

The representations and implications of gender stereotypes portrayed in three selected TV advertisements shown in Bangladesh: a critical interpretation

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to the precise critical interpretation of gender roles portrayed in the three selected TV advertisements shown in Bangladesh.

Design/methodology/approach – The analysis begins with the theoretical framework of gender roles analysis here in this paper: Goffman's gender stereotypes hypothesis which is used to identify and analyse the thematic features present in the ads. After critically examining the hypothesis, Kress and Van Leeuwen's systemic functional analysis framework is used to analyse the semiotic feature to interpret the signs and symbols. After that, Fairclough's stylistic analysis of discourse analysis is used to find out these features in the advertisements to search the cultural, political implications. Finally, the paper uses Pope's The Rape of the Lock and it is Cultural-Ecofeminist Analysis of Francois d'Eaubonne.

Findings – This paper tries to connect with the above-mentioned frameworks from a contextual point of view to predict the future progression of the gender representations and their implications in the coming years to check whether the changes in gender roles are reflected in the society or not.

Originality/value – Both in houses and workplaces, women empowerment, more female entrepreneurs in the working forces will bring out a change in the minds of people about the stereotypes and make more women inclusive and the women-friendly environment in Bangladesh and South Asian Countries.

Keywords Discourse analysis, Gender stereotypes, Stylistics, Cultural ecofeminism, Semiotic analysis, Systemic functional analysis, Systemic functional framework, Stylistic analysis, Multi-disciplinary framework

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

“Advertising is our environment. We swim in it as fish swim in the water. We can not escape it [. . .]. Advertising messages are inside our intimate relationships, our homes, our hearts, our heads”.

Says Kilbourne (1999) which conforms with how advertisements “frame” specific forms of perceptions and understanding in our mind (Gamson *et al.*, 1992). The ways in which the



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gender representations are portrayed in the advertisements have a direct connection with the social, political and cultural associations with gender stereotypes in different levels including thematic, semiotic and stylistic levels. Bell and Milic (2002) combine content analysis with semiotic analysis in Australian magazines to show gender stereotypes and their implications which will be used in the Bangladeshi context to examine whether these frameworks comply with advertisements shown in the country. In this paper, the representations and implications of gender stereotypes in the three selected TV advertisements shown in Bangladesh will be critically examined with Goffman's Gender Stereotypes Hypothesis to conduct "thematic analysis" On the other hand, Kress and Van Leeuwen's Systemic Functional Framework is used for "semiotic analysis". Along with these two frameworks, Fairclough's Discourse Analysis Framework will do "stylistic analysis". These theoretical frameworks with these methods of analysis along with d'Eaubonne's cultural ecofeminist analysis will form "Multi-Disciplinary Framework" to interpret firstly, the representations of gender stereotypes, secondly, the reasons behind the advertising agencies to portray women as stereotypical and thirdly to predict the future trajectories of gender stereotypes in Bangladesh.

Literature review

Dealing with gender stereotypes has always been an area of interest for the sociolinguists of Gender Studies all over the world. The researchers and academics over the later half of the past century, as well as during the first 20 years of this century have put forward the implied reasons for gender stereotypes by proposing different theoretical frameworks and methodologies. Applying the frameworks and methods in the Bangladeshi context is extremely important to have clear and precise ideas of the gender stereotypes and their underlying reasons. For this purpose, the existing research studies on gender stereotypes are used in examining gender stereotypes in TV advertisements in Bangladesh to form the theoretical basis for this paper. By giving a comprehensive overview, these existing research studies will also show the need for a "holistic framework" consisting of different theories and their applications. One of the earliest known research studies conducted on gender stereotypes (Rosenkrantz *et al.*, 1968) critically evaluates the relationship between the self-concept of people and they are "differentially valued sex roles". The researcher group found all the four age groups of male and female participant groups agreed in terms of their valuation of stereotypically "masculine" characteristics more than "feminine" ones shown in magazines. Researchers concluded that these "stereotypical opinions" on gender roles are the reflections of their inner preoccupied mind. Goffman's (1979) work on gender stereotypes is one of the major works conducted in the later half of the 20th century. Till then only a handful of researchers had joined the quest to find out more about how women and men are portrayed. His article, *Gender Advertisements* of 1979 deals with it from the viewpoint of how society wants us to see gender roles in advertisements rather than what actual roles are being played in real life. Bell and Milic (2002) later on use the Systemic Functional Framework with Semiotic Analysis in 827 advertisements shown in Australia to revisit the Gender Stereotypes Hypothesis of Goffman to check whether these stereotypes are reinforced or not. They find that though there has been a presence of the socially constructed stereotypes in TV Advertisements, many instances of progression of women are also shown in terms of their more professional, responsible, self-sufficient roles and more supportive roles for men. An and Kim (2007) implement Hofstede's Masculinity Index (MAS) in 300 Korean Advertisements which show the Gender Stereotypes such as; women portrayed more in beauty product-oriented ads, ads where the setting is home and in "recreational" roles. These representations are according to the requirements of the advertising agencies.

