

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Female Role Assignment in Saudi and American Advertisements

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Abstract

This study analysed Saudi and American detergent commercials to explore how they assign roles to women in their respective societies. The analysis employed Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis: description, interpretation and explanation. In the first two steps, the analysis relied on linguistic and intertextual tools, such as ideologically contested words, overwording, hyponymy and presupposition. In the last step, the analysis also employed Eagly's social role theory to further understand the stereotypical female roles and Fairclough's common sense ideology to shed light on the reason behind these designated roles. The findings of the study revealed that these commercials relied on a limited number of stereotypical female roles, to appeal to the viewers and conform to conventional societal perceptions. The continuous representations of these typical roles in TV commercials have caused them to become naturalised and regarded as common sense. It follows from this that a deconstruction of such patriarchal ideology should be highly considered.

Keywords

Stereotyping, advertisement, female roles, presupposition, patriarchal ideology, social role theory

1. Introduction

Liberalism has been said to be the major difference between the eastern and western cultures, with the latter said to be liberal and the former tending to be more conservative. Saudi Arabia can be said to well exemplify the conservative and thus non-liberal society, while the United States of America (USA) an example of a liberal country. They could well be on opposite ends of the liberal continuum. It is a common belief for the USA's liberal society that women there enjoy all sorts of freedom, such as equal rights in all spheres of life. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia is considered a patriarchal society where gender asymmetry and highly restricted and stereotypical female roles are apparent. This is the status quo in the eyes of the world. However, Saudi Arabia, as rigid and closed as things may appear in terms of culture, it is materially advanced in spite of the so-called

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conservative culture. Modernisation and development are in many ways at par with developed countries. World-class universities, healthcare and shopping malls, among many other things, are accessible to almost everyone in Saudi Arabia.

Stereotypes exist in all cultures, in varying degrees and types such as gender, socioeconomic status and rural/urban differences. A considerable amount of research in the field of social studies has investigated gender and stereotyping (Eddleston et al.; Harrison and Lynch; Witt), but few studies have considered the role of commercials in reflecting the perceptions of female roles as a resource to shed light on gender symmetry or asymmetry. Commercials are so ubiquitous in today's society, that they have the power to not only influence people to buy and consume certain products but also to shape certain lifestyles, especially one that is coveted. They literally dictate what designer outfits people should wear, which perfume to buy, where to study or travel, what to eat, among a myriad of *must-haves* and *must-dos*.

Commercials directly or indirectly address society's expectations of roles of men, women, teenagers and children in various contexts, such as at home or workplace. Additionally, the continuous representation of these preferred roles in commercials creates a pattern of stereotypical female roles (Suter 98), as women are often the decision-makers in household spending. Eventually, these stereotypical female roles come to be accepted as social reality (Cheng and Leung 43). That is, commercials contribute to naturalising stereotypical female roles and, in this sense, shaping and enhancing a reality of gender roles (Eisend 421; Schroeder and Zwick 22).

The present study was carried out to critically analyse and compare the types of stereotypical female roles in two societies, the liberal and non-liberal, with Saudi Arabia being non-liberal and the USA the liberal one, in detergent commercials. The choice of detergent commercials was made as women are expected to be portrayed more than men in them. The goal of the study stems from the need to deconstruct gender asymmetry and patriarchal ideology, and to see if the liberal factor plays a role in differentiating the perceptions of women in the two cultures accordingly. Thus, the women in the US commercials would be expected to be portrayed liberally and the women in the Saudi commercials more conservatively based on acceptable social norms. The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

- a. What are the roles assigned to women in commercials in Saudi Arabia and the USA?
- b. Is there diversity in the depiction of female roles in Saudi and American commercials?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous Studies on Gender and Advertisement

According to Butler, gender is performative (128). That is, constituting gender roles is, in essence, a performance rather than innately inherited. In this sense, “one is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (301) according to de Beauvoir’s famous line. Indeed, gender roles are not innate features but are constructed by family reinforcement and society’s expectations. Women are supposed to be feminine, fragile and nurturing, whereas men are considered masculine, virile and strong. According to Rudy et al, society tends to construct and maintain frameworks of general attributes for men and women, despite their specific personal traits (707). Eventually, Rudy et al maintain that these gender attributes evolve into gender stereotypes (707). According to López-Sáez and Lisbona, gender stereotypes are both descriptive and prescriptive (363). They are descriptive in the sense that certain characteristics are said to describe a group of people based on their sex, and prescriptive because they set the configuration of society’s expectations of how males and females should behave.

