Gender Stereotyping in Fashion Advertising: A Perceptual Analysis of Male Consumers from Pakistan

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Abstract

This study is aimed at answering the male perception about gender related stereotypes that make up major part of printed fashion advertisements. Carried out on Pakistani men, this paper attempts to fill the research gap related to how gender stereotypes are perceived by men as consumers of printed fashion advertising. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were carried out with Pakistani men who shop for their own clothing. The empirical data was coded manually.

The findings revealed a positive attitude of men towards traditional masculine displays in advertisements. Any deviances from the traditional masculine displays were met with negative criticism. The interviewed men also asserted that they did not feel constrained when put into categories of certain social persona or groups.

The conclusion implied that classical stereotypical gender roles were deeply embedded in the minds of the interviewees and unless the advertising reproduction of such images is not revised, such mindsets will continue to exist, grow and create difficulties in the transition of the society towards fairness and equality.

Keywords: masculinity, gender roles, gender stereotypes, traditional displays, non-conforming depictions, advertising, male perception.

1. Introduction

The discussion encompassing the topic of gender issues is rooted back to '1960s' (Eisend, 2010).Since then, the topic has pulled the greater interest of academic scholars, and various studies have been carried out to examine the portrayals of genders in print advertisements (Bolliger, 2008; Elliott, 2005; Robertson, Jessica, 2013; Zotos, Eirini, 2014), radio advertisements (Eisend, 2010; Furnham, Schofield, 1986; Furnham, Thomson, 1999) along with television commercials (Gilly, 1988; Knoll, Eisend, 2011; McArthur, Resko, 1975). The results of researches revealed that even though the gender roles have changed in the past decades but advertisers continue to heavily depend on stereotypical portrayals of men and women in advertisements.

The cultural interpretations and gender centric roles' classificationsare the reasons shaping gender stereotypes. It is essential to understand that sex and gender are two different concepts. Bolliger regardssex as a biological concept that distinguish humans as male and female, and according to them gender has been "defined by society and its cultural norms" (Bolliger, 2008).

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He further attributes masculine gender roles with success, power, strength, and aggressiveness while femininecharacters are ascribedas supportive, submissive and warm.

As defined by (Knoll, Eisend, 2011), the gender stereotyping is "a set of concepts related to a social category" and connects it to those who classify these labels as "beliefs that certain attributed differentiate women and men". However, (Yuet al., 2014) argued stereotypes as the ways to enable people to steer through difficult daily life. The authors argue that stereotypes are source of information that helps people distinguish each other in the absence of their personal information. The belief that stereotypes do not essentially have to be negative and can be helpful in daily life in the absence of a person's orientation. However, it is essential to realize that stereotypes are over simplified notions and their usage can result in misjudgments, misunderstandings, and hurtful interpretations. Stereotypes take a challenging form when life choices and prospects for people from particular social clusters are influenced by them (Knoll, Eisend, 2011).

The aim of advertisers continuing to be dependent on conventional demonstrations of both genders is due to the willingness with which consumers identify for whom the product is aimed for (Lafky et al., 1996; Wolin, 2003) supports the view that gender acts as a subdivision scheme for two reasons. One that it is easily understandable for the customers. Second, that they allow large profitable areas for marketers whose impacts of responsiveness and change are easy to measure. Majority of the products in market are based on gender stereotypes and the consumerist adoptions that characters make, symbolizes and reinforces their place in a specific crowd. Various authors (e.g. Schroeder, Zwick, 2004; Wolin, 2003) believe that due to the above mentioned explanations, vendors are reluctant to distribute usage of typecasts as it allows them to communicate a multitude of ideas and things without having to actually say it.

This study aimsto investigatehow males perceiveabout these kind of depictions, opinionsand in-depth feelings that they stimulate and their awareness of gender specific role portrayals in advertisements. The importance of this research is argued for two reasons: a) That majority of the research studies conducted in this scope is centered around women, b) To question and investigate the general perception that images in advertisements have the tendency to negatively impact people's lives because of their portrayal of idealistic body images, culturally defined gender based roles and responsibilities or dominance of particular social communities groups. The plenty of studies have been limited to examine the advertising content and have foregone investigation regarding consumers perception and interpretation of such images in their own correspondingenvironments.

Therefore, the scope of this researchis defined to study men's perception of male portrayal in printed fashion advertisements to make the research around gender stereotyping more inclusive. The target of this research is to evaluate the role of stereotypical portrayals and if they really are perceived as significantly as vouched by individuals and researchers.

2. Materials and methods

As per the objective of the research, a research question was formed *"How do men identify gender stereotypes in printed fashion advertisements?" t*o inquire about male perception regarding stereotypical depictions in advertisements, the most appropriate method was one that would allow insight into the opinions, beliefs and attitudes of the respondents. Thus, it was decided to involve respondents in a conversation that would give the interviewer, literal, words. This led to selection of qualitative data collection as it is concerned with words than numbers while semi-structured in-depth interviews was chosen as data collection technique "to allow opening up of new insights and dimensions (Easterby-Smith, 2012). This method highlights the social constructionism paradigm which asserts "reality' is socially constructed and the meaning is given by people" (Easterby-Smith, 2012). This study is, however, restricted to a sample size of seven respondents of Pakistani origin and the selected advertisements are from printed fashion magazines. Subsequent sections carry the reason for selection for methodological choices and process for data collection.

Research Design. This research paper was aimed at collecting data through semi structured in-depth interviews to study male consumer perception about gender stereotypes as depicted in print advertisements of clothing brands. Consequently, the aim was to find out the impact of contemporary print advertisements from the fashion industry and whether they have an impact on its consumers or not.