This is a way of analysing the gender stereotypes and their implications from a quantitative assessment. According to them, their research will help the advertising agencies to locate their target customers' needs by using the MAS Index which in most cases comply with the existing stereotypes in gender roles portrayals. The recent trends of Gender Stereotypes in TV Advertisements are found in the research conducted by [Matthes et al. \(2016\)](#) in accessing 1755 advertisements in 13 Asian, American and European countries where they examined the gender of primary character or characters, voice-overs, age, the product types, setting and working roles to justify the influences of the gender roles shown in TV Advertisement. They concluded that although there is the presence of Gender Stereotypes all over the globe, the recent trends tend to be more women inclusive compared to the last half of the 20th-century portrayals by Goffman. By critically examining and synthesizing the above-mentioned research studies, this paper will use the below mentioned main frameworks and supporting frameworks for the interpretation of gender stereotypes: ([Table 1](#))

Gender Stereotypes Hypothesis of [Goffman \(1979\)](#) is a theoretical framework that identifies and explains gender stereotypes in different roles of men and women. Goffman dealt with advertisements to interpret stereotypes of gender roles portrayals in his *Gender Advertisements*.

On the other hand, [Kress and Van Leeuwen's \(1996\)](#) Systemic Functional Framework is the theory of language that builds systemic relation between choices and forms of language in different contexts, for example, here in three selected TV Advertisements. [Fairclough's \(2003\)](#) Discourse theory of language deals with human expressions in the form of language which is also used for examining gender stereotypes in terms of discursive dimension ([Table 2](#)).

The rationale for choosing the Theoretical Frameworks: Gender Stereotypes Hypothesis, Kress and Van Leeuwen's Systemic Functional Analysis, Fairclough's Discourse Analysis will be used to determine and interpret stereotypes of gender in Bangladeshi TV advertisements. Hofstede's MAS Index Framework, Freud's Psychological theory along with a literary contextualization using Pope's *The Rape of The Lock* in terms of a cultural ecofeminist viewpoint will be used to find the implications and especially the underlying reasons of gender stereotypes. By combining these theoretical frameworks with the analytical methods mentioned below, a new "Multidisciplinary Framework" is formed. This framework will be used to examine thematic, semiotic, stylistic and literary features to justify the claims made by the above-mentioned frameworks and find out the implications of Gender Stereotypes and finally to predict the future trajectories of gender roles portrayals in Bangladesh by using both theoretical and practical analysis in the same contexts. Each of the above-mentioned frameworks has been classified into multiple sub-frames with which

Table 1.

Main theoretical frameworks with names of the founders

Serial no.	Names of the main theoretical frameworks	Founders of these main theoretical frameworks
01	Gender stereotypes hypothesis	Erving Goffman
02	Systemic functional framework	Gunther Kress and Van Leeuwen
03	Discourse analysis framework	Norman Fairclough

Table 2.

Supporting theoretical frameworks with names of the founders

Serial no.	Names of the supporting theoretical frameworks	Founders of supporting theoretical frameworks
01	MAS index for gender stereotypes	Geert Hofstede
02	Psycho-analytical framework	Sigmund Freud
03	Cultural ecofeminism	Francois d'Eaubonne

newer spectacles will be re-discovered in this field of women and gender studies. By using these multi-disciplinary frameworks with multiple sub-frames to provide a broader spectrum to view women and gender from the best possible viewpoints. *The research question* of the Paper deals with the threefold critical interpretations of gender stereotypes (How?, Why? And Now what?) which is divided into three sub-questions on three aspects: (a) Gender Representations, (b) Implications of Gender Stereotypes, (c) Future Trajectories of Gender Stereotypes in the three selected TV advertisements in Bangladesh. Firstly, *Gender Representations(How?)*: How are gender stereotypes portrayed in the three selected TV Advertisements shown in Bangladesh? Secondly, *Implications of existing Gender Stereotypes (Why?)*: Why (underlying reasons) are gender stereotypes portrayed in these ways? Thirdly, *Future Trajectories of Gender Stereotypes(Now what?)*: Are the stereotypes reinforced or there is any wind of change regarding stereotypes in future TV ads?

Research methodology

Approach

To determine and signify “Gender Stereotypes”, different methodologies and frameworks such as thematic, stylistic, semiotic analysis have been used separately in [Dines \(1995\)](#) in which only gender and culture were addressed. Other than that, communication theories, film and media strategies of audio-visual content analysis, literary theories and their applications on gender issues in TV advertisements are hardly present in [Kellner’s \(1995\)](#) work in media and culture. However, this Paper will provide the readers a holistic interpretation of Gender Stereotypes and their implications by connecting the above-mentioned fields of theories and their analysis. This paper will go through an extensive interpretation of gender stereotypes by combining the theoretical frameworks with the practical analysis methods on selected TV ads by three main methods of content analysis of the “Multi-Disciplinary Framework” are given below in the table and also in the description of methods of analysis: [\(Table 3\)](#)

Firstly, the thematic analysis will be done for [Goffman’s \(1979\)](#) Gender Stereotypes Hypothesis to determine whether the gender stereotypes do exist or not and if they do, to what extent these have an impact on social, political, cultural, economic and psychological aspects of life. Secondly, the semiotic analysis will be critically interpreted by the Systemic Functional Framework of [Kress and Van Leeuwen \(1996\)](#) to examine extensively the semiotic features present in the ads to understand and justify the claims made by Goffman from the symbolic analysis. Alongside thematic and semiotic analysis, the third dimension of stylistic analysis is used to examine further deep into the roots of gender stereotypes using Fairclough’s *Discourse Analysis* which is explained nicely by [Prasad \(2017\)](#). As the advertising agencies mainly use conversations of the various participants in their advertisements, it is very crucial to study these conversations from a critical discourse analysis point of view. The overall analysis is also based on two genres (a) *Qualitative* and (b) *Quantitative* analysis of examining gender stereotypes: [\(Table 4\)](#).