Advertisements can have a significant role not only in reflecting gender views and understandings but also in shaping them, as mentioned earlier. Goffman claims that advertisement reflects some fundamental aspects of the social structure of gender representation (45). Unrealistic stereotypes and negative images have been created in advertisements as well (Taylor and Bang). In this sense, advertisements not only reflect social behaviours but also create a distorted reflection of people in societies. Therefore, advertisements do reflect recognisable social scenarios and tend to manipulate public opinion about gender roles and stereotypes as well. In other words, commercials rely on images of role behaviours that society recognises and favours. Unfortunately, since a limited number of gender behaviour types is often employed and reinforced by advertisers, this funnels the creation of gender stereotypes in society.

Several studies have employed content analysis to report the stereotypical female roles in television commercials that have become a reality for certain societies (Doring and Poschl 182; Hung 1034; Nassif and Gunter 758). For instance, women as homemakers or housewives are usually portrayed in commercials as performing cleaning tasks in the kitchen. Nassif and Gunter report that Saudi television commercials prefer to depict women performing household tasks (756). This homemaker role is differentiated from another similar role, which is that of a nurturing mother. According to Hung et al, the nurturer is a mother who is depicted as gentle, kind and well-mannered (1036). Another female role reported in the literature is that of women as beautiful or decorative objects. Alstiel and Grow claim that incorporating female beauty and sexuality in TV commercials is an effective instrument for promoting a product (96).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) starts with the premise that “language use is always social” and that “discourse both reflects and constructs the social world” (Rogers 5). In other words, CDA investigates the relations between the use of language and the political and social contexts in which language occurs (Paltridge 45). Clark and Ivanič argue that critical analysis aims to explore issues related to gender, ideology and identity, and how these issues are reflected in a text (217). It also illuminates the role of language in constructing and reconstructing social relations. Fairclough claims that CDA deconstructs texts to explore power relations in the social and political world and to do so, CDA starts with a detailed textual analysis and moves from there to an interpretation and explanation of the analysis (29). This includes tracking underlying ideologies from the linguistic devices present in the text, then unpacking particular presuppositions in the text, and situating the text in a bigger social context (Clark 220).

The description stage of CDA is mainly related to analysing the linguistic properties of text, while “interpretation” aims to explore the relationship between text production and text interpretation. The interpretation stage is a combination of what is in the text and what is in the interpreter’s mind in the sense of the resources that interpreters bring to the text. It is the relationship between the interpretation of context and interpretation of a text. Interpreters quickly determine what the context is, and this determination can affect the interpretation of the text. The third stage, which is that of explanation, aims to locate and explain the text within the wider social and cultural scope to show how it is determined by social structures, as illustrated in figure 1. Given the orientation of Fairclough’s approach to CDA, social structures mainly refer to relations of power and social struggle. As such, “explanation” portrays the text as part of processes of social struggle and relations of power (Fairclough 26).

