

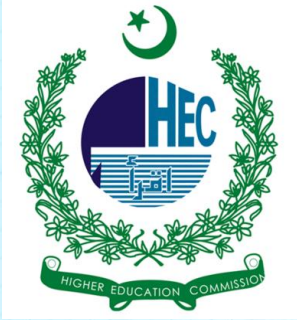
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**Analysing Patriarchal Language Practices in Pakistani
Advertisements: A Feminist Discourse Perspective**



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Abstract

This research study explores how language reinforces patriarchy. The qualitative language analysis was conducted on Pakistani advertisements, using data gathered from articles, websites, and scholarly journals. The study reveals that advertisements use language that reinforces the power dynamics and marginalisation of women. The research aims to provide insight into language practices that appear to be positive but, deep down, have an agenda. By critically analysing the two Pakistani advertisements from different brands, such as Tapal Dane Dar and Shan Masala, it becomes evident that linguistic patterns are embedded with gender stereotypes and the marginalisation of women. The findings reveal that patriarchal language exists in society through gendered adjectives and narrative structures that reinforce the male figure as the authoritative person. The study also provides suggestions to overcome this gendered linguistic pattern that reinforces patriarchy. This paper contributes to feminist media studies and highlights how language perpetuates gender inequality in Pakistan.

Keywords: Media, language and gender, advertisement, patriarchy and women representation.

Introduction

The media industry plays a vital role in reinforcing existing ideologies. Media effects can be positive or negative, but every effect results in change; the same media can reinforce existing ideological beliefs (Wikipedia). According to previous studies, the media have two effects: the direct effect(private) and the indirect effect(public). The indirect effect also causes a social impact, as the information creates a standard knowledge of a culture and promotes social coordination when people engage with the content and accept the information, especially if they believe it. Advertisements are also a part of the media that serve to reinforce ideologies such as patriarchy in society. The feminist movement raised a voice for marginalised groups against power dynamics. The studies revealed that feminist campaigns are a significant force behind historical societal changes for women's rights. Feminist theories have developed across various disciplines to highlight gender issues and inequalities, including the marginalisation of women and gender stereotypes (Wikipedia). The feminist theory's

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third dimension explores how language causes influence, control, and dominance. It highlights how language plays a role in maintaining societal power dynamics and underscores its role in challenging and reinforcing societal ideologies (Fairclough, and Fairclough). Language not only defines reality but also shapes it. Additionally, it impacts an individual's actions (Van Dijk).

The interrelation between language and gender gained attention since the rise of the second wave of feminism. This area is concerned with how language is used to represent social identities. The media, particularly advertisements, further reinforce the ideologies constructed by society. Media discourses are the key to shaping and creating certain realities and understandings (Gerbner, et al.). Likewise, it was argued that discourse is never random and dominant ideologies always influence it in a society (Foucault).

Advertisements often depict an idealised view of the world, which can be neither positive nor pleasant (Iram, et al.). In advertising, advertisers often create narrative identities and depict people's lives through symbolic cultural values, aiming to establish relatable messages for viewers (Yücel). Through the power of stories, advertisers engage their audience by crafting messages about "who they are" and "what they stand for" (Fog, et al.). A primary role of advertising is to persuade consumers by providing information about the products and services available from various companies. The purpose is fulfilled when advertisers portray socio-cultural values through narratives and storytelling (Alozie). Asian societies are patriarchal societies, and unfortunately, the media is also part of it. systematic patriarchy has stripped away much from women and all that relates to femininity.

Patriarchy, masculinity, and femininity are interconnected concepts. Patriarchy is defined as a social structure where men hold power, while masculinism is viewed as a specific ideology justifying, endorsing, or supporting male dominance. Feminism challenges male supremacy and champions women's rights and gender equality." In essence, patriarchy refers to a societal structure where significant power lies with men, who control all aspects of both private and public life. O'Shaughnessy and Stadler stated that patriarchy is grounded in the 'law of the father'. This operates in two ways: first, through lineage, where children typically inherit their father's family name instead of their mother's; second, through legal and political systems that,

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while not solely under male control anymore, have evolved as predominantly male institutions. Historically, women were barred from holding political office and denied voting rights, which they gained only after a lengthy fight. They had limited legal rights, and married women were often seen as their husbands' property (Rasool).