Data collection. Qualitative research method was adopted in an attempt to convincingly answer the research question and so seven in-depth semi structured interviews were conducted along with photo elicitation technique which is further explained.

Semi- structured in-depth interviews

Seven male consumers who shop for their clothing were interviewed through semi-structured, in-depth interviews to add to the reviewed literature as "in-depth interviews allow birth of views, perceptions and opinions of people through the language they use" (Easterby-Smith, 2012). The focus was to get the respondents to open up about their true opinions and perceptions regarding gender stereotypes in advertising. The semi-structured approach allowed the researcher to skip or add questions when individually interviewing respondents according to how the interview flowed. Individual questioning also allowed the respondents to feel at ease and without any pressure.

The researcher's focus was on investigating the male perceptions and attitudes in Pakistan among those who personally purchase their own clothing brands, the interview guide was created in Urdu. The interviews were conducted in the native language to make respondent comfortable and more expressive. The interview guide consisted of 25 questions, subdivided into five topics and which varied according to the interviewee and the topics discussed with him. The interview guide is explained in detail in lateral parts of the paper. Due to the semi-structured plan of interviews, it was possible for the researcher to bring up additional topics not included in the interview guide and strike follow-up questions whenever deem fit.

Photo Elicitation

For this research, the participants were exposed to six printed clothing brands' fashion ads depicting male models in various settings and situations. Each advertisement is described in detail in lateral part. According to (Easterby-Smith, 2012), pictures in the research process enable new perspectives and connections to come to the forefront that would otherwise, go unnoticed. A. Bryman and E. Bell (Bryman, Bell, 2011) has called this method as photo elicitation which gives an insight to the participants about the setting at hand. Thus, the questions asked during the interviews were aimed at prompting respondents on their true feelings of relativity to the advertisements, if they can identify and what alterations would they like to make to it. The focus was to discover deeper insights to help in the formulation of a theory and to answer the research question.

Keeping in view, the vast majority of the printed advertisements in the fashion industry and the difficulty of analyzing the data on the whole, six printed fashion advertisements were selected that portrayed men in various states, based on six masculinity types as primarily identified by (Yuan, Shaw, 2011). These ads were then shown to respondents for them, to be able to provide a more concrete and relatable response. The objective of exposing respondents with these ads is to put forward the broader and clearer investigation about the male perception of gender stereotypes in printed fashion advertisements. The print ads were utilized to motivate discussion and to ensure concrete statements from respondents about what they saw and felt toward the depictions.

The Interview Guide

Y. McGivern (McGivern, 2009) considers interview design as a crucial component of building the research structure thus, an interview guide was formulated that comprised three components: perceptions, identification with model and situation depicted and possible changes that the respondent suggested. It was then further divided into five sections of Introduction, Main body; perception of fashion advertisements and buying behavior, perception towards shown advertisements, stereotypical displays in ads and self-recognition, and closing questions.

The interviews started with introduction as it is important from an ethical perspective and to make the participants at ease (McGivern, 2009). Participants were made to sign a consent form which assured them of confidentiality, revealed the topic, purpose, procedure, length of the study, took their permission to record the audio and informed them of their right to end the interview at any time and of the non-existence of right or wrong answers.

The participants were provided with pen and paper to jot down their thoughts. They were shown the selected ads and were asked to write about what they saw, liked, disliked, felt in the ads and if they could relate with the portrayals in ads. They also filled thought bubbles, written down important views about the models depicted in the advertisements. The participants were provided with enough time to finish their notes and thought bubbles as required by them. The process was recorded throughout the interview.

In the introduction, the participants were asked to talk about their preferences in shopping, whether they follow fashion trends, look up fashion magazines or buy clothes worn by dummies. The questions were aimed at analyzing whether advertising influenced the participants, whether they looked at printed ads in detail or skimmed right away. The insights allowed a detailed background information about the preferences of the participants, their general interests and awareness of men's clothing, advertising and magazines.

The second part involved inquiring about the participant's perception about the six advertisements. They began by describing the ad in their own words, then shared their thoughts about the advert; what they liked/disliked, alterations they would make in it, if it was appealing to them and if they could identify with the models. This allowed the researcher insights into how the respondents feel, think, and perceive the selected ads and what emotions does the ads evoke.

The third part dealt with the participants' awareness of stereotypes in advertisement and their experiences of such depictions. They were also asked to come up with a 'perfect ad' for men's apparel that they would find more appealing.

The closing questions asked for respondents' feedback about advertising in fashion industry and were asked to add additional information if they had any. If they had nothing to add, then the recording stopped. Respondents were told that they would receive a script of their interviews with which they could verify their answers and contact for further details. In the end, all the participants were acknowledged for their precious time and the insightful information they shared with us.

The interviews were conducted in person and recorded with the consent of participants and later transcribed to reduce the chances of data loss and misinterpretation. Once the transcript was completed, it was coded manually to analyze the data.

Sampling and Participant Selection

The criteria required to answer the research question of how males perceive a gender stereotype in printed fashion advertisements included men of Pakistani origin, male, 20 to 35 years old and had to be buyers of their own clothes. This sample size is targeted by marketers and fashion agencies. The fact that the participants regularly followed men's fashion magazines was not of much significance however, the participants' willingness to share and express their perceptions and opinions mattered.

M.T. Easterby-Smith (Easterby-Smith, 2012) states that purposive sampling method is selected when it is very clear which sampling units are needed in a research method. Thus, due to clear distinction about which sampling method to use and with a limited time period of four months, purposive sampling method was selected as it allows strategic sampling of participants which ensure only those sampled are relevant to the (Bryman, Bell, 2011).

Thus, participants were scheduled to be interviewed from 1st to 20th April 2018. Participants were briefly told about the topic of the study and how their opinion was required about print adverts from fashion industry. Participants were informed individually about the scheduled date and time.

