

THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN SELECT BEAUTY PRODUCTS TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENT: PERCEPTUAL STUDY OF CONSUMERS IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

Advertising can manipulate and distort images of women in the media, and create stereotypes of women as sex objects. This study aims at assessing the portrayal of women in select beauty products television (TV) advertisements: Perceptual study of consumers in Imo State. The specific objectives of this study are to examine the different roles of women as portrayed in select beauty products TV advertisements; identify the stereotypes around women in Imo State and determine consumers' perception on whether the portrayal of women in select beauty products TV advertisements impact on the stereotypes around women in Imo State. The study was underpinned on cultivation theory and objectification theory. The researcher approached the study from audience analytical perspective, using the survey research design. This approach is suitable because the study is focused on investigating the portrayal of women in select beauty products TV ads, from the perception of consumers in Imo State. The population of the study targets the residents in Imo State. The population of Imo State, according to the projection by the government is 4,928,000 (IMSG 2017). The sample size is 380, obtained from the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. Purposive sampling technique was employed to collect data from the sample size. Statistical tools, such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to summarize the collected data. Inferential statistical tools, such as Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between components or variables of the study. The study reveals that women play key roles in the television advertisements of beauty products in Imo State. However, the study found that the manner in which the women are represented in the advertisements further strengthened the stereotypes attached to women in the society which have several negative consequences, such as objectification of women, degrading of female roles in the society, low esteem etc. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that a more inclusive depiction of women should be rendered in TV ads. of beauty products in Imo State, which would provide women in general, particularly, young woman with options and role model.

Keywords: Advertisement, Portrayal, Television, Beauty Products, Imo State

Introduction

Advertisements have become an integral part of the society. They are known as powerful marketing tools which influence the purchasing behaviour of consumers and equivalently penetrate into their cultural lives with language and social messages which are used. Bovee and Avens (1982) simply describes advertising as the non-personal paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identified sponsor, through the various media.

Onyejekwe (2006) noted that the power of advertising lies in persuasion and its ability to influence peoples' behaviour. This ability might have been enhanced by the use of women in advertising. "The female figure, if half-dressed with exposure of her sensitive parts or complete nude pulls the eyes and also elicit desirable responses and make advertisements very focused and highly persuasive".

Bovee & Arens (1982) further added that today's advertisements have exploited very extensively the beauty and attractive figures of women as irresistible appeal. In fact, there is hardly any advertisement on any product, especially beauty products, and services on television or bill board etc, without a woman or a group of women being used as the centre of appeal that will create the required persuasion. Reflecting on this seemingly abuse of women, Cliff (2009) writes that "images of female bodies are everywhere. Women and their body parts sell everywhere, from food to cars".

According to Gulati (2014) advertisements remind women every time that perfume or lipstick can completely change her life. It can save her marriage and can fetch her job with a handsome salary". These television advertisements reduce women to mere objects, portraying them as weaker sex, mindless, submissive, confused, childish, generally in need of help. Kubourne (1999) pointed out that women are presented as sex objects. Women are viewed as 'things', objects of male sexual derive, or the part of the merchandise, rather than people. (Hall, Crum, 1994). Body exposure and frequency of these advertisements

have increased at an alarming rate over time. He further mentioned that the chests, legs, buttocks, and crotch shots increased the stereotypes and images that women are “bodies” rather than some bodies (with personalities which ultimately reflect the provocative exploited images (Gulati, 2014).

Women as decorative or beautiful objects have been used for years to attract attention to advertisements. Using female beauty and sexuality to sell a product can be effective, depending on the product and the brand (Attstial & Grow, 2006:93). It is noted that media contributes to people's understanding of imagery of the role of women in the society and they are still portraying women as objects in the advertisement as the study suggest. There is an underrepresentation and misrepresentation of the roles regarding the women in the advertisement which needs to be altered. “until the media and the advertising industry develop a new found respect for women, the struggle to be taken seriously and viewed as equals will continue” (Gulati, 2014).

For the purpose of this seminar paper, television advertisements are focused on because of the advantage TV gives by its use of audio-visual effect. Thus, it gives a better measure to evaluate how reality is portrayed (Soley & Reid, 1983, Moschris & Moone, 1982, Butler, 1991; Gerber et al, 2014). Research suggests that over time, exposure to TV content has the ability to affect and influence peoples' perceptions of reality. The more one is exposed to TV contents, like advertisements, the more the representation in these advertisements appear real to the viewer, and thereby influence what the person does or how they act in the real world (Gabner et al, 1976).