Qualitative analysis using mainly Goffman’s gender stereotypes hypothesis will be used to find out the underlying themes present in these ads for interpretations of gender stereotypes. Secondly, the quantitative analysis uses mainly [Hofstede’s \(2001\)](#) MAS index to do factor

Table 3.
Methods of analysis with theoretical frameworks and their founders

Serial no.	Types of analysis (methods)	Founders of the frameworks	Theoretical frameworks
01	Thematic analysis	Erving Goffman	Gender stereotypes hypothesis
02	Semiotic analysis	Gunther Kress and Van Leeuwen	Systemic functional framework
03	Stylistic analysis	Norman Fairclough	Discourse analysis framework

analysis to combine the theoretical frameworks with the practical on-field analysis with data collected from the three representative advertisements. Next, qualitative analysis is used to explore the sense of the “exotic” in the Ads where Freud’s *Dream Work* and the psychological principles will be used to psychoanalyze the minds of the participants of the advertisements, the owners of the advertising agencies and their potential plans or strategies and the viewer’s minds. The patriarchal society and the oppression of women by it are explored in terms of cultural ecofeminism which deals with the oppression against women and nature. Finally, both qualitative and quantitative analyses are used in the literary text *The Rape of The Lock* of Alexander Pope to give an extra contextual advantage by complying with the current contextual scenarios. The rationale for choosing the above-mentioned analysis methods include: the applications of all those frameworks and sub-frameworks regarding various social, cultural, economic factors will help further to contextualize scenarios. By justifying gender roles, attitudes towards changes in role-plays of women, future trajectories will eventually be developed by the Multi-Disciplinary Framework. This framework will interpret specific proposals in gender stereotypes not only in Bangladesh as a localization of the framework but also the world scenarios will eventually be justified better by this broader framework using in it the post-modernist and post-structuralist theories.

Data collection

The rationale for choosing the three advertisements for interpretation of gender stereotypes include: the three advertisements such as; Pears Soap Ad, Bangladesh Army Ad and Brac Ad are carefully chosen by the author of this Paper from TV advertisements shown on prime broadcasting time in Bangladesh. These ads are representative of three important factors *beauty*, *power* and *career* of women so that the present study can predict gender stereotypes from threefold levels. The language of two of the ads such as; Bangladesh Army Ad and Brac Ad is *Bangla*. The other ad, Pears Ad is in *Hindi*. When quoted from these three ads, transliteration is used alongside the meaning in *English* to maintain both contextual integrity and clarity of meaning. The words, phrases and sentences used in these advertisements are collected by documentation by the respective author while the ads were running on the TV screen. The three advertisements chosen for this research paper do comply with the paper’s definite aim to determine and analyse the trajectories of gender stereotypes and they are underneath implications by providing a visual description of gender roles portrayed in three of the most important sectors for gender stereotypes: beauty, empowerment and career. These visual texts contain a lot of gender-specific data to be used to analyse gender stereotypes using [Lakoff’s \(1975\)](#) politeness devices. The three advertisements are collected from three different time frames to interpret gender stereotypes within a decade (2010–2020) to identify the gradual change in the approach of advertising agencies within that time span. The subsequent advertisements shown to justify gender stereotypes theories were also taken from 2020 to contextualize with present times as much

Serial no.	Methods of analysis	Founders of the frameworks	Theoretical frameworks
01	Qualitative/macro analysis	Erving Goffman	Gender stereotypes hypothesis
02	Quantitative/microanalysis	Geert Hofstede	MAS index for gender stereotypes
03	Qualitative analysis	Sigmund Freud	Psycho-analytical framework
04	Both qualitative and quantitative analysis	Alexander Pope and Francois d’Eaubonne	Cultural ecofeminism

Table 4.
Methods of analysis
with theoretical
frameworks and their
founders

as possible. Different socio-political, economic, cultural factors are taken into consideration to deal with the gender stereotypes and implications more accurately by going deep into the roots of stereotypes. The reasons behind these practices and their continuous evolution will be determined and checked by the above-mentioned frameworks to provide a more substantial theoretical framework to work in the future. These frameworks will determine the future trajectories of gender roles in different sectors of our society with empirical research in both macro and micro-level analysis. This study also will try to find out about the future trajectories of gender stereotypes by combining these above-mentioned frameworks with practical fields of analysis. Finally, the paper will review the above-mentioned strategies to examine Gender Stereotypes whether these promote or demoralize women and will comment on the findings using the above-mentioned frameworks to predict their future trajectories and their impact on women folk. The three Ads show a gradual transition from a more radical point of view towards women to a more liberal point of view. The Ads also serve the purpose of gender roles presentations as each shows women in different familial, social and national roles played by them.

