

A CRITICAL DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S OBJECTIFICATION IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA OF PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Despite the growth of Pakistani media as a lavish industry, there are significant concerns regarding the depiction of women in advertisements, particularly their portrayal as commodities. This critical discourse analysis examines how Pakistani electronic media perpetuates the objectification of women, associating success with the color of their skin, the shine of their hair, and social media influence. This study aims to expose the hidden agendas that reduce women to mere objects, reinforcing misogynistic and chauvinistic ideologies largely catering to the male gaze within a male-dominated industry, in current advertisements in Pakistan that objectify women using Norman Fairclough's 3D model (Brite washing powder, Slice juice, and Sunsilk shampoo). The finding highlights the media's manipulation of beauty standards, favoring fair-skinned women and marginalizing dark-skinned ones. This study has observed the role of media in shaping societal attitudes and behavior. Through a lens of Critical Discourse Analysis, this study reveals the media's manipulative strategies and provides viable solutions to address the escalating issues of women's objectification in Pakistan.

Keywords: Power and language, Women Objectification, Gender Representation, Critical Discourse Analysis, Advertising discourse.

Introduction

Due to its significant influence in forming social views of gender roles and perpetuating structural inequalities, researchers have recently examined how women are portrayed in the media, especially in advertisements (Gurpur et al., 2025; Ruan et al., 2025; Said et al., 2025). The objectification and commercialization of women are facilitated by the idealized portrayals of femininity in media texts that conform to patriarchal standards (Liang, 2025; Singh et al., 2025). These depictions support larger sociocultural structures in addition to having an impact on how individuals create their identities. It is crucial to analyze gendered messages using interdisciplinary frameworks like feminist theory and critical discourse analysis since they are ingrained both verbally and visually (MahalAyub et al., 2025). However, Women's objectification in electronic media is quite different when we talk about Western progress versus the Pakistani context. According to Qamar et al., (2020), both males and females target actresses on social media, leaving hurtful comments on their posts and demeaning them based on their appearance and figures. Objectification of women in Pakistan has become a common activity, physical appearance and depiction of their bodies are among others, (Ahmed et al., 2020). Pakistani electronic media uses women's bodies as the source of men's gaze and presents them as objects to look upon, they show them as mindless men seeking women who only think of themselves beautiful only if approved by the male gaze, the study focuses on body shaming, sexual dysfunction, male gaze and depression in women due to fear of not being attractive. Women objectification and gender discourse on billboard advertisements of Pakistan, the stereotypical gender roles that Pakistan still follows, and the sexual orientation of women, females are subject to exploitation daily from smallest to large aspects of life, the Pakistani

media and masses are more interested in looks than in product as jazz advertisement says “look who's talking” pointing to white foreign women in picture (Mushtaq et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Pakistani electronic media have been encouraging the idea of self-objectification. There are directly targeted advertisements towards unmarried girls, demotivating them with various personal factors, including age, career, and educational background, bombarding them with impossible beauty standards and socioeconomic positions which causes depression and eating disorders among youth (Farhan & Nouman, 2021). Such advertisements showcase female body as pyramid of success in Pakistan, exposing female physical appearance to exemplify these stereotypes to women and presenting them as desired body count for male gaze, these images of perfection has created disoriented realities in both male and female minds (Sheikh et al., 2019).

Moreover, with multiple TV channels and advertisements, Pakistan's growing media can shape perceptions and profoundly influence others. A study finds that the rise of mass media in Pakistan shapes the beliefs and perceptions of the common masses (Khan et al., 2025). Ideology and power have an interdependent relationship in social activity; we engage with one another regularly in the society we live in (Hassan, 2018). We convey the sense of strength that we must form the ideology. Power and ideology are common practices. Sometimes we even do it unconsciously when threatened, we exercise authority in our home when we earn bread, in academia if we teach, as a customer when we buy, and according to our social status. (Harwood et al., 2014) We can apply the same ideology and power that Foucault introduced through the media, utilizing Fairclough's 3D model. Fairclough highlights the complex link between discourse and power to deconstruct texts that are ideologically formed by power relations and social frameworks. In this social setting, the stereotypical consumers are women, so it is essential to decode the text and the power behind these discourses. These stereotypical gender roles may not be advertised openly, but they still exist and are hidden in cleverly constructed texts in today's consumerist culture (Ali, 2018).