The repetitive nature of advertising aggravates the phenomenon of consumers learning (via consumer socializing) limited gender roles based on advertising images. According to Mervy Rubinaterm and Comstock (in vall-fernandez & Martinez-Vicente, 2007; 691), television commercials, in particular are major consumer socializing agents. People spend much time watching television, and this has an impact on the learning and understanding of the prevalent gender roles. Television has been identified as a major information source, not only on new brands, but also on acceptable gender-role behaviour.

In 2004, Dove created the “campaign for real beauty”, featuring everyday woman to generate a dialogue about the predominantly this models portrayed in the media (Unilever, 2018). Fourteen years later, the discussion of idealized imagery of women in the media is still a hot topic among both consumers and practitioners. Although, Dove was applauded widely for its efforts to depict “real women” of various body shapes, sizes and ethnicities, and has enjoyed sustained sales success, the majority of brands failed to follow the company's lead. Today, the vast majority of women featured in advertisements remain demonstrative of the thin ideals, or the traditionally idealistic slim female body.

During the past 60 years, when TV advertisements have been broadcasting, many scholarly articles have been published and many documentaries made, claiming on the unfair portrayal of women and men in advertising. Although, recent studies have shown that the portrayal of women in advertisements has gotten a lot better, recent analyses have sill shown that TV media portrays women the same way in the past.

When women are shown stereotypical gender roles, they are usually portrayed as younger and fresh looking, and not the common middle aged women that is seen every day. Due to the frequent playing of young women in advertisements, young women have created the foundation for the accepted role of genders in commercials (Stern, 2004).

Researchers like Lundstorm and Sciglimpalia (1977), Goffman (1979), Lindner (2004), Schaffter (2006), Shabbir et al (2019), and many more have looked into the relationship between advertisements and portrayal of woman. The finding of researchers conclude that women are been portrayed stereotypically in advertisements (Negi, 2014, Gulati, 2014). Negi (2014) further mentioned that the general roles women play in advertising are: Decorative Role, Recreational Role, Independent career Role, Self-Involved Role, Carefree Role and family Role. The dynamism of society affects the change in role of women in advertisements

Statement of the Problem

There is this belief that advertising has injured the celebrated reputation of women beyond imagination. Reacting to this, Patterson et al (2009) stated that “the representation of women in advertisements has been a subject for discussion and debate for many years, with advertisers standing accused of utilizing inappropriate and degrading stereotypes”. Advertising can manipulate and distort images of women in the media to create a stereotype of women as sex objects. It has also be proven that men almost always appear fully clothed, while women are constantly portrayed as wearing less clothing, which comes back to the issue of women being portrayed more as sex objects than men.

Advertisers are believed to portray women as not only the inferior and unserious gender, but also an instrument of sales, recreation and entertainment. When advertising portrays women as sex objects or symbols, home-makers and fashionable people, it creates a perception and an image. Over time, the society

begin to associate such a person or group of people with such image that is been portrayed. The implication is that every other person in that group is seen the same way. This has greatly affected the side psche of women folk and the growth of the society. Research has shown the detrimental effects idealized imagery can have on young women's mental and physical health (Field, Cormogo, Taylor, Berkey et al, 1999, Groesz, Levine and Murnema, 2002). The problem is “has the dynamism of society affects the change in role of women in advertisements?

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. Examine the different roles of women as portrayed in select beauty products television advertisement in Imo State.
- ii. Identify the stereotypes around women in Imo State.
- iii. Determine consumers' perception on whether the portrayal of women in select beauty products television advertisements impact on the stereotypes around women in Imo State.

Literature Review

Overview of Role Portrayals of Women in Advertising

Many studies have been conducted on the portrayal of women in advertising, and each has identified particular roles. All of the identified studies used content analysis as research method and are therefore relevant to the current study. Previous research focused on magazines, however, this study intends focus on television and include survey of consumers (Bolliger, 2008; Döring & Pöschl, 2006; Hung, & Li, 2006; Johnson et al., 2006; Koernig, & Granitz, 2006; Grau et al., 2007; Monk-Turner et al., 2008; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009; Razzouk et al., 2003; and Rudansky, 1991), while some studies analysed the content of television commercials (Furnham & Mak, 1999; Furnham et al., 2001; Ibroscheva, 2007; Mwangi, 1996; Nassif & Gunter, 2008; Valls-Fernández & Martínez-Vicente, 2007).

Sex object

The depiction of women as sex objects refers to a woman in an advertisement that is portrayed in a sexual manner, usually dressed in revealing clothing and/or in provocative poses. The sex object is purely ornamental, and her presence and appearance are not related to the product (Rudansky, 1991:147). There are associations between the descriptions of sex objects and those of the “urban sophisticate” identified in Chinese advertising (Hung et al., 2007:1039). The urban sophisticate epitomises the good life – a life of opulence and luxury. Hung and Li (2006:14) point out that the urban sophisticate's hedonistic nature is attracted to new products from the West or Japan, and the Western values of youth, progressiveness, sexuality and vivacity may be the reason for this portrayal's popularity amongst Chinese advertisers.