Table 2. Participants Selected for Interview

Name	Age	Occupation
Ali	23	Student
Ahmed	26	Software engineer
Zain	20	Student
Humaid	24	Production manager
Hasan	23	Student
Jazib	30	Accountant
Wajih	27	Computer scientist

Data Analysis

All the interviews were recorded on tape and transcribed in order to eliminate all possible errors. First, all the transcripts were read repeatedly. Then a reflection was carried out on the literature review, followed by generation of codes which allowed breakdown of data in various parts (Bryman, 2011). Charmaz's advice as cited by (Esterby-Smith, 2012) was taken up which cautions

about ensuring the precision, simplicity and closeness of data. The coding process of data was done in Urdu. Codes were categorized in different themes on Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, and only Urdu quotations extracted for data analysis were translated into English. Different themes were assigned to these codes in an Excel file. The coding was done thorough manual method. Hereafter, the codes and themes were reevaluated after keeping in view the considerations from literature review and data sample.

Selected Advertisement

The advertisements selected from the fashion industry were done for various reasons. Firstly, to narrow down the research frame as there is a vast variety of advertisements featuring men selling different products. Secondly, it was not possible to collect, arrange, analyze from such a huge amount of data in a limited time and making comparison of displays of different product types would be irrelevant. Thus, only one product type ensured that the research was specific, accurate and meaningful.

Fashion as a topic is more accessible than any other topic among men and since everybody needs clothes to wear thus there is a likely chance that every consumer of clothes must have come across and been influenced by advertisements and fashion at least at some point in their lives. The images used by fashion advertisements selling accessories and apparel, not just serve purpose for visualization of products but also entice the viewers to imagine a fantasy flight when using that product (Santaella et al., 2014).

Thirdly, fashion advertisements have a great connection with print industry and can be found on newspapers, magazines and billboards.Therefore, fashion advertisements provided the best fit for this study due to being readily available and mostly being the source of controversy for their portrayal of gender specific images.

In a bid to find the most appropriate print advertisements, fashion magazines from 2017 January till March 2018 were randomly shortlisted, later scrutinized for projecting clothing advertisements targeted towards men. The selected print advertisements were selected from (*ONE, Levis, Tony & Guy, Jockey, Dockers Khakis, Dockers*). The aim was to show a variety of male depictions in advertisements to respondents in order to gain their perception. Thus, six ads were selected on the basis of classification model by (Yuan, Shaw, 2011). The classification is categorized in two variables: Masculinity types and masculinity roles. Seven masculinity types were identified that were placed in four categories: macho and vigorous, sophisticated and refined, cool and trendy and others. While masculine roles identified included entertaining, professional, decorative, recreational and other.

While Yuan and Shaw's model has identified seven types of masculinity types, only six are used in this study due to the non-availability of the 'gentle and refined' type in the three magazines that were reviewed.

Research objective

This study targets to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of men toward depictions in printed ads in the fashion category. The objective is to explore whether male consumer segment is aware of the stereotypes present in advertisements, what they term as conventional and non-conventional, and their feelings about the tradition of gender-detailed imagery and roles.

Research question

The research question developed to achieve the aforementioned research objective is as follows: *"How do men identify gender stereotypes in printed fashion advertisements?"*

3. Discussion

Gender Stereotypes and damaging consequences of advertisements

Author in (Knoll, Eisend, 2011) has classified gender stereotypes in to four mechanisms: trait descriptors, physical features, role behaviors, and occupation. Each of these segments has certain characteristics that are thoroughly related to men or women. Some authors argue that stereotypes do not necessarily have to be negative, others point out that gender stereotypes in advertising and media can have serious negative impact on a society. S.M. Shaw (Shaw, 1994) has emphasized contemporary media upholds and reproduces present-day gender principles (Black et al., 2009; Lafky et al., 1996; McArthur, Resko, 1975) have raised concerns over how these contemporary media depictions portray culture and what impact it will have on future generations. K.A. Black (Black et al., 2009) debates that due to exposure to stereotypes from a young age, youngsters adopt stereotypes and end up imitating it.

Scholars, feminists, activists and mindful customers have long argued that females are depicted as timid compared to males (Lafky, 1996).

M.E. Thomas (Thomas, 2000) contends that hostile stereotypes are not just faced by females, but also by African-Americans and Jews based on racial and religious discrimination. Several authors also argue that it is not just the negative impacts of stereotypes in adverts that are harmful but the promotion of unrealistic body images also affects people's self-confidence and sense of personal worth, leading them towards anorexia and bulimia (Elliott, 2005; Zotos, Eirini, 2014). People go for plastic surgeries because of the beauty standards they get exposed through mediums likeprint magazines, television commercials, movies, billboards and others (Elliott, 2005).

The Importance of Perception

Majority of the studies are content-based researches and have neglected the perception of consumers. This study allows an analysis of the sentiments being conveyed to consumers through advertisements and how they are perceived.

S. Livingstone (Livingstone, 1998) has discussed the importance of perception of people towards several kinds of textual materials including book, movie, image or other creative work. This led towards the inception of perception theory. It further states that the idea of a transcript is not prearranged and rests on the audiences' interpretation of the text. Thus, no generalized declarations can be made around the reception of printed advertisements. Since every individual interprets text differently, it can be concluded that it is based on the person's social, cultural, financial, educational situation and circumstances.

Gender Stereotyping of Women

The preceding researches have mostly concentrated on the representation of females in ads. Due to the feminist movements, the societal expectation of females transformed and they began to acquire education, took up executive level jobs and asked for equal pay. This allowed them to have more dispensable income leading to changes in social, occupational and domestic structures (Zotos, Eirini, 2014). Nevertheless, the marketing world also faces criticism for portraying women as sex objects, useless and dependent on men (Zotos, Eirini, 2014). Researches also confirm that most of the stereotypes are majorly communicated through adverts.