Thus, throughout the years, the notion of women's objectification has been continuously developed, but has not been done explicitly Through Fairclough 3D model, in Pakistan, particularly on given advertisements; therefore, it is essential to discuss. This paper examines women's objectification in Pakistani advertisements through the lenses of three primary issues of current media portrayal of women, unbundling the textual analysis codes of advertisement with three hidden agendas, connection of white skin to confidence, shiny hair in association with women's success, and employment of social media influencers to enhance product consumption. The study will further provide detailed information on existing knowledge about the manipulation of media and hidden agenda consumeristic agencies (Ali, 2018). This research can be beneficial to the academic community to understand the objectification in recent advertisements, hidden in the name of modernization, how Pakistani media still attributes a woman's success to the color of her skin, the shine of her hair, and how many followers she has on her social media accounts. In addition, the study also examines how such depictions are often made through the lens of the male gaze, which establishes patriarchal ideologies by presenting women as a mere source of visual pleasure rather than as autonomous individuals.

Background of Study

According to the studies, feminist critiques have stated that due to advertisements, women have become sexual objects to men's desire as they objectify and categorize women, and advertising about perfect bodies is what is making women more targeted, and body shaming is increasing, (Anderson et al., 2018). Such portrayals of advertisements reduce women to their appearances and fuel a culture where body shaming and unrealistic beauty standards flourish. Such advertising not only marginalizes women but also commercializes them since their bodies are used to sell products that promise perfection. The use of women's images in advertising

feminine products has been particularly troubling. Mainstream media uses women's bodies to sell feminine products, and women are mere products of a good sales pitch (Baldissarri et al., 2020). Feminists also argue that this overrepresentation and distortion of women's physiques have led to sexualization, objectification, and mental health issues among young women, including eating disorders and low self-esteem (Basow et al., 2007).

Another problematic aspect of advertising is that it uses implicit double-meaning messages for both women and men. For example, advertising suggests that products such as anti-aging creams and body lotions come with hidden narratives. Men are made to believe that these products can turn women into perfect partners, and women are convinced that using such products is a gateway to attracting successful men. These manipulative messages lower women's self-esteem and promote a fantasy-driven standard of beauty and behavior (Holland et al., 2017). Not only does the beauty industry present an ideal woman, but also her personality is dumbed down to a submissive, mindless doll; she will be lured by anything. Beauty products are merely tools; the real agenda is to completely erase the individuality of women, which can lead to psychological disorders in women (De Wilde et al., 2020).

Mitchell & Mazzeo, (2009) emphasizes the role played by the media in shaping societal values and behaviors. Instead of working as a positive force, the media tends to promote sexist and racist ideologies and act as a cause of cultural discrimination. Furthermore, Feminists point out that the beauty products that are targeted towards young girls are not because of skincare and self-care but only to multiply the numbers and to feast on insecurities of young girls, the slimming body products, healthier hair, and whiter skin, these cause mental illness in young youth as they want to be accepted among the prettiest girls, this is one of the things that causes severe depression among young girls as they are constantly scared of being bullied, the concept of beauty standards is flawed (Chevallereau et al., 2021).

The Pakistani media landscape has developed significantly over the past few decades. Under General Zia ul Haq's regime in the 1980s, the media was under the government's command and monitored regarding women, especially; if women appeared on TV, they were supposed to wear traditional clothing. At that time, Pakistan only had one state-run television channel, PTV. In the 1990s, Shalimar Television Network (STN) and Network Television Marketing (NTM) were introduced, slightly diversifying media content.

In 2004, during the time of General Pervez Musharraf, the media were granted more freedom and space, as Pakistani media managed to become more open, with eighty-seven new media channels under the "Pakistani Electronic Media Regulatory Authority" license. PEMRA was established in 2010 and owns public and private Pakistani media channels but also facilitates foreign media channels through satellite. As Pakistan is an Islamic-rooted country, PEMRA clearly stated that any advertisement that contains content of Vulgarly, Obscenity, and Immorality will not be tolerated; any mocking or offensive joke towards Islam is forbidden. Despite these guidelines, the portrayal of women in Pakistani media often mirrors the objectification seen in Western media, albeit shaped by cultural and traditional norms.