Various previous research studies have indicated that the sex object is the most frequently depicted female role (Grau et al., 2007:62; Koernig & Granitz, 2006:91; Razzouk et al., 2003:123). According to Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009:1423), the sexobject depiction is the second most prevalent (32%) portrayal in UK advertising. Similarly, Bolliger (2008:51) points out that sexualised gender typecasting of women is prevalent in educational technology advertisements. Women are generally far more likely than men to be featured as sexualised characters in advertisements (Koernig & Granitz, 2006:91).

Mother/Nurturer

The mother or the nurturer is often depicted in advertising. A total of twenty per cent of the advertisements in the South African study pictured a woman as a mother (Rudansky, 1991:144). As this role was the second most popular role portrayal, it is possible that South African advertisers perceived the mother portrayal to be relevant to the women of the nineties. In this role portrayal the female character is depicted with one or more children in the advertisement, and her attention is focused on the child or children, or the product being advertised. The nurturer, as the family-oriented role of Chinese femininity, represents the ideal wife and mother who is characterised as soft, virtuous, kind and well-mannered (Hung et al., 2007:1039). Women employing the “feminine touch”, a category description which denotes a nurturing attitude, were found in the majority of female depictions in a study on mobile communication advertisements (Döring & Pöschl, 2006:182). Similarly, Koernig and Granitz (2006:89) identified specific values (family, nurturance and tradition) in e-commerce advertisements that were associated more frequently with women and inter alia with the role of the mother. The mother role is a traditional female role and the high frequency thereof in many previous studies is consistent with the traditional stereotyping of women (Warner, 2006:182). The mother portrayal is used most frequently in advertising baby and food products in South Africa. This is consistent

with reality as such product categories are generally associated with mothers (Rudansky, 1991:171). Conversely, in China the nurturer (mother) was used primarily to advertise automobiles, specifically family cars (Hung & Li, 2006:22). In the current study, the role of the woman depicted as a mother will also be included.

Physically attractive/decorative

The woman, as a physically attractive or decorative creature refers to a portrayal that focuses on physical beauty. Women portrayed in advertisements purely for the purpose of being decorative or attractive were found to be particularly widespread in much of the previous research. The “flower vase” (coded as physically beautiful) is a role that carries an image of glamour, charm and beauty, and was the second most-used role portrayal in advertisements in China (Hung & Li, 2006:13). The flower vase is typified as the official ideal of the modern Chinese woman: a woman who celebrates her femininity, and does so through enhancing her physical beauty by using cosmetics, jewellery and hairstyles to enhance her looks. The woman in a physically decorative role was frequently identified in mobile communications advertisements (Döring & Pöschl, 2006:181). A vast majority of cosmetic product advertisements feature the decorative woman. This is consistent with the role description of a woman who enhances her beauty through cosmetics (Hung & Li, 2006:20). The woman as a physically attractive decoration was the most popular portrayal for advertising medicine and personal care products in Thai magazines (Razzouk et al., 2003:124). The association between the physically attractive woman and the product category of cosmetics and personal care items is clear - so much so that such products in an advertisement often indicate a decorative role portrayal. A distinction should be made between the decorative woman and the sex object role. Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009:1417) categorise both the physically attractive role and the sex object as “decorative roles”, where the physically attractive role was defined as the female aiming for physical beauty; and the sex object is specifically related to sexual allure.

Working/career woman

The woman as a worker or career person is represented by an image of professionalism across a range of different employment types: for example executives, clerks or service personnel. Women are portrayed in a working or career role in advertisements in a diverse range of studies worldwide. In advertising images, the setting, clothes and activity depicted generally indicate a specific role. For example, a career woman is depicted in a work setting (such as an office); her clothes (such as a uniform) signify work and she may be performing work-related activities (such as typing). The career role was specifically identified as such in Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009:1417); Razzouk et al. (2003:123) and Rudansky (1991:148).

Social reality today indicates that women worldwide are active in the workplace. Two-thirds of Thai women work outside the home, and in America, as well as in South Africa, women make up half of the work force (Cant et al., 2006:97; Koernig & Granitz, 2006:9; Razzouk et al., 2003:120). This is not reflected in advertising practice, as only 12 per cent of Chinese and Thai female advertising images depict career women (Hung & Li, 2006:12; Razzouk et al., 2003:122).

