty standards, implying that women must achieve flawless, radiant skin, thereby instilling a sense of inadequacy and the need for beauty products (Heathy, 2020). This targeted approach to advertisement not only promotes a change in the kind of products the consumers are likely to buy but also strengthens certain product gender stereotypes. In gender-stereotyped advertising, it becomes evident that consumers are probably to select those products, with women especially likely to select those products portrayed as feminine such as beauty & household products & men are likely to select products that are related to strength & athleticism (Reghunath & K, 2023) societal expectations, influencing gendered behaviors and roles. For example, ads targeting women often emphasize beauty standards, implying that women must achieve flawless, radiant skin, thereby instilling a sense of inadequacy and the need for beauty products (Heathy, 2020). This targeted approach in advertising not only influences consumers' purchasing behavior but also reinforces specific product associations with gender.

Exposure to gender-stereotyped advertising can significantly impact consumer preferences, with women often swayed toward products marketed as feminine, like beauty and household items, and men inclined toward products associated with strength or athleticism (Reghunath & K, 2023). However, gender stereotypes can negatively influence brand loyalty as customers more often uphold brands that reinforce healthy gender stereotypes whereas customers reject brands that uphold unhealthy gender stereotypes like repulsive beauty standards or overemphasis on male chauvinism (Shaikh, Bughio, & Kadri, 2015). As expected of the social conventional roles, the feminine gender is depicted as more emotionally charged, beauty-conscious, and powerless while the masculine gender is depicted as more rational, powerful, and emotionally contained (Saeed & Khan, 2022). Such portrayals reflect and perpetuate societal expectations, influencing gendered behaviors and roles. For example, ads targeting women often emphasize beauty standards, implying that women must achieve flawless, radiant skin,

thereby instilling a sense of inadequacy and the need for beauty products (Heathy, 2020). This targeted approach in advertising not only influences consumers' purchasing behavior but also reinforces specific product associations with gender.

Exposure to gender-stereotyped advertising can significantly impact consumer preferences, with women often swayed toward products marketed as feminine, like beauty and household items, and men inclined toward products associated with strength or athleticism (Reghunath & K, 2023). However, gender stereotypes can also have adverse effects on brand loyalty, as consumers increasingly boycott brands perceived to perpetuate outdated or harmful gender norms, such as those promoting unrealistic beauty standards or rigid masculine ideals (Shaikh, Bughio, & Kadri, 2015). In line with societal roles, advertisements often present women as emotionally driven, aesthetically focused, and lacking power, while men are depicted as rational, influential, and emotionally restrained (Saeed & Khan, 2022).

A number of the analyses of gender stereotypes in advertisements thus become detrimental to individual development and career prospects, ego, and self-image reduction, especially among those who position themselves against conventional gender roles. It is therefore crucial for (Ahmadli, 2023) to stress that these stereotypes impact people's beliefs, actions, and goals, thus having rather a profound impact on society.

Normally, the advertisement is a mirror to society depicting acceptable behaviors and beliefs within the targeted audience. In this way, the advertisers increase the relevance and appeal of their advertisements to the population by associating products with competing cultural constructs of being male and female. For example, women are often portrayed as the usage of products such as cleaning products, cosmetics, apparel, and many others, while men are portrayed as using products such as Electronics, automobiles, and financial services (Thurm, 2001) among those who challenge traditional gender roles. (Ahmadli, 2023) highlights that these stereotypes affect individuals' attitudes, behaviors, and aspirations, leading to significant societal consequences.

Advertising often reflects prevailing social norms and values to establish resonance with target audiences. By aligning products with culturally accepted notions of masculinity and femininity, advertisers enhance the appeal of their messages. For instance, women are typically shown in ads for household products, beauty items, and clothing, while men are more commonly featured in ads for technology, automobiles, and finance (Thurm, 2001). Such portrayals are far in a way contributing towards encouraging society to put women into prison-bound roles taking care of children while the husbands assume the role of decision-makers and providers.