The three selected TV advertisements and their dominant themes

The first selected TV advertisement is of a beauty Soap “Pears” (2018) on “women’s beauty”. In this advertisement for Pears Golden Glow Soap, the main character is a young woman who is also the mother of a little school girl. The proceedings start with the little girl in her school uniform closing her eyes when she hears that her schoolmates are coming. She opens the door and then asks them to close their eyes also. They are shown equipped with musical instruments. After that, she goes into her house and asks her mother to come with her to the yard. Her mother asks her to know the matter. The little girl replies that their classmates have a musical competition and her mother’s face is lucky for them and she smiles with a glow. In the meantime, the background music “Teri ek jhalak dikh jaye to din ban jaye, din ban jaye” is playing in *Hindi*, an Indian-subcontinental language and the meaning in English is that if a little glimpse of her is seen, the day becomes a success. Here, only physical beauty is considered to be the reason for the little girl’s feeling lucky, not her mother’s musical talent or blessings. Blessing in conventional terms still makes more sense than beauty to be felt lucky about. It is a fantasy world created around the little girl in which she will follow her mother to be another “beauty-icon” herself. The second selected advertisement is of “BRAC”, an NGO Advertisement (BRAC, 2017) on “women’s empowerment”. This heart touching advertisement shows how vulnerable women are in getting their rights. The story begins with the death of the father of a young girl. When her mother claims to her brother-in-law about her husband’s piece of land, she hears from him that he has lost his brother and she has come to ask for lands! He gives her a packet of taka and says that her daughter is fatherless and so to take care of her. Then the woman leaves her house with her daughter and makes a train journey to Dhaka. That night while her daughter was reading about Bangladesh and it is land areas, she requests her mother to read that part and her mother read, “Bangladesh is our motherland”. It is land area is 1,47,570 square kilometres. Then she asks her if Bangladesh’s land area is 1,47,570 square kilometres and where is their land? Her mother is seen sewing to earn their livelihood. According to a report (International land coalition, 2014, Halim, 2006) spoken by the male voice over, women possess less than 4% of Bangladeshi land which shows that still how vulnerable women are in terms of land possession. The message of the advertising is that not only in words but also by changing our minds we can make women empowerment possible by restoring their rights on lands and all other assets. The third selected advertisement is of “Bangladesh Army” (2011) on “women’s career”. The beginning of the Ad shows that both men and women who are young, energetic and brave, applying for the posts of the Bangladesh

army. Then the rest portion of the video shows that both are taking challenges to overcome the obstacles in hard training to fulfil their entrance into their dream profession. The male voice over is heard saying about their dedication, hard work and passion to serve the country directly by being a defence officer. After completing the training, they are seen in army uniforms which mark their bold stance in one of the toughest professions in the world. This ad shows that 21st-century women are no longer vulnerable to the “stereotypical” gender norms.

Data analysis

Justification of Goffman's gender stereotypes hypothesis

Thematic or content-based analysis: putting the theoretical framework into practical fields.

Goffman's (1979) *Gender Advertisements* has continued to form the theoretical basis for content analysis framework which deals with a hypothesis of stereotypes of male and female participants in advertisements. They are portrayed repeatedly as participants of the “hyper-ritualization” of women. One of the selected advertisements, the Brac ad shows such traits. The Pears soap ad shows some of the dimensions of “infantilization”. “The feminine touch” is shown in the Pears ad, where women touch and ritually caress the object, for example; the soap and themselves by both the mother and the female child. The contrast can be drawn from another selected ad of Bangladesh Army where both male and female officers are seen grasping purposefully the weapons and themselves while in training. An opposing viewpoint of equality shown in BD Army Ad can be drawn here from Eagles and Sczesney's (2009) psychological research on men, women and directors of the leading companies in Europe which found that only 4% of the presidents and only 10% of the directorial bodies of these companies are women. That survey concluded with the reasons for the stereotypical view of gender roles as to see men as bosses and women as subordinate stuff. Again the “function rank” is supported by the sewing work of women shown in the Brac ad where stereotypically “feminine” work is associated with women. This is supported by Eagly and Steffen's (1984) experiment where the gender stereotypes are mostly reinforced by the participants of five different social groups where women are associated with communal (selfless and concerned with others) roles and men are with agentic (self-assertive and motivated to master) roles according to their hypothesized beliefs. The contrast is the BD Army ad where both male and female participate equally in a stereotypically “masculine” military training. The “family” shows that the family figures tend to demonstrate a special mother-daughter (Pears and Brac Ad) bond which is emotionally close and a special father-son (Brac Ad) bond which is emotionally distant. Grau and Zotos (2016) also support the stereotypical portrayal of gender roles according to common beliefs. They pose three questions such as What? (What stereotypes), Why? (the social implications of stereotypes) and Now What? (the social consequences of it). Women are presented in family-oriented and “decorative” roles (Uray and Burnaz, 2003) (Pears and Brac Ad), seen as young and in housewifely roles where men are portrayed as independent, authoritarian and professional roles with little regard to age or physical appearance (Brac and Army Ad). The exception here is the BD Army ad where women are as “masculine” as men and shown with power, career and honour (Richert and carpenter, 2004). Finally, the “mirror” and “mould” debate, where the “mirror” part supports Goffman's Hypothesis (Brac Ad) and the “mould” part is true for Pears ad where the cultivation theory is in action. People's perception of society is moulded by media (Gerbner, 1998). Human behaviours and human relationships are then termed as “hybrid”. Contrastively the ads which follow the stereotypes, create gender identity according to the stereotyped “masculinity” and “femininity” (Schroeder and Zwick, 2004). People's perceptions are always changing towards women especially those who are educated and holding professional positions tend