In contrast to the above findings, the role of females in contemporary e-commerce production is adequately reflected in advertising, as women are as likely as men to be depicted in positions of power and authority (such as career portrayals) in e-commerce advertisements (Koernig & Granitz, 2006:87). Similarly, career women are frequently portrayed in German mobile communication systems advertisements in women's magazines (Döring & Pöschl, 2006:183).

Housewife

The role of a housewife is portrayed by a woman in a household setting performing household activities such as cleaning or cooking. The housewife is differentiated from the mother by the absence of children in the advertisement, as the inclusion of children is an indicator of the mother role. Six per cent of advertisements in the UK, ten per cent in Thailand and one per cent in South Africa depicted women as housewives (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009:1423; Razzouk et al., 2003:123; Rudansky, 1991:162).

Women as housewives are often depicted with household products or appliances related to housework, and are therefore frequently used to advertise such products. The housewife was primarily used to advertise household products in a variety of previous research studies (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009:1427; Razzouk et al., 2003:124; Rudansky, 1991:170). It is not really surprising that women were not shown in household settings in mobile communication systems advertisements nor in advertisements for educational technology products (Bolliger, 2008:49; Döring & Pöschl, 2006:183). The current study will include the housewife role portrayal.

Dependant

The woman in the dependant role was identified in eight per cent of Thai advertisement portrayals and in less than four per cent of advertisements in the UK (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009:1427; Razzouk et al., 2003:123). In these studies, the dependant role is used most frequently for advertising apparel and food/beverage products, respectively. Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009:1417) describe the dependency role as a woman that does not make any crucial decisions, and who needs security and reassurance. The category “ritualisation of subordination” (that consists of body/head tilting and support) is often used *inter alia* in analysing gender roles (Goffman in Döring & Pöschl, 2006:174). The actions of tilting the body or the head and leaning on others are deemed indicators of dependency. Women are frequently depicted in the ritualisation of subordination poses in mobile phone advertisements, pointing towards a more dependant role (Döring & Pöschl, 2006:182).

The role of a housewife is generally accepted to include a degree of dependency, and as it already exists as a distinct role category, the dependant role will be included under the housewife role in the current study. Previous research also combined the categories of housewife and dependant (Furnham et al., 2001:24; Nassif & Gunter, 2008:758).

Mannequin

Various advertisements feature women with no distinct relation to others or any pertinent focus on external factors, thereby signifying a mannequin portrayal. According to Rudansky (1991:149), the mannequin is also referred to as the model girl, and her role is solely to exhibit or show off the product.

The mannequin is primarily depicted as actually wearing or displaying the advertised product. Although she may be portrayed with others in the advertisement, she is not focusing on the other people present. Her main function is to be a vehicle for the display of the product. The neutral role that was identified in role portrayals by Razzouk et al. (2003:123) is included in the mannequin portrayal, as it was not clearly defined and is assumed to refer to mannequin-type portrayals.

Rudansky (1991:169) suggested that the high incidence of the woman as a mannequin is due to a lack of creativity on the part of advertisers, as women are suitable for fulfilling more functions in an advertisement than purely being a vehicle for the showing off of the product. The woman as mannequin in the Rudansky (1991) study included testimonial advertising that featured celebrities.

Product user

A woman who is depicted as preparing to use or actually using the advertised product is classified as a product user. Previous research has already examined product use, often in relation to expertise, and mostly for technological products. The product user role was specified in research on gender portrayals in computer and technological product advertisements, which found that although women are depicted as product users, they are seldom portrayed as experts (Bolliger, 2008:49; Johnson et al., 2006:6). Furthermore, women are mostly portrayed as passive, insecure and mainly decorative in the use of technological products.

A person depicted as using a computer is considered to have mastered the technology, indicating an expert user role (Koernig & Granitz, 2006:86). Although female product users are portrayed in technology advertisements, they are under-represented as experts (Bolliger, 2008:49; Johnson et al., 2006:7).

Social being

As a social being, the woman is shown in a wide variety of social contexts, such as sport events or parties (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009:1417; Rudansky, 1991:146). The woman in a social role is shown with other characters and her attention is on the others or the actions taking place. Her facial expression indicates emotions which are generally positive. Events such as funerals are not associated with positive emotions, but as they include people in groups with a common goal, women in such depictions will be coded as social beings.

Koernig and Granitz (2006:90) identify the values of relaxation and enjoyment as more frequently associated with women than with men in advertisements. As social activities generally revolve around relaxation and enjoyment, it is inferred that these values can identify the woman as a social being. Product category advertising that features the social being includes apparel, cigarettes and food products (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009:1427; Rudansky, 1991:175).