Research on the portrayal of women in advertisements reveals a disconnect between these representations and the actual roles of women in contemporary society (Thurm, 2001) concludes that gender stereotyping in advertising persists as a national practice, often failing to capture the evolving role of women outside traditional domestic settings. Similarly, (Javed, Asif, Tariq, Ali, & Ayoub, 2024) investigate how television advertising perpetuates gendered ideologies, underscoring the significant impact of media on shaping gender perceptions. This study highlights the intricate relationship between media and consumer culture, noting that TV advertisements contribute to constructing and reinforcing gender stereotypes, which in turn shape societal expectations.

Consumer perception of advertising entails how consumers conceive of and act towards advertisement information considering characteristics of the consumers themselves, their history, psychological factors, other people, and the advertisement containments. Gender stereotyping plays a very large role in the advertisement because stereotypical images reinforce the idea that women should be slim and obsessed with their shape while men should be muscled and obsessed with physical fitness. Such portrayals impact body image negatively, self-esteem, and overall body satisfaction for both sexes thus promoting self-consciousness and may even lower self-confidence (Åkestam, Rosengren, Dahlén, Liljedal, & Berg, 2021). This frequently leads to consumption with regard to products that promise to

align the consumer with the culture of the society. The appeal is usually augmented through celebrity advertisement appeals which makes advertisements more persuasive to the intended audience (Mkerwa, 2024).

This study reveals how gender stereotypes in advertisements affect consumer behavior and perception. For example, visuals of muscle gains would target men who are looking for products of strength while adverts that portray the traditional female gender interest women in beauty or homemaking products. Also, colors are relevant here with blue and pink connoting to genders to help with brand perception. One analysis shows that perceptions of female attributes (for instance, pink) make a brand seem friendlier and more trustworthy, while masculine associations' (for instance, blue) lead to perceptions of competence for novel brands, which increases the purchase intention and the customers' trust level (Subroto & Balqiah, 2022). Advertisements significantly shape consumer perceptions, as stereotypical depictions often portray women as slender and focused on appearance, while men are shown as muscular and athletic. These portrayals can harm body image, self-esteem, and overall body satisfaction for both men and women, fostering self-consciousness and potentially reducing self-confidence (Åkestam, Rosengren, Dahlén, Liljedal, & Berg, 2021) This often drives consumers to purchase products that claim to help them align with societal ideals. Celebrity endorsements are frequently employed to enhance appeal, making advertisements more relatable and compelling to target audiences (Mkerwa, 2024).

Research shows that stereotypical portrayals of gender in advertising influence consumer behavior and perceptions. For instance, visuals emphasizing muscularity may appeal to men seeking strength-oriented products, while advertisements promoting feminine stereotypes attract women interested in beauty or homemaking products. Additionally, colors play a significant role, with gendered cues like blue and pink influencing brand perception. A study indicates that feminine cues (such as pink) enhance perceptions of a brand's warmth and trustworthiness, while masculine cues (like blue) increase perceptions of competence, especially for new brands, boosting purchase intention and consumer trust (Subroto & Balqiah, 2022). As highlighted by the authors these results are a pointer to how brands deliberately incorporate gendered colors that are dubbed as 'traffic light' to help in framing impressions as well as promote the sale of products.

It is also relevant to note that, gender-stereotypical advertising has an impact on attitudes to gender equality. S-API ads, which can perpetuate conventional role expectations, may desensitize users to certain roles, and revert the social progress of change, but advertisements of S-OSA may have positive impacts on consumers' attitudes toward gender roles since they challenge specific predictable roles. Other prior studies indicate that gender stereotypes influence the consumer response to celebrity endorsement and reveal that women tend to be more influenced by celebrities' endorsements than men (Lazăr, 2020) ads that challenge stereotypes can positively influence consumer attitudes by promoting diverse gender representations.

