

## **CONSUMER ATTITUDE TOWARDS GENDER STEREOTYPING IN TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This research work has examined the attitudinal difference between men and women towards the various dimensions of gender stereotypes used by advertisers to visualize women in Television advertisements. The societal categorization of gender as male and female with specific behavioral traits, domestic roles and occupational roles attached to each category, it is being posited that purchase and use of certain products and services are congruent with the traits and roles attached to the gender. Hence advertisements as a vehicle for dissemination of product/ service related information capitalize on the gender stereotypes. Through the employment of gender stereotypes in advertisements it is believed that individuals will easily identify themselves with the character roles and this identification will help them to remember, recollect the advertisement and its product information resulting in positive attitude formation and conversion in to purchase. By reason of the above, this work has explored the attitudinal difference between men and women towards gender stereotyping in Television advertisements. The stereotypical dimensions used are role, age group, product category and advertisement back ground. The sample size is 196 with equal number of male and female respondents with all the respondents as graduates. The collected data was analyzed by the statistical methods of Correlation and Pair wise Comparison in One Way Anova using SPSS 23. The results have confirmed attitudinal difference between men and women towards gender stereotyping in Television advertisements and attitude formation was found to be high among women in comparison with men.*

**KEYWORDS:** Advertisements, Attitude, Gender, Stereotypes.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Advertisements in television are an audio visual tool for disseminating information about the product/ service. The design and development of the advertisements are built around a theme/ concept which are usually a reflection of the socio-cultural beliefs and practices prevalent in the society. It is believed that advertisements for products designed around the established societal practices will be well received, remembered and recollected by the audience which will help in remembering the product and stimulate purchase of the product when need arises. With gender categorized as male and female, it is established that all individuals vary with respect with these two dimensions and these dimensions by itself are considered as an embodiment of the behaviors/ traits/ roles assigned to the specific category, which means male are considered as assertive, ambitious and aggressive and females are considered to be

nurturing, passive and sensitive. Gender as a social construct comprising two categories (male/ female) and stereotype as patterns of behavior displayed by people by their belonging to a specific category, the male specific and female specific traits ascribed to each category lends reason for the differences in the portrayal of men and women in advertisements.

Thus the portrayal of a particular gender in certain product specific advertisements stems from the socially established practice through which individuals identify themselves with their gender category and exhibit behavior in congruence with the gender roles. Hence the significance of gender stereotyping in advertisements is connected with purchase decisions with respect to specific products which differ according to gender and their related roles (Decision making by female is high for domestic products). The changing nature of society and feminist movements advocating equal opportunities for men and women have challenged the traditional gender stereotypes and brought changes in the domains of employment opportunities and domestic structure. With more women in the work force, the established female stereotypical roles associated with women as caretakers and parents have lost its relevancy. But studies have proven television advertisements to portray women as married, caretakers and parents and not in professional roles. The persistence of gender stereotyping in advertisements is confirmed in the work of Eisend (2010). The work of Knoll et.al. (2011) have confirmed the involvement of women in advertisements in dependent roles and domestic products and that of men in independent roles and other categories of products . Differences in the portrayal of men and women in advertisements based on stereotypical roles ascribed to the particular gender is proven in the study by Arima (2003).

Gender differences are accounted for differences in attitude and behavior. The biological and sociological factors accounts for differences in information processing between men and women. This study has investigated the attitudinal difference between men and women towards the various dimensions of gender stereotypes used to represent women in television advertising. The elements of gender stereotypes taken up for investigation are role, product category, age group of women and advertisement back ground. With the role of women in society on continuous change, the attitudinal difference between men and women towards advertisements that adheres to the portrayal of women in stereotypical roles needs to be examined, as incongruity of portrayal will develop a negative attitude towards the product.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **GENDER STEREOTYPING IN ADVERTISEMENTS**