Although female writers, critics, and activists in Pakistan have made the issue more prominent, the struggle for women's liberation and representation continues. The objectification of women within the Pakistani media still reflects deep-rooted patriarchal values. In contrast to the West, where the issues are often linked to conversations regarding equality and empowerment, in Pakistan, women are still largely viewed through the lens of honor, modesty, and physical appearance. Body shaming, obsession with fair skin, and unrealistic standards of beauty persist and are fueled by media portrayals that ignore women's individuality and agency (Fogarty Michael P., 1973).

Theoretical Framework:

To understand critical discourse analysis, it is important to understand critical theory. Critical theory is the collective form of theories that tackle the social transformative and normative issues in society, with the help of Critical Theory. Critical theory is affiliated with works of philosophers and social theorists in 1930s and is related with Frankfurt school, it challenged current issues of the time and the normativity of it, now it is related to gender roles, race, colonialism, and post-colonialism (Critical Theory (Frankfurt School) (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy), 2023) and (Wellmer, 2014). Critical discourse analysis comes from critical theory, while critical theory was more concerned with social normativity, Critical discourse analysis focuses on linguistic inequalities, power struggle in discourse and social practices involving power and language (Blommaert, 2003).

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method examines how language in media reflects and constructs ideology and social power. Language is a form of social practice, meaning that every text both influences and is influenced by societal structures. (Fairclough, 1989). This research adopts Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework because it offers a systematic and multi-dimensional approach to analyzing how power, ideology, and gendered roles are inscribed into media discourse. Fairclough's model is particularly valuable for media and gender studies within linguistics because it allows researchers to examine not only the linguistic makeup of texts but also the broader socio-cultural and institutional forces that shape them.

His three-dimensional model examines discourse on three interconnected levels: textual, discursive practice, and social practice, each revealing different aspects of how meaning and power are produced. In this study, Fairclough's three-dimensional framework will be applied to electronic media advertisements to examine how their visuals and language contribute to the objectification of women and the reinforcement of gender-biased products.

The approach also incorporates feminist theory to further examine gender portrayal and objectification. The structural underpinnings of gender inequity, patriarchy, and the masculine gaze are all criticized by feminist theory (Chaudhuri, 2006). In order to appeal to male viewers and buyers, women are often shown in the media as passive, ornamental, or commercialized characters. According to feminist media academics, these depictions serve to domesticate and marginalize women's identities in society while reinforcing limited beauty standards objectification. The structural underpinnings of gender inequity, patriarchy, and the masculine gaze are all criticized by feminist theory (Mulvey, 1975). In order to appeal to male viewers and buyers, women are often shown in the media as passive, ornamental, or commercialized characters. According to feminist media academics, these depictions serve to domesticate and marginalize women's identities in society while reinforcing limited beauty standards (Clair Gill, 2007).

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional CDA Model:

Fairclough's CDA is constructed around a three-dimensional model that examines discourse on three levels:

Text (Micro Level): Analyzes language in specific texts, emphasizing vocabulary, grammar, and cohesion.

Discursive Practice (Meso Level): Examines how texts are produced, consumed, and distributed socially.

Social Practice (Macro Level): investigates how discourse shapes wider social and cultural structures, specifically power relations and ideologies.

Research Methodology

This study uses Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how Pakistani advertisements construct gender, ideologies, and power in society. The

textual analysis is the first part of the framework, and it focuses on the linguistic and visual features of the advertisement, including camera angles, framing, imagery, and metaphors, to reveal gender portrayals and ideologies. Afterwards the discursive practice investigates the production, distribution, and audience interpretation of the advertisement. It examines how the celebrity is influencing society and how it is related to other advertisements of the same category. Social practices analyze the advertisements with broader socio-cultural and ideological contexts, such as capitalism, patriarchy and media ideology. It focuses on how media reinforces the gender roles and commodifies femininity, reflecting the power behind discourse.

These stages are cumulative: First, the text is described with details, then interpreted within its communicative context, and lastly placed in the broader social order. In practice, Fairclough's model progresses from a close reading of the advertisement's content to understanding its position in the media environment and ultimately explaining it to society.

Research questions

1. How do media depictions of women use images of femininity and beauty to appeal to the male gaze?
2. How is silky, smooth hair portrayed in the media advertisements as a sign of feminine success?
3. How does beauty marketing reinforce conventional gender norms and aid in the domestication of women?

Research objectives

1. To explore how the media depicts linguistic and visual elements to appeal to the male gaze in representation of women.
2. To critically examine the ways in which media and commercials associate women's strength and success with having smooth, silky hair.
3. To evaluate how the media and advertisements portray women in conventional and domestic roles.