Previous studies also show that gender stereotypes affect consumer responses to celebrity endorsements, with women reportedly being more influenced by these endorsements than men (Lazăr, 2020). Furthermore, there was evidence that traditional Gender Role Portrayal still dominates the advertising airwaves, especially in financial and automobile-related services; which has a negative influence on purchase intention and organizational attitude where the target group was confirmed to be female consumers. The outcomes of such representations may lead to decreased self-esteem, less interest in nontraditional roles and in leadership domains, and less aspiration among women and may decrease self-efficiency among men (Zawisza, 2019).

Analysing the gendered meta-message of current advertisements clearly shows that although women's roles in society are extending, their images in adverts remain dominated by traditional portrayals of feminine dependency and beauty. In turn, men are depicted as muscular and highly authoritative and

occupying the dominant power places, but those angles do not consider the modern women and men's diversities of roles they play (Heathy, 2020).

Gender stereotyping in advertising is one of the critical areas of concern because it acts as the foundation to the branding of a product. Culturally dominant brands are associated with conformity to conventional gender roles while non-conforming brands could be seen as non-conforming following culture trends. As such, gender relates to the perception of the values, personality, and positioning of a brand among consumers (Kyriaki, 2024) societal progress toward inclusivity, while ads that challenge stereotypes can positively influence consumer attitudes by promoting diverse gender representations.

Previous studies also show that gender stereotypes affect consumer responses to celebrity endorsements, with women reportedly being more influenced by these endorsements than men (Lazăr, 2020). Additionally, the prevalence of traditional gender portrayals in advertising—particularly in industries like finance and automotive services—has been shown to lead to lower purchase intent and less favorable attitudes toward products, particularly among female consumers. These portrayals can reduce women's self-esteem, interest in nontraditional roles, and ambition in leadership fields, while men may experience decreased self-efficacy (Zawisza, 2019).

A discourse analysis of gender stereotypes in advertising reveals that despite women's expanding roles in society, advertisements often continue to depict them as dependent, primarily focused on beauty and domestic tasks. Men, conversely, are shown as strong, successful, and holding high-status positions, which fails to reflect the actual diversity of roles both genders occupy today (Heathy, 2020).

Gender stereotypes in advertising play a crucial role in shaping a brand's image and identity. Brands that adhere to traditional gender roles are often perceived as conventional, while those that challenge stereotypes may be viewed as progressive and innovative. Consequently, a brand's portrayal of gender can influence consumers' perceptions of its values, personality, and market positioning (Kyriaki, 2024).

This paper tests the hypothesis that gender stereotypes in advertisements have a bearing on the perceived relevance of the products. Sustaining gender normativity may make consumers create a perception that certain products are appropriate for definite genders, for instance, beauty products, which have historic target audiences of women, are seen as inapplicable to men and vice versa. Stereotypes related to gender can be emotional drivers in consumers' bond to a specific brand. Thus, gender equality is a value relevant to ads and could make consumers feel positively about ads matching it, or negatively about ads that lack it. If brands are insensitive to these stereotyped portrayals of women, it will result in the exclusion of a particular group of consumers.

Throughout the performance of this task, gender stereotypes in the advertising messages were found to have a powerful impact on the consumers' buying decisions. While stereotype advertisements create awareness among stereotypical consumers embraced by society, they create awareness that generates boycotts. For instance, a woman who is in search of a soap ad, that makes fair skin essential, may be captured by the ad while others who find such messages repulsive are alienised. Specific products such as beauty products, foods, and clothing are targeted at women; these are regarded as products that women use in their domain of housekeeping and caregiving while cars, electronics, and financial products are marketed to men since they are bestowed with decision-maker homemaker roles. This study found that women were either depicted in passive or supporting roles in the advertisement in a manner that supports stereotyped gender roles (Sana, 2018).