Interestingly, the depiction of stereotypes considered offensive, varies from one generation of women to another; aged women would be angered by sexually empowered female depictions while younger women would dislike women to be portrayed as typical housewives.

The Masculine Gender Responsibilities

The concepts of masculinity and femininity vary from one culture to another due to cultural differences (Bolliger, 2008).

The definition of masculinity and femininity in the (Longman..., 2003) says "the features and qualities considered to be typical of men". R.S. Craig (Craig, 1992) implies that "[m]asculinities and male bodies are socially and historically constructed and reinforced by social expectations based on shared meanings, especially by gender display in the mass media". D. Bollinger (Bolliger, 2008) debates that archetypal portrayals of men involve characteristics that emanate strength, success, power, aggressiveness and competence.

Pakistan stands on a neutral level on the Hofstede's masculinity index. Pakistan has attained a total of 50 points on a scale ranging from zero to 120 (Hofstede, 1980). Here index means, the "role distribution between the male and female genders" and explores the drivers behind people's behavior (Hofstede, 1980). The intermediate score of Pakistan asserted nothing about which spectrum the country lied on, whether it was more feminine or masculine. This study will explore which spectrum of the masculine or feminine qualities does the Pakistani society lies on.

Male Preconceptions in Advertising

As highlighted earlier by (Wolin, 2003), concept of gender allows easy categorization of products for consumers and market segmentation for producers.

Male models depicted in advertisements with typical postures and settings are usually engaged in some physical activity. Whether occupational or athletic, in offices or outdoors, the male portrayals emanate confidence, control and strength. The image of 'erotic male' has gained popularity in the last few years where the male appears to be sexually desirable. D.A. Rohlinger (Rohlinger, 2002) asserts that instead of symbolizing freedom and power for individuals to make their own choice, these images serve purpose to objectify men similar to women and encourage idealistic body images. S.T. Yuan and P. Shaw (Yuan, Shaw, 2011) reinforce seven separate types of masculinity that are further subdivided in four distinct classifications of male depictions in

advertisement.The 'Tough and macho' look is a customary look of an aloof cowboy. He has an athletic build, sharp features and defined muscles. His look reflects wildness, toughness, and determination.

The second category of 'vigorous and sunny' is the boy-next-door look, which is symbolized by a coy and sunburned looking model. Dressed casually, he carries an air of amiableness.The 'refined and gentle' category comprises of models that are cultured, intellectual and well-mannered. They have a tidy hairstyle and carry a preppy look which may include wearing glasses. The fourth category – 'Stern and Sophisticated' – involves middle-aged men with prosperous professions. The model adorns on suits and carries a confident and assertive look that reflects maturity and trustworthiness.

The fifth type – 'Trendy and Cool' – discusses the ads depicting casted models in rebellious attire, wearing stylishoutfits in provocative poses. They appear indifferent, aloof and distanced from the viewers. The sixth category called Sexy and Sensual portrays models in revealing, and tight clothing. Positioned in a way that arouses sexual desires, the models are mostly looking away from the camera.

The 'androgynous' look carries a mixture of feminine and masculine approach with an air of independence and daintiness. Within this categorization in adverts, models take up roles which include occupational, entertaining, familial, re-creational and fashionable. In the occupational character depicted in print ad, the male model casted is depicted as a professional in a working environment. The entertaining role is taken up by musicians, athletes and actors. In a domestic character, the model is casted as in a role of father or husband while in anentertaining role, thecasted model indulges in outdoor and leisurely activities. The fashion industry portrays models in an ornamental role.

Gender Stereotype Theory

Two theory-based approaches are also elaborated that deal with the use of stereotypical images in advertising. One is the Classic Theory and the other is the Stereotype Content Model (Zawisza,Cinnirella, 2010).

The Classic Theory

As per this theoretical explanation, anything creating divergencefrom the conventional essence has an ultimate possibility of being termed as negative (Zawisza, Cinnirella, 2010). If an image does not comply with stereotypical displays ingrained in the public's mind, then they will not perceive it positively. This theory reaffirms the idea by (Yu et al., 2014) which regards stereotypes as an easy way in the daily life to comprehend process and assign information. So as per this theory, if an image does not conform to traditional gender roles, some consumers will be confused by the information as they would be unable to categorize and process it. This may result in the consumer disregarding the advertisement or developing negative sentiments that may eventually pass down to the product line or the brand extensions. It can be concluded as; in the classic theory, gender precise roles and stereotypes contribute befittingly in advertisements, as they allow easy classification of products for consumers.

The Stereotype Content Model

S.T. Fiske at al. opposes this theory with his stereotypical content model. This model deals with the content on which stereotypes are based and evaluates it in the context of cordiality and proficiency. S.T. Fiske at al. say that even if the stereotype portrayed is conforming or negating traditional portrayals, it comprises of both the dimensions of friendliness and competency. A businessman can be categorized as low in warmth and high on competence while a father can be ranked as low in competence and high in warmth. The authors contend that this model allows stereotypes against social groups to be categorized into four subdivisions: "paternalistic (high in warmth, low in competence), contemptuous (low in warmth, low in competence), admiration (high in warmth, high in competence) and envious (low in warmth, high in competence)" (Fiske at al., 2002).