to defy the gender stereotypes hypothesis according to [Eagly and Steffen \(1984\)](#). The selected advertisements show us a gradual transition towards a more women-friendly environment in Bangladesh from a more radical point of view towards women. Identification for women has been a significant scenario to make a bold stance and take advantage of the opportunities that come in their way to be more professional, more powerful and more boldly beautiful. The point of raising consciousness about women's rights has been one of the most talked-about topics of women. These advertisements will surely boost their morale for their future endeavours. The problems that they face like not having their rights on land will be eradicated only if they are educated and aware of their rights, and thus empowered. Overt beautification, a trap of the advertising agencies which is termed as "commercial reality" by [Goffman \(1979\)](#) is used to create the "perfect" realization of one's dreams. The attitude of children towards the beauty of women is also a crucial theme that deals with the formation of a "moulded" psychology for young children towards unconsciously "objectifying" themselves and making them more a "wooden doll" rather than the real-life women with consciousness about their physical and psychological beauties which they nurture not in front of the dressing tables but in the school of their minds as well. The good thing is that the trend towards intellectuals nurturing is increasing among women which can be traced by looking into the ever-growing number of ads showing women empowerment not only with beauty but also with their knowledge and skills. It means a lot to a young girl watching TV with her family where other girls of her age are shown as successful by dint of their extreme hard-work and merit earned by their dedication towards their respective fields. The advertisements are still mirrors of the society where the trend towards becoming intellectual women for girls is increasing which is shown more and more in these ads. Bangladesh has become less MAS-centric than before and also a more GDI or Gender Development Index score holder which is given by United Nations (UN). These are visible in the ads showing women empowerment and career consciousness.

Systemic functional analysis of Kress and Van Leeuwen

Critically interpreting semiotic analysis: putting theories into practice with Hofstede's masculinity index. "Semiotic categories" depicted in [Kress and Van Leeuwen's \(1996\) Reading Images](#) are used to analyse the gender stereotypes in advertisements. Under the Systemic Functional Analysis Framework, according to [Anstey and Bull \(2018\)](#), a semiotic system is classified into five categories; such as-linguistic, visual, audio, gestures, spatial. [Hofstede's \(2001\) masculinity index \(MAS\)](#) is an indicator of gender stereotypes in a society which deals with different variables such as the main character, age, gender, settings and women's representations as caregivers. This Index divides the countries into two categories such as; "masculine" countries with a high MAS index and "feminine" countries with a low MAS index. The high MAS indexed countries portray women as subordinate to men, mostly shown as holding household roles and hardly shown as professionals. They are also shown as caregivers and associated with the "other" and the "exotic" which is an important part of the psychological study of minds of people which associate women with "colonies", "the good old days", "the happy family", "fun-loving youth" ([Tolson, 1996](#)) to create a pseudo-equality for women contrastingly a fantasy world of romantic dreams for men from where they get all their "needs" fulfilled. Post-structuralist and post-modernist theories make their contributions in interpreting semiotics by treating cultural identities as "verb", not "noun" which implies that the identities of women are evolving with the passage of time and will go towards a more comprehensive way for them. The ritualization of subordination as a stereotype for women show them in inferior positions as in Brac ad where the woman becomes landless after her husband's death. They are shown in inferior poses, for example,

in Brac ad where the woman is humbly asking for the land-claim of her husband in submissive postures and gestures and seen under the protection of men (the woman was under the protection of her husband and now becomes landless). [Belknap and Leonard \(1991\)](#) claim that women caress and men more grasp as seen in the Pears and BD army ad, respectively. Women are portrayed as “decorative” and “alluring”. Women shown as infants is a semiotic device. Infantilizing women is to associate women with feeble, meek, subordinate children. On the other hand, whenever women are shown in “masculine” positions, they are depicted in “proffering” poses for male sexual consumption ([Wex, 1979](#)). At the same time, women have been subjected to association with home, pleasure, exotic, nature and the “colony” which connotes the exploitation of the “other” and to conceal the hedonistic capitalism (Pears Ad) in [Williamson’s \(1994\)](#) proposal. This generation of connotative meaning is full of “ad work” which is similar to Freud’s “*Dream Work*”. It is due to commercial and political pressure. Formal semiotic strategies are used to quench the thirst of the “hungry” people’s psychological need for fantasy. [Kress and Van Leeuwen \(1996\)](#) use “Visual-semiotic theory” to explore the connotative meanings of gender Stereotypes which are part of [Hallyday and Hasan’s \(1985\)](#) “Systemic Functional Approach”. The narrative process (“going on”) and conceptual process (“ideas”) are part of the representational dimension where there are transactions and interactions with vectors (eye lines, gestures indicating a line of force), for example; the first scenes of ads of Brac, BD Army and Pears where a woman is dominated by men in the Brac ad whereas women pose is strong and “focused” appearance in BD army and Pears ads consecutively. The conceptual process reflects women’s association with “non-active”/“conceptual” (beauty in Pears Ad) as carriers of symbolic (semiotic) meaning. It is as if men “act” and women “are”. In the interaction between participants and viewers, factors (the “gaze” towards the camera or not, the “distance” between them and the “angle” from which they are seen) are also taken into consideration. The “gaze” is more intensely portrayed in Pears and BD army ads where the participants create expressions of beauty, power and confidence. “Angle” is used especially for Pears ad where the woman is seen caressing soap and herself from multiple angles to focus on her beauty. The “distance” is at the minimum level for mother-daughter in Pears and Brac ads and more distance between the father-son in Brac ad. So, the first pair is more emotionally attached than the second. The “gaze” and “angle” are the key semiotic devices for BD army ad which reflect women’s power, solidarity, dedication, endeavour and hard work. On the other hand, the participants were seductively presented with the product (Pears) so that the viewers should desire them. [Hall’s \(1969\)](#) discussion of “proxemics”, the psychology of people’s use of space show intimacy, love and attraction when it is “intimate distance” or “personal distance” and when it is “social distance” or “public distance”, it shows less solidarity and more formality of relations. The mother-child and the child-child relationship in Pears and Brac ads show the first category and the father-son and mother-uncle relationship in the Brac ad show the later. The “gendered voice of advertising” shows that the male voice is associated with professional and entertaining roles while the female voice is associated with decorative roles. For example; the female voice and voice-over in Pears Ad, the male-female voices with the male voice-overs of Brac and BD army ads show conformity with the “gendered” voice due to the “stereotyped” specificity of the voices with the ads. From the visual-semiotic perspective, the falling of a dead leaf and a lonely “Dolna” (swing) in the background show that probably someone has died. Exactly the same predicted thing occurs and the father of the girl dies and later on the mother-daughter are ousted from their land in Brac ad. The setting of the background of the house shows the woman’s profession as a homemaker in Pears ad and also the colour orange or golden in the dress and background match with the colour of the soap. This colour symbolically