Consumer segmentation divides markets into groups based on similar needs and preferences, and gender stereotypes in advertising can contribute to this segmentation. Gender-specific messages may lead consumers to associate certain products with their gender, creating demographic-based segments (Arsova & Riste, 2019). For instance, men may be drawn to ads promoting athletic products, while women may resonate with beauty-focused ads. Stereotypical advertising may, therefore, reinforce

gender-based consumer segmentation (Natalia, 2023).

Research Questions

RQ1: To what extent do Pakistani consumers believe their gender-stereotypical advertising reflects societal norms and values?

RQ2: What impact does gender stereotypical advertising has on Pakistani consumer purchase intentions and brand preferences?

Hypotheses

H1: Pakistani consumers perceive gender-stereotypical advertising as reflective of social norms and values.

H2: Gender-stereotypical advertising influences Pakistani consumer purchase intentions and brand preferences.

Theoretical Framework

Social Role Theory

Social role theory introduced by Eagly and Wood (1987) is basic to comprehend the ways social norms define behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions of people. The theory includes that people absorb roles environmentally assigned to men and women and psychologically attend to gender, roles, and expectations of property. According to Eagly and Wood, such socially mandated scripts determine one's gender identities, beliefs, and patterns of social relations hence providing an understanding of gendered behaviours based on culture.s society assigns distinct roles, attributes, and expectations to men and women. Eagly and Wood argue that these socially prescribed roles influence individuals' self-perceptions, beliefs, and interactions, thereby establishing a framework for understanding gender-specific behaviors within a cultural context (Eagly, 2012). To that end, the theoretical framework in this research is Social Role Theory to understand the impact of gender stereotypes in advertising on Pakistani consumers' beliefs, attitudes, and brand considerations.

Discussing the case of advertising, Social Role Theory explains how ad messages uphold gender roles within a given society and, consequently, how consumer perceptions of goods and services are influenced. As suggested in the paper, there is a representation of women as housewives and men as providers decision decision-makers. These representations are contrary to the social roles that assign women the task of doing household chores and men as powerful and superior (Anam, 2018; Javed et al., 2024) As a result, Social Role Theory posts another implication that consumers may embrace products with gendered depictions as portrayed above. For instance, beauty products such as scoops and detergents, utensils, and kitchenware are mainly targeted at women whose social roles imply that they must be beautiful and be responsible for domestic work (Reghunath & K, 2023; Saeed & Khan, 2022).

The theory also helps to explain how gender-stereotyped advertisements are seen many times by consumers reinforcing stereotyped gender roles and embodying these roles within the consumer realm. Thus, the results are in harmony with Åkestam et al. (2021) which show that the traditional male and female portrayals in the advertisements impact the consumer's self-esteem, body image, self-esteem, and build unrealistic visions of attractiveness and manliness.

Moreover, Social Role Theory can account for matching results of gender representation in advertising and consumers' consumption patterns. Motherly or caretaker commercials may appeal to women consumers who seek products connected with caregiving or beauty; commercials that show men as strong decision-makers may appeal to male consumers, who seek products related to strength such as sportswear or financial services (Heathy, 2020; Kyriaki, 2024). According to this theoretical perspective, gender stereotypes used in the advertisement affect the consumer's perception of the

relevance of a product and its suitability, to some extent, narrowing down the choices of a person to pen them to specific societal norms.