Data Analysis



Representation of Women and the Male Gaze

The visual representation of Hania Aamir's dress plays a significant role in marketing the product. The bright yellow-orange hue not only reminds one of the fruits but also of a sense of vitality, brightness, and allure. Her attire is thrown against the rich green background, putting the focus directly on her. Her outfit blends her body into the product so fluidly, implying she is both the product and the personification of the slice.

Mango is often considered a symbol of sensuality, pleasure, and richness, aligning with the branding of Slice juice as a luxurious escape. The use of slow-motion effects, soft music, and her actions towards the camera create an emotional

connection with the audience. The depiction of mango's juiciness dripping and splashing maintains the sensually appealing theme of the advertisement, making the product appealing and the advertisement more happening for the male audience.

Her long, silky hair is pulled back to look voluminous and luxurious, perfectly fitting with the stereotypical notion of femininity. The visual focus on her radiant, fair complexion reflects the

enduring colorist beauty standard in South Asian media, where fair skin is coded as desirable and holds greater social value.

The advertisement features a series of overly sensual events. In one frame, Hania Aamir is gently biting into a mango while directly looking into the camera, an act that suggests flirtation and sexualization not with the other individual but within the advertisement and with the viewer. The direct eye contact brings the audience into a voyeuristic role, mirroring how women are often shown as objects for the male gaze rather than individual entities whose worth is much more than how they are viewed by men.

Another shot features her sitting in a dreamy place, her eyes shut, showing a relaxed posture and visible enjoyment on her face, reinforcing the trope of feminine pleasure so commonly portrayed in advertising. The bodily postures, facial expressions, and body language are artfully staged to be aesthetically pleasing, particularly from a male's perspective. This represents Fairclough's concept of power in discourse, where it captures and explores existing power relations and ideologies. Through this advertisement, gender ideology is used at its best by portraying Hania Aamir as the object of the male gaze, utilizing beauty and sensuality to promote a product that has nothing to do specifically with women, and countering the male gaze, reinforcing the traditional views of women as passive objects of beauty.

Cinematography plays an important role in objectification. The close-up shots of Hania Aamir's lips and face, and her biting into the mango while looking directly at the camera, shift the visual focus to her body rather than the product itself. The slow-motion effects and the seductive tone of the music and voice-over create a sensual effect.

This advertisement employs soft light pastel hues and a pristine home environment to build an idealized portrait of femininity.



The woman is dressed nicely in delicate Pakistani attire subtly coded to gentle care and domestic purity, her neatly styled hair in a bun and her serene smile, her body language, and her lack of fatigue throughout the advertisement romanticize the domestic work and her responsibility. The wife is portrayed as calm and happy doing the house chores for husband and family, meanwhile, the husband is hiding across the room as his wife inspects his clothes for laundry on which he had put all the stains, and he presents her with bright washing powder and their child gives her a card saying **brite sub right krdega** shows the normalization in the society about women are only supposed to work at home

and only for husband and look after their children without any complaint. The woman is shown alone in managing cleanliness, which is her only duty. This suggests that if something in society is normalized, it becomes invisible, whether it may be gender inequality or justice.

The whole mood of the advertisement is calm, free, and emotionally soothing. There is no representation of effort, fatigue, or distress. The mother smiles calmly, comforted by her child's note, and this develops the discursive fantasy that household work is not only effortless but emotionally fulfilling. The representation of domestic work as calming and nice portrays the strategic use of language, which constructs society and its norms. The invisible labor and emotional burnout that women face in real life are fantasized through this advertisement, which leads the attention of viewers and society from inequality and patriarchal roles to romanticizing women's unpaid labor.

And the last one, the Sunslik advertisement featuring Dananeer are thoughtfully constructed to symbolize transformation, beauty, and consumerism-powered empowerment. The



advertisement immediately associates a woman's worth and visibility in society with beauty standards, specifically long, thick hair, which becomes a metonym for her entire persona. In the beginning, Dananeer is shown as hesitant and excluded, often in dull lightning, apart from others due to her unmanageable dull hair, but when she uses Sunslik, there is a radical visual transformation, the lightning becomes bright, her hair flows in motion, she is surrounded by glamorous friends in color-coordinated outfits looking confident and successful symbolizing femininity and social acceptance. The depiction of Dananeer as confused, clumsy, and doubting herself is a symbolic picture of an outsider and a misfit.

