

# Gender Representation in Philippine Television Advertisements

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**Abstract** This study analyzed 254 unduplicated primetime Philippine television advertisements from 2010 for differences in gender representation. Two coders independently coded the entire sample and achieved an intercoder reliability of greater than .700 for each reported variable. The findings are based on chi-square analyses and indicate a high prevalence of gender differences and stereotypes in Philippine television advertisements. For example, more males were shown in the workplace (17.9 % vs. 7.4 %), whereas more females were shown at home (45.9 % vs. 24.5 %); males were generally fully clothed (88.7 % vs. 44.6 %), whereas females were often suggestively dressed (52.7 % vs. 6.6 %); more males than females delivered voiceovers (46.1 % vs. 35.0 %); and product categories were stereotypically associated with gender. The only exception to these traditional, stereotypical gender portrayals was the predominance of female primary characters in television advertisements (58.3 % vs. 41.7 %). Overall, such stereotypical portrayals do not accurately reflect Philippine society, which is considered to be one of the most egalitarian Asian societies with regard to gender. By analyzing Philippine television advertisements, this study intends to close a gap in the still under-researched area of gender representation in developing countries, which could provide a more complete picture of this topic from an international perspective. The similarities and differences between this research and previous studies on this topic in developing and developed countries are examined. The possible effects of such representation on

audiences are discussed based on social cognitive theory and cultivation theory.

**Keywords** Philippines · Television advertising · Gender stereotypes · Representation · Content analysis

## Introduction

This study analyzes Philippine television advertisements for differences in gender representation. By performing a content analysis of Philippine television advertisements and adapting variables that have been developed in previous research (Furnham and Mak 1999; Kim and Lowry 2005; Nassif and Gunter 2008), this study intends to narrow the gap in the under-researched area of gender representation in developing countries. This international perspective is important because it provides a more complete picture of the field, which is still dominated by research in Western and more developed countries. Thus, this study gives international readers a rare glimpse into the current state of gender representation in a developing Asian country. The results are placed in the context of studies of developing and developed countries and may thus serve as an important basis for further research into possible similarities or differences in gender representation in developing and developed countries, despite our acknowledgement that each country has its own unique culture. Finally, the article discusses possible effects of such gender representation in terms of social cognitive theory and cultivation theory and examines whether gender representation in television advertisements reflects recent changes within Philippine society or reinforces traditional gender roles and stereotypes.

Much has been written about gender in the Philippines, especially with respect to Philippine women working abroad as migrant workers or serving as mail-order brides (Guevarra 2006; Mahalingam and Leu 2005), however, little has been

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written and published internationally about gender and its representation within the Philippines. The Philippines has made significant efforts to promote gender equality during the last several years. For example, several laws and policies that aim to institutionalize gender equality have been established (Battad 2006) and have produced long-term effects. Among 135 countries, the Philippines was ranked eighth in The Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum (Hausmann et al. 2011), and it was ranked the highest in Asia (Sweden: 4, USA: 17, Malaysia: 97, Japan: 98). The Global Gender Gap Index is based on economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. The Philippines scored well for gender equality in all of these areas, and it is one of the few countries in the world, and the only Asian country, that has closed the gender gap in the areas of education (Philippines: 1, Sweden: 41, USA: 1, Malaysia: 65, Japan: 80) and health (Philippines: 1, Sweden: 82, USA: 39, Malaysia: 78, Japan: 1). The Philippines also scored significantly well in the areas of political empowerment (Philippines: 16, Sweden: 4, USA: 39, Malaysia: 115, Japan: 101) and economic participation and opportunity (Philippines: 15, Sweden: 7, USA: 6, Malaysia: 95, Japan: 100). In contrast to the Global Gender Gap Index, the Philippines does not score highly on other gender indices, such as the Gender Empowerment Measure by the United Nations Development Programme, in which the Philippines ranks only 45 (Sweden: 2, USA: 15, Malaysia: 65, Japan: 54) among 93 countries (UNDP 2007). However, this ranking is still better than that of most other Asian countries, and the Philippines is ranked fourth among countries with medium human development in the Human Development Index.

Some scholars have criticized the persistent association of Filipino women with the domestic sphere (Eder 2006). With approximately half of Filipino women participating in the labor force, the roles of husbands and wives remain strongly differentiated, as males generally do little housework and masculinity is equated with being the breadwinner (Chant and McIlwaine 1995). These clear gender distinctions can also be observed in Hofstede's cultural dimensions, which assign the Philippines the third highest masculinity score in Asia after Japan and China (Hofstede 2013). A higher masculinity score (masculine cultures) indicates greater gender differentiation and distinct gender roles in a culture, whereas a lower masculinity score (feminine cultures) indicates less gender differentiation and fewer gender role distinctions. The continuing presence of patriarchal structures in the Philippines was attributed to the strong role of the Catholic church (Orate 2007). The role of women in the media is crucially framed such that "women are portrayed as passive, inferior, intellectually and physically dependent upon men as wives and mothers, and as objects of male sexual gratification" (Chant and McIlwaine 1995, p. 11). These contradictions between gender egalitarianism in the areas of health, education, political empowerment and

economic participation in the Philippines and a somewhat traditional approach toward gender in the domestic and media spheres raise the question of how females and males are represented in Philippine television advertisements. Do these representations mirror social change within the Philippines, or are they similar to other media forms, as suggested by cultivation theory? Cultivation theory states that exposure to television cultivates perceptions of reality and that message elements are shown in a consistent manner among different genres, which strengthens the cultivation effect (Gerbner 1998).