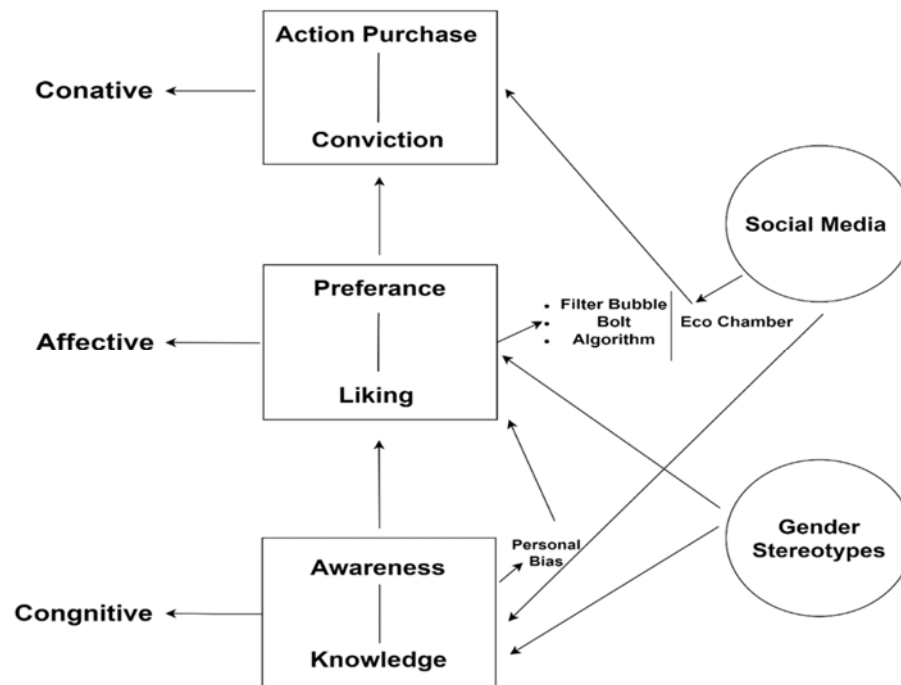
Application of SRT to Gender Stereotypes in Advertising

SOCIAL ROLE THEORY suggests that the normative aspect is the major determinant making Social Role Theory a coherent theoretical model in the analysis of gendered advertisements and the effect they have on the consumers. This paper argues that advertisement can be seen to reinforce traditional stereotyped gender roles with consumers thereby conditioning them to accept these roles as normal or deserving. This generates a psychological association between gender identity and consumers' buying behaviors; thereby affecting their planned purchases. For example, through advertisement and social images, companies portray skinny beautiful women, and muscular beautiful men that consumers must meet to use beauty and fitness products (Zawisza, 2019; Mkerwa, 2024).

Last but not least, the Social Role Theory will give an understanding of the effect of this stereotyping on brand image and brand loyalty. Therefore, when brands' messaging is in line with current hegemonic framings of gender, they may be considered 'normal' or 'correct' though that which rebels against the dominant ideas of gender and identity may be considered 'wrong' and may appeal to consumers who see non-traditional representations as liberating (Subroto & Balqiah, 2022). The integration of Social Role Theory with consumer segmentation also sheds light on why gender-stereotyped TV advertisements appeal to certain gender sections of the population since consumers are always in search of brands of products that portray their particular gendered self-schema.

Therefore, the Social Role Theory suggests that gender norms are conditioning the thing being advertised and, therefore, how the consumer will understand and interact with it. This theory helps to understand why consumers are drawn to products that support conventional gender roles and how these portrayals influence their perceptions of the products and themselves, as well as, why brands supporting progressive gender norms are likely to have more customer acceptance and brand identity among segments who value the concept of Diversity and inclusion.

Conceptual Framework



Extended Stair step Flow model of communication

Methodology

In the current research study, the research methodology was the quantitative research approach with a cross-sectional survey design to collect empirical data regarding Pakistani consumers' perceptions of gender stereotypes in advertisements and their impact on their buying behavior. Thus, the descriptive survey method was selected because it aimed to study consumers' behaviors and attitudes, as well as their perceptions of the variables, without intervening in the process in line with the paper's goal of analyzing the contemplative process. By using the convenience sampling technique, the participants were chosen based on their accessibility and availability hence; resource and time limitation issues were overcome. Despite the limitations of convenience sampling including inherent sampling bias, this type of sampling was appropriate for this exploratory paper to gain a first understanding of attitudes towards cabin crew uniforms within the cultural context of Pakistan.