Romantic role

The woman featured in a romantic role is portrayed with a male or in contact with one, and her facial expression indicates love or affection towards the man. The environment in which the couple is depicted

excludes other people and the setting implies romance or affection (Rudansky, 1991:145). The romantic role includes inter alia portrayals of women as wives and girlfriends, roles which have already featured in previous studies, for example in Hung et al. (2007:1039).

To differentiate the romantic role from those of housewife and mother (both of which are generally considered as wives), distinctions are made based on the setting (romantic); the presence of other people (no children or others); and the focus (the woman in the romantic role focuses on the man). This portrayal was prevalent in advertisements in the South African study (which coined it “romantic”) and it was most often used for promoting alcoholic beverages (Rudansky, 1991:162).

Engagement in non-traditional activities

Women in advertisements are sometimes depicted engaging in actions not traditionally associated with females (non-traditional activities). Such depictions represented six per cent of the role depictions in Thai advertising and are mostly used to advertise durable products (Razzouk et al., 2003:123). These portrayals are not considered common depictions of women and are seldom used; therefore, the non-traditional category will be excluded from the current study.

Up to now, the roles portrayed by women in previous studies on magazine advertisements have been described. The discussion on previous research findings confirms the fact that gender stereotyping is used in advertising regardless of any changes in the social environment. Döring and Pöschl (2006:184) assert that advertising today does not reflect current gender roles adequately. It is thus argued that portrayals of women in advertisements emphasise traditional gender stereotypes that are not necessarily in line with social realities.

Consumers' Perception of the Use of Females in Advertising

Consumer perception is regarded as how consumers feel or give interpretation or inferences to advertising messages so that it becomes meaningful. There are some factors which influence how things are perceived by people. These include personality, cognitive style, gender, occupation, age, values, attitudes, long-term motivation, religious beliefs, socio-economic status, cultural background, education, habits and past experiences. But there are also other factors which according to Warr and Knapper (1968) may contribute to individual difference in perception which are transitory; they include “mental 'set' mood (affective/emotional state), goals, intentions, situational motivation and contextual expectancies.” When consumers process advertising messages, they often form inference about product attributes that are explicitly described in the advertisement. According to Harris (1981:18);

“Inferential beliefs are growing interest in advertising research for at least two reasons: first, inferences are of managerial concern since, like beliefs derived from explicit claims or personal experiences, inferences affect consumers' responses to advertisements and are therefore an important determinant of advertising effectiveness. Second, inferences are relevant to advertising regulation since they represent meaning that goes beyond what is explicitly given and may therefore be misleading.”

Psycholinguistic research demonstrates that inferences occur when message receivers apply their general world knowledge to help them understand the content of messages (Johnson, Bransford and Solomon, 1983: p.193).

Anderson (1978, p.249) argues that verbal and visual stimuli may elicit similar behavioural responses regardless of their representational form or manner of processing. However, Mitchell and Olson (1981, p. 318) support the above assertion by demonstrating that consumers respond to explicit claims about a product attribute by forming the same belief, regardless of whether the stimulus ad uses pictures or words to make claim.

The use of women in advertising has become a common place. Since 1990s, the use of women in advertising (especially as sex appeal) has continues to be a controversial topic as evidenced by the strength and variability of reactions to it. Previous empirical studies have indicated that the use of such models have met with a somewhat mixed consumer response, sometime evoking positive reactions and sometimes evoking negative reactions from viewers (Alexander and Judd 1986; LaTour 1990; Morrison and Sherman 1972). The whole issue of the use of female models in advertising and what is considered as decent and acceptable in a society is continually in flux (Boddewyn, 1991, p. 25).

Advertisers are finding it increasingly difficult to determine whether viewers will perceive advertisement containing provocatively posed and attired models as “sexy”. However, Ford and LaTour (1993, p. 72) assert that general perception of female role portrayals have shown that if women perceive they

are being portrayed inappropriately, their perception may reduce purchase intention and/or damage sponsor image.

Beauty Advertising and its Effects on Women

According to Wakefield (2002) “women today make eighty percent of total purchases, making them the largest consumer group. Advertisers are realizing this fact and trying to advertise products and services to more women. Most advertisements directed at women portray them as sophisticated, intelligent consumers, who make the important buying decisions in their households.” In contrast, beauty advertising, for the most part, disregards the idea of women as sophisticated, intelligent consumers and instead uses insecurity and sex appeal to sell products.

Molly (1992) in his own words narrates that “countless advertisements reinforce insecurity by asking women to view their faces and bodies as an ensemble of discrete parts, each in need of a major overhaul”. An advertisement for Foundation Garments depict two disembodied backsides and promises “New improved fannies.” “If your hair isn't beautiful” warns a shampoo advertisement, “the rest hardly matters.” Another advertisement demands to know. “Why aren't your feet as sexy as the rest of your? An advertisement for Deep Styling products suggests that we beautify our hair in order to counteract our other glaring flaws. “Your breast may be too big, too saggy, too pert, too flat, too full, too far apart,” the copy reads, “but... at least you can have your hair the way you want it”. In Satin colours lipstick the advertisement reads “compare yourself: Are you just as beautiful? Discovering who's better in satin colours lipstick.”