Reviews related to the dimensions of gender stereotyping employed in advertisements and the gender differences towards the same were analyzed. Gender stereotyping in advertisements as a stimulus for perpetuating and strengthening the stereotypical behavior associated with the particular gender was proven by Lafky et.al. (1996). Content analysis of the magazine advertisements in Japan revealed the trait specific portrayal of men and women and found advertisements which used women emphasized on appearance Ford et.al. (1998). The biological and sociological factors which accounts for differences in the information processing in men and women and its importance for advertisers was explored by Putrevu (2001). The differences in the portrayal of men and women in Japanese television advertisements in terms of sex, age, ethnic background, credibility, role, place, dress, persuasion, product type and target was analyzed and the same was proven by Arima (2003). The differences in the depiction of men and women in the television channels of Hong Kong were studied and the same was established by Furham & Cham (2003). Reaction of men in general and that of women with liberal attitude towards sexual appeals in advertisements was found to be positive in the study by Sengupta & Dahl (2007). The role of cultural in attitude

formation and its impact on attitudinal differences towards gender stereotyping in advertisements was examined in three different cultural groups and the results confirmed the same Sawang (2010). The differences in the portrayal of men and women in television advertisements and connecting women with dependent roles and men in independent roles was proved by Knoll et.al., (2011). The perceptual differences between men and women towards gender stereotyping was examined and found females to have negative attitude towards gender roles in advertisements and males to remain indifferent Kolman & Vercic (2012). Gender stereotyping in recruitment advertisements was examined by Anand (2013) in the context of jobs that were stereotyped as male and female and the conclusion drawn from the study was that in jobs that demanded higher educational qualification, the relevance of gender stereotyping gets reduced. The impact of feminist movements and its relation with female depiction in advertisements was conceptually analyzed by Zotos & Tschla (2014). The conceptual work of Menon et.al., (2015) explored the perceptual differences between men and women towards gender stereotyping and concluded that advertisements which reflected the societal reality was well received. Attitudinal difference towards gender stereotyping was found to differ with respect to the gender and age of the respondents by Theodoridis et.al., (2015). The impact of changing role structure in the society and its impact on portrayal of gender in advertisements was conceptually studied by Gran & Zotos (2016). The ideological construction of male and female through the use of icons, symbols and indexes in advertisements was analyzed by Heathy (2020) which proved the depiction of female stereotypical behavior as weak, dependent and powerless.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The study aims to investigate the attitudinal difference between men and women towards the various dimensions of gender stereotyping in television advertisements.

**HYPOTHESIS**

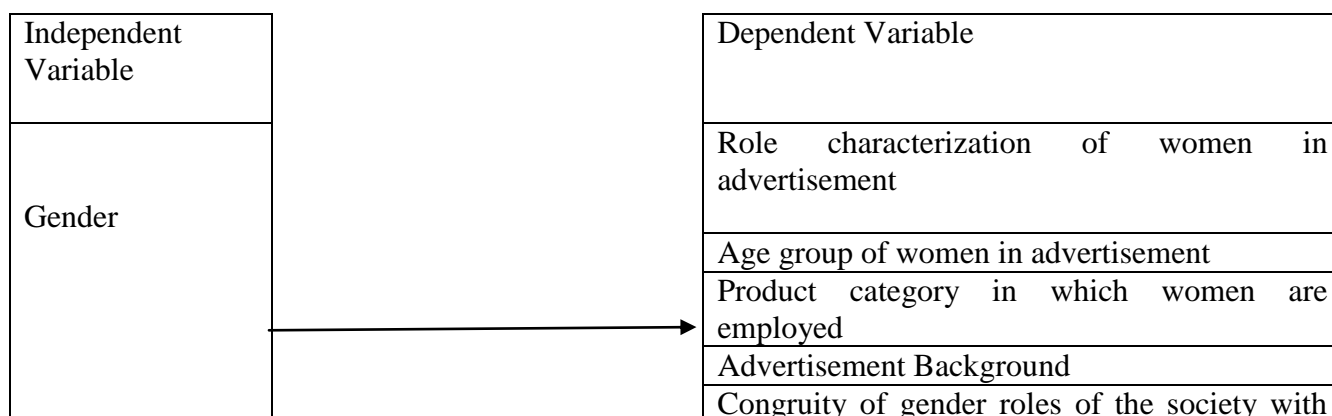
H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant difference between the gender of the respondent and their attitude towards the stereotypical variable role of woman in advertisement.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant difference between the gender of the respondent and their attitude towards age group of women in advertisement.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant difference between the gender of the respondent and their attitude towards the product category employing women.