The target population included male and female students, a young group who is usually sensitive to media messages and social issues. This demographic was appropriate for analyzing the reception to gender stereotypes because younger consumers are more prone to be affected by what they see on television and are a newer representation of current culture. The number of respondents to be sampled was fixed at 375 to accommodate practicality as well as reliability. This number also matches mainstream recommendations in survey research: a number that minimizes sampling error, yet yields enough data for analysis.

Demographic information, perception of gender stereotypes, and advertisement attitudes were gathered by a formulated online questionnaire constructed for this survey. A pilot test with 30 similar respondents was conducted to establish the validity and repeatability of the instrument after which minor measurements were made. The responses were thus quantitatively analyzed for gender stereotypes in advertisements with the purchasing behavior aspect of the targeted consumers.

Data Analysis

RQ 1: To what extent do Pakistani consumers believe their gender-stereotypical advertising reflects societal norms and values?

To analyze the relationship between the time social media users spend on social media and their perceptions of which aspects of gender-stereotypical advertising most reflect social norms and values in Pakistan, a correlation test was applied. This approach helps determine if there is a statistically significant association between social media usage and users' beliefs regarding how gender stereotypes in advertising align with societal expectations and values. By using Pearson's correlation coefficient, we can assess both the strength and direction of this relationship.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Time Spent on social media	1.7280	.44588	375
Which aspect of Gender stereotypical advertising do you believe are the most reflective of social norms and values in Pakistan	3.7920	1.44398	375

The mean time spent on social media is 1.73, with a standard deviation of 0.45, indicating that many respondents reported spending more than four hours on social media. For the statement, "Which aspect of gender-stereotypical advertising do you believe is most reflective of social norms and values in Pakistan," the mean response was 3.79 with a standard deviation of 1.44. This suggests variation in

respondents’ beliefs about the extent to which gender-stereotypical advertising reflects societal norms and values.

Correlations

		Time Spent on social media	Which aspect of Gender stereotypical advertising do you believe are the most reflective of social norms and values in Pakistan
Time Spent on social media	Pearson Correlation	1	
Which aspect of Gender stereotypical advertising do you believe are the most reflective of social norms and values in Pakistan	Pearson Correlation	.442**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation coefficient $r=.442$ shows a positively moderate to strong correlation between the time spent by social media users and their perception of gender-stereotypical advertising as reflective of Pakistani social norms and values. This correlation indicates that as individuals spend more time on social media, they are more likely to view gender-stereotypical advertising as a mirror of societal expectations and standards. The p-value of .000, being highly significant ($p < .005$), reinforces the statistical reliability of this relationship, showing that the observed correlation is unlikely to be due to chance.

These findings lend robust support to the hypothesis that Pakistani consumers perceive gender-stereotypical advertisements as emblematic of existing cultural norms. This correlation implies that the portrayal of gender roles in advertising resonates with the societal roles traditionally associated with men and women in Pakistan. As exposure to such content increases, individuals may increasingly identify advertising messages with underlying societal expectations, which may, in turn, influence their perceptions and acceptance of these roles as accurate reflections of social norms.

H1: Pakistani consumers perceive gender-stereotypical advertising as reflective of social norms and values.

RQ 2 What impact gender stereotypical advertising has on Pakistani consumer purchase intentions and brand preferences?

To address this question, a correlation analysis was conducted between three variables: (1) the time social media users spend on social media, (2) the influence of gender-stereotypical advertising on users' brand preferences and purchase intentions, and (3) the tendency of social media users to purchase products or services due to their portrayal in gender-stereotypical advertising. This analysis aimed to determine the extent and nature of relationships between these factors, specifically whether higher social media usage correlates with greater susceptibility to gender-stereotyped advertising's influence on consumer preferences and purchase behaviors.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Time Spent on social media	1.7280	.44588	375
Gender stereotypical advertising influences social media user's brand preferences and purchase intentions.	3.9240	.98085	375
Most of the time social media users purchase product or services because of their portrayal in gender stereotypical advertising.	3.4800	1.07247	375