“ These advertisements can be devastating to women. After seeing thin models, airbrushed and make-up covered celebrities, and articles about beauty does and don'ts, women start feeling discouraged, anxious, and empty. They spent \$20 billion on cosmetics, \$33 billion on diets and \$300 million on cosmetic surgeries to eliminate this emptiness in 1991” (Wolf, 1994).

Martin and Gentry (1997) suggests that girls in particular are generally preoccupied with attempting to become beautiful. He stresses that “today's specifications call for blonde and thin – no easy task, most girls get bigger during adolescence, and many become anorexics or bulimics: a few rich ones get liposuction. In other words, these advertisements create eating disorders, and depression in women as well as causing financial distress as women rush to buy products to make them look younger or more beautiful. Women strive for the perfect ideal, and since they cannot reach that goal, the stress reaches all areas of society (Wakefield, personal communication, March 15, 2002).

Wolf (1991) went further to say that eating disorders are prevalent as images of thin models still dominate, despite some magazines' effort to include plus-size models' as well. However, the “plus-size” label is one many women try to avoid, though it may be healthier than what eating disorders do to women every day. Dangerous thin models, who have no breasts or hips and look very little make the clothes look better because they can hang freely. But countless women think of these images as beautiful, and they strive to reach it. According to ANRED report “one out of every hundred women are anorexic, and four out of every hundred are bulimic. These statistics do not include many people suffering from the diseases because not all cases are reported, and some cases are borderline.”

Theoretical Framework

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory based on Gerbner's cultivation hypothesis holds that “the more people are exposed to the mass media especially television, the more they will believe that the real world is like the one they observe.” This theory of the media effects views the media as moulders of society and argues that the message of the media is deviant from reality on several key points yet persistent exposure leads to its adoption as a consensual view of society (McQuail, 1987, p.283). Despite the fact that some researchers have questioned the validity of this theory, citing weakness of the hypothetical relationships, several studies by Gerbner and his colleagues have consistently found empirical support for cultivation hypothesis, (Gerbner et al, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980). Following his study of strategies for elaborating the cultivation hypothesis, Potter (1988, p.938) concludes that “this study provides evidence that cultivation effects do exist.” Writing about the validity theory, McQuail (1997, p.283 and 284) says:

“The main evidence for the cultivation theory comes from systematic content analysis of American Television, carried out over several years. The second main source of evidence in support of the theory comes from surveys of opinion and attitude which seem to support the view that the higher exposure to television goes with the sort of world view found in the message of television.”

Other theoretical approaches like Bandura's 'social learning theory' and the 'agenda-setting theory' lend support to the cultivation theory. In their study of media use and image of nations, Nwuneli et al., (1993, p.37) clearly discuss how these theories support the expectation that "perception of social reality will correspond closely to the mass media 'realities' because the images of the world portrayed in the media will be internalized and accepted as accurate representations of reality by media audience."

Okigbo (1995, p.107) succinctly explains, "our knowledge of the world comes from various sources, of which the two most important are personal experience and the media. In this age of modern communication more than any other, the international media are playing an ever increasing role in the process of national image cultivation and management. This cultivation role of the mass media has for many years fuelled the Third World vociferous demand for a new world information and communication order. The fear which generated and sustained this demand appears to have become even more profound in this age of the information super-highway, as negative reporting of the developing world, particularly Africa, waxes stronger and stronger in the international media. Even in situations of direct personal experience with phenomena, people's perceptions of social reality are structured by the media. Strong belief in the powerful socializing influence of the media is gaining around universally."

Sexual Objectification Theory

This theory assumes that there is a growing perception of women as physical objects of male sexual desire. Propounded by Fredrickson and Robert in 1997, the theory- suggests that by reason of certain cultures, women's value is tied to they looks and sexual appeal to men. This leads to the reduction of women to physical objects of sexual desire. Patrick steward posits that "the general observation is that the depiction of women as objects of desire affects general relations and society's attitude towards women and women's sexuality". As such, women in the society are perceived as being more looks than brain, because their bodies are emphasized, but other personality aspects like intelligence etc are ignored conveniently.

This theory also has the tendency to render women as targets of potential sexual violence and also pervasive pattern of social disadvantaged, both publicly and privately (Fiske, 1996). It is absolutely easy for man to regard women as products to be acquired or things that men are rightly entitled to have access to."