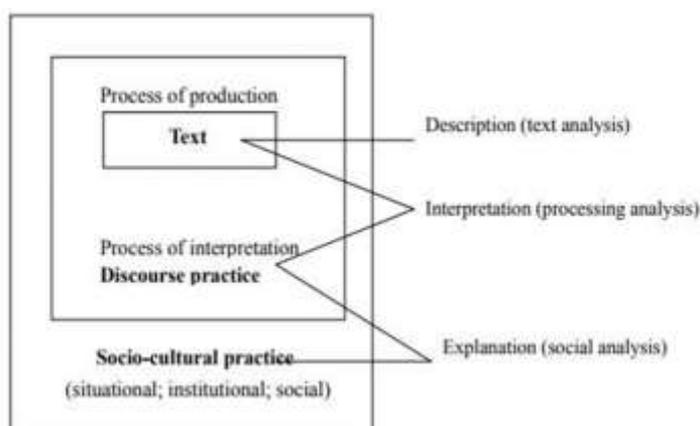


Figure 1. Fairclough’s (2015) Three-dimensional Model

The Social Role theory, which was first proposed by Eagly, is a well-known theory that aims to shed light on gender stereotypes in the field of social studies. The theory maintains that men and women act according to their social roles, which are segregated by gender lines, and, in this respect, gender roles and stereotypes are confirmed (Eagly 87). As such, men and women act differently as their social roles not only differ according to expectations but they require different skills. By way of illustration, men and women were historically identified with different tasks that were appropriate to their physical attributes because of economic, social and technological pressure (Harrison and Lynch 228). Men were assigned to tasks that required strength and the ability to be away from home for a long time, while women were typically identified with tasks related to family and home. In other words, the social role theory proposes that men and women are expected to perform different roles, and, hence, gender stereotypes develop. At a very young age, children develop an understanding of gender roles and stereotypes by usually representing their adherence to them (Eddleston et al. 438). These stereotypes are enhanced and reinforced by the child's environment, such as parents, siblings and the media. Hence, these persuasive factors place pressure on children to conform to their expected gender roles and stereotypes (Eddleston et al. 438). In this respect, gender stereotypes delineate how men and women should behave.

3. Methodology

The materials used in this study are six detergent commercials of one popular international detergent company; the choice of looking at only one company is to ensure the reliability of data. The name of the company is kept anonymous for confidentiality purposes. Three of the commercials are Saudi, and the other three are American. They are all recent commercials found in the official company's *YouTube* and have been aired on local channels in Saudi Arabia and the USA, respectively, between 2014 and 2017. The American commercials are provided in English with English subtitles and the Saudi commercials are provided in Arabic with English subtitles, except for one that the researcher has translated into English for the sake of analysis since the analysis depends only on the texts. The texts for these commercials are provided in the appendix.

Fairclough's three stages of CDA were employed to arrive at the findings of this study. In the first stage of analysis, the description of linguistic devices is concerned with the vocabulary and grammatical levels, specifically the use of metaphors, mottos, ideologically contested words, overwording, hyponymy and rhetorical questions. In the second stage of analysis, the linguistic choices highlighted in the previous stage of analysis were interpreted focusing on presupposition (Fairclough 141), which is another contextual unit of analysis. In the final stage of analysis where the discussion aims to reach a final critical explanation on a macro-level basis, the underlying ideological functions of

relations of power and social struggles were explained as the outcome of Fairclough's common sense ideology with the aid of Eagly's Social Role theory.

4. Results and Discussion

This section provides the result and discussion of the analysis according to the three stages of CDA.

4.1 Description

The study found the prevalent use of metaphors, rhetorical questions and mottos in Saudi commercials, whereas ideologically contested words, overwording and hyponymy are employed in the American commercials. This is probably due to the cultural differences manifested in the interpretation of solidarity and power. By way of illustration, the rhetorical question is usually used by Saudi parents when addressing their children as their relationship includes a hierarchy of both power and solidarity at the same time. On the other hand, in the American context, "solidarity implies closeness whereas power implies distance," and accordingly, "hierarchy precludes closeness" (Tannen 26). The following sections discuss the Saudi and American commercials separately.