The mean time spent on social media is 1.73 (SD = 0.45), indicating that respondents generally spend more than four hours per day on social media. The mean response to the statement "gender-stereotypical advertising influences social media users' brand preferences and purchase intentions" is 3.92 (SD = 0.98), suggesting that, on average, respondents tend to agree that such advertising affects their brand and purchase choices. Similarly, the mean response to "most of the time, social media users purchase products or services because of their portrayal in gender-stereotypical advertising" is 3.48 (SD = 1.07), reflecting a moderate agreement that gender-stereotypical portrayals in advertising drive their purchasing behaviors. These descriptive statistics offer insight into the degree of influence that gender-stereotypical advertising may hold over social media users' brand preferences and buying decisions.

Correlations

		Time Spent on social media	Gender stereotypical advertising influences social media user's brand preferences and purchase intentions.	Most of the time social media users purchase product or services because of their portrayal in gender stereotypical advertising.
Time Spent on social media	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Gender stereotypical advertising influences social media user's brand preferences and purchase intentions.	Pearson Correlation	.510**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		
Most of the time social media users purchase product or services because of their portrayal in gender stereotypical advertising.	Pearson Correlation	.357**	.508**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis for the statement "gender-stereotypical advertising influences social media

users' brand preferences and purchase intentions" yielded a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r=.510$ indicating a positive strong correlation with time spent on social media. The p-value is $p=.001$, which is highly significant as it is less than 0.005. Similarly, for the statement "most of the time, social media users purchase products or services because of their portrayal in gender-stereotypical advertising," the Pearson correlation coefficient is $r=.357$, also demonstrating a positive moderate correlation, with a p-value of $p=.000$, which is highly significant. The correlation value between "the most of time spent on social media more likely to purchase product" and "Gender stereotypical advertising influences social media user's brand preferences and purchase intentions" is $r=.508$. It shows a strong positive correlation between both variables, with $p\text{-value}=.000$, which means that it is highly significant.

These findings support the hypothesis that gender-stereotypical advertising has a significant impact on Pakistani consumers' purchase intentions and brand preferences, with social media usage amplifying this influence. The significant correlations suggest that the more time consumers spend on social media, the more likely they are to develop brand preferences and purchase intentions influenced by gender-stereotypical portrayals in advertisements. This underscores the pervasive role of gendered advertising in shaping consumer behavior within the cultural context of Pakistan.

H2: Gender stereotypical advertising influences Pakistani consumer purchase intentions and brand preferences.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The research topic of this study is 'Profiling Social Roles in Pakistani Media Advertisements' seeks to establish the degree to which gender stereotypes that are depicted in advertisements mirror societal norms and practices while questioning how gender stereotyping impacts consumer decision-making and brand preference.

A number of research studies in the area of advertising have observed that communication media continues to portray traditional gender roles as a norm while social roles have changed, and more women are depicted in various roles including managerial. But, women are represented as weak, concerned with appearance and performing housework, and men are presented as powerful, affluent, and professionally employed. For instance, (Heathy, 2020) pointed out that while it is difficult to find ad images that portray women in possession of professional accomplishment, resulting ads tend to depict women as subordinates to the dominating male figures. Along the same vein, (Javed, Asif, Tariq, Ali, & Ayoub, 2024) explore the way television ads construct and maintain gendered discourses, which can impose stereotyped roles and even determine the viewer's gender role expectations in society. norms and values and how these stereotypes affect consumer purchase intentions and brand preferences.

Research indicates that advertising often reinforces conventional gender stereotypes, even as societal roles have evolved, with women increasingly occupying diverse roles, including leadership positions. However, advertisements often depict women as dependent, focused on appearance, and engaged in household chores, while men are portrayed as strong, successful, and in high-status jobs. For example, (Heathy, 2020) discusses how ads rarely showcase women's achievements, instead casting them in subordinate roles, contrasting with men who are represented in positions of authority. Similarly, (Javed, Asif, Tariq, Ali, & Ayoub, 2024) investigate how television ads shape and sustain gendered ideologies, reinforcing traditional roles and influencing viewers' perceptions about gender in society. In performing their analysis, their emphasis points towards the fact that TV advertising remains central to consumerism and gender stereotype construction.