This confusion isn't rooted in her personality or skills but in her failure to meet dominant beauty standards—she lacks “good hair.” Her initial portrayal plays into the stereotypes of Pakistani society imposed by media representatives that if a woman does not fit the beauty standards, she can't do anything or be successful in society.

Hair becomes the central metaphor, its volume and shine directly linked to confidence, popularity, and empowerment. The lack of diversity within body types and certain skin tones further creates a narrow, idealized image of beauty. Ultimately, the visual conveys that the achievements, confidence, and self-worth are symbolically and literally in a woman's hair, reflecting empowerment to a beauty level transformation achieved through products.

The selection of Dananeer- an influencer already connected to youth through every other media platform adds another layer to the advertisement. Her slim figure, fair complexion, carefully curated fashion, and performative energy become central to the narrative. The advertisement capitalizes on her as a social media girly aesthetic, reinforcing that this is the ideal woman the viewer should aspire to be. The visuals and linguistic text align with the theory of gender performance, reinforcing that femininity and beauty are not something natural but achieved through beauty standards and style. The transformation in the advertisement is not simply about hair, but also the matter of perfect femininity, well-groomed, light-skinned, fashionable, flirtatious, and socially desirable. In the post-transformation, Dananeer is shown as cheerful and confident, suggesting that she has not only changed her hairstyle but also her whole personality, worthy of attention and success. This conveys the message to young viewers that to be successful and socially accepted, you should be aesthetically pleasing with great hair.

Construction and Symbols of Feminine Success in Lexicons

Slogan: Khul gien na ankhen, har mango drink slice nhi hoti.

The slogan is rich in metaphor, sensory implication, and implied desires. The phrase **khul gien na ankhen** employs metaphor to suggest a captivating and seductive look, which suggests the viewer is temporarily attracted and hypnotized by what they see without even knowing that it is a juice advertisement. This cleverly blurs the distinction between the model's appeal and the product's appeal. The next part **Har mango drink slice nhi hoti** positions the brand by portraying it as rare and desirable, a marketing cliché heightened in this instance through the model's visual appearance and attractiveness.

This type of lexical framing establishes a semi-erotic narrative, where the product becomes interchangeable, fostering both the desire for the juice and the desire for the model simultaneously. This is a classic trope of gendered advertising where the woman's body is sold in the name of products, through the use of eroticization.

The advertisement recalls the old Slice Juice advertisement featuring Katrina Kaif, who was styled and positioned in the same way as Hania Aamir, in extremely sensual imagery. This advertisement culturally aligns and reinforces patriarchal society and norms related to women and how they are just looked at as commodities and maintains ideologies like how women are supposed to be aesthetically pleasing and beautiful. This makes a narrative where a woman's value is based on her looks rather than who she is. Such intertextuality contributes to marketing tactics that lead to a point where a mango and a woman are merged into a symbol of exotic desire. They reflect South Asian marketing strategies and tactics that only objectify women.

Slogan: Brite sub right krdega

The advertisement positions the mother as the main character and caretaker of the house. The vocabulary used in this advertisement is simple, comforting, and emotionally charged phrases like "Don't worry, mama brite sub right krdega, Pakistan jitne khane banata hy naya brite utne daagh mitata hy", reinforcing the idea that it is only a female's responsibility to look after the domestic work. It establishes the identity of a woman as mother and wife, tying her role to caregiving only. The slogan (Brite makes everything right) carries a deep symbolic meaning. It suggests that household chaos, symbolized by dirty laundry, can be fixed by some washing powder, and it is a woman's responsibility to make everything right. The language is plain yet effective, focused on women and their household responsibilities. The stains are just the metaphorical representation of the domestic burden. Such language quietly reinforces the idea of gender inequality and the gender binary that men are doers in public and women are supposed to take care of the house. This mirrors Fairclough's idea that language is a social practice used to sustain power relations. This advertisement maintains the traditional idea of Pakistani society about male privilege and domestic responsibility.

The phrase used in the slogan **Sub right kredega** (makes everything right) extends beyond the laundry. It suggests that a woman is responsible for restoring emotional harmony, family order, housework, and visual cleanliness. The phrase puts forward the idea that a woman who keeps the house clean and does everything to keep the family happy and right is great, it indirectly equates clean clothes with correct family choices, imposing the emotional and moral blame on women.