Opposed to The Classic theory, this model contends a complex perspective on stereotypes that says that attitudes and prejudices have a tendency to change if societal situations get altered. The stereotypical content based research model has received empirical support and has been tested. The results reveal that images that rank higher in warmth are perceived more positively than envious images. Considering the results for this study, it helps in explaining the typical stereotypical women portrayal witnessed in advertising communication. As depicted, the portrayed image of a housewife or woman of the house falls on the paternalistic scale and is thus, perceived

better than an image of a business woman which falls on the envious scale. However, the model appears opposite for men in classic gender roles. An image of an incapacitated man in a wheelchair is more on the paternalistic scale and appeals more than an image of an athlete as it falls on the envious scale. The truth of these findings is that the stereotypical displays of male models for marketing purposes is unjustified as unconventional portrayals would inspire consumers more and derive greater purchases of the product.

Table 1. Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al, 2002)

Four types of Out-Groups, Combinations of Status and Competition, and Corresponding Forms of Prejudice as a Function of Perceived Warmth and Competence

Warmth	Competence	
	Low	High
High	Paternalistic prejudice Low status, not competitive Pity, sympathy (e.g. elderly people, disabled people, housewives)	Admiration High status, not competitive Pride, admiration (e.g. in-group, close allies)
Low	Contemptuous prejudice Low status, competitive Contempt, disgust, anger, resentment (e.g. welfare recipients, poor people)	Envious prejudice High status, competitive Envy, jealousy (E.g. Asians, Jews, rich people, feminists)

Identity

The term 'identity' has been defined and refined over the past years. J.D. Fearon (Fearon, 1999) believes that the concept of identity can be understood in two contexts- social and personal. The social category comprises of people who share definite attributes, qualities and characteristics which determine whether a person can be part of that group or no. While in the individual perspective, identity is considered as the entirety of individual characteristics that differentiate a person from another. Mostly, individuals take pride in these characteristics and so regard them as "socially consequential but more-or-less un-changeable".

An individual's identity constantly adapts and changes over the time (Hall, 1996). It is also argued that anindividual's self-identityis hard to be perceived holistically;rather it is made up of many parts and fragments and multiplies over transecting and divergent practices, discourses and positions. The authors oppose the view that identities are built on similarities of people surrounding a person, instead, they argue that identities are an accumulation of differences.

Identity Construction through Consumption

R.W. Belk (Belk, 1988) in his research about possession states that it contributes to our identities. He believes that individuals assign particular value to few products and they are considered as a sum of all their possessions.

J.E. Schroeder and D. Zwick (Schroeder, Zwick, 2004) has highlighted the importance of masculine identity and the role it plays in the consumption of how the male body is constructed and represented. The authors believe that male body is a broad spectrum which was created in sum of consumption, advertising, visual communication and market segmentation.

The contemporary advertising shows masculine gender role in association with power and so, (Rohlinger, 2002) closes that "[p]roducts are placed in juxtaposition with images of power, which suggests that the product is an extension of the owner". Referring to (Rohlinger, 2002), it is derived that society categorizes men based on their physical strength and athletic stamina. This affects the mass-produced goods that reflect masculinity. However, it is also added that changing times show an inclination in non-traditional depictions in advertisements. For example, in 19860's gay liberation movement, the stereotype of how a "real man" should look like was questioned.

4. Results

Overall, a certain friction was felt between the four themes of authenticity, accessibility, masculinity and tolerance throughout the interview analysis. The following section discusses each theme in detail and explains how the respondents had opposite views which led to the decision of structuring the data analysis chapter on friction. One aspect of the interview that is especially mentioned at the end of the chapter is how all the respondents thought they were too smart to be influenced by the advertisements.

Authenticity vs. Inauthenticity

The authenticity of the adverts was discussed in terms of how believable the adverts were in terms of the model depicted and the situation that they were in. Some adverts were taken to be more believable and authentic than others and are discussed in the following content.

Authenticity in Relation to Model

The first print advertisementthe participants were exposed to, the *ONE* advert, received criticism for the way models were positioned in the advert. Firstly, the respondents showed confusion about the way the female model was made to lie down and the male model was looking down at her. According to respondents, it was a confusing posture as the models didn't look like they were selling clothes. Majority of the respondents could not relate with the way the male model was positioned in the advert.

The second criticism was targeted toward the black colored tops of the models. Since the advertisement is about summer arrivals, the respondents thought it appropriate for models to be dressed up in bright colors rather than black.

Another reason that reduced credibility of the *ONE* ad, was the use of female model and her positioning. A lot of respondents found it abrupt and misplaced and believed she could be positioned in a better way that would have revealed her clothes instead of her body. Both the models are famous Pakistani TV artists and were immediately recognized. The respondents thought that the way they were positioned made it very unrealistic and inauthentic. It looked very unnatural to pair the two models up in a setting that neither reflected the clothing nor the theme of summer, instead carried a sexual connotation to it. However, it wasn't just *ONE* advertisement that received criticism for being inauthentic but the Tony & Guy ad also appeared inauthentic due to the way the model carried his hair. The male models in both the ads showed a male image that did not fit with larger audience: "*You will not find a guy and a girl sitting in such a posture in public places, you may find them in movies but not in real life. That is what makes this ad (refers to ONE ad) very inauthentic and dramatic. (Referring to Tony & Guy ad) You are also unlikely to find a guy wearing a high hair bun, in the fashion shows yes you might but not in daily life, that is why this ad is very un-relatable.*"

Contrastingly, the models in Jockey and Dockers were perceived as more relatable. On the discussion of these two adverts, the respondents felt that the models appeared to be showing their real self. Respondents felt that the models are being shown for what they are and are not being blended into something they are not. The respondents could imagine themselves in their place.

Authenticity in Relation to Situation

The second aspect of authenticity was brought up in the situational context in which models were displayed. Every advert had a different situational context. The first three advertisements (*ONE, Levis and Tony & Guy*) depicted the male model as the sole presenter for the product whose main purpose was to show the viewer how the product would look like and they were doing so without being involved in any activity. While, the fourth, fifth and sixth advert (*Jockey, Dockers Khakis and Dockers*) depicted the models in varying situations like outdoor activity, playing football and in a living area.

