

AUDIENCE PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER STEREOTYPES IN SELECTED COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENTS ON CITIZEN TELEVISION, KENYA

ABSTRACT

Television advertising incorporates visual and auditory mediums, making it a powerful tool for constructing, disseminating, and endorsing dominant ideologies that shape the collective consciousness of society. Advertising addresses various subjects but has faced criticism for perpetuating gender stereotypes through texts and images that reinforce traditional roles. This study aimed to explore gender roles, analyze gender representation, and examine the diversity of gender stereotypes in selected TV commercial advertisements in Kenya. The research employed random sampling to select respondents from a study population of 2.2 million individuals, ultimately comprising a sample of 384 participants. Data was collected from Citizen TV advertisements aired between May 1 and May 31, 2024. Guided by feminist theory, the study utilized both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Structured questionnaires were distributed to individuals in shops, offices, and educational institutions within the Nairobi Central Business District. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the collected data, which was evaluated based on the research objectives. The analysis was conducted using SPSS version 28 and presented through various statistical measures, including mean, mode, and frequencies, alongside visual representations such as charts, tables, and graphs. The study found that both men and women appeared with similar frequency in TV advertisements; however, many respondents perceived women as being more prominently featured than men. This finding highlights a significant gap in awareness and recognition of gender stereotyping in the media. Respondents indicated that traditional gender roles persist, with women predominantly associated with domestic responsibilities and men depicted as authorities and professionals. Additionally, the research revealed that advertisements largely associate women with caregiving roles, further demonstrating the limitations placed on women's portrayals. Regarding voiceovers, the study indicated that men were often perceived as dominating this aspect of advertising, underscoring the imbalance in gender representation. The findings are expected to be beneficial for media practitioners seeking to counter the notion of gender stereotyping. Moreover, government policymakers may find the insights from this research resourceful in formulating effective policies. The study advocates for further research focusing on encouraging gender-balanced casting and storytelling in TV commercials and developing industry guidelines to prioritize non-stereotypical portrayals. These measures can contribute to reducing gender stereotypes and fostering equitable media representation in Kenya.