The depiction of a woman using Brite washing powder to remove stains from her husband's clothes reflects societal and gender norms that a woman is expected to work at home without any acknowledgment, and it is her responsibility to do so, while men are absolved of any involvement in household chores. The advertisement heavily relies on intertextual and cultural references that support patriarchal norms and gender bias in Pakistani Society, particularly the idea of the perfect housewife who finds her identity only through her domestic duties. By featuring the mother smiling while doing the laundry for her husband, the advertisement goes back to the rich history of South Asian television dramas and every other advertisement, whether it may be cooking oil or washing powder, where women are portrayed as happy housewives and emotional caretakers with men absent or barely doing anything in the house. This absence is not accidental but something that reflects the culture and society. It indicates a cultural silence regarding the male involvement in the housework, normalizing the belief that only women are supposed to do it, and inherently are feminine responsibility. These types of advertisements contribute to constructing broader cultural ideologies that naturalize domestic violence and gender inequality and strengthen a male-dominated social order under the guise of tradition and care.

Slogan: Jab Baal hon thick, koi bhi hairstyle kro pick (When hair is thick, you can pick any hairstyle)

This Advertisement uses rhyming and catchiness and Urdu-English code-switching to appeal to young consumers while applying rigid beauty standards. The lexical choices of thick, hairstyle, and pick suggest that an individual's confidence, freedom, and liberty are only possible when a woman meets specific beauty ideals set by society, namely, having voluminous, silky hair. Terms such as confidence, empowered, and shine through create an illusion of women's freedom, but an empowerment that is conditional on beauty terms and not talent and ability to do anything. The language positions hair not only as a part of beauty but also as the gateway to social acceptance and confidence, reflecting a consumerist approach where confidence is directly proportional to beauty. Therefore, the slogan and words used in the advertisement insert patriarchal values into positive aspiration, disguising conformity as empowerment.

The advertisement featuring Dananeer strongly relies on intertextuality and cultural references to imply its messages and resonate with the Pakistani audience. It reflects the classic South Asian beauty standards where a woman's life "begins" only after she becomes beautiful. This trope is also familiar in Bollywood cinema, where physical beauty is equated with destiny and success, often implying that a woman's worth is only because of how she looks. The advertisement is copying the tactics of brands such as Pantene and Fair & Lovely, which also associate beauty products with women's empowerment. All these advertisements copy the same theme, and through the use of the product, the woman becomes assured, welcomed, and socially attractive. This intertextuality makes the message more acceptable and accessible to the Pakistani audience, especially young girls. The advertisement also takes cues from social media influencer culture, particularly Instagram and TikTok aesthetics, for example, selfies, slow motion shots, and pastel colors, drawing on the aspirational lives of beauty vloggers and internet celebrities. Dananeer herself, **Pawri horhi hy** meme queen, is a cultural referent herself, symbolizing the rise of influencer culture and digital femininity based solely on looks. By situating her as the symbol of beauty and confidence and contemporary Pakistani girlhood, the advertisement blends traditional expectations with consumerism and digital relevance, reaffirming that to be socially accepted and successful, a woman must not only participate in beauty culture but excel within it.

The exclusion of women with darker skin tones, curly hair, different body types, and non-prevailing styles perpetuates a narrow and elite understanding of femininity, based on colorism as well as class bias that pervades South Asian beauty culture. The Sunsilk advertisement vividly illustrates the lack of diversity, standardized beauty, and social erasure in casting and visual representation of a woman. All the women appearing in the advertisement adhere to a narrowly defined beauty ideal: a thin body, fair complexion, straight and wavy hair, and most importantly, fashionable and trendy. By presenting Dananeer as the perfect woman, the advertisement marginalizes the rest of the population, including working-class, rural, or non-conforming women, implying that they are outside the boundaries of success, confidence, and empowerment. Rather than disrupting beauty standards, the advertisement supports them, clearly establishing that social acceptability and self-value belong only to those who can fit into a strict, idealized framework imposed by the media. This lack of representation leads to the internalized inferiority complex within the culture, where many women feel invisible and inadequate for simply not trying to fit into the society and the marketed ideals.

Reinforcement of Conventional Gender Norms, Power, and Consumerism

These advertisements are broadcast mainly on every television channel and social media platform, including YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter. The high-budget visuals,

glamorous models, and aesthetically pleasing setup and attire ensure that the advertisement gets attention and encourages online engagement through parody or admiration.