Methodology

The researcher approached the study from audience analytical perspective using the survey research design. Nworgu (1991, p.55) posits that, "a survey research is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analysing data from a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group." This approach was suitable because the study was focused on investigating the portrayal of women in select beauty products television advertisements with focus on the perception of consumers. The population of the study targets the residents of Imo State. The population of Imo State according to the projection by the government is 4,928,000 (IMSG, 2017). The obtained sample size is 384, obtained from the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. As a result of the large population, the purposive sampling technique was employed to determine the sample size of the study. According to Ikeagwu (1998), "the basic assumption behind purposive sampling method is that, with good judgement and appropriate strategy, one can hand-pick the cases to be included in the sample and this develops sample that is satisfactory in relation to ones needs." Those that met the requirement of this research in the chosen population sample are adults who regularly watch Television programmes.

The beauty products television advertisements selected as focus for this study are: Dudu Osun Soap, Dettol Products, Nivea cream products, Darling hair weavon product and Dove Beauty Cream. These products advertisements were selected because of the popularity, far reach and consistency of their broadcasts in major television channels in Imo State. A structured questionnaire was designed and used in the survey to elicit information from selected respondents from the target population of the study. The questionnaire method was employed because it helps the researcher gather vast data within a short period of time. It also allowed the researcher to resolve a large amount of problems in a consistent way (Picincu, 2018). The questions in the questionnaire were designed with a 5-point Likert scale, providing options for respondents to select from.

The collected data from the survey will be analysed using quantitative analysis approach. Descriptive statistical tools (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) was used to summarize the collected data. Inferential statistical tools such; Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between components/variables of the study. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to aid the analysis of the data.

Results, Findings and Discussion

The collected data was analysed presented in tables and discussed under this section of the study.

Table 1. Responses on Respondents' Exposure to the use of Women for Advertising Beauty Products on Television

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	380	100
No	0	0
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The result in table 1 shows that all of the selected respondents have had exposure to the use of women for advertising beauty products on television in Imo state. This implies that all of the 380 respondents (100%) have watched women play roles in beauty product adverts on television.

Different roles of Women as Portrayed in Selected Beauty Products Television Advertisement in Imo State

Table 2. Consumers' Perception of the Roles of Women as Portrayed in Select Beauty Products Television Advertisement in Imo State

S/N	Items	Mean	St. Dev
1	Women play romantic roles in beauty products television advertisements	3.92	0.25
2	Women play the role of physical decoration for beauty products in television advertisement	3.85	0.41
3	Women play social being role where they are in contact with other people in beauty products television advertisements	3.77	0.26
4	Women play roles that depicts them as sexually attractive or alluring (sex objects) in beauty products television advertisements	4.62	0.09
5	Women play the role of homemakers in beauty products television advertisements	3.61	0.22
6	Women play the role of wife/mother in beauty products television advertisements	3.58	0.15
7	In beauty products TV advertisements, women play the role of work/career woman	3.84	0.32
8	Women play the role of models in beauty products television advertisements	4.53	0.07

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2 presents the result for items of the questionnaire on consumers' perception of the roles of women as portrayed in the selected beauty products television advertisement in Imo state. All of the options provided had mean above 3.5 which marks the cutoff point for respondent's agreement (based on the 5-point Likert Scale; 3.5 – 4.4 = agree; 4.5 – 5.0 = strongly agree). This implies that respondents' perception agrees with the provided options of roles of women as portrayed in the select beauty products television advertisement in the survey. The highest mean (4.62) was obtained for “Women play roles that depicts them as sexually attractive or alluring (sex objects) in beauty products television advertisements”. The lowest mean (3.58) was obtained for “Women play the role of wife/mother in beauty products television advertisements”. This result clearly shows that the roles of women as portrayed in the selected beauty products television advertisement in Imo state are categorized as follows: romantic roles, model role, physical decoration role, social being role, sex objects role, homemaker's role, wife/mother role and work/career woman role. However, the result further revealed that women are more perceived to play the role of sex objects in most of the beauty products television advertisement. This could be seen in some of the imageries that show women exposing their bodies and alluringly displayed for men's amusements.