We have chosen television advertisements for analysis as television is the most important advertising medium in the Philippines, which is one of the top countries in the world in terms of the proportion of ad-spending going to television advertisements (75.6 %) (based on WARC 2010). Television is also the most influential medium in the Philippines, and it has the widest audience, with 96 % of households in Metro Manila owning television sets (Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies 2004). Metro Manila residents spent an average of 3.7 h a day watching television in 2006 (Nielsen 2007a), which translates into over 60,000 television advertisements watched per year, suggesting that these advertisements have an influence on individuals. In addition, Filipinos are one of the populations that trust advertising the most. A survey of 47 countries ranked Filipinos and Brazilians first in their trust of advertising (Nielsen 2007b). Trust in advertising may also play a role in the possible effects of advertisements.

Advertising plays an important role in society. In addition to reflecting the society's social norms (Frith and Mueller 2010), advertising is also involved in creating them (Holden 2004) and teaching social roles and values (Pollay 1986). Several theories support the argument of advertising shaping society. For example, social cognitive theory (Bandura 2001) suggests that most social behavior is learned through direct as well as vicarious observation, such as watching television. People model their behavior based on these observations, which include information about appropriate gender roles. Cultivation theory (Gerbner 1998) argues that exposure to television cultivates perceptions of social reality. Television, a major storyteller of our time, plays an important role in creating (distorted) views of reality, especially for those viewers who watch a considerable amount of television as watching television produces in the viewer a worldview, that is, images of social behaviors, norms, and values.

Empirical research supports these theories. A meta-analysis of previous studies confirmed that heavy viewing is positively associated with gender-role stereotyping and that television teaches gender role stereotyping in children as well as adults (Oppliger 2007). The same is true for advertisements, as found by studies in the United States and Canada (Garst and Bodenhausen 1997; Jennings-Walstedt et al. 1980; MacKay and Covell 1997). Although the results of this research cannot claim to describe the effects on audiences, content analysis is

an important first step in understanding the possible impacts of media (Riffe et al. 2005).

### Literature Review and Hypotheses

Gender representation in television advertisements has been a subject of academic research for many years (Eisend 2010; Furnham and Paltzer 2010), first emerging in the United States in the 1970s (Dominick and Rauch 1972; McArthur and Resko 1975; Silverstein and Silverstein 1974). Two decades later, these initial studies were followed by some English-language studies on East and Southeast Asian countries, including Japan (Arima 2003; Bresnahan et al. 2001; Furnham and Imadzu 2002; Milner and Collins 2000), South Korea (Kim and Lowry 2005; Moon and Chan 2007; Paek et al. 2011), China (Cheng 1997; Paek et al. 2011; Siu and Au 1997), Taiwan (Bresnahan et al. 2001), Hong Kong (Furnham and Chan 2003; Furnham et al. 2000; Moon and Chan 2007), Singapore (Lee 2004; Siu and Au 1997; Tan et al. 2002; Wee et al. 1995), Malaysia (Bresnahan et al. 2001; Tan et al. 2002; Wee et al. 1995), Indonesia (Furnham et al. 2000), and Thailand (Paek et al. 2011). To date, nearly all studies have concluded that television advertisements portray gender in stereotypical ways, a practice that is even more prevalent in Asia and developing countries (Furnham and Mak 1999; Furnham and Paltzer 2010).

In the following review, we outline these stereotypical portrayals in detail; however, we limit ourselves to research that was performed after 1995 and focus on research on Asian countries. In this regard, the study can provide a more specific scholarship timeframe that addresses gender in television advertisements because changes are expected to have taken place during the last two decades. It should be noted that comparisons of previous studies involve several research issues, such as channel equivalence (viewing figures, target group, national vs. regional channel, funding, style), sample equivalence (sample size, recording times, duplicated vs. unduplicated advertisements), content categories (varying categories and definitions), and units of analysis (television advertisements vs. characters) (Furnham and Mak 1999; Prieler et al. 2011).

Cultivation theorists claim that numerical representations of social groups are an indicator of the importance, relevance (Gerbner et al. 1980), and recognition of a social group within a given society (Signorielli and Bacue 1999). Such representations may shape the audience's consciousness and influence what they learn about these groups (Gerbner et al. 1980). In gender studies, gender predominance is quantified by the ratio of the number of males to the number of females involved. In the case of television advertisements, this type of analysis has led to mixed results, with some countries featuring more males and others featuring more females. For example, more males were found in Australia (Mazzella

et al. 1992) and Great Britain (Furnham and Skae 1997), while more females were found in Mexico (Villegas et al. 2010) and Bulgaria (Ibroscheva 2007). This trend also held true in the case of Asian research, where most studies on Southeast Asian countries showed proportionally more males in Hong Kong (Furnham and Chan 2003; Furnham et al. 2000), Malaysia (Bresnahan et al. 2001), Indonesia (Furnham et al. 2000), and Thailand (Paek et al. 2011). In contrast, studies of South Korea (Kim and Lowry 2005; Paek et al. 2011) and Singapore (Lee 2004; Siu and Au 1997) found more females employed, while studies on Japan (Arima 2003; Furnham and Imadzu 2002) and China (Paek et al. 2011; Siu and Au 1997) led to contradicting results. In addition to the results of previous studies, some research has indicated that the countries rated as more masculine by Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede 2001) are more likely to exhibit large gender differences, for example, in the form of numerical predominance of males over females (Milner and Collins 2000). Given that the Philippines has the third highest masculinity score in Asia (Hofstede 2013), the predominance of males in previous studies in Southeast Asia, and the persisting view that women are inferior to men in Philippine patriarchal society (Garcia-Dungo 1995), we suggest the following hypothesis:

H1: More males than females will appear in Philippine television advertisements.