4.1.1 Saudi Commercials

The texts of the Saudi commercials are provided in table 1. In the Saudi commercials, there is a reliance on the use of metaphors, rhetorical questions and mottos. For instance, in commercial 1, a woman is seen giving comments of disapproval to her sister-in-law who is washing her husband's clothes with gel detergent. She uses the rhetorical question "Does your husband know about this?" to rebuke the sister-in-law and imply that if her husband knew about this, he would not have allowed it. The woman then uses the family's motto "old habits are precious habits" to emphasise conventions and conformity to societal beliefs and values. In a similar respect, commercial 2 shows a mother using rhetorical questions as well as metaphors to emphasise her point. She enters the living room and sees her daughter sitting on the sofa watching television. She asks her daughter: "How are you going to get married when you don't even know how to wash clothes?" The question requires no answer as it implies that, in this culture and for this family, knowing how to wash clothes is necessary for marriage. The mother proceeds to educate her daughter in laundry matters using the metaphor of drama, but referring it to the real-life drama of the cleaning power of the detergent which cannot be depicted in television dramas. Commercial 3 shows a girl who is wearing a princess dress and is narrating a fairy tale. She notices a stain on her dress, and her mother duly washes it off. The commercial integrates the metaphor of a princess with these words: "Once upon a time, I became a princess.... I collected spring flowers and I picked summer fruits that flew with the fall breeze" to illustrate the expected feminine role of

girls. On the other hand, mothers are “supermom” with the help of the detergent, as the daughter exclaims in the final act: “in the last chapter, I realised that every princess needs a supermom.”

Table 1
Saudi Commercials

1	<p>Woman: Your husband knows about this: that you’re washing the laundry with gel? What is our family’s motto? Sister-in-law: Old habits are precious habits. Woman: These are my brother’s collars and pants, and no one knows how to wash them like I do. Pour the secret mix. Then see the result! <i>{It is not that clean, but then the new power gel cleans it off}</i>. Speaker: We present the new power gel for an amazing cleanliness, and forget about the powder and additives. Sister-in-law: What are you doing? Sister in law: Sharing my laundry on Facebook.</p>
2	<p><i>{The mother enters the living room while the daughter is watching TV and crying over a show}</i> Mother: How are you going to get married when you don’t even know how to wash clothes? Instead of pampering yourself, get up with me. If you want drama, I’ll give you drama. The detergent is the hero; our secret mixture is out there, and they lived happily ever after. Speaker: Are you surprised? This is the detergent whiteness with no additional steps. Mother: This whiteness is not even in movies. Speaker: Nothing is impossible with this detergent.</p>
3	<p>Daughter: Once upon a time, I became a princess <i>{then she looks at a stain in her dress}</i>, but mommy how can I be a princess with a dirty dress? Mother: Don’t worry, your highness. <i>{Then she washes it with the detergent}</i> Daughter: So I continued to be a princess. I collected spring flowers, and I picked summer fruits that flew with the fall breeze. Speaker: This detergent with the protection shield helps prevent dirt from sticking to clothes and maintains its whiteness over time. Daughter: And in the last chapter, I realised that every princess needs a supermom. Speaker: Time passes, and whiteness stays.</p>

4.1.2 *American Commercials*

The texts of the American commercials are provided in table 2. Ideologically contested words, hyponyms and overwording of some concepts to represent their experiential world are highly employed in these commercials, often to depict what they favour and what they oppose. By way of illustration, in commercial 4, a father says his daughter wears a “princess dress” all the time, but she is “not tidy,” which is a contradiction to the first comment. The daughter wants to play “Sheriff,” but he only allows her to do so when the princess dress is being washed. As such, “not tidy” and “Sheriff” belong to groups that he ideologically opposes, and “princess dress” belongs to the group that he is in favour of. Similarly, Commercial 5 shows a dejected mother who has failed to make her daughter be more feminine and wear pink outfits. However, her daughter only wants to wear “hoodies and camouflage shorts and get dirty.” In this respect, “pink” clothes and “hoodies and camouflage shorts” appear to belong to ideologically different groups. In fact, the expression “getting dirty” is collocated with wearing “hoodies and camouflage shorts.” The stuff that makes her daughter’s clothes dirty appear to be impossible to clean, but the detergent used did it easily, and therefore, the clothes were as good as new and continued to be used. The daughter walks in looking dirty again as if she just came from working in a “car garage.” Her mother comments with the word “beautiful” which must be a sarcastic remark as it contradicts the daughter looking very dirty or that she can once again show that she can easily clean it with the said detergent.