presents the woman as seductive using the soap and also creates a hedonistic impression on the viewers. The dark colour shown in the Brac ad demonstrates the fate of the 96% of women who do not possess their own land. The voice of the ad is through encouraging enough to build awareness regarding the landless women and urges for women's rights of land and property. The "money" becomes a strong symbol of envy and jealousy when the uncle of the young girl gives her mother only a handful of money and it eventually turns out to be a sign that they have to leave the land to him in Brac Ad. The background music is so mesmerizing and enchanting that people memorize the song and the product name at the same time subconsciously like in the Pears ad.

Stylistic analysis to uncover the hidden strategies by Fairclough's discourse analysis

A combination of qualitative analysis with the quantitative assessment. The stylistic features of language also portray gender stereotypes according to Prasad (2017). In Fairclough's (2003) *Analysing Discourse*, style is the discourse of ways of being and identity which are closely associated with the languages of the three selected TV ads that portray gender stereotypes. Styles are linked to identification whereas identity is an effect of discourse. Post-structuralist and post-modernist theories associate an identity with discourse. People are not only primary agents to be prepositioned with roles but also as social agents who do, create and change things. According to Archer (2002), creating "self-consciousness" is essential in forming a social identity. The Brac Ad is showing women as primary agents who are predestined to sufferings like losing their own land. Lakoff (1973) termed the word "politeness device" as part of the syntactic analysis which is used by the woman in Brac ad to maintain the conversation with her husband's brother. Similarly, The women in the BD army ad on the other hand are changing their lots by being flexible as social agents. McIntyre (1984) explained the "stock" characters which represent a culture distinctively from other cultures. Here, the woman and her daughter in the Brac ad are distinctive of "rural exploited women" and men are "the exploiter". Again in Pears ad, the woman and her daughter are "stock" characters of the fantasy world of the capitalist business arena where the woman is caressing the soap and the daughter feels lucky before going to music competition just seeing her mother's face before seeing anything else with all her mates. Features such as simple syntactic structure, high rate of repetition and direct appeal to the viewers are present in all three Ads. All the sentences are simple sentences, each sentence has a part, which repeats in another sentence. For example, "*Teri ek jhalak dikh jaye to din ban jaye, din ban jaye (II)*", means "If I get to see a glimpse of your glimmering face, it makes my day a success (II)". In Brac ad, there is the usage of simple sentences and multiple repetitions; for example: "Bangladesh is our Motherland. Its land area is 1,47,570 Square Kilometers (2)". The little girl poses a question to her mother and to the country symbolically that, in their motherland where is their land? It reflects that only less than 4% of Bangladeshi lands are owned by women and connotes the land grabbing men. The BD army ad also has simple structures to convey the qualities of army-like confidence, bravery, spirit, dream, endeavour. The Pears ad is a descriptive, poetic and aesthetic ad, the Brac ad is narrative and descriptive and the BD army ad is descriptive and expressive. The rhyme of the background song of Pears is very soothing to the ear and intensifies the meaning of the discourse. Poetic language focuses more on the affective meaning rather than referential meaning. It uses overtly glorifying rhymes to entice the customers to use the product. The other two ads do it with their narrative and descriptive styles. The simple structure is a part of "loaded" language according to Bolinger. The words "jhalak" and "din ban jaye" have attention value so as the words "courage", "endeavour" and "dedication" for BD Army Ad. Use of exclamation ("wow!" in Pears Ad) and question (In our

motherland, where is our land, ma(mother)?” help to decipher the hidden meaning of the context which are the colonial mind and land grabbing mind of men. All the ads have a simple, familiar vocabulary. Memorability is achieved through alliteration, metrical rhyme, grammatical parallelism, lexical repetition, syntactic repetition, repetition of product names which are common in these ads. Leech’s positive adjectives are present in both Pears and BD army ads. Words such as “special”, “jhalak”(flash), “100%”, “extra”, “courage”, “endeavour”, “dream” and “desire”, which create positive impressions on the viewers, especially the product users. Here both qualitative and quantitative analyses are done to examine the gender stereotypes better and these will be used to further research by combining with it a literary flavour containing both thematic and contextual scenarios with practical fields of advertisings to implement those theories into practice and justify the future trajectories of gender stereotypes.