Whereas numerical representation alone does not indicate the quality of the representations, the inclusion of the exact nature and type of the portrayals may reveal the society's respect or lack thereof for a given social group (Signorielli and Bacue 1999). The setting tells us more about the gender portrayal and is regarded as an important indicator of gender bias (Nassif and Gunter 2008). The existing literature states that setting is a variable that largely produces highly stereotypical results and clear gender divisions. By using such representations, social cognitive theory suggests that audiences may learn about gender expectations that are attached to specific places (and that are associated with typical actions in those places). Most studies reported that more females than males are shown being at home (Furnham and Paltzer 2010). Very few studies on more developed countries reported otherwise, including Furnham et al. (2000), who found slightly more males than females shown at home in Hong Kong, and Bresnahan et al. (2001), who found the same percentage of males and females shown inside the home in Taiwan. Another setting where gender differences were found was in the workplace. Indeed, Eisend's (2010) meta-analysis of 64 studies revealed that the magnitude of stereotyping is the highest for occupational status. The majority of studies around the world reported that more males than females are represented in the workplace setting. Finally, several studies have reported that more males than

females are shown outdoors. This finding applies to the Asian contexts of Singapore (Siu and Au 1997), Malaysia (Bresnahan et al. 2001), and South Korea (Kim and Lowry 2005). On the basis of these findings from the extant literature in Asia and the situation in the Philippines, in which gender roles remain highly differentiated, with males regarded as breadwinners and a low percentage of women participating in the labor force (Chant and McIlwaine 1995), we suggest the following hypotheses:

H2a: More females than males will be shown in a home setting.

H2b: More males than females will be shown in a workplace setting.

H2c: More males than females will be shown in an outdoor setting.

Several studies have investigated the degree of dress of males and females appearing in advertisements. However, this issue merits additional attention as, from a social cognitive theory viewpoint, such representations may solidify beauty standards within a society and influence self-esteem among its viewing populace, possibly leading to the objectification and self-objectification of women (Fredrickson and Roberts 1997). Research in Belgium, for example, has shown that female models who were scantily dressed had more negative effects on body esteem issues than did more fully clothed models (Dens et al. 2009). All studies to date have shown that females are more likely to be suggestively dressed than males in television advertisements (e.g., Fullerton and Kendrick 2000—United States/Spanish language television; Ibroscheva 2007—Bulgaria; Signorielli and McLeod 1994—United States/MTV; Stern and Mastro 2004—United States). That is, studies have reported that a small percentage of males are suggestively or sexily dressed, while more than half of advertisements for females display them in suggestive or sexy clothing (Ibroscheva 2007—Bulgaria; Signorielli and McLeod 1994—United States). A comparative study (Nelson and Paek 2008) on Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, South Korea, Thailand, and the United States confirmed that females were shown in more advanced states of undress than males. However, the research also found that female nudity differed strongly across countries, with television advertisements from the United States and China showing the least nudity and those of Germany and Thailand showing the most. On the basis of the overall predominance of suggestively dressed females reported in all previous studies, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: More females than males will be shown suggestively dressed.

The predominance of male voiceovers (i.e., the voice of an unseen narrator) has been one of the most consistent findings in terms of gender representation in television advertisements

(Furnham and Mak 1999; Furnham and Paltzer 2010). In the context of the United States, Silverstein and Silverstein (1974) had already found a strong predominance of male voiceovers by the 1970s. They interpreted this role as the “voice of authority and trust” (p. 84), giving advice and recommendations, qualities that women are presumed to lack. Thus, voice-over gender may reinforce the association of a specific gender with authority within a society, as suggested by social cognitive theory (Bandura 2001). Out of over 60 studies on gender representations in television advertisements since the 1970s, we could only find two studies with (slightly) more female than male voiceovers, one in Turkey (Milner and Collins 1998) and the other in South Korea (Paek et al. 2011). South Korea may be the exception in Asia, as a literature review by Furnham and Paltzer (2010) indicates a predominance of male voiceovers, which was even more pronounced in Asia than in Europe. Moreover, Paek et al. (2011) found that a higher score in Hofstede’s masculinity index (Hofstede 2001) increases the odds of a male voiceover. Based on the results of previous studies and given the findings that the Philippines has one of the highest masculinity scores, and that males continue to be regarded as having more authority in that society, we propose the following hypotheses:

H4: There will be more male than female voiceovers.

The product categories used by different genders are often analyzed in the television advertisement context to see whether certain products are associated with a particular gender and to what degree these associations limit gender portrayals in television advertisements. Social cognitive theory suggests that we can learn from such associations (Bandura 2001). For example, the strong association between females and cosmetics/toiletries products emphasizes the importance society assigns to females’ beauty and contributes to their sexualization (Luyt 2011). Indeed, the most prominent gender difference within product categories reported in most previous studies is significantly manifested in cosmetics/toiletries products, or as other studies called them, toiletries, beauty products, and personal care products, which are associated with females (Furnham and Paltzer 2010). These findings also proved to be true in several studies of Asian countries (Bresnahan et al. 2001—Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan; Das 2011—India; Furnham et al. 2000—Indonesia; Nassif and Gunter 2008—Saudi Arabia; Tan et al. 2002—Singapore, Malaysia). Other than the association between females and cosmetics/toiletries, there are relatively few consistent findings in terms of product categories associated with genders. This lack may be due to different studies employing different product categories. Some studies have found an association between females and household and cleaning products (Cheng 1997—China; Nassif and Gunter 2008—Saudi Arabia; Tan et al. 2002—Singapore, Malaysia); others have found an association between males and cars (Das 2011—India; Furnham and Imadzu 2002—Japan; Furnham et al. 2000—Indonesia; Tan



et al. 2002—Malaysia, Singapore), telecommunications, electronics, technology, and computers (Bresnahan et al. 2001—Japan; Das 2011—India; Tan et al. 2002—Malaysia). As our pretest did not gather any car advertisements on Philippine television, we did not investigate this category further. In addition, the findings for categories such as household and cleaning products, telecommunications, electronics, technology, and computers were only true in the minority of studies. Thus, we formulate our final hypothesis as follows:

H5: There will be more female than male characters in advertisements for the cosmetics/toiletries product category.