Commercial 6 shows a stay-at-home father, exchanging roles with his wife who is at work. Ideologically contested words are also used but in a more complicated way. In this commercial, the speaker wants to convey the message that he is a father but doing a mother’s job, hence the word “dadmom.” Another instance of ideologically contested words in this commercial is presented when he refers to himself as a “mixture of masculinity and nurturing” as if these words do not naturally collocate with each other, but do with him because he is a “dadmom.” Yet another instance of ideologically contested words is presented when the speaker collocates the word “brute” with “nurturing” to mean that he can not only be a “brute,” but also “nurturing” even though he is not a woman. Interestingly, the commercial uses hypernyms and hyponyms in a rather different way. The hyponym “nurturing” is used to refer to the hypernym group of mothers, while the hyponym “brute” refers to the hypernym of males. Having nurturing characteristics entails being a mother (a woman) and having brute characteristics entails being a father (a man), as they appear in the commercial. However, the father here is different because he is both. There is overwording in the commercial, which is exemplified in “dadmom” and “mommoms,” the latter to emphasise that real mothers who stay at home and do the housework would be astonished by his domestic role. Yet, when referring to possible males’ astonishment at his role, there is no overwording of “daddads” but only “dads.”

Table 2
American Commercials

4	<p>Father: Oh, Lily, she pretty much lives in her favorite princess dress, and she is not exactly tidy; even if she gets a stain, she will wear it for a week straight, so I used the detergent to clean it and that detergent to get it fresh and soft. Since I am doing the laundry, I will do what an expert father will do. I let her play sheriff. I got 20 minutes to live. Daughter: You are free to go. Speaker: This detergent and the other one are great on their own but better together.</p>
5	<p>Mother: We tried the whole pink thing; nope all that she wants to wear is hoodies and camouflage shorts, and get dirty. Then, she lost some crayons in her pocket, and they went into the wash. I thought her clothes were ruined. Then, entered the detergent Booster, and the stains are gone. It is kind of too bad. <i>{Hesitantly looks at her daughter}</i>. Another car garage, honey. It is beauuuutiful. Speaker: That is my detergent; what is yours?</p>
6	<p>Father: Hi, I'm a dadmom. That means while my wife is at work, I am at home being awesome. I know there [are] a lot of mommoms that look at my unique mixture of masculinity and nurturing and find it quite alluring. I know that there are dads out there astonished with my ability to wash a 5 year old dress. But here is a real clicker. I can take even the frilliest dress and fold it with complete accuracy. BOOM & with the detergent boost. I can use the brute strength of dad and mix it with the nurturing ability of my washing detergent. Now, if you will excuse me, I'm gonna go do pull-ups and crunches in the other room. Speaker: The detergent Boost is my detergent; what is yours?</p>

Tables 3 and 4 present the ideologically contested words side by side to show their contradiction, as found in the commercials.

Table 3
Ideologically Contested Words in Commercials 4 and 5

In favour of	In opposition to
Pink	hoodies
Princess dress	Camouflage shorts
Tidy	Getting dirty
	Car garage
	Sheriff

Table 4
Ideologically Contested Words in Commercial 6

Moms	Dads
Wash clothes	Go to work
Stay at home	Brute
Nurturing	Do not know how to wash clothes

4.2 Interpretation

The linguistic choices highlighted in the previous stage of analysis are interpreted in terms of “presupposition” (Fairclough 152) of conventional female roles. Presupposition can be defined as common knowledge shared and agreed to by a group of community. According to Fairclough, presupposition can have an ideological function when what the speakers assume has the characteristics of “common sense in the service of power” (86). That is, the ideological function of presupposition is achieved through the different linguistic devices highlighted earlier and is manifested when what is articulated is taken for granted as common sense to the particular community. Additionally, Fairclough argues that “producers in mass communication have a rather effective means of manipulating the audiences through attributing to their experience things which they want to get them to accept” (158) through the advertisements.