Cultural ecofeminism on gender stereotypes and their implications

Literary theories into practice. A cultural ecofeminist study by [Mohammadi and Kalantari \(2016\)](#) shows that the exploitation of women and nature in the hands of patriarchal society can be equated with two of the selected advertisements: Pears ad and Brac ad. The male-dominated society equates women and nature to erode them both as inactive the “other”. [Salma \(2011\)](#) talks about the metaphor of the British Empire equated with Belinda, the main female protagonist in Alexander Pope’s *The Rape of The Lock*. In the ad of Brac, we find that the male-dominated society grabs lands belonging to women. So, even though colonialism is eroded from the earth, the colonial mindset is still present to date which is shown in this ad. [Westfall \(1998\)](#) criticized Pope for not showing any progress in the plot of the storyline in *The Rape of the Lock* where Pope only showed female coquetry. The patriarchal domination is made trivial and less serious than what it is supposed to be. [Phillips \(2004\)](#) criticized Pope, Donne, Milton, Aphra Behn, Margaret Cavendish for downgrading women and earth by speakers e.g. Lovers, theologians, colonists. For example, in Donne’s Elegy XIX: *To His Mistress Going to Bed*, the female-beloved is treated as colonized lands by the male-lover: “Oh my America, my new found lande,/My kingdome, safeliest when with one man man’d” (27–28). Francois d’Eaubonne who coined cultural ecofeminism says that the patriarchal society defines women to preserve beauty and chastity and men to preserve power, authority and earth. Beauty is considered a virtue itself. Her physical characteristics magnify her virtuosity. “If to her share some female errors fall, look at her face,/you will forget ‘em all” (p. 8). Intellectuality and other virtues are dismissed and victimization is internalized as it is only women’s duty to protect their beauty and chastity. It is similar to the Brac ad where the legal claim of a woman was dismissed and internalized and she has not protested and taken any action. “She who scorns must die a maid!”, “Beware of all, but most beware of men”, “Weights men’s wits against lady’s hair, Belinda is marginalized even though she outwitted the Baron in the game of Ombre and beauty(women) loses to wit (men) as if each of them is associated with exclusively to either male or female. It is similar to recurrent background music “*Teri ek jhalak dikh jaye to, din ban jaye*” where beauty is exclusively associated with women. Freud’s psychoanalytical theory conforms with [Illouz’s \(1996\)](#) observation of “fantasy generated emotional experience” for which the Baron wants to “ravish” Belinda’s hair which is still prevalent in the Bangladeshi context as well.

Results and implications: a wind of change?

Both the representations and implications of gender stereotypes in Bangladesh according to the newly developed Multi-Disciplinary Framework by the author mostly conform with the

combined findings. The results are shown in accordance with frameworks mentioned in the “literature review” and “methodology” section of this paper: (Tables 5-6)

Firstly, Goffman’s (1979) *Gender Stereotypes Hypothesis* is justified in terms of thematic analysis by identifying the main gender stereotypes criteria including beauty, empowerment of women in Pears ad and Brac ad but contrasts with BD army ad where women are associated with more “masculine” roles which mean wind of change is starting to blow to show that women are treated as equal by their male counterparts in BD army. Secondly, Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) *systemic functional framework*: the multidisciplinary framework uses systemic functional analysis to justify thematic analysis combined with practical analysis. The semiotic features also conform with the stereotypes of seeing women as objects, at home in recreational roles and gives us an insight into the insiders’ mind of the advertising agencies and also the “imperial” mind of the male-dominated society which eventually turn into an “objectifying” attitude towards women irrespective of all classes. Here Freud’s *Dream Work* has worked in favour of the analysis Framework to support the claims made according to the semiotic analysis. Thirdly, Fairclough’s (2003) *Stylistic Analysis* deals with the stylistic aspects of gender stereotypes and their implications by examining the discourse in the context of gender roles portrayals in Bangladesh. The stylistic analysis in terms of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics as a part of discourse analysis makes it evident to justify gender stereotypes and also points out future trajectories of gender stereotypes using the same means which are used to examine gender stereotypes. Fourthly, *Literary Interpretation*: The literary viewpoint also makes the strong claim of gender stereotypes portrayal in Bangladesh in the 21st century even stronger and gives an insight into the oppression of women and nature by men. Using cultural ecofeminism as a tool to find out the troublesome experiences of women even in the 21st century. Even though Pope’s *The Rape of the Lock* is an 18th-century epic poem but still it manages to examine gender stereotypes better because of its being universal in terms of women subjugation and oppression. This is also a most concerning

Table 5.
Results of
stereotypical
representations
(categories) in three
selected TV
advertisements