## Method

### Sample of Advertisements

The sample recording was conducted in Quezon City, Metro Manila, between October 25 and October 31, 2010. We recorded the two main Philippine television networks during primetime (ABS-CBN, with a market share of 42.4 %, and GMA, with a market share of 34.6 %; the third largest market share was ABC/TV5, with only 7.0 % as of 2009), which is defined as the period between 6:00 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. in the Philippines (Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies 2004; WARC 2010). From a theoretical viewpoint, the advertisements on these channels during this time period are the most watched and therefore the most influential. To produce a representative sample, the recordings between 6:00 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. were divided into 1.5-h blocks, and the two television channels were randomly assigned to these time slots (see also Cheng 1997). Local advertisements, political campaign advertisements, self-promotional advertisements for the television networks, advertisements for entertainment products (such as movies, music concerts, DVDs, CDs), advertisements for festivals and events, and public service announcements were not included in our sample (Kim and Lowry 2005). This exclusion led to 304 unduplicated television advertisements, of which 254 included primary characters. This group served as our sample.

### Coding Procedure

Our unit of analysis was the primary character in each television advertisement. We first analyzed whether there was a primary character in the advertisement and identified the gender of the primary character (0=none, 1=male, 2=female). A primary character was defined as 18 years or older and appeared on camera with either a speaking role or prominent exposure for at least 3 s. When several characters appeared in an advertisement, we followed a method from previous

research (Nassif and Gunter 2008) that was adapted during our coder training and pretests for the Philippines. The coders selected the primary character as the character who (1) was central to the story, (2) appeared in close ups for the longest period of time, (3) appeared for the longest period of time, (4) provided substantial information about the advertised product or service, (5) used or held the product, and/or (6) had the more extensive speaking part (in this particular order of decision criteria).

The coders were two Philippine students (one male and one female) and did not include any researchers. They were blind to the hypotheses and were trained on the coding manual for approximately 10 h. The intercoder reliability coefficients for the pilot test and the final sample were measured using Cohen's kappa. After the coders completed a pilot test with 50 television advertisements that were not included in the final sample and reached a reliability of above .700 for each reported variable, they began independently coding the sample. All variables in the final sample (Table 1) had kappa values above .700, which Hayes (2005) regards as sufficient if the intercoder reliability was corrected by chance, all coders coded all units, and disagreements between the coders were resolved, all of which were true in our study. The unitizing reliability was .861, indicating that the raters were able to agree whether there was a primary character in the advertisement and whether the primary character was male or female. Following a categorization by Landis and Koch (1977), the strength of agreement was almost perfect for the unitizing variable (.861), the voiceover (.928), and the product category (.909), and substantial agreement was reached for the variable setting (.747) and the degree of dress (.749). Although studies in certain other countries, such as the United States (Coltrane and Messineo 2000), have included variables to assess race/ethnicity, we have not included these variables in the present study because non-Filipino actors are almost entirely absent in Philippine television advertisements; by contrast, in Japan and various other Asian nations, actors of non-native ethnicities are common (Prieler 2010; Creighton 1995).

## Results

The results of this study are based on chi-square analyses that were executed on a sample of 254 unduplicated television advertisements including primary characters. As we were interested in both the overall significant differences between males and females for each category and which subcategories contributed to this significance, we broke the results down even further using the adjusted standardized residuals (ASRs) for post-hoc tests.

The final sample of Philippine unduplicated television advertisements included 254 primary characters, of which

**Table 1** Variables included in the study

Variables	Categories	Definition
Setting	(1) workplace (inside), (2) home (inside residential space), (3) other indoor settings (e.g., store, restaurant, car, bus, train), (4) outdoors, and (5) other (e.g., artificial).	The setting is the place where the primary character appears in the commercial (Mastro and Stern 2003). If several settings appeared, then the dominant setting was coded. The setting was coded from the perspective of the chosen primary character. For example, for a waiter in a restaurant serving food, the setting would be “workplace,” but the setting would be “other indoors” for the person being served.
Degree of Dress	(0) fully dressed, (1) suggestively dressed, (2) partially dressed, and (3) nude.	Fully dressed: everyday dress, such as walking shorts but excluding short shorts and underwear. Suggestively clad: clothing that partially exposed the body, such as sleeveless or tight shirts, unbuttoned or open blouses, short shorts/mini-skirts, muscle shirts, open shirts, tight clothing that enhanced the figure, or clothing that exposed the cleavage or chest areas. Partially clad: clothing such as under-apparel, lingerie, bikinis, and briefs. Clothing showing bare backs, muscular shoulders, abs, thighs, and midriffs was also coded as partially clad. Nude: bare bodies or those wearing translucent under-apparel or lingerie, male models wearing only a towel, including actual nudity or suggested nudity, such as holding a towel or linen to conceal genitals (Ibroscheva 2007; Nelson and Paek 2008).
Voiceover	(0) none, (1) male, (2) female, and (3) both (male and female).	Voiceovers were the voices of people who could not be seen. Voiceovers did not include the following: (a) voices that were only heard singing or (b) children’s voices.
Product Category	(1) cosmetics/toiletries, (2) pharmaceuticals/health products, (3) cleaning products/kitchenware, (4) non-alcoholic drinks, (5) alcoholic drinks, (6) foods/snacks, (7) restaurants/retail outlets, (8) communications/information, and (9) other.	On the basis of the results from a pilot test of 20 different product categories, these nine categories were selected for this study.