The advertisement featuring Hania Aamir as the lead has a great impact on the marketing strategy and consumption because of her beauty as well as her fan base. Instead of empowering women, it leverages the female body to attract the male gaze and increase product desirability. It aligns with the commodification of femininity, where a woman's body is used to sell not herself, but the juice. The woman is a symbol, not a subject.

In Pakistan, where women's sexuality is repressed, guarded, or shameful if openly expressed, the Slice ad is a contradiction. It commercializes female sensuality in a way that is stylized and male oriented. Slice advertisements first originated in India, similar versions circulated in Pakistan, and their gendered visuals and aesthetic appeal carry transnational patriarchal ideologies. The advertisement doesn't empower women but simply uses a female body to sell a product, and the woman is shown as a symbol of pleasure, luxury, and taste—all to attract consumer attention, particularly male viewers. This appeals to Pakistan's long-standing "respectable woman" vs. "attractive woman" customs. The woman in the Slice advertisement is beautiful, expressive, and decadent, but only within the confines of a safe, aestheticized, ad-space fantasy, whereas normal women are expected to be modest and reserved. In Pakistani media, where women are rarely given full subjectivity unless it benefits business interests, this use of the male gaze objectifies them. Furthermore, the absence of genuine complexity—voice, no dialogue, no individuality—flattens the woman into a visual commodity. In Pakistan, a woman's body is a domain of control, use, and critique, especially in the media and advertisements. This reinforces the patriarchal ideology that pervades the country.

Like many other advertisements, the Brite washing powder advertisement in Pakistan also shows gendered inequality and bias in the form of household work. The story typically revolves around the woman and her husband's-stained clothes, showing that it's her responsibility to clean them, and the slogan also narrates that it is a woman's job to make everything right quietly and happily. The ad is designed to normalize and glorify unpaid domestic labor.

Brite advertisements are typically shown in morning shows, family dramas, television slots, and commercial breaks that are mainly watched by housewives. The advertisement appears through women-oriented entertainment channels, reinforcing its gendered targeting.

The advertisement is consumed by housewives and middle-aged women in Pakistan, reinforcing the notion that a woman's role is confined to the home, and her identity is tied to how well she serves her husband and children. It mirrors the concept of the patriarchal bargain, promoting women as someone who loves to work for the family, and there's no use of men in the household chores.

The Brite advertisement defines home space as feminine, which is based on still-traditional Pakistani gender norms. In most Pakistani households, especially those in the lower and middle classes, women are still expected to perform unpaid domestic work without a second thought. The woman in the advertisement, smiling, devoted, patient, and skilled at running the home, is not a fictional character; rather, she is a representation of the culturally idealized "good wife." Promoting the notion that "Brite sab right kar dega" (Brite fixes everything), it shifts the burden of household perfection onto the woman. The male character, who is either absent or employed as comedic relief, represents the accepted male disengagement from household chores. Despite being the backbone of family life, women's domestic work in Pakistani culture is devalued and ignored, which is an indication of a larger structural imbalance. The advertisement plays into a certain gender ideology common in Pakistan, where women's identities are centered around taking care of others, cooking, cleaning, and making sacrifices. It supports the societal belief that women achieve success by creating the "ideal house," not by achieving their own goals. The idea of empowerment is completely absent; instead, submissive femininity, normalized by

amiable visuals and soft background noises, takes its place. Brite upholds the old traditional ideologies where women are only supposed to work for their families and not for themselves. The Sunsilk advertisement is produced by a multinational corporation Unilever, which has a background history of crafting beauty advertisements targeting women in developing nations. The woman is shown as lost and marginalized until she transforms into the ideal beauty standards set by the media industry. The advertisement is the basic trope set by Bollywood and South Asian media to present beauty as empowerment.

This advertisement was made to be released across different media platforms, including television channels, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, providing mass exposure. Featuring Dananeer has further amplified the impact because of her fan base, blending production promotion with influencer culture.

The target audience of the advertisement is young urban girls, especially those who use social media and are influenced by it. The idealized beauty standards shown depict that there is no such thing as women's empowerment unless the woman is beautiful. It commodifies transformation instead of patriarchal norms.