Name/s and year	Pears ad	Brac ad	Army ad
Rosenkrantz <i>et al.</i> (1968)	Stereo-typical	Both stereo-typical and not	Not stereo-typical
Bell and Milic (2002)	Stereo-typical	Both stereo-typical and not	Not stereo-typical
Uray and Burnaz (2003)	Stereo-typical	Both stereo-typical and not	Not stereo-typical
Reichert and Carpenter (2004)	Stereo-typical	Both stereo-typical and not	Not stereo-typical
Grau and Zotos (2016)	Stereo-typical	Both stereo-typical and not	Not stereo-typical
Matthes <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Stereotypical	Both stereo-typical and not	Not stereotypical

Note: Categories: (1) stereotypical (2) not stereotypical and (3) both stereotypical and not stereotypical

Table 6.
Results of
stereotypical
representations
(categories) in main
theoretical
frameworks in three
selected TV
advertisements

Name/s with year	Pears ad	Brac ad	BD army ad
Goffman (1979)	Stereo-typical	Both stereo-typical and not	Not stereo-typical
Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996)	Stereo-typical	Both stereo-typical and not	Not stereo-typical
Fairclough (2003)	Stereo-typical	Both stereo-typical and not	Not stereo-typical

Note: Categories: (1) stereotypical, (2) not stereotypical and (3) both stereotypical and not stereotypical

finding that even in our modern times' women may be safe from the direct physical assault but still, they go through an inexplicable amount of mental trauma and most of them have to go through this. They are being "objectified" even though they are not aware of the "hungry mind's" psychological crimes. Implications of Stereotypes: Blum's (2004) writing finds this Stereotypical mind which reads every category according to pre-occupied ideas: "It is false or at least misleading, to say that Jews are cheap, Blacks lazy, Asians good at math, women emotional, etc". The good thing is that the change for a more women-friendly job environment is reflected in the BD army ad. Due to the development of more women inclusive education system, job sectors, as well as job environment, the advertising agencies are starting to show women in more positive and important roles and also a partner of men in the development of a Developed Bangladesh. As more and more women are getting quality education due to the facilities given by the government and NGOs like Brac, women have become more self-sufficient. However, overt femvertising may put a brake on the development of women folk as these are the works of the "predatory mind". So promoting women as successful entrepreneurs in different sectors of Bangladesh will boost up other women who have the potentiality to go forward by building a positive mindset and attitude towards women by both men and women to make sure an inclusive world for women in terms of safety, respect and glory. So, this proposed Multi-Disciplinary Framework of gender stereotypes analysis will help the researchers in this field to examine deep into the gender stereotypes and their implications.

Conclusion with future trajectories of gender stereotypes with recent trends of advertisements

The paper will end here with two contrasting propositions about predictions of gender stereotypes in ads shown in Bangladesh. Zotos and Tsuchla (2014) say that due to the changes in occupational opportunities and domestic structure, women are seen more as a professional rather than as a housewife. Due to the development of new opportunities for women, they are now portrayed in more independent, professional and self-sufficient roles. "Femvertising" is using ads to celebrate women rather than objectifying them. Such an enlightened woman of Bangladesh is Prof Niaz Zaman of the English Department, Dhaka University who says, "If there is a wall in front of me, I will scale it or bring it down" (Saba, 2014). The positive impact is that boosts girls' self-esteem and breaks down gender inequality (Bahadur, 2014). Though many Islamic scholars of Bangladesh were indifferent to women's career and empowerment issues, nowadays they also tend to support women's education and empowerment (Table 7).

However, overt femvertising without authenticity can be less effective. For example, a Lux ad (October 5, 2020) shows that Indian actor Saif Ali Khan overtly praising another Indian actress Kareena Kapoor Khan by comparing her "beautiful" face with the

Names of ads with year	Stereo-typical (mainly)	Non stereo-typical (mainly)	Both (partially)
Lux ad (October 5, 2020)	Yes	No	No
Meril soap ad (February 2020)	Yes	No	Yes
Lux ad (March 2020)	No	Yes	Yes

Table 7. Results of stereotypical representations (categories) in three recent TV advertisements

Note: Categories: (1) stereotypical, (2) not stereotypical and (3) both stereotypical and not stereotypical

“whiteness” of the Moon but the irony is in the ad title “Lux Rose and Vitamin E” to cure skin with Vitamin. There has hardly been any dark coloured woman shown in the ad of Beauty Soap Meril (2020 February) where the dark colour is promoted and celebrated. The professional portrayal in a recent (March 2020) ad of Lux soap shows actress Mim performing an action scene with “alluring” makeup, dark red lipstick and stylish hair. This is barely the case for our real-life action heroines, for example, women police or army who perform their action with bravery and intelligence rather than on “beauty” which is used by the advertisers to allure more viewers who will mainly quench their psychological thirst for women fantasy. Contrastively, the report of Jones (2020) where two petitions were filed against Unilever for promoting “anti-blackness sentiment” and “be light to feel beautiful” and according to the court’s verdict, it removed “fair” from “Fair and Lovely” beauty cream which is a bold step forward for reducing portrayal of the stereotypical “Whiteness”. Along with that, low MAS Index scores and high GDI Index scores, the gender roles portrayal is enduring a positive change in the stereotypes to “mould” new cultural identities of “masculinity” and “femininity”. So, the Gender Stereotypes shown in TV advertisements in Bangladesh complies with this Multi-Disciplinary Framework as it shows positive future trajectories change of gender stereotypes in Bangladesh and will be an ideal model to follow to examine the future trajectories of gender roles representations in other countries as well in future research proposals.

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