All the respondents were synonymous with the fact that the models who were involved in some kind of activity appeared more authentic and relatable. They criticized the first three ads for being too unrealistic. Most of the participants argued that the situation showed in the advert and the emotions conveyed through the models affect the authenticity of the adverts. This influenced their perception of the product and the brand in general.

In conclusion, adverts from *ONE, Levis and Tony & Guy* were perceived as inauthentic as the models were clearly posing for the picture and no guy would find themselves in such a position in real life. Comparatively, adverts of Jockey, Dockers Khakis and Dockers were perceived to be more authentic as the participants could identify with the models and their situations and felt that the advert was a reflection of real life. "*I think the Dockers advert is the perfect and most relatable*

depiction. It's how any office-going person looks like and feels like. Nothing seems to be poised or contrived and appears as natural as possible". "The way female model is lying down with closed eyes is not something that you get to see every day and looks very artificial." (referring to ONE advert)

Accessibility vs. Inaccessibility

Another important aspect touched upon by all respondents was the difference between accessibility and inaccessibility. It dealt with how the interviewees perceived the portrayal of individual and situational context depicted in the adverts; how obtainable was a particular role portrayed and the situation shown. While some adverts were more likely to be reached and were accessible, others appeared to be dream images with less chances of being accomplished.

Accessibility in Context of the Model

The interviewees also evaluated adverts in relation to the situation in which the models were portrayed. A clear positive preference was seen amongst the interviewees for advertisements number four, five and six (*Jockey, Dockers Khakis and Dockers*) while the adverts number one, two and three (*ONE, Levis and Tony & Guy*) were met with neutral or negative criticism. It is pertinent to note here that the former ads portrayed models engaged in some kind of activity while the latter ads presented products without any situational context. The situational context and how well they were perceived will be discussed later.

The Jockey advert was generally perceived favorably by most respondents as they could relate wearing vest at home due to the hot weather. The advert instantly evoked positive feelings. Even though not all respondents could imagine themselves in place of the model as he was shown in an outdoor setting and a lot of them couldn't relate to the background but they could relate with the model's look. Neither did everyone agree that the model was attractive or young but almost everyone was fond of the model's get-up and his easy-going and laid-back appearance. The respondents used words like: *"Macho", "manly" (Jazib), "Cool", "breezy" (Humaid), "Feeling at ease" (Ahmed).*

Positive feedback was also received for Dockers advertisement, as all the respondents agreed that it was desirable and relatable. Majority of the respondents said they look or would like to look this sharp and fit at workplace while working and during breaks. In answer to what is the most appealing aspect of the advert, Ali said: *"The guy look contended because he is well-dressed. He looks like he means business and I think I can relate to that look of seriousness and class."*

The setting of the advert was also well-received by respondents as they thought the dressed up guy was perfectly suited in a formal setting of "an office" or a "living room".

While the advertisements number one, two and three (*ONE, Levis and Tony & Guy*) were pointed out for their zero situational context. All the ads were coloured and despite that the respondents called some of them out for being "cold" and "strange".

Conclusively, it can be stated that advertisements that reflect scenarios from daily life and the majority's lifestyles are more relatable and accessible by respondents as they are able to imagine themselves in the place of the models while advertisements that are lacking in situational context are received with less desirability, relativity and accessibility.

Masculinity vs. Femininity

Another theme that was highlighted by respondents was in their responses concerning masculinity and femininity. The respondents had their own views about which ads appeared manly and which could be altered 'to make manly'. It dealt with how the relationship between men and women exists and evolves.

Masculinity

In answer to the question of what defines masculinity for the interviewees, all of them came up with the stereotypical traditional definition of masculinity. Most of them related it to: "Tall" (Ahmed), "Macho" (Ali), "Strong-built" and "hard-looking" (Humaid), "Neatly-dressed" (Wajih).

According to the respondents, a man who is tall, strong-built, bearded with neat clothes on is a reflection of a true man. This reflected the conditioning of traditional male image in the minds of the participants. Therefore, it was no surprise that adverts four, five and six landed on the positive spectrum on the evaluation scale due to their projection of the traditional male image while adverts one, two and three landed on the negative spectrum due to their projection of the unconventional male image.

The advert by *Tony & Guy* was received with criticism for the way the model carried his hair in a bun. When asked what changes you would make to this ad, Ali said: *"I would get rid of the hair*

bun as it looks very feminine, I will cut his hair short and he would look perfect then as he already has a good built. He has feminine face features, delicate nose... but they won't be a problem if he gets a short haircut" (Ali).

This leads us to the conclusion that even facial features are stereotyped into feminine and masculine. A thin, sharp nose was considered feminine by an interviewee along with the style of hair.

The Dockers Khakis advert embodied manly characteristics, as stated by the interviewees. A man casually playing football in dress pants was perceived positively by respondents. They considered him with attributes such as successful, laid-back, and a go-getter.

However, majority of the interviewees asserted that clothing adverts should carry portrayals that ordinary men can relate to, as exaggerated portrayals create a sense of alienation and evoke negative emotions. *"I can't relate to it because I don't like polo shirts (referring to Levis advert). Models should be dressed up in a relatable way with normal body types that ordinary men possess. It shouldn't be too skinny or too bulky but enough to look good to the eyes of the consumer" (Wajih).*

Consequently, the respondents had an opinion on how should a man not look like. Men displayed in *ONE* and *Tony & Guy* were least favoured due to being away from the definition of manliness. *The Tony & Guy* model was also considered as 'feminine'.