58.3 % ( $n=148$ ) were female and 41.7 % ( $n=106$ ) were male ( $\chi^2=6.945$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.008$ ). As a result, hypothesis 1, which states that Philippine television advertisements will feature more males than females, was not supported. However, after the advertisements for the most prominent product category (cosmetics/toiletries) were removed from the sample, no statistically significant differences between males and females were found ( $\chi^2=0.337$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.562$ ). Thus, the results indicate that this product category plays a major role in the predominance of females in the sample, whereas the results of other variables were not influenced by this removal. Following these results, which indicate a possible effect of product categories on the results, we have controlled for the type of product for all variables using product category as a layer in the chi-square analysis. Because of low cell counts, we used Fisher’s exact test, but this method led to mixed results and the lack of a clear pattern. For each variable, advertisements for different product categories were responsible for the overall significant differences between males and females.

As for the setting (Table 2), we found significant differences regarding gender representation ( $\chi^2=16.182$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=.003$ ; Cramer’s  $V=.252$ ). With respect to the adjusted standardized residuals (ASRs), two settings were significantly associated with one gender. The workplace setting was clearly dominated by males (17.9 % vs. 7.4 %;  $ASR=\pm 2.6$ ), and the home setting

was dominated by females (45.9 % vs. 24.5 %;  $ASR=\pm 3.5$ ). However, no statistically significant difference for males and females was found in the outdoor setting (24.5 % vs. 18.9 %;  $ASR=\pm 1.1$ ). As a result, hypothesis 2a, which states that females will dominate the home setting, and hypothesis 2b, which states that males will dominate the workplace setting, were supported. However, hypothesis 2c, positing that males will dominate the outdoor setting, was not supported.

We also found gender differences regarding dress ( $\chi^2=58.985$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and a strong association between the genders on the degree of dress exhibited by the primary characters (Cramer’s  $V=.482$ ). Specifically, more males than females were fully dressed (88.7 % vs. 44.6 %;  $ASR=\pm 7.2$ ), and more females than males were suggestively dressed (52.7 % vs. 6.6 %;  $ASR=\pm 7.7$ ). As a result, hypothesis 3, stating that more females than males will be suggestively dressed, was supported. However, no statistically significant difference was found regarding the partially dressed subcategory.

Supporting hypothesis 4, there were more male (46.1 %) than female (35.0 %) voiceovers in Philippine television advertisements ( $\chi^2=13.665$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Additionally, 6.7 % of the advertisements had no voiceovers at all, and 12.2 % had both male and female voiceovers. We also found a strong association between the gender of the voiceover and the gender of the primary character ( $\chi^2=86.535$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p<.001$ ; Cramer’s

**Table 2** Relationship Between Gender and Miscellaneous Variables

Variables		Male		Female		Chi Square
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Setting	Workplace	19	17.9	11	7.4**	16.182** ( <i>df</i> =4)
	Home	26	24.5	68	45.9***	
	Other Indoors	24	22.6	23	15.5	
	Outdoors	26	24.5	28	18.9	
	Other	11	10.4	18	12.2	
Degree of Dress <sup>a</sup>	Fully Dressed	94	88.7	66	44.6***	58.985*** ( <i>df</i> =2)
	Suggestively Dressed	7	6.6	78	52.7***	
	Partially Dressed	5	4.7	4	2.7	
Voiceover	None	7	6.6	10	6.8	86.535*** ( <i>df</i> =3)
	Male	82	77.4	35	23.6***	
	Female	5	4.7	84	56.8***	
	Both	12	11.3	19	12.8	
Product Category	Cosmetics/ Toiletries	15	14.2	49	33.1***	17.310** ( <i>df</i> =6)
	Pharmaceuticals/ Health Products	21	19.8	14	9.5*	
	Cleaning Products/ Kitchenware	8	7.5	13	8.8	
	Non-alcoholic Drinks	13	12.3	22	14.9	
	Foods/Snacks	32	30.2	29	19.6	
	Restaurant/ Retail Outlets	7	6.6	7	4.7	
	Other <sup>b</sup>	10	9.4	14	9.5	

The significance levels for differences between sub-categories are based on post-hoc tests using adjusted standardized residuals. If the value of a residual lies outside  $\pm 1.96$ , then it is significant at  $p < .05$ ; if outside  $\pm 2.58$ , then  $p < .01$ ; if outside  $\pm 3.29$ , then  $p < .001$

<sup>a</sup> Nude primary characters did not appear in our sample

<sup>b</sup> The alcoholic drinks and communications/information product categories were added to the “other” product category due to low cell counts  
 $N=254$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

$V=.584$ ), as more male voiceovers were used in advertisements with male primary characters (77.4 %,  $ASR=+8.5$ ) and more female voiceovers were used in advertisements with female primary characters (56.8 %,  $ASR=+8.6$ ).

Finally, the product categories also showed gender differences among the various advertisements ( $\chi^2=17.310$ ,  $df=6$ ,  $p=.008$ ; Cramer's  $V=.261$ ). However, when examining the ASRs, only two product categories were associated with a particular gender. More females than males were shown in advertisements for the cosmetics/toiletries product category (33.1 % vs. 14.2 %;  $ASR=\pm 3.4$ ), supporting hypothesis 5, which states that more females will be shown in this product category. In addition, more males than females were shown in advertisements for the product category pharmaceuticals/health products (19.8 % vs. 9.5 %;  $ASR=\pm 2.4$ ).