Table 3. Stereotypes around Women in Imo State

S/N	Items	Mean	St. Dev
10	Women are flawless and unattainable goddess	3.89	0.02
11	Women are domestic providers/obsessive who do not make significant decisions	4.27	0.17
12	Traditional female roles include: cooking, cleaning, caring for children	3.94	0.31
13	Women are selfless nurturer	3.83	0.22
14	Women are sex objects (men regard women primarily as sexual objects)	3.91	0.34
15	Women are mainly supporting or background character for males in the work place (Women’s job is most likely a non-professional one, such as a secretary)	3.74	0.27
16	Women are dependent and need men’s protection	3.59	0.08
17	Women do not make important decisions or do important things	3.51	0.15
18	Women need to apply beauty products because only then will men around them give them attention	4.55	0.04
19	The only potential woman holds is her body and nothing else	3.52	0.18
20	Portrayal of women as mindless sexual beings	3.60	0.39
21	A lean body without any belly fat is a desirable body for women and all women should work towards it	4.76	0.11

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 3 presents the result for items of the questionnaire on consumers' perception of the stereotypes around women in Imo State. All of the options provided had mean above 3.5 which indicates that respondents were in agreement (based on the 5-point Likert Scale; 3.5 – 4.4 = agree; 4.5 – 5.0 = strongly agree). This implies that respondents' perception agrees with the provided options of the stereotypes around women in Imo State as given in the survey. The highest mean (4.76) was obtained for “A lean body without any belly fat is a desirable body for women and all women should work towards it”. The lowest mean (3.51) was obtained for “Women do not make important decisions or do important things”. This result clearly identified the stereotypes around women in Imo State which include: women are flawless, women are domestic providers, women are sex objects, women are majorly non-professional, women are dependent on men and they are mindless sexual beings. This could be seen in the societal assigned roles and relegations of women (glass ceiling). This finding corroborates that of Das (2010) and Gulati (2014) which found similar stereotypes around women.

The Relationship between the existing consumer perceptions and stereotypes around women in Imo State

Table 4 Consumers' Perception on the Sexual Objectification of Women as a Result of Negative Portrayal of Women in Beauty Product Television Advertisement

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	295	77.6
No	85	22.4
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

According to the result presented in table 4, 295 (77.6%) of respondents perceived that the portrayal of women in beauty product television advertisements have increased the sexual objectification of women. The remaining 85 (22.4%) of the respondents indicated (No), implying that they disagreed with this suggestion. This result implies that majority of the respondents perceived that the portrayal of women in beauty product television advertisement have negatively led to the sexual objectification of women.

Table 5: Consumers' Perception on the Degrading of Feminine Role as a Result of Negative Portrayal of Women in Beauty Product Television Advertisement

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	343	90.3
No	37	9.7
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The result presented in table 5, shows the result for determining consumers' perception on the degrading of feminine role as a result of negative portrayal of women in beauty product television advertisement. The result shows that 343 (90.3%) of respondents perceived that the portrayal of women in beauty product television advertisements have increased the degrading of feminine role. The remaining 37 (9.7%) of the respondents indicated (No), implying that they disagreed with this proposition. This result implies that majority of the respondents perceived that the portrayal of women in beauty product television advertisement have negatively led to the degrading of feminine role in the society. This finding contradicts that of Negi (2014) and Gupta and Pal (2020) which found that advertisements aired on the mainstream channels of Indian televisions portrayed their women in responsive, decorative and independent roles.

Table 6: Consumers' Perception on Whether Negative Portrayal of Women in Beauty Product Television Advertisement Impact on Self-Esteem of Women

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	318	83.7
No	62	16.3
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The result as presented in table 6, reveals the result for determining consumers' perception on whether negative portrayal of women in beauty product television advertisement impact on self-esteem of women. The result reveals that 318 (83.7%) of respondents perceived that the portrayal of women in beauty product television advertisements have impact on self-esteem of women. The remaining 62 (16.3%) of the respondents indicated (No), implying that they disagreed with this submission. This result is an indication that most of the respondents perceived that the portrayal of women in beauty product television advertisement have impacted on the self-esteem of women in the society, workplace and other social gathering.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was aimed at investigating the portrayal of women in select beauty products television advertisement with interest on the perceptual study of consumers in Imo State. In conclusion, the study was able to reveal that women play key roles in the television advertisement of beauty products in Imo State. However, the study also found that the manner in which the women are represented in the adverts, have further strengthened the stereotypes attached to women in the society, which have several negative consequences such as: sexual objectification of women, degrading of female roles in the society, low self-esteem etc. In a society as obtainable in Imo state, where women are striving to break through the 'glass ceiling' in their workplace and others struggling to emerge from the societal barriers that have tried to hinder them from getting to the peak of their education, career and aspirations; it is important that women are better portrayed to help eradicate negative representations.

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations were therefore made:

- i. A more inclusive depiction of women should be rendered in television advertisement of beauty products in Imo State, which would provide women in general particularly young women with options and role model.
- ii. In the television advertisement of beauty products, women should be portrayed as independent, assertive and successful players in the workplace and society.
- iii. Stereotypical framing of women should be avoided in the design of television advertisement of beauty products.

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