Interestingly, the male model in the *ONE* advert was considered feminine in context of how he was depicted alongside a female model. *"I don't like how he is looking down upon the female model, while the female model could have been placed in a better way, the male model could have looked elsewhere into the frame, he appears feminine in the current position" (Humaid).*

In conclusion, the image of a traditional man is deeply anchored in the minds of the respondents according to which they perceive masculinity with tallness and strength while unconventional features are termed as unmanly and strange.

The connection of men and women in advertisements

The first advert of *ONE* featured woman alongside the male model. A general perception by interviewees was that women are mostly depicted to increase the attractiveness of the ad. While one respondent believed the presence of the female model was making the ad attractive: *"The ad would be quite boring if there was no female in it" (Ahmed).*

While on interviewee was honest with his views, others were more restrained in wording their opinion. They stated that the ad was not attractive for them but it might be for others and would *"convince them to buy the product too" (Humaid).*

Majority of the interviewees were critical of the use of a female model in the particular position as they believed she was playing a decorative role. *"I find the positioning of the female model very sexist. It might be attractive for some but for me it's neither attractive nor convincing as it is not selling the product effectively either" (Hasan).*

Another aspect which triggered response was the unnatural positioning of the female model. When asked what the interviewees would want to change about the advert, they agreed they would *"place her in a position where her clothes would be more visible than her body" (Ali).*

So in conclusion, an observation was derived that the participants very much conformed to the conventional and traditional displays of masculinity and so preferred to classify men in categories. They were of the opinion that stereotypes made it easier for them to distinguish which product was made for them and which wasn't. In fact, they directed criticism toward ads that they were unable to put into any category calling them 'strange', 'messy' and 'confusing'.

In conclusion of the data analysis, three recurring themes were found during the interviews. They were of authenticity, of accessibility, and of masculinity. A summary of the outcomes of the data are as follows:

The first theme of authentic and inauthentic perspective of advertisements led to the discovery that advertisements perceived as authentic are likely to be evaluated positively by interviewees in terms of both the context of the model and the situation. According to the respondents, when the products are placed in situational context (involved in outdoor activity, playing football, or taking a break in office), their authenticity factor increases while adverts that lack situational context and only use a model to present the product, lie on the inauthentic scale.

Furthermore, when the models conformed with the respondents' view of ordinary man only then were those adverts assumed to be authentic otherwise, they were perceived to be inauthentic.

The second theme dealt with accessibility and inaccessibility with regard to how easily the respondents can imagine themselves in a particular position or situation. The findings implied that the respondents identified two types of ideals; one that was desirable which they were likely to adapt and dream images; one that they were unlikely to adapt. Models that appeared in real life activities and postures in the adverts allowed the respondents to relate with them and perceived them positively. While models that portrayed unusual or strange depictions were perceived as hard to identify with and were assessed negatively and marked as inaccessible.

The third theme revolved around the notions of masculinity and femininity and concluded that the respondents are very much in accordance with the traditional stereotype of masculinity. Anything that conformed to their ideal of manly characteristics, (beard, wide-built) was evaluated as positive and quite contrastingly, anything that didn't conform (posture or hairstyle) was perceived as negative, feminine and unmanly.

The results reasserted that stereotypical displays are very much congruent with the existing perceptions of interviewees. They have clear distinctions of masculinity and femininity and categorize men and women according to various distinctions. Nevertheless, any deviation from the traditional perception of gender roles leads to confusion and disregard. Thus, the interviewees made use of stereotypical displays in order to be able to easily recognize if the advertised product was meant for them or no.

5. Conclusion

Conclusively, it was observed that the men who took part in the study reacted positively to the classic displays of masculinity. The participants confirmed that their preconceived notions of masculinity define men with hard work, success, strength, and sharpness. They mirrored these qualities in the physical appearance of a man who is fit, tall, with a strong-built and looks presentable and well-groomed.

Adverts selling through this kind of depiction were perceived as favourable and were evaluated positively. Images that did not correlate with the stereotypical masculine portrayals were received with confusion, distrust, and negative feelings. Repeated disapproval by participants over non-traditional masculine portrayal affirmed that masculine and feminine notions are deeply ingrained in the minds of the participants and that they strive to fit to the traditional portrayal. Portrayals where models appeared as successful businessman or esteemed personality having an authority to mark their own decisions were admired by respondents and one that they would personally aspire for. On the other hand, images that did not sit well with their perception of masculinity elicited feelings of confusion, disgust and antipathy. Repeated affirmation by the respondents about the lack of relativity with unconventional masculine depictions asserted that the classic ideas of masculinity and femininity and gender roles were deeply entrenched in the minds of the respondents. They appeared to attempt to achieve and aspirefrom those ideals. The respondents perceived print advertisements portraying models as successful businessmen or therespected personality were perceived as favourable by the respondents and were something that they wished to aspire for.

On the other hand, depictions that were not satisfying the respondents' concept of masculinity were disregarded as considered unnatural, strange and unworthy when it comes to aspiration. This also implies the under-thought that the respondents might have about how other people might regard their masculinity. The notions about masculinity are deeply anchored in the society and travel through the generations. Thus, it is a possibility that men would feel hesitant in sympathizing or showing interest in a non- conventional display. These results aid the idea of hegemonic masculinity that commonly exists and acceptable in majority of the societies. The depiction of a white, heterosexual man emanating power and strength is perceived to be superior in comparison to men with feminine characters or homosexual men. This provides explanation to why the adverts of *ONE* and *Tony & Guy* were met with harsh criticism.

Findings Related to Gender Stereotype Theories

The findings of this study reiterate the classic theory which says that any deviation from standard gender roles would be received with negative emotions. Participants evaluated the non-traditional depictions as strange and confusing.