These commercials rely on presupposition in manipulating the audience by attributing to the audience’s experiences of conventional female roles. The linguistic devices employed in the commercials, such as rhetorical questions, overwording and metaphors served in presupposing female conventional roles, and, accordingly, these presupposed conventional roles would convince the audience, particularly women, to buy the product being advertised by placing it within the perceived conventional roles. To illustrate, in commercial 1, the sister-in-law perceived the intended message underlying the presupposition in the rhetorical question “Does your husband know about this?” as a reminder to the power the husband has over the wife. In this respect, this patriarchal power is taken for granted because it is regarded as common sense that the wife washes her husband’s clothes, but the decision still lies with the husband, in this case even in the choice of detergent. Additionally, the mother in commercial 2 uses a rhetorical question in presupposing that the ability to wash clothes is significantly related to the well-being of marriage. The same rhetorical question also presupposes that the daughter will get married one day and will do the family’s laundry, and in this respect, the mother is only highlighting the conventional role of the housewife to her daughter. Another role depicted in these commercials through the use of presupposition and shared knowledge of societal conventions is that a girl is feminine and should wear a princess dress. This role is extensively depicted in these commercials and emphasised as the norm. For instance, in

commercial 3, the girl in the princess dress says, “Once upon a time, I became a princess.” The presupposition in this metaphor is that she was not a princess before, but she became one, which presupposes that eventually every girl will become feminine. Thus, she may be feminine and a princess in her own world, but laundry awaits in the future in the presupposed conventional roles of women in this society. She will be another “supermom” in the footsteps of her mother.

In the American commercials, the use of the presupposition has also served the aforementioned aim. In these commercials, daughters do not want to wear dresses, although it is suggested that they do via presuppositions because they are girls. Another instance of presupposition is also presented in commercial 6, which depicts a father in a non-conventional role of being a “housemom” and doing the housework, while the mother is working. However, the father implicitly presupposes through the use of overwording that this is not what he should be doing and that is why “mommoms” who stay at home and perform household activities would be amazed by his role at home. In addition, when he is doing the chores, he is “awesome.” In this respect, the commercial is relying on the conventional intertextual experience of the audience in that household activities are supposed to be done naturally by women. Since he can do it as well, he characterises himself as a “mixture of masculinity and nurturing.” Besides, the commercial attributes the nurturing ability to mothers, which again presuppose the conventional roles of women in the house, even in the western culture.

Hence, both the liberal and non-liberal cultures of the USA and Saudi Arabia, respectively, depict stereotypical female roles in commercials. Saudi commercials and American commercials depict women using the same labels of nurturers, housewives or pretty feminine girls. In line with the findings of Holtzhausen, it can be inferred that detergent commercials capitalised on the presupposed knowledge of women as the homemaker and enhanced this image to sell their products. They build their path to profit on the conventions of society. Accordingly, with time, these commercials further enhance and perpetuate this gender role stereotyping as an acceptable presupposed and shared knowledge of the society. This is becoming evident in situations when daughters are reminded to be feminine by none other than their parents. Cases of fathers doing housework activities are not uncommon but when depicted, the stereotypical female roles are implied and presupposed. Thus, the depiction of the conventional roles of men and women are clear in the commercials, in both the east and the west, in liberal as well as conservative societies. They are not only selling a product but also the social roles of men and women.

4.3. Explanation

In line with the findings of the social role theory (Eagly), the results show that commercials confirm the existence of gender stereotyping. In these commercials, girls are expected to be feminine beings who wear pink and are tidy; women are

portrayed as housewives who wash their husbands' clothes, and single women are portrayed as waiting to get married to be the perfect housewife. In this respect, these commercials support the social role theory in that parents are reinforcers and facilitators of expected conventional gender roles to their children. Non-adherence to societal conventions, which is presented in a girl being dirty as if she has been working in a car garage toy and wearing a hoodie, is not favoured by society and is against the norm of being a typical young woman.

Similarly, according to Fairclough, social conventions that are portrayed in discourse usually embody ideological assumptions that are taken as common sense and facilitate existing power relations (86). In other words, Fairclough's concern revolves around "common sense in the service of power" (93) in which ideological assumptions are implied in the discourse, but are taken for granted as common sense. Such assumptions are "not things that people are aware of and rarely explicitly examined or questioned" (Fairclough 101) because common sense is part of the common and presupposed knowledge that is shared and accepted by a particular society. Additionally, ideological common sense is not straightforwardly formulated. Before an ideological assumption becomes common sense, it has to go through a process of naturalisation. Ideologies are regarded as ideological common sense to a degree that the discourse that embodies them becomes naturalised. This mainly depends on the power of the social groups and their ideologies, which are naturalised in the discourse that eventually becomes common sense. In this respect, ideological common sense is, in fact, an "effect of power" (Fairclough 113) and a manifestation of power. What is regarded as common sense is dictated by those who exercise power in society and their ideologies. Commercials appear to have this power of exercising and shaping ideologies in society, based on existing social conventions or new ones.

Therefore, in terms of these commercials, patriarchal ideology is manifested in women's responsibility to do household chores such as laundry and in the preferred expectations of girls to be pretty, clean and princess-like. Through the continuous representation of these stereotypical female roles, they have become naturalised and regarded as common sense. Thus, it is the power of patriarchy and patriarchal ideology that depicts women in these limited stereotypical female roles, and it is the repetition of these roles throughout the different commercials that have enhanced this common-sense knowledge. As such, the ideological common sense in these commercials is, in fact, the depiction of stereotypical female roles. These stereotypical female roles are not depicted overtly, and that is why they are taken for granted, but they can sustain the patriarchal ideology even though the audience is not aware of their effect. It is not easy to challenge common sense, as this is part of the knowledge that has been approved and accepted by the community for generations. In this respect, the depiction of this limited and stereotypical female role in all of these commercials shows the sustenance of the patriarchal ideology in both the liberal and non-liberal societies.

With these findings, a deconstruction of such ideology is highly needed, starting with the commercials themselves. This may allow women to empower themselves and do much more in society other than conforming to stereotypical and limited roles.

5. Conclusion

This study has critically analysed the representation of women and the roles assigned to them in the societies of Saudi Arabia and the USA, as both cultures are at opposite ends of the liberal continuum: USA being often considered a liberal society while Saudi Arabia is generally deemed a conservative society. Accordingly, the paper deconstructed the gender asymmetry that appeared in the two cultures and as depicted in the commercials. Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA was employed (25). In the first two steps, the analysis relied on linguistic and intertextual tools, while in the last step the analysis employed Eagly's social role theory to explain the presupposed existence of stereotypical female roles (87) and Fairclough's common sense ideology (78) to shed light on the reason behind the continuation of such roles. The findings reveal that these commercials assigned roles to women based on the perceived limited stereotypical female roles. This, in turn, perpetuates the limited representation of women in society. Besides, one would expect commercials in the liberal society to be less stereotypical in terms of societal conventions, but this is not the case. It is claimed that they rely on these limited stereotypical female roles to appeal to the viewers' experience of conventional societal conceptions to sell their products. However, with the continuous representation of these limited roles in television commercials, they eventually become naturalised and regarded as common sense.

This study has not claimed any generalisations. Its aim is an in-depth analysis of a cross-cultural phenomenon. It has attempted to reveal the situation of female roles in Saudi Arabia and the USA to show that these two cultures have certain similarities. However, more studies and a larger sample of commercials would be ideal to examine the situation more extensively. Additionally, comparing the commercials of other cultures may also uncover similar or different female role stereotyping cross-culturally and what we could do to deconstruct limited and stereotypical ideologies of women.

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