## Discussion

Gender stereotyping is high in the Philippines, assuming that equality is the basis of comparison for gender stereotyping and that stereotyping is more prevalent when advertising

deviates more from gender equality (Eisend 2010). In other words, if, for example, the percentages of males and females in the workplace are similar, then stereotyping is low, but if these percentages differ greatly, then stereotyping is high. On the basis of the findings attained, gender stereotyping was found for the following: settings in which more males were found in the workplace and more females were found at home; the degree of dress, in which more males were fully dressed and more females were suggestively dressed; voiceovers, which employed more males than females; and product categories, in which cosmetics and toiletries were associated primarily with female characters. In contrast, the predominance of female primary characters ran counter to trends in previous studies. In the section that follows, these findings will be considered in the context of the previous literature and possible reasons for and effects of these representations will be discussed.

## Numerical Representation and Setting

One gender-related factor of advertisements that may differ from stereotypical and traditional gender depictions is the

numerical representation of gender, which is dominated by females, at 58.3 %. This value exceeds the actual percentage of females in the Philippines, which has a nearly equal distribution of males and females (Hausmann et al. 2011). The predominance of female characters differs from the results from many other countries. For example, in Hong Kong, more than 60 % of the central characters in advertisements were found to be males (Furnham and Chan 2003). It is a positive sign that females are not underrepresented in the Philippines, which may indicate women's relevance and recognition, as noted by cultivation theorists (Gerbner et al. 1980; Signorielli and Bacue 1999).

There are several possible reasons for this predominance of female characters; however, in reviewing the few studies in which females clearly dominated, it is difficult to find an explanatory pattern. These studies included not only developed countries, such as the United States (Bartsch et al. 2000) and Singapore (Lee 2004), but also less developed countries with patriarchal societies, such as Mexico (Villegas et al. 2010) and Turkey (Milner and Collins 1998). One reason for the predominance of female characters in the Philippines may be that females are the main target group for most advertised products. This assumption is supported by the finding that females generally dominate the primetime viewing audience in the Philippines; this predominance also occurred during our recording week, in which females had an audience share of 53.3 % whereas males had an audience share of 46.7 % (Sunshine Fung, AC Nielsen Philippines, personal communication, November 23, 2012). In addition, based on a categorization from a previous multinational study (Paek et al. 2011), 57.5 % of the product categories that were advertised in the Philippines can be identified as female products, which suggests that females are likely the main users, whereas the majority of the remaining product categories can be regarded as gender-neutral products. Advertisers tend to use spokespersons of the same gender as their target group in television advertisements (Whipple and McManamon 2002). A closer examination of the product categories reveals the possible main reason for the predominance of female primary characters, namely, the product category of cosmetics/toiletries, which is strongly dominated by females. The removal of advertisements for this product category from the sample leads to no significant gender differences for the numbers of males and females. Thus, we must be cautious in interpreting the results on numerical representations as countering stereotypical gender depictions because they are based on one of the strongest gender stereotypes, namely, the strong association of females with the product category of cosmetics/toiletries. Thus, the predominance of females within the cosmetics/toiletries product category and perhaps the intended target group could explain why the prediction that countries with a high masculinity score (Hofstede 2001) should have more male primary characters (Milner and Collins 1998, 2000) was incorrect in this

study. Multi-country research has also shown that this prediction may apply to only a few countries (Paek et al. 2011).

Overall, we conclude that numerical representations alone are not sufficient to determine whether gender representations are positive or negative. Paek et al. (2011) cites South Korea as an example of a nation in which the use of more females in advertisements does not indicate a better representation of females. Collins (2011) also concluded that “simply increasing the prevalence of women among characters in media might exacerbate any problematic effects of media use unless the manner in which women are portrayed is also addressed” (p. 294). Therefore, as suggested by cultivation theorists, a deeper understanding of the nature of the representation of gender in television advertisements, including precise types of portrayals and appearances, is needed. These representations may then be used to draw conclusions about the society's respect for the social group studied (Signorielli and Bacue 1999).

One indicator that can provide insight into the ways in which gender is portrayed in advertisements is the setting in which the primary characters appear. The settings in this study were highly stereotypical for both genders and presented more females than males in the home (45.9 % vs. 24.5 %) and more males than females in the workplace (17.9 % vs. 7.4 %). Gender depictions within the various settings followed traditional gender roles and were consistent with most previous research. Research on Indonesia, Japan, and Singapore (Bresnahan et al. 2001; Furnham and Imadzu 2002; Furnham et al. 2000; Siu and Au 1997) has revealed gender differences of 20 % or more for the home setting. Research outside of Asia has shown especially strong gender differences at home for more traditional societies, including Saudi Arabia (Nassif and Gunter 2008) and Zimbabwe (Furnham et al. 2001). For the workplace setting, only one other study in Asia (South Korea) found gender differences greater than 10 % (Kim and Lowry 2005), while generally studies in more developed countries, such as Japan (Bresnahan et al. 2001), Singapore (Siu and Au 1997) and Hong Kong (Furnham and Chan 2003), found few gender differences or even a female predominance in the workplace setting. This trend was also identified in certain developed non-Asian countries, such as Great Britain (Furnham and Farragher 2000; Furnham and Imadzu 2002) and Australia (Mazzella et al. 1992). However, gender differences in certain settings were found not only in television advertisements but also in magazine advertisements (Skorek and Schreier 2009).