Heathy (2020) and Javed et al. (2024)'s research also suggest that traditional media is still reviewing gender stereotypes through the representation of women only in the Kitchen or dressing table and men going to the office. These current results indicate that social media users spending more than four hours

per day online share similar perceptions to those reported above; they consider that stereotyping in advertisements on social media is a manifestation of what is expected by society: They identified women as being portrayed in low power positions and men in power related positions such as employment, business, or finances. That is why older media sources also convey traditional gender roles, and the users of social media consider such stereotypes to be realistic.

Moreover, the studies of gender stereotype effects on consuming behavior's outline the capability of stereotyped portrayals to restrain potential and career opportunities and have a negative effect on self-esteem and self-identity. Thus, saying that people, violating traditional gender roles, suffer more than those adhering to these roles, Ahmadli (2023) provided more evidence. They can play an important role in shaping attitudes and behavior by endorsing the preferred stereotype for males and females, and thereby penetrating individual expectations for the self. According to the study done by Zawisza (2019), stereotypical gender portrayals in advertisements lead to the reduction of purchase intention and perceived product liking, particularly among females, in sectors such as finance and automotive. These representations also have negative psychological effects, causing negative attitudes to self, decreased expectations of leadership, and unconventional roles.

Consequently, taking into account Ahmadli (2023) and Zawisza (2019), the impact of gender stereotypes in advertising on personal development, psychological well-being, as well as, consumer behavioral intentions assert that there is a need to adopt more diverse and nontraditional ad images. The present research extends this line of thinking to the current context by examining the moderating role of gender stereotypes on Pakistani SNS users' purchase intentions and brand preferences. Accordingly, the collective of studies documented in the article supports that nontraditional trends in advertising are still far from being predominant in the contexts of various cultures and insists on the representations of male or female nontraditional images in the advertisement that will contribute to the reduction of a contagious negative impact on the audience.

Conclusion

This study 'Profiling Social Roles in Pakistani Media Advertisements' examined the social roles that are either implicitly or explicitly used in the contents of an advertisement from the audience's perspective. This research aimed to assess how these stereotypes manifest in advertisements and how they influence every customer's purchase intention and loyalty toward a specific brand that promotes advertisements of specific product categories into specific norms and values.

As it relates to Objective 1, which was "To examine the extent to which Pakistani consumers perceive gender stereotypical advertising as a representation of the social norms and values," the responses reveals that the majority of the respondents to the questionnaires from social media platforms whom daily engagement is over four hours existing perceive these advertisements as being social oriented. The gender roles in question are often the women being shown as homemakers while the men are parameterized as providers of finances or performance of professional duties.

In the case of Objective 2, "To examine the impact of gender stereotyping advertisements on intentions to purchase and brand preferences of consumers," there is quite a heavy influence demonstrated by the findings. Especially for social media consumers, it was established that their intention to purchase and their brand preference are defined by the gender stereotyping that took place in the advertisements. The evidence points to the reality that users do not like the products that they find offensive or the usage of which endorses the stereotypes they resent.

The implications of these findings go beyond just individual consumer behavior; they also reflect wider societal norms and values. The way women are depicted in household roles and men in professional settings reinforces traditional gender roles, which can influence consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions. This cycle of perception and behavior not only affects personal choices but also shapes societal expectations, emphasizing the need for advertisers to think about the broader impact of their

messaging. Ultimately, these findings highlight the importance of creating more inclusive and diverse advertising strategies that challenge traditional stereotypes, promoting a healthier and more equitable representation of gender in media. By tackling these stereotypes, advertisers can cultivate positive consumer perceptions and strengthen brand loyalty among diverse audiences.

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