The findings from the study pose a contradiction to the stereotype content model by (Fiske, 2002) which stated that paternalistic portrayals communicating warmth would be perceived positively as compared to images that emanate competence and enviousness. The opposite was true

for the participants of this study as they thought of the model in businessman attire as perfect and ideal. Whereas, they received effeminate portrayals with negative feedback despite them emanating warmth, according to the model.

Findings Related to Identity

One more interesting discovery of this research study wasparticipantspositive responsiveness to those depictions where they could imagine their own selves in place of the models and the situations. In the depictions that they could not, response would be of dislike and indifference. An interesting connection of authenticity and accessibility was found with identity. However, it was unclear whether the identification with the depictions was due to them being perceived as authentic and accessible, or whether the identification with the depiction brought about the classification of adverts as authentic and accessible.

Thus, the findings of this study can be categorized as consonant with J.D. Fearon's perception of identity (Fearon, 1999). He categorized identity into personal and social content. In the social context, he explicated that identity comprises of a category with people having similar attributes, characteristics and features. The findings revealed that participants were trying to put the models into one or the other social category based on a certain set of characteristics. In the personal context, J.D. Fearon (Fearon, 1999) explicated that identity is the total of personal characteristics and traits which tells one person apart from another. This identity can be reflected in different activities, preferences and desires. In the study at hand, findings revealed that respondents were able to relate with the adverts of Dockers Khakis and Dockers as they had desirable attributes like (groomed looks and successful persona) and were presented in everyday situations (in outdoor activity, playing football). The participants were able to project their personal attributes and characteristics onto the models in the adverts.

The study also proved true R.W. Belk's, idea (Belk, 1988) of the extended self in which he claims that people are a reflection of their possessions. The participants also attached meanings to clothing items as was in the case of Dockers model. Participants associated him with success due to the way he was dressed in formal attire. They pictured themselves in the situation and thought of the possession of such clothes as signifying of smartness and importance. For the participants, possession of such a clothing item is extension of their own identity to be allowed to form part of a social group.

Male vs. female stereotypes

An interesting discovery was that the men who were part of the study had a preference for categorization of men in adverts, while women disregarded the idea of being categorized, as depicted in examples of literature. Majority of the participants shared that they don't feel constricted when categorized. Some also stated that they considered stereotypes helpful as they make an ad distinctive from others. Others opined that traditional displays of men in advertisements helped in knowing about the values that the ad was promoting. They found it hard to categorize ad number three (Tony & Guy) as it failed to conform to standard notion of men. Various authors (Lafky et al., 1996; Wolin, 2003; Yu, 2014) highlighted the convenience associated with stereotypes as they act as shortcuts for people to move on about complex daily life. While stereotypes in advertising assist in telling people if the product is targeted toward them or no. the positive acceptance of stereotypical portrayal in ads by men is in stark contrast to examples of women in literature who are unaccepting of stereotypical portrayals in advertising. Possible explanation of this behavior is attributed to women's portrayal as inferior to men. They are usually objectified as sex symbol, contended house makers or male dependent entities.

Considering the Pakistani gender roles (Hofstede, 1980) and the stereotypes attached with the ideas of masculinity and femininity, it is understandable why the men were not too concerned about categorization and being subjected to stereotypes. As stated earlier, women are subjected to inferior standards than men and less categories apply to them than it does for men. In sum these categories are of businesswomen, housewives, and the sexy girl and almost all carry undesirable connotations. In comparison, men are mostly depicted in positions of power and appear desirable and easily fit into several categories of headstrong sportsman, popular businessman, rebellious go-getter, doting father and such. Each categorization has massive acceptance in the society and because these attributes are considered positive, men do not mind being put into these categories. However, the participants of the study showed an inclination to work toward the depicted social persona and would be happy to identify themselves with it. The participants verified this when they were asked to make changes to the ads and they suggested alterations that would make the ad more

stereotypical and relatable. For example, participants suggested that the model in ad number three (*Tony & Guy*) should be given a haircut to make him appear less strange.

In conclusion, this study has contributed to the previous research in the field of stereotypes in advertising, by successfully examining male perceptions of gender stereotypes in printed fashion advertisements in relation to reception theory. While the previous research dealt in content analyses, this study has focused on the perception of the consumers of the stereotypical depictions and data. Also, this study reasserted the previous research findings about stereotypes continuing to be extensively communicated through ads. The study at hand proved contrary to (Elliott, 2005) according to which men are also influenced through oppressive stereotypes, the respondents of this study established it clearly and showed their concern and about stereotypical portrayals. The authors poised that men are also faced with stereotypical displays of unrealistic body images or categories like that of a successful businessman but this study proves that the participants were willing to aspire to achieve such depictions. Therefore, the men who were interviewed felt that the categorization was not a source of limitation for them.

Limitations of the study and future research

It is difficult to generalize the findings of this research for the multi-ethnic population due to the qualitative nature of this study. It is highly recommended to further study the subject area by using results through quantitative data analysis in future.

The study can be replicated with multiple age groups in diverse cultures to acquire in-depth knowledge of the male perception. The stimulus can be modified, and other than print ads more interactive mediums like television commercials and digital content can be used to stimulate multiple senses of the respondents in order to create a strong perception. A comparative case can be built around the women and men perceptions about the same ads under the influence of gender stereotypes. Another suggestion for replication of this study can be constructed around Hofstede's cultural dimensions' theory (Hofstede, 1980) which places every country on a different masculinity-femininity index. It would make an interesting study to find out how men from high and low masculinity index countries would perceive selected advertisements. The focus of this study is on printed fashion advertisements only but future research studies can explore other sectors or products as traditional displays are present across the board.

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