In Pakistan, where women's mobility and identity are often constrained by cultural and familial expectations, the Sunsilk advertisement then presents a liberal, modern myth. It depicts a lady who, after undergoing a beauty transformation, gains self-expression, confidence, and social acceptance. It does this by reflecting a postfeminist attitude prevalent in Pakistani urban media, which tells women that they can be "anything" as long as they come under the beauty standards set by society. It depicts that in Pakistani society, women are empowered by purchasing the right products rather than working on themselves. The message appeals to educated, middle-class, and upper-class ladies who are aware of global fashion and social media attractiveness, especially in places like Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad. The advertisement excludes the majority of Pakistani women, especially those from rural areas, traditional origins, or other socioeconomic groups. The capitalist goals of the centralized beauty industry are supported through this advertisement, which encourages women to buy products to gain social acceptance. The advertisement aligns with the matrimonial culture of Pakistan, which puts the woman's looks, especially her hair, skin color, and body type. Therefore, Sunsilk reinforces the idea that success, visibility, agency, and confidence are correlated with physical beauty. The idea that supports gendered capitalism, rather than opposing it.

Findings:

This study has attempted to uncover the ideologies of target audiences, and persuasive linguistic techniques used in selected advertisements based on Norman Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis. As shown in these advertisements, success, and confidence, as depicted, are based on patriarchal and capitalist conceptions of beauty rather than intelligence, independence, or achievement. They are related to beauty standards set by society and the Pakistani media. The results indicate that the Pakistani electronic media often commodifies a woman's worth by using superficial attributes like fair complexion, slim figure, and lustrous, bouncy hair. Across all 3 advertisements, women are portrayed as commodities and are limited to the stereotypical roles as domestic caretakers, beauty objects, or passive consumers. The Bright's advertisement builds the woman's identity among her house and household chores, utterly removing men from domestic responsibilities meanwhile, the Sunsilk's advertisement quietly reinforces the idea of women must continuously maintain physical attractiveness to be socially relevant by reducing empowerment to shallow beauty standards, where "thick, shining hair" becomes the yardstick of a woman's value not her education. Similarly, the Slice advertisement sexualizes the female body using close-up shots, slow motions, western attire, and seductive body language, catering to the male gaze. Fairclough's three-dimensional model reveals how the textual structures, discursive practices, and underlying social ideologies within

these advertisements reproduce dominant gender hierarchies. These advertisements not only promote contemporary social conventions but also actively participate in portraying women as either domesticated or aesthetically pleasing in the public sphere, while men are either absent, in control, or uninterested in the narrative. The research shows that mainstream electronic media in Pakistan consistently use language and imagery that objectifies, marginalizes, and devalues women, which leads to the normalization of male dominance and upholds structural inequalities embedded in common discourse.

Conclusion

The study concludes that patriarchal and capitalist ideals that marginalize and objectify women are pervasive in Pakistani electronic media advertisement. It is clear from using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach that the language and imagery in these commercials reinforces traditional gender roles by portraying women largely as passive creatures, beauty objects, or caregivers for the home. The idea that a woman's value is based on her outward beauty rather than her intelligence or accomplishments is reinforced by the representation of women, which is mostly focused on superficial criteria such as fair complexion, thin bodies, and glossy hair. In addition to upholding gender norms and power structures, these depictions normalize men's exclusion from household duties and present them as domineering or distant individuals. Ultimately, this discourse analysis demonstrates how media language serves as a weapon to preserve structural injustices and mold public opinion in ways that support male authority and limit the agency of women in society.

Implications and Future recommendations

The study's findings have significant implications for comprehending how gender beliefs are shaped and reinforced in Pakistani society through media discourse. Advertisements support the normalization of gender inequality and the upholding of patriarchal beliefs by excluding males from household storylines and presenting women in limited, appearance-based positions. Particularly among younger audiences, these portrayals have an effect on self-image in addition to public perceptions. It is imperative that media creators, marketers, and legislators take more inclusive and accountable stances going ahead. More studies on audience reaction and changing trends can aid in dispelling negative stereotypes and directing the creation of fair media practices. Future commercials ought to support varied, strong representations of men and women that go beyond domesticity and beauty to represent their actual duties and contributions. While more female voices in content creation can promote equal representation, regulatory organizations must enforce ethical standards to stop the objectification of women. Furthermore, encouraging media literacy and carrying out more studies on audience reaction and changing patterns might aid in dispelling negative perceptions and directing the creation of fair media practices.

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