A stereotypical representation of women was prevalent in the 1980s. Women were confined to household responsibilities. The relationship between language and identity development is profoundly interconnected, and the power of language extends beyond what is typically recognised. It acts as a mechanism for conveying information, asserting authority, and providing motivation. Therefore, linguists support language's phatic function (Talosa, and Malenab-Temporal). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is recognised for its explicit political perspective and focus on social inequality and injustice. Feminist perspectives influence the debate in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in women's studies. Feminist stylistics, pragmatics, and conversation analysis have introduced innovative ways to analyse literary and non-literary texts (Mansoor, and Khalid). Identifying and establishing a feminist perspective in language and discourse studies has been a longstanding critique and goal for feminists in academia across male-dominated fields in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Literary and non-literary fields examine feminism uniquely to highlight emerging ideas through relevant frameworks. Advertisements convey messages and sell products tailored to audience preferences in non-literary texts.

Research Questions

Q1: How do Pakistani advertisements use language to reinforce patriarchy?

Q2: How do feminist discourse principles reveal the underlying patriarchal ideologies in the language of Pakistani advertisements?

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study.

- I. To analyse how patriarchy is practised in Pakistani advertisements through language.
- II. To highlight how random utterances or sentences strengthen the patriarchal notions in a society.

Significance of the Study

The significance lies in identifying how patriarchy is practiced in socially acceptable

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ways. The study highlights the linguistic variables reinforcing the power dynamics marginalizing women. The research aims to provide insight into language practices that appear to be positive but, deep down, have an agenda. A language ideology can affect language policy during micro-interactions online while maintaining metalinguistic aspects and communitydriven language regulation. Examples of expressions in real-life situations include repetition, humour, and overt correction (Heuman).

Literature Review

Advertisement depicts women as subordinate and emotionally weak subjects. Advertisers use the persuasive linguistic and visual devices to strengthen the existing power structures (Khalid, et al.). Pakistani ads depict women within patriarchal and stereotypical frameworks. The language and visual representation in Pakistani ads have historically sustained patriarchal discourse. Over time, the trends toward gender equality are changing slowly(Khan, et al.). The study suggests that advertisements are the primary source of cultural change and ideological shift about women in society(Sumaira, et al.). The research highlights that most of the women in ads are objectified. The study reveals that the ideal woman is defined by her physical appearance, leisure and sex. Women are not defined as beings with wants and emotions(Nasir, et al.).

The field of advertising is quite vast. The role of beautiful young women attracts the consumer toward the relevant product. The portrayal of women in ads is against Pakistani cultural and Islamic values. Women with an Islamic appearance are considered illiterate(Shahid, et al.). Narrative theory was proposed by Walter Fisher in the 20th century. According to this theory, human beings tell stories, narrate events, and occurrences with the help of communication. This theory relates to the selected research topic, based on the idea that seeing is believing. The advertisements narrate incidents so that they impact human minds and cause them to perceive women's role in society accordingly. People believe and internalise the ideology indirectly portrayed by the advertisements' vocabulary and sentences(Nasir, et al.).

Researchers explored the stereotypical representations of females in 150 advertisements spanning various categories. They employed a constructionist approach to analyse television commercials, focusing on aspects such as language,

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voiceovers, models, the products being sold, and the messages conveyed by these advertisements. Their findings indicate that women are portrayed in their traditional roles, including those of wives, daughters, and mothers, or characterised as shy, dreamy, passive, submissive, emotional, and easily manipulated individuals. Conversely, men are depicted in terms of their professional and physical strengths; they embody dominance, rationality, high achievement, and power (Khan, and Anwar). These portrayals contribute to the reinforcement of patriarchal foundations and represent not a neutral or insignificant reflection of society, but rather a biased and onedimensional representation of genders (Dates, and Barlow). The mixed-method research claimed to investigate the roles and status of Pakistani women and concluded that the media accurately reflects Pakistani society regarding female representation (Sundas).

The theory identified three levels of linguistic meaning: word meanings, phrase meanings, and the meanings of a speaker's utterance. According to this study, sentence meaning represents the semantic content of a sentence and can take various forms. Statements with pragmatic meanings convey utterance meanings across various contexts. Interactions focus on transmitting messages and information. Consequently, word meanings are exclusively shaped by collocational relationships that establish contextual links (Kroeger). Advertisements convey meanings through grammatical structures, vocabulary, and intonation, which enhance marketing communications and industry practices. This framework, utilising 'advertising' to encompass all marketing communications, aligns with contemporary industry standards, presenting a strong argument for academic researchers and educators to embrace it too (Laurie, et al.). Advertising language includes stimuli that shape word meanings, leading to a better understanding of commercial messages. Due to inadequate distribution structures, including information about product availability and company location, is crucial, a concept referred to as "openness of meanings" (Gebreselassie, and Bougie). Language ideologies can shape language policies in online micro-interactions, maintaining metalinguistic features and community-driven language regulation. Examples of expressions observed in real life include repetition, humour, and direct corrections (Heuman).

Advertisements significantly influence viewers' mindsets and beliefs, leaving

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enduring impressions. Researcher argued that “people are exposed to the advertising process wherever they are” and views advertising as “an ‘ideal tool’ for reaching people economically, but it is a device for achieving and maintaining social, cultural, political, and even psychological connections with individuals”(Chafai). He discussed the semiotic aspect of advertising, stating that "through images, verbal language or symbols, consumers come to identify themselves with the merits and significance of the advertised product in their everyday life." He believed that “advertising has to know the world of consumers, their sense of identity, their attitudes and expectations, and then create associations between people’s dreams and the commodity." Consumers interpret meaning not only from the product itself but also from their lived experiences, the world around them, and their beliefs and values that give the product its suggestive meaning (Chafai). Visual images in advertising seek to connect commodities with socio-cultural traits and characteristics. The function of these images extends beyond merely promoting a product; they play a crucial role in conveying a “worldview, a lifestyle, and value system”(Kellner). The study highlighted three key roles of visual images: they can provoke emotions by depicting real people or objects; they can act as photographic evidence of events that have occurred; and they can create a sense of presence(Messaris).

Many studies in Pakistan have explored gender roles and the objectification of women based on societal standards of beauty. However, only a few studies highlight the marginalisation of women through linguistic practices. This study highlights how language and linguistic variables reinforce patriarchal ideologies. This research addresses the gaps in the FCDA model and focuses on language variables that give it a distinctive characteristic.

Research Methodology

The qualitative method is applied in this research study to analyse the impact of language on society. This research will use qualitative research methodology to highlight the impact of internalised language patterns on human beings that strengthen certain ideologies, such as patriarchy. The qualitative language analysis was conducted on the Pakistani advertisements. The use of sentences and vocabulary in different Pakistani ads was analysed to show the reinforcement by patriarchy through language. The data for this research has been gathered from different articles,

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websites, and scholarly journals. This research paper analyses how advertisements internalise specific language patterns to promote ideologies. The paper aligns with feminist viewpoints that stand against patriarchy to marginalise women specifically in society.

Theoretical Framework

The feminist theory critically examines the use of stereotypes. FCDA, a term predominantly ascribed to Lazar, represents a sub-discipline within Critical Discourse Analysis that emphasises gender ideologies over other social variables. The primary premise of FCDA, as expounded by the researcher, is to "highlight the complex, subtle, and at times, overtly apparent methods through which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, maintained, negotiated, and contested across various contexts and communities"(Lazar, 2005). The initial principle of FCDA advocates that a critical analysis of discourse that upholds the patriarchal social order constitutes a form of analytical resistance, potentially empowering feminist linguists to attain an equitable and just social framework. Consequently, through its analysis of gendered discourse in Pakistani media, the present study aspires to contribute modestly to this objective.

The second tenet of FCDA posits that the dominant understanding of gender is an ideological construct that categorises males and females into dominant and subordinate social groups based on sexual differences. FCDA uncovers how language maintains power dynamics. It highlights how linguistic choices shape gender roles and identities. FCDA emphasises the marginalisation of women by dominant patriarchal discourse. Hegemonic gender ideologies are consistently enacted, practised, and disseminated through everyday texts and conversations, becoming perceived as common sense, ultimately embraced by the wider community. These discursive practices render power relations as gender norms, portraying them as "invisible power, misrecognised and acknowledged instead as entirely legitimate and natural"(Lazar, 2005). In light of the above points, the present study explores how language plays a role in reinforcing the patriarchy.

Data Analysis

The dialogues are examined to find the underlying depth and hidden ideologies. The advertisements are from two Pakistani food brands. One advertisement is associated

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with Tapal danedar, and the other with Shan masala. Both ads highlight societal norms, but the in-depth analysis reveals that the ads and their use of language are not innocent.

Advertisement 01

Dialogues reflecting patriarchal themes:

Excerpt 1:

“HAMARE KHANDAN MAY LARKIYAN JOB NHI KRTI “

(Girls do not work in our families) (0.18 sec) Excerpt 2:

“AB AAP HUMSE BEHAS KAREINGI “

(Now you will argue with me) 0.31 sec

Excerpt 3:

“HUM AAP KO NOKRI KI IJAZAT NHI DE SAKTE ‘BUS”

(‘Enough!’, I cannot allow you to do a job) 0.36 sec Excerpt 4:

“BILKUL APNI MAA KI TARAH ZIDDI HO”

(Precisely, you are as stubborn as your mother.) 1:06 sec

Explanation

The excerpts are taken from Tapal Dan e Dar's advertisement. The dialogues in the above excerpts were delivered by the male character, the girl's father. The father argues with her daughter and disagrees with her pursuing a job after higher studies. The girl tries to convince her father, but he does not agree in the first part of the ad. The latter part of the advertisement reflects that the daughter finally convinced her father when she tried to normalise the situation and brought a cup of tea for her father. Meanwhile, he was not appreciative and agreed to the demands because of her capabilities, but he showed a positive gesture because she made good tea. This gesture shows that society does not accept the woman's demands when she argues. Society accepts the woman's demands only if she convinces society with the gesture that society demands.



**Tapal Danedar's new TVC "Har Mizaaj Sey Aashna"
3rd film of the series- Father daughter**

72K views 14y ago ...more



TapalDanedar1 682

Subscribe

Fig 01: Tapal Danedar's TVC "Har Mizaaj Sey Aashna" portrays a father-daughter conversation about traditional family roles versus modern aspirations.

As mentioned in the above excerpts, certain dialogues in the ad reinforce patriarchy. The excerpts highlight that language has the potential to induce particular patterns. When these patterns become redundant, they are accepted as realities. The explanation of the selected excerpts is as follows.

The dialogue from excerpt (1) reflects that what women are supposed to do is decided by society. The dialogue, "Girls do not work in our families," reflects that society defines that women are not supposed to work or have a job. The word "our family" portrays a kind of honour that should not be crossed. Likewise, an association of job with morality and family reputation is a notion of patriarchy reinforced by the advertisements. The second excerpt is about the limitations of being a woman. The father warns the girl and says in a fierce voice, "Now you will argue with me." This dialogue reflects that women are not allowed to share their viewpoints. Similarly, they are not allowed to say something for their rights. If a woman says something in her favour, it is considered an argument, as mentioned in a dialogue. Excerpt four of the ad has the word "Enough" which reflects a final call. The father says he cannot bear more and will end the discussion. The girl does not give up and tries another way to convince her father. She makes a cup of tea and serves it to her father. This time, she does not argue but requests in a cute way. The father does not appreciate her for her ambitions; instead, he says she is just like her mother and associates a quality of

stubbornness with her. The use of language in excerpt four highlights the language associated with a patriarchal society. In the framework of patriarchy, people usually associate negative qualities of a child with the mother; likewise, the father in the ad associates the stubbornness of a girl with her mother, ‘precisely you are as stubborn as your mother. This dialogue reinforces the patriarchal ideology. This time, the father was also in a good mood, and he did not respond positively because of the girl's capabilities, but she responded positively. The father shows this positive response because of the girl's positive gesture. Although the girl is portrayed as an ambitious and educated woman, she still needs the approval of her father to pursue her career. The father character and the dialogue reflect traditional authority that men have the final say in family decisions. The excerpt reflects how a father imposes his decision and says a direct no to her dream fulfilment— a legacy to be written.

Advertisement 2

Excerpt 1: “AIK DOCTOR BAHU BANAY KAY NATEY”

(being a doctor's daughter-in-law)

Excerpt 2: “APNI ZINDAGI SIRF KITCHEN KI KHIDMAT MA GUZAROONGI”

(I will spend my life only serving the kitchen)



**Fig: 02 Excerpt 3: “IS KAY KITCHEN MEI ROZ KIYA PAKAY GA YEI ISS
KI AWLEEN TARJEEH HO GI”**

(What is cooked in her kitchen daily has become her highest priority.)

**Excerpt 4: “HAR SAAL HAZARON BACHIYAN DOCTOR BNTI HAIN BAHU
BANNE KE LIYE”**

(Every year, thousands of girls become doctors to become daughters-in-law.)



Fig:03

The ad highlights that society expects women to do household and professional duties. The ads present an oath-taking ceremony of the woman who will be a doctor; with that, she is a wife. There are two voices—the voice of professional responsibility and the voice of household responsibilities of a married woman. The second voice is depicted as the voice of society. The voice of society expects women to be perfect and prioritise their household duties.

The voice and language are mainly used in our society to describe women's responsibilities. The excerpt of the ad suggests that the women mostly became daughter-in-laws. The line depicts that our society uses such random sentences to define and question women's ambitions. The word or utterances “doctor bahu”, as mentioned in the excerpt one, suggests that females are defined by their individuality. In the whole advertisement, the girl is not called by her name. The advertisements reinforce the lost identity of women through the use of language and visual representation. The name of the female is not mentioned in the ad, and adding her professionalism with her societal role as daughter-in-law reflects language that reinforces patriarchy in our society.

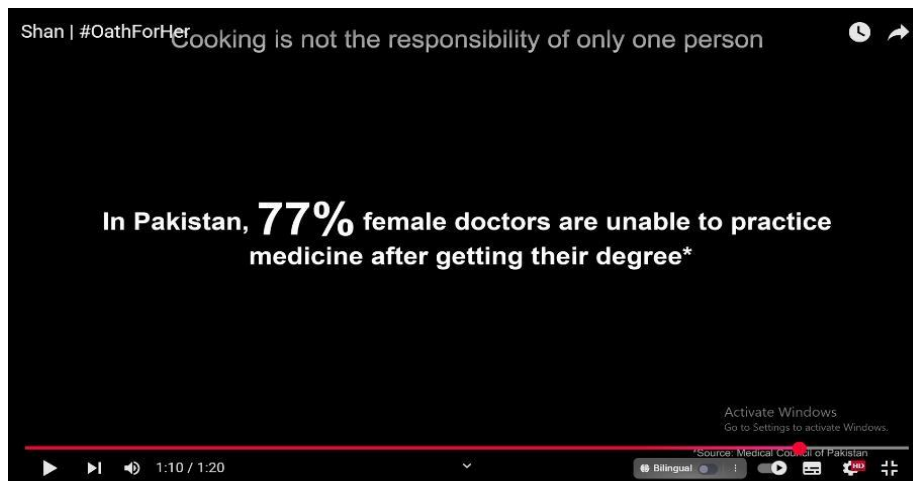


Fig: 04

Excerpt three and excerpt four are correlated as both define the priority of women in a society. "What is cooked in her kitchen daily has become her highest priority". Likewise, every year, thousands of girls become doctors to become daughters-in-law. These dialogues reflect that advertisements with a glorifying picture practice the ideologies and power dynamics. These sentences are portrayed so that a large audience listens with interest. As time passes, such sentences, because of redundant exposure, become part of their ideologies and mindset. The ads reflect that no matter how successful a woman becomes, society continually defines her role in the household as her priority. The second excerpt states " I will spend my life only serving the kitchen. This sentence reflects that society wants women to spend their whole lives serving household duties. These sentences suggest how the language reinforces patriarchy; such sentences became redundant in society, and people became used to them. Later on, they start to accept the spoken words as truth. This is how language and particular sentences in society are so embedded in people's minds that they start accepting them without even considering the extent of correctness within a particular dialogue or utterances.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that language practices in the society reinforce the dominant ideologies, such as patriarchy. The study highlights that advertisements play a crucial role in building reconstructive ideologies. Information about everyday life is conveyed through advertising language, influencing the audience and reinforcing lifestyle choices. In this context, society engages with persuasion and the rhetorical

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frameworks that have historically shaped modern social discourse. The power of persuasion is fundamentally embedded in the social discourse that permeates our society (El-Dali). The use of language in the advertisements is moulded so that the audience finds it appealing. The deep analysis of such languages reveals that they hold the factors that reinforce a society's patriarchal factors. In this research, the two advertisements have been analysed above to prove this stance. The analysis reveals that Pakistani advertisements use language that reinforces the power dynamics. The first advertisement highlights the conversation between the father and daughter, which we analysed by considering the FCDA model and how the linguistic variables underscore patriarchal norms.

Likewise, we analysed another advertisement where society defines women's responsibility. Society tells women what their priorities should be. The language and excerpts that we highlighted above clearly explain that the language practices reinforce patriarchal ideologies. The study reveals that patriarchal language practices are embedded in the linguistic choices and narrative structure. The language usage in the advertisements reinforces the male as an authoritative person. The woman is depicted as confined to household duties, which are her priority, regardless of her profession. Advertising language's persuasive effects are based on linguistic features that project uneven power relations and ideological tendency (Jangore et al, 2020). Ideologies are socially constructed, and language is the building block to construct such ideologies. The language used in the selected advertisements depicts the patriarchal norms that reflect gender dynamics, identities, power dynamics, and ideologies, which are correlated and their power cannot be exercised without language. So, language is the most powerful tool for practising power. Gender is a social construct that needs to be contested, challenged, and resisted to overcome stereotypes(Lindsey). For this reason, feminist linguists focus on uncovering the link between language and gender inequalities/discrimination, as they believe that "linguistic change is an important part of overall social change" (Litosseliti)

Conclusion

No doubt, language is a powerful mode of communication, and it assists the dominant ideologies in functioning. Language is the essential source of communication, and with its help, power dynamics and dominant ideologies are practiced. When we focus

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on generic language, we see that the words in a language also reflect alliances with the dominant group in patriarchy, i.e., male. There is a specific vocabulary for the exact words for females; for example, the word 'chairman' indicates no corresponding word to accompany women in this context. We do not have the term 'chairwoman' to precisely describe the designation for women. The essential words that address women also incorporate the term male; for instance, the word 'women' includes 'men' within it. The pronoun 'she' also contains 'he.' Somehow, the language is designed to imply that women are incomplete without men. The above discussion and these examples lead to the conclusion that language is not innocent; it always promotes certain ideologies and power dynamics. Advertisements are used to reinforce and strengthen these ideologies. They are portrayed in a way that leads the audience to believe whatever is shown in advertisements is correct. Critical feminist analysis empowers female consumers to identify underlying presuppositions and potentially contest the ideological beliefs that support outdated stereotypes. It clarifies whose interests and beliefs are being integrated and whose perspectives are unexamined.

Suggestions

The following suggestions should be considered by brand ambassadors/models and actresses who signed contracts for advertisements.

- Advertisements should avoid linguistic choices that marginalise women and support patriarchal ideologies.
- Advertisements should avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes, which become a barrier to women's potential and personality growth.
- To promote gender equality, advertisements should show women in nontraditional roles such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- Advertisements should promote women's empowerment through linguistic choices.
- Advertisement should portray women as strong, capable, and confident individuals who can make their own decisions.
- Advertisements should partner with female creatives to accurately and positively portray women.
- Advertisements must focus on consumer feedback and heed women's voices to guarantee respect and empowerment.

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- Pakistani advertisements could be improved by creating culturally relevant content.
- The advertisements should not reinforce power dynamics. Ads should promote equality and raise a voice against suppression.
- The advertisements should be transparent in terms of facts.
- The advertisement should give equal opportunities to both genders.

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