The gender differences in settings reflect the situation in the Philippines, where the roles of husbands and wives are clearly differentiated (Chant 2007), with males as the breadwinners and being reluctant to perform household chores (Chant and McIlwaine 1995). On the other hand, the representations in the workplace setting do not reflect gender



equality in the Philippines. From a social cognitive theory viewpoint, such stereotypical occupational depictions of males and females may teach and reinforce the viewer's gender-typed occupational schemas (Bandura 2001). Research in the United States has indicated that the viewing of stereotypical advertisements leads to less interest in jobs that are traditionally associated with the opposite gender, whereas viewing females in nontraditional occupations can increase the acceptability of females working in nonconventional careers (Smith and Granados 2009); these findings support social cognitive theory.

#### Degree of Dress, Voiceover, and Product Category

The degree of dress of the primary characters in relation to gender was consistent with previous research showing that more males were fully dressed (88.7 % vs. 44.6 %), while more females were suggestively dressed (52.7 % vs. 6.6 %). Similarly, in research conducted in Bulgaria, 59 % of females were dressed suggestively compared with only 24 % of males (Ibroscheva 2007). The same proved to be true in several studies conducted in the United States. For example, Signorielli and McLeod (1994) found in MTV advertisements that most male characters were wearing neutral clothing, while 24.4 % of females wore somewhat sexy clothing and 29.4 % wore very sexy clothing. Such differences in the degree of dress between males and females may be a form of sexual objectification of women, who are treated as bodies “that exist for the use and pleasure of others” (Fredrickson and Roberts 1997, p. 175). Furthermore, using women as sex objects may be a form of maintaining and expressing patriarchy. As proposed by social cognitive theory, such depictions may have a wide variety of effects because viewers are influenced by these depictions (Bandura 2001). Objectification, for example, can lead to anxiety, shame, depression, and eating disorders (Fredrickson and Roberts 1997), and sexualization has been linked to negative thoughts about one's body (Dens et al. 2009). A cultivation effect was found in connection with watching sexual stereotypes in the media: The more an audience watches sexual stereotypes in the media, the more strongly viewers will endorse these stereotypes and regard women as sex objects (Ward 2002). Finally, research has found a relationship between sex image advertisements and reported attitudes supportive of sexual aggression and lower acceptance of feminism (MacKay and Covell 1997). Additionally, the use of nudity may be questioned from a business perspective, as women (in contrast to men) adopt more negative attitudes toward an advertisement when they see nudity compared with advertisements without nudity (Dianoux and Linhart 2010).

The voiceover results were consistent with previous studies, as male voiceovers dominated female voiceovers (46.1 % vs. 35.0 %), and are also consistent with research showing an association between higher masculinity scores and the gender

of the voiceover (Paek et al. 2011). Furthermore, voiceovers are commonly associated with authority (Silverstein and Silverstein 1974). In contemporary Philippine culture, males are still considered to hold greater authority than females. As suggested by social cognitive theory (Bandura 2001), such perceptions might be further reinforced by television advertisements conveying to the audience that male voiceovers are the voice of authority. However, the Philippines does have a more equitable number of voiceovers than Singapore and Japan, where more than 70 % of voiceovers were male (Arima 2003; Furnham and Imadzu 2002; Lee 2004) or Malaysia, Taiwan, China, India, and Thailand, where more than 80 % were male (Bresnahan et al. 2001; Cheng 1997; Das 2011; Paek et al. 2011). In studies of non-Asian countries around the world, strong gender differences have been observed in voiceovers, although there is no clearly visible pattern with respect to the frequency of male voiceovers. In particular, more than 70 % of voiceovers were male in the United States (Bartsch et al. 2000; Fullerton and Kendrick 2000; Paek et al. 2011), Great Britain (Furnham and Skae 1997; Nassif and Gunter 2008), Germany (Paek et al. 2011), and South Africa (Luyt 2011), whereas more than 80 % of voiceovers were male in New Zealand (Furnham and Farragher 2000), Canada (Paek et al. 2011), Brazil (Paek et al. 2011), and Saudi Arabia (Nassif and Gunter 2008). In addition, the preponderance of male voiceovers should be questioned from a business perspective because research in the United States has shown that female voices are at least as effective as male voices (Whipple and McManamon 2002).

In terms of product categories, there was an association between females and the product category cosmetics/toiletries (33.1 % vs. 14.2 %), while more males than females were used for the product category pharmaceuticals/health products (19.8 % vs. 9.5 %). The latter finding is not in accordance with previous literature but may be explained by the observation that more authority is attributed to male than to female doctors in the Philippines. In contrast, the association between females and cosmetics and toiletries is consistent with previous research. This result was one of the most consistent findings internationally (Furnham and Paltzer 2010) and was also true in Asian studies in Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan (Bresnahan et al. 2001; Das 2011; Furnham and Chan 2003; Furnham et al. 2000; Tan et al. 2002). There were, however, a few exceptions in Hong Kong and Japan (Furnham and Chan 2003; Furnham and Imadzu 2002; Furnham et al. 2000). Such depictions tell the audience which products to consume and also convey behaviors and qualities that are desirable for a particular gender; for instance, advertisements emphasize the importance of beauty and attractiveness for females. In short, as claimed by social cognitive theory, the audience learns from such depictions (Bandura 2001). Paek et al. (2011) found that product type is the most significant predictor of the gender of the primary

characters in advertisements; thus male-oriented products are more often promoted by male primary characters, and female-oriented products are more often promoted by female primary characters. Therefore, the main reason for the predominance of female primary characters in the Philippines may be that more female-oriented products are advertised in this country (such as the product category of cosmetics/toiletries), with 57.5 % of all advertisements promoting female-oriented products (Paek et al. 2011). Such associations, however, should be less restricted from a business viewpoint, as well as from the perspective of social responsibility, because targeting one gender may make sense in the short term, but ultimately, companies often need to target both genders (Milner and Fodness 1996). It appears that these developments have already begun in more economically developed locations such as Hong Kong and Japan, where product categories are less associated with one specific gender, at least according to some studies (Furnham and Chan 2003; Furnham and Imadzu 2002; Furnham et al. 2000).

### Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Research

Overall, this study has found stereotypical depictions of males and females in Philippine television advertisements for almost all of the investigated variables. These findings confirm those of previous studies indicating that Asian countries, as well as more traditional developing countries, continue to use more gender stereotyping in television advertisements than most Western and other developed countries, where gender stereotyping has been on the decline (Furnham and Mak 1999). Studies have also found that, at least for some variables, less gender stereotyping occurs in television advertising in the Asian nations of Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan than in more traditional societies, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The impact of religion in defining gender roles in these places may also be important in determining these traditional representations, such as the presence of Christianity in the Philippines.

Considering that the Philippines is one of the more advanced countries in terms of gender equality (Hausmann et al. 2011), such strong gender differentiation and stereotyping does not mirror the changes within Philippine society. There are still strong gender divisions in Philippine society, especially within the family, but advertising exaggerates the differences between males and females (Luyt 2011) and lags behind changes in society (Kim and Lowry 2005; Wee et al. 1995), a phenomenon that has taken place not only in the Philippines, but in many countries around the world (Furnham and Paltzer 2010). This lag may be connected with television's desire to maintain the status quo, as claimed by cultivation theorists. Television "is an agency of the established order and as such serves primarily to extend and maintain rather than to alter, threaten, or weaken conventional conceptions, beliefs, and behaviors" (Gerbner

and Gross 1976, p. 175). In other words, television may favor and support a patriarchal society, a situation that may also be related to the attitudes and views of those who produce television advertisements. In another context, it was shown that the gender of the writer or producer may also have an effect on gender portrayals (Lauzen and Dozier 1999).

Regardless of the actual causes of gender stereotyping in Philippine television advertisements, gender stereotypes may have negative consequences, including restricting life opportunities (Eisend 2010) and reinforcing existing stereotypes (Lee 2004). Social cognitive theory states that the audience acquires gender role stereotyping from the media (Oppliger 2007), which may reinforce viewers' gender-typed occupational schemas (Bandura 2001). The sexualization of women has been linked to women's negative thoughts about their bodies (Dens et al. 2009), which can lead to anxiety, shame, depression, and eating disorders (Fredrickson and Roberts 1997). Cultivation theory also supports this idea and notes that the consistent repetition of gender stereotypes in advertising and other media naturalizes and normalizes these representations (Gerbner et al. 1980), and heavy viewing is positively associated with sex-role stereotyping (Oppliger 2007). However, advertising, and the media in general, can also be used to alter already existing attributes, judgments, values and conduct (Bandura 2001). For example, non-stereotypical advertisements can reduce stereotypes among viewers (Smith and Granados 2009) and help to produce behavioral changes in women (Jennings-Walstedt et al. 1980). Furthermore, from a business perspective, it is surprising that advertising agencies around the world still consistently portray gender in highly stereotypical ways; in fact, research in the United States has found that women do not feel adequately portrayed in advertising, a perspective that may lead to negative company images and even to boycotts of firms' products (Ford and LaTour 1996).

Equal participation and opportunity have been established as a practice in the Philippines. However, traditional roles still prevail in the family (Chant 2007). This phenomenon can also be observed in the Filipino image of mothers as the "ilaw ng tahanan" (the light of the home), or care providers in the family, whereas males are cast as the "haligi ng tahanan" (the stronghold of the home), or economic providers. These roles are deeply rooted in Filipino gender consciousness, and the mass media and in particular television advertisements preserve and reinforce these gender images. It appears that gender roles will be perpetuated in the Philippines as long as these traditional Filipino family values and social norms persist in the media. A survey shows that such portrayals might have cultivated and naturalized such gender images. Females in 10 Asian countries were asked whether advertising tends to portray women in shallow ways; the survey revealed that only 46 % of Filipino women agreed with this statement, whereas in Hong Kong and South Korea, 71 % and 82 % of women,

respectively, agreed with the statement (Unilever Philippines 2007). Despite a recent publication on gender representation in the media (Enriquez 2011), this type of research is not at the forefront of the Philippine agenda, even among feminists, who are predominantly concerned with other issues, such as poverty, the division of labor, labor migration, gender violence, sexual politics and reproductive rights (Sobritchea 2005).

This study has provided insights into gender representation in Philippine television advertisements and is an important addition to the still under-researched area of gender representation in developing countries. Nevertheless, a single-country study can only lead to limited conclusions. Thus, we suggest additional multi-country studies that further investigate how economic conditions, cultural aspects, practical considerations (see Paek et al. 2011), religion, and other aspects of a society influence gender representation. In addition, we can only speculate about the possible effects of gender representation on audiences. As a result, we recommend further research on the effects of gender representation. Furthermore, we investigated only primary characters, a limitation that restricts the amount of information about gender representation that can be gleaned from television advertisements; future research should include a more comprehensive study of all characters that are represented in an advertisement. Finally, although this detail is consistent with most studies (Furnham and Paltzer 2010), our research was based only on primetime advertisements, thus limiting the inferences that can be drawn with regard to gender representation in a full day's cycle of television advertisements. As a result, we suggest that future research studies examine how gender is represented in various television time slots. Despite its limitations, this study has shown that Philippine television advertising remains geared toward the norms of the nation's tradition and culture, which continue to manifest a patriarchal framework. These results are in line with studies on more traditional and developing countries. Although other sectors have implemented efforts to promote gender equality, much remains to be done in the Philippine advertising industry.

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