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant difference between the gender of the respondent and their attitude towards the advertisement background.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**



	the assigned roles to men and women in advertisement
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**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Sample**

The respondents for the study involved graduates from the districts of Tiruppur and Coimbatore in the state of Tamil Nadu and the sample size is 192. Convenience Sampling method was employed to reach out to the respondents. Equal number of men (96) and women (96) were covered for the research work. All the respondents for this study are graduates.

**Time Period**

The time frame for the study was from October 2021 to February 2022.

**Instrument for data collection**

Questionnaire was used to collect the data.

**Methods of Data Analysis**

The collected data was analyzed by the statistical methods of correlation and pair wise comparison in Anova using SPSS version 23.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

**Descriptive Statistics**

**TABLE 1 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS UNDER VARIOUS CATEGORIES**

Variable	Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Age	20 – 30	93	48.44
	31 – 40	46	23.96
	41 – 50	29	15.10
	>50	24	12.50
Gender	Male	96	50.00
	Female	96	50.00
Qualification	Under graduate	42	21.88
	Post Graduate	114	59.38
	Ph.D	36	18.75
Income	0 – 10000	48	25.00
	10001 – 20000	52	27.08
	20001 – 30000	43	22.40
	30001 – 40000	16	8.33
	>40000	33	17.19
Occupation	Self employed	32	16.67
	Working Professional	151	78.65
	Entrepreneur	9	4.69
Residency	Urban	73	38.02
	Rural	119	61.98
Role characterization of women in advertisement	Dependent role	42	21.88
	Independent role	96	50.00
	Professional role	54	28.13

Age group of women in advertisement	Young age	133	69.27
	Middle age	52	27.08
	Old age	7	3.65
Product category in which women are employed	Personal care	112	58.33
	Home needs	69	35.94
	Food	7	3.65
	Electronic	4	2.08
Advertisement Background	Mostly female	88	45.83
	Mostly male	11	5.73
	Mix	93	48.44
Congruity of gender roles of the society with the assigned roles to men and women in advertisement	agree	132	68.75
	Disagree	12	6.25
	neutral	48	25.00

**Hypothesis Testing**

**TABLE 2 CORRELATION OF GENDER WITH THE DIMENSIONS OF GENDER STEREOTYPES**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Gender	1					
2 Role of woman in advertisements	.710	1				
3 Age group of Woman in advertisements	.629	.770	1			
4 Product category that employs woman	.739	.697	.845	1		
5 Advertisement background	.971	.729	.631	.742	1	
6 congruence of gender roles with male and female characters in advertisements	.651	.815	.926	.762	.653	1

**TABLE 3 PAIR WISE COMPARISON USING ONE WAY ANOVA DEPICTING THE RELATION BETWEEN GENDER AND THE GENDER STEREOTYPICAL DIMENSIONS IN ADVERTISEMENTS**

Dependent Variables	F	Sig.	Mean Difference I - J Male(I) Female(J)	95% Confidence interval for difference	
				Lower bound	Upper bound
Role characterization of women in advertisements	193.016	.000	-1.000	-1.142	-.858
Age group of women employed in advertisements	124.495	.000	-0.688	-.809	-.566
Product category employing woman	229.061	.000	-0.990	-1.119	-.861
Advertisement background	3166.119	.000	-1.885	-1.952	-1.819
Congruence of gender roles with portrayed roles in advertisements	139.909	.000	-1.125	-1.313	-.937

Level of Significance at 5%

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The correlation values from table 2 confirm a strong relation between the gender of the respondent and the various stereotypical elements used to represent women in advertisements. From table 3, the significance value ( $p < .05$ ) indicates attitudinal difference between the gender of the respondent and the stereotypical elements that visualize women in advertisements, which proves the hypothesis  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ ,  $H_3$  and  $H_4$ . From the mean difference values in table 3 it can be inferred that attitudinal difference is high among women in comparison with men towards all the stereotypical elements. The results of this work is in conformity with the research work of Sawang (2010) & Knoll et.al., (2011), which established gender based attitudinal difference towards gender stereotypical elements. Masculinity and femininity as traits with specific innate qualities and behavior makes men and women to hold different attitude towards the stereotypical elements used to portray women in advertisements. Companies which employ the stereotypical elements in their television advertisements have to consider the attitudinal differences between men and women and design their advertisements to make a positive appeal on them. The message communicated through the stereotypical elements must be synchronous with the attitude of the respective gender for better